

A Report on the Recommendation of a Preferred Site for the Vail Transit Center

Prepared for:

The Town of Vail

Prepared by:

**Nate Larson, PE, PTOE
URS Corporation**

On Behalf of:

Fentress Bradburn Architects

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This brief report has been prepared at the request of Town of Vail staff to evaluate four site options for regional transit transfer activities. This report has the following three parts:

1. Evaluation Criteria
2. Pro/Con analysis of the four sites
3. Conclusions

The current transit center is not considered large enough to accommodate the desired functions, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Bays for up to five buses and five hotel shuttle vans at one time
- Warming enclosure for passengers and drivers
- Restroom facilities
- Visual display of system route and schedule information

The consideration of a new location is driven by fact that the existing site is not large enough to accommodate these desired functions, which are considered vital to the future success of multimodal transportation to, from, and within the Town of Vail.

If a new location is selected, all transit center functions currently occurring at the existing site will be transferred to the new transit center when it opens.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING TRANSIT OPTIONS

The following criteria were developed by the Vail Civic Center consultant team to facilitate the Pro/Con analysis of each site, and are presented in no particular order:

1. Capacity to meet program targets (5 buses, 5 shuttle vans)
2. Adequate space for vehicle circulation and maneuvering within the center
3. Traffic impacts on Frontage Road
4. Impact on access /egress at Lionshead parking structure
5. Safe pedestrian movement within transit center & from there to Lionshead Mall (proximity to pedestrian destinations)

6. Potential for future expansion of transit center
7. Provides space for waiting area, restrooms, etc. (+/- 600 sf?)
8. Balances pedestrian flow into Lionshead Mall (east vs. west)
9. Possibility of combining with Information Center?
10. Convenient access for buses from Town of Vail and regional bus routes (and I-70)
11. Visibility from highway and Frontage Road
12. Ease of rider transfer to in-town shuttles
13. Safe distance between entry to transit center and any roadway intersection (150'?)
14. Cost
15. Separation from Village Transit Center

These criteria were considered starting points for discussion, and not all of them were eventually used in the Pro/Con analysis.

No scoring or weighting mechanisms were used in this analysis. The Pro/Con analysis for the first three sites was conducted in a workshop setting on September 29, 2004 by consultant team members Mike Winters (Fentress Bradburn), Nathan Kibler-Silengo (Fentress Bradburn), Nate Larson (URS), and Sherry Dorward, Landscape Architect.

OPTION 1: CONCERT HALL PLAZA

The Concert Hall Plaza site is the location of the existing transit transfer facility. It is located on West Lionshead Circle south of Frontage Road (see **Figure 1**).

