

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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April 23, 2017

Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams
c/o Max Forgens
Mountain Spots/Special Uses Administrator
White River National Forest
P.O. Box 190
Minturn, CO 81645

Re: Golden Peak Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams:

Since submitting our comments on the Golden Peak Improvement Project (dated April 14, 2017), we have now reviewed the underlying Vail Resorts Master Development Plan. One of the subjects of that Plan is parking. Because the Golden Peak Improvement Project is an amendment to that Plan, and we believe that another part of the Plan needs substantial updating, we submit this additional comment.

As we stated in our original comments, the Vail Homeowners Association is a community based advocacy organization that promotes the quality of life for both Vail residents and visitors. Among the issues of concern for the Association are parking and the public safety issues caused by overflow parking on the South Frontage Road.

Parking is also a concern and focus of the VRMDP. As that Plan recognizes, adequate guest and worker parking is a necessary component of proper management of mountain uses. As of the August 2007 Update to the VRMDP, it was calculated that there was sufficient parking for 8,400 users.¹ This was contrasted with a “managed-to” number of 19,900 guests resulting in a significant deficiency in available parking. The update noted, however, that parking was planned to be increased by expansion of the Lionshead parking structure (200 cars)

¹ This was based on an average of 2.8 persons per car. If the more usual average of 2.2 persons per car was used, there would only be parking for 6,600 users.

and the Ever Vail development (750 cars), and with those additions, there would be adequate parking for present and future needs.

Since 2007, the parking situation has grown much worse, and the inventory count in the Update is no longer accurate. Due to development and other changes, the available parking has shrunk by about 300 spaces or down to 2,700 spaces, and we know that consideration of an expansion of the Lionshead parking structure is no longer being pursued by the Town of Vail, and Vail Resorts has declared it is abandoning commercial development. Therefore, there is now parking for only 7,560 users (using 2.8 per car) to 6,000 users (at 2.2 per car).

As we also know, overflow parking on South Frontage Road has continued to increase in both the winter and summer seasons.² The VRMDP, however, condones this practice for up to 30 days of such use. Putting aside the fact that limit has already been exceeded, South Frontage Road parking is Vail's number one public safety issue with near unanimous consensus that it is only a matter of time until a serious injury or worse occurs, especially, in the winter season when snow and ice are prevalent and guests are often in ski boots.

This overall lack of sufficient parking, also, directly impacts the Golden Peak area. It causes more people to drive to the Golden Peak area to look for parking or to try to drop off or pick up others. This creates unsafe conditions on Vail Valley Drive where pedestrians commingle with vehicular traffic accessing Golden Peak ski base. The problem worsens during large special events, with skiers mixing with event goers. The resulting congestion prevents neighborhood residents from safely accessing their homes. This lack of safe and convenient parking is one of the highest ranking community problems.

Neither the VRMDP nor the USFS should create or condone base congestion or situations that put public safety at risk.

It is for those reasons that the Vail Homeowners Association believes that the parking requirements of the VRMDP need to be updated as follows:

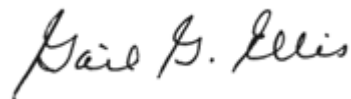
1. The available parking inventories need to be updated.
2. The use of Frontage Road overflow parking should be eliminated from the acceptable inventory. While this is the subject of a CDOT/TOV agreement and USFS cannot change the terms of that agreement, the VRMDP should not condone this practice by continuing to recognize it as a valid use. In other words, it is within the USFS authority to eliminate it from the VRMDP.

² The Town of Vail only has parking rights on South Frontage Road during the winter season. It has no right to allow parking during the summer season although it continues to do so.

3. The VRMDP should require that Vail Resorts provide more parking. Vail Resorts already owns several acres of land west of Lionshead and could provide parking there. With the addition of the already approved lift at that location, there could be ready mountain access for hundreds of guests. Vail Resorts could, also, work cooperatively with the TOV to develop more parking at other locations or in other ways. We do not advocate a specific solution, nor do we believe that the VRMDP need do so; it only needs to address that more parking must be made available.
4. Alternatively, the “managed-to” number of guests should be reduced to bring that number into balance with the available parking.

If as a matter of procedure, these concerns cannot be addressed within the context of the Golden Peak Improvement Project, then we request that the USFS initiate a proper procedure for updating the parking requirements of the VRMDP. If we can provide additional input, please let us know. Also, please let us know how the USFS intends to address these concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail G. Ellis".

Gail Galvin Ellis, Psy.D.