



Architect's rendering of West Middle Creek from I-70, opposite the Town Center of Vail Village and Lionshead. Indebted by bond funding, currently under construction.

V a i l H o m e o w n e r s A s s o c i a t i o n

Letters to Vail

One more time - Boom and Bust Again?

April 6, 2026

Where now? Is investment in large workforce housing projects stretching TOV's financial resources? Is it even the right direction to go? Bond-financed projects are projected to attain the goal of providing 1000 units of workforce housing by 2027. This figure was generated from accumulated demand created by a redevelopment and construction boom during the 2010s.

As commercial development continues into the 2020's, the need for additional workforce housing is anticipated. [A recent, community sourced, exhaustively documented report on worker housing trends for Jackson Hole](#), a Wyoming mountain resort community with attributes similar to Vail, demonstrates the counterproductive cyclical nature of resort growth. [A Jackson Hole realty publishes a summary of 2026 real estate trends for western United States mountain resorts communities](#), which are a key factor in predicting housing demand.

There are multiple methods of calculating population and workforce, residential housing demand, and needs. Depending on the method of calculation, the statistical percentages will vary. However, the predicted outcomes do not. Included here is a summary of [recent Eagle County published employment and housing strategies](#). Environmental predictions are layered with climate implications. Short-term reactions may be hazardous in the long run. [Has the time arrived for a pause? A pause to formulate a strategy that anticipates the challenges ahead.](#)

Throughout its existence, the Vail community has faced challenges with employee housing. To the credit of the Town and a handful of employers in the early years, several projects with various forms were built to house workers; from dormitories to duplexes, mobile homes, to multifamily living units. Some of the earliest investments were in housing for management workers. Logistic plans for the 1976 Winter Olympics envisioned housing athletes and staff in refitted Pullman passenger train cars stationed on the railroad sidings at Minturn and Avon - it certainly was not a long-term solution for workers or guests!

The conundrum is, workforce housing cannot keep pace with commercial development because of the cyclical nature of resort development.

Lack of investment in worker housing by both big and small business interests is largely to blame for the shortages. Employers with the greatest number of employees have been late or absent from providing real housing solutions, expecting the TOV to pick up the slack. Not until the 1970s did large-scale employee housing come into being. Even then, some proposed projects were at odds with efforts to acquire open space for environmental preservation, also as a means of tamping down commercial real estate development, and maintaining a balance with the environment.

Frustration over the lack of corporate financing for workforce housing played a significant role in shaping the projects during the 1990's and beyond. The Vail community has been slow to recognize the correlation between the TOV incentivizing commercialized tourism, and the seemingly endless demand for worker housing.

The current approach to large-scale employee housing projects is in the hands of a select group of housing developers who have found ways to commandeer public funding for their projects. The ideal solution to dependence on ever increasing tourism and demand for more and more workforce housing is for the TOV to require each new development or redesign to provide housing for the workers who will be employed after the project is completed.

*******VHA Membership*******

The mission of VHA is, and always has been, to identify, research, and respond to issues that affect residential property owners in Vail. We have pledged to take a leading role in advocating for the mutual interests of full and part-time residents.

VHA is a non-profit funded entirely by voluntary annual membership dues and contributions. We rely on members like you to help sustain the work we do.

As a town, Vail continues to grow while space for development shrinks, creating challenges for the Town, developers, and those who call it home. It is extremely important for everyone who enjoys the community that has evolved through the years to stay informed and involved to ensure that the lifestyle and experience we have enjoyed are preserved for our enjoyment and for future generations. VHA can help sustain that vision through the support of our valued community members.

We hope you will take a few minutes to consider the value of a VHA membership and join us in working to support the Vail experience that we love. Contact: vha@vail.net

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