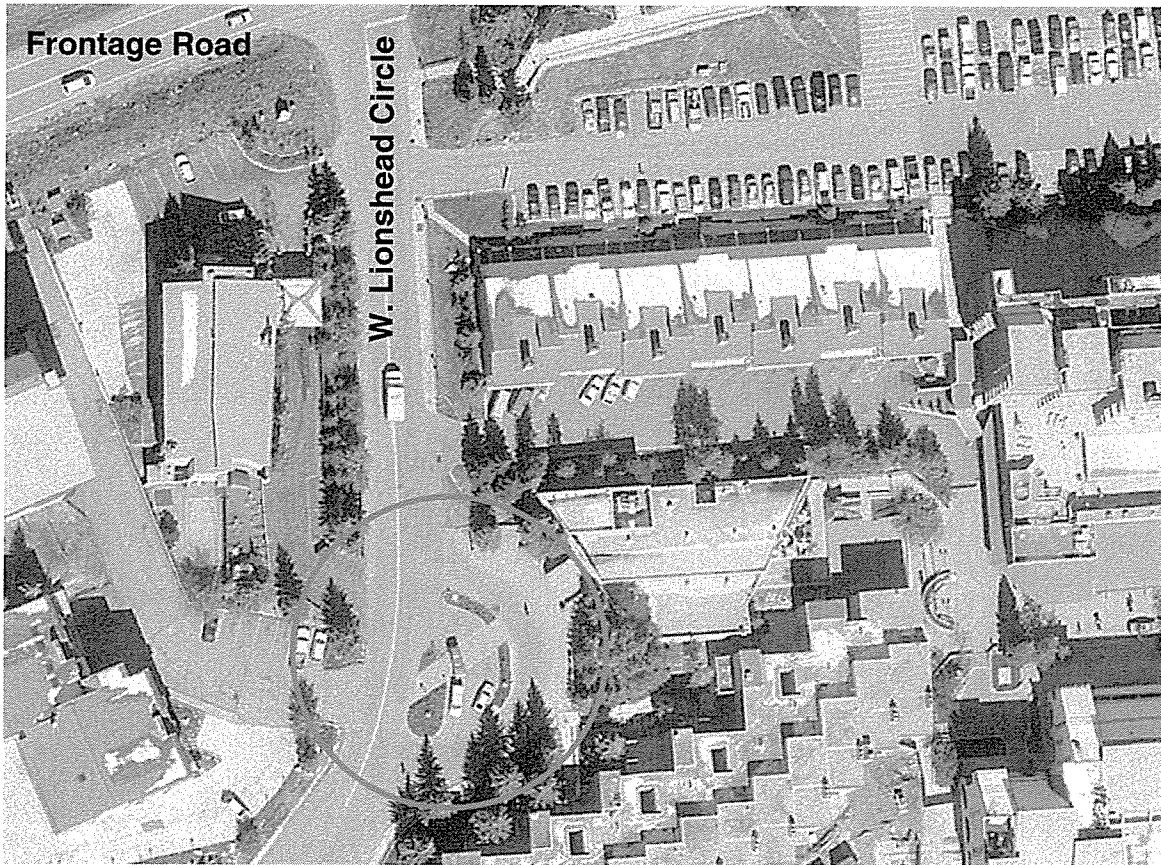


Figure 1. Concert Hall Plaza Site

PROS

- Least cost
- Existing

CONS

- Can't fit full program or any ancillary uses
- Conflicting uses (delivery and service, pedestrians, cars)
- Inefficient, unworkable shape (circle)
- No direct pedestrian route to mountain
- Site doesn't energize retail development, most likely pedestrian route is at mall edge (down the street)
- Brings big buses into Lionshead pedestrian zone
- Limits potential redevelopment of Concert Hall

OPTION 2: NORTH DAY LOT

The North Day Lot site is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Frontage Road and West Lionshead Circle (see **Figure 2**).

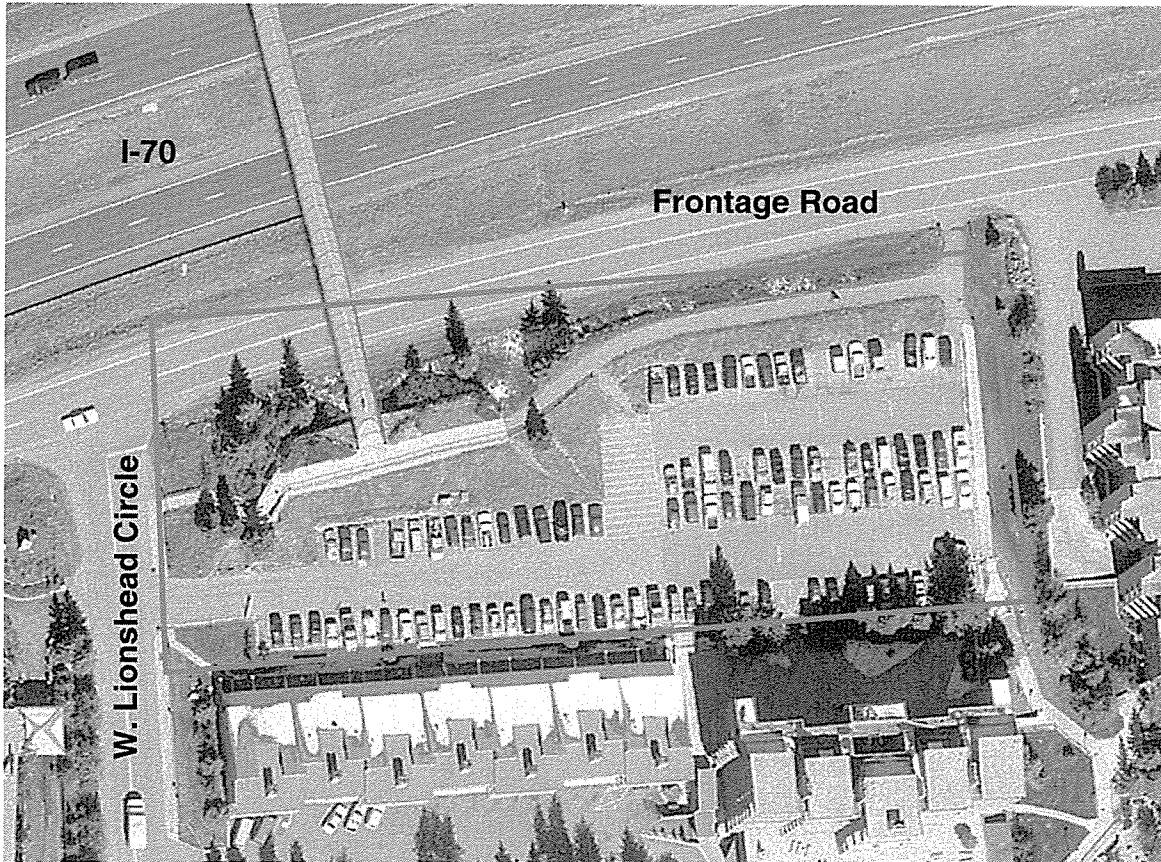


Figure 2. North Day Lot Site

PROS

- Pedestrian overpass makes this transit location more accessible to people coming from north side of I-70
- Strengthens North-South pedestrian axis into Lionshead core
- Biggest site, allows best potential design (functional, expandable)
- Better vehicle access – no conflicts with parking structure, minimal number of Frontage Road curb cuts
- Closer to mountain than Options 1 or 3

- Pedestrians don't have to cross a vehicular street
- Already part of adopted Lionshead master plan
- Might integrate better with in-town shuttle

CONS

- Have to work around pedestrian overpass (site planning constraint, not obstacle)
- Proximity to residential condos (opposition to traffic and diesel buses, noise)
- Limits use of site for other needed/desired development, increasing development costs
- Not a Town of Vail property (but Town has rights in the Lionshead development agreement)

OPTIONS 3a and 3b: ON TOP OF THE LIONSHEAD PARKING STRUCTURE

The existing Lionshead Parking Structure is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Frontage Road and East Lionshead Circle. With Option 3a, the new transit center would be located on top of the Lionshead parking structure (see **Figure 3**). With Option 3b, the transit center would be located on the redeveloped Lionshead Parking Structure (see **Figure 4**).

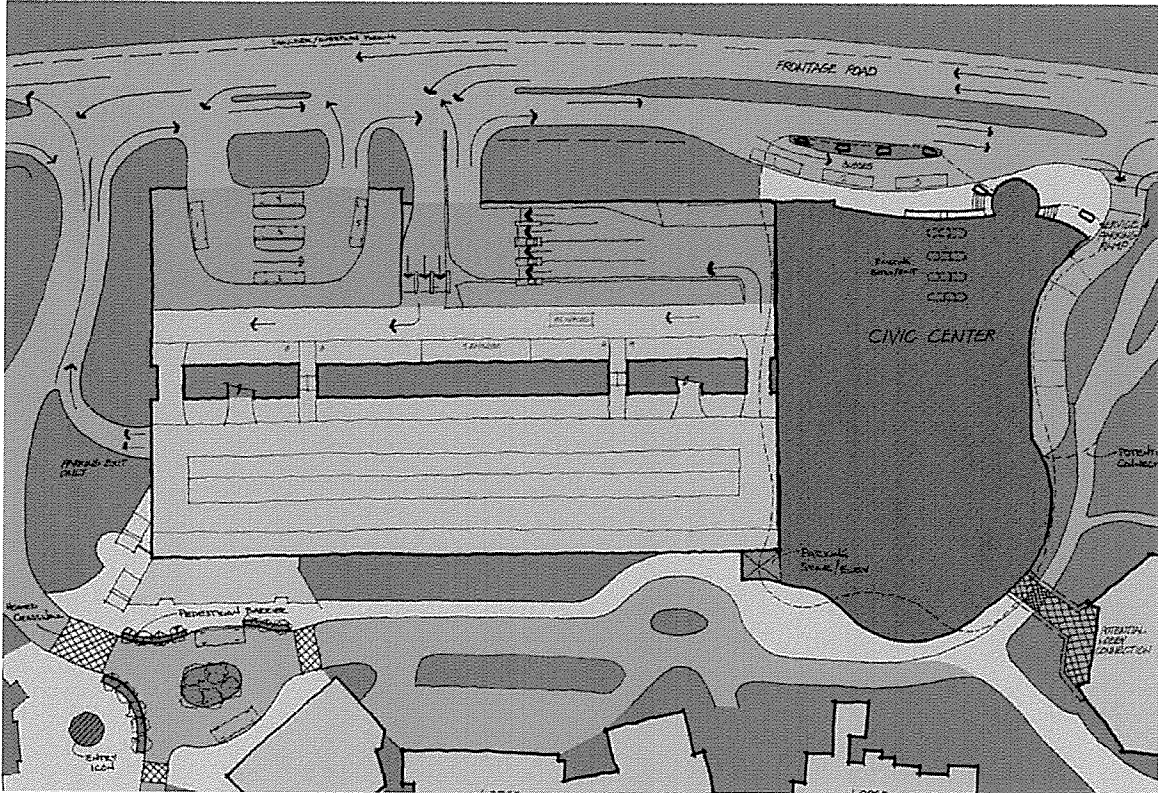


Figure 3. Lionshead Parking Structure Site (Existing)

Option 3a

PROS

- No adjacent residential properties
- Town of Vail property
- Direct access from Frontage Road
- Close to civic/conference center

CONS

- Density of the many curb cuts along Frontage Rd. (potential CDOT concern)
- Displaces parking spaces
- Complicates circulation patterns on Frontage Road – lack of clarity for drivers
- Requires physical improvements to parking structure if placed on existing structure (i.e. Phase 1, option 3)

- Inconvenient pedestrian connection
- Longest distance to mountain
- Unpleasant pedestrian experience (quality concerns)
- Poor visual quality of Frontage Road (no space for landscaping)
- Space available is minimally adequate for program
- No expansion potential
- If transit center is located on existing structure in Phase 1, it will have to be relocated for duration of Phase 2 construction, then rebuilt.

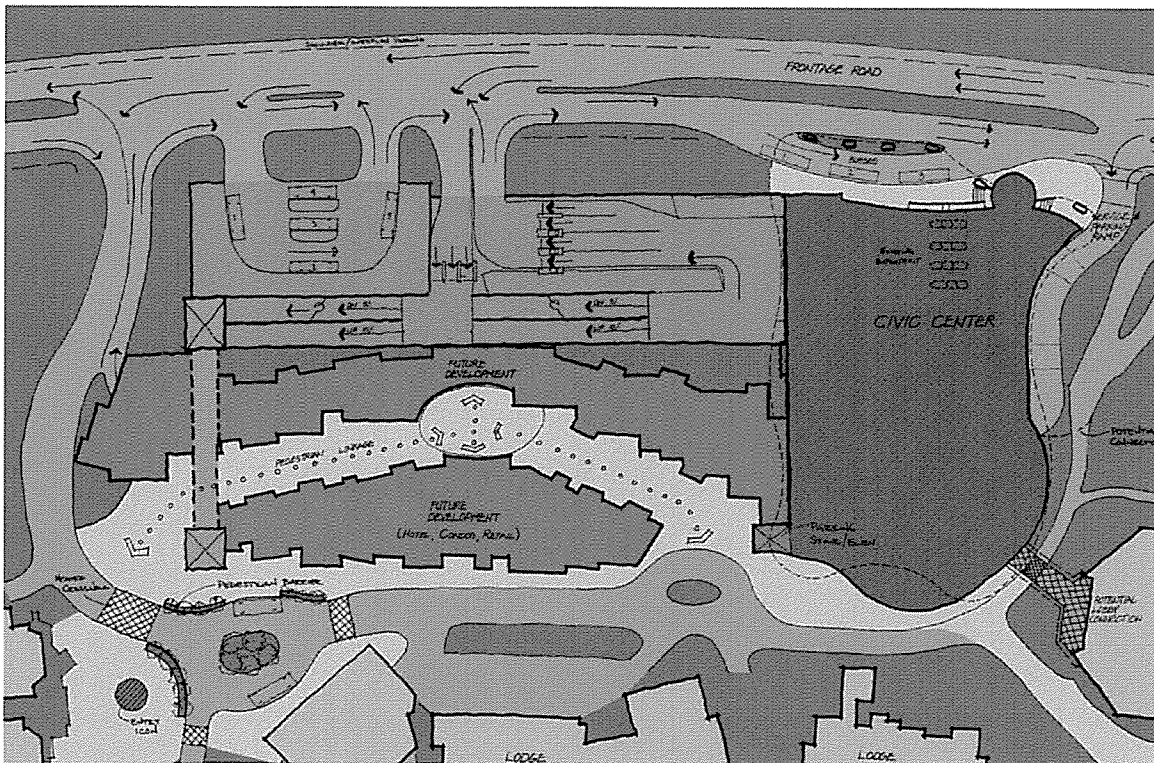


Figure 4. Lionshead Parking Structure Site (Concept Schematic)

Option 3b

PROS

- No adjacent residential properties
- Town of Vail property
- Direct access from Frontage Road

- Pedestrian connection to Lionshead can be designed appropriately
- Close to civic/conference center

CONS

- Density of the many curb cuts along Frontage Rd. (potential CDOT concern)
- Displaces parking spaces
- Complicates circulation patterns on Frontage Road – lack of clarity for drivers
- Longest distance to mountain
- Poor visual quality of Frontage Road (no space for landscaping)
- Timing requires developer involvement
- Would require removal of Vail Resorts International covenants
- Space available is minimally adequate for program

OPTION 4: E. LIONSHEAD CIRCLE TURNAROUND

The E. Lionshead Circle turnaround site is located across E. Lionshead Circle from the southwest corner of the Lionshead parking structure, at the entrance to the Lionshead Mall. This option would include the removal of the Youth Services facility and existing retail space adjacent to the parking structure (currently occupied by Subway) and reconfiguration of the parking structure’s pedestrian access (see **Figure 5**).

PROS

- Supports efforts to make East Lionshead Circle a more prominent entry into Lionshead (which could include enhanced signing and/or monuments)
- Shortest distance to mountain minimizes skier/mountain employee walking distance
- Directs pedestrian traffic from parking structure away from bus loading areas
- Displaces current unregulated dropoff and delivery area
- Does not require route modification for in-town shuttle
- Able to accommodate currently-projected transit and hotel shuttle needs easily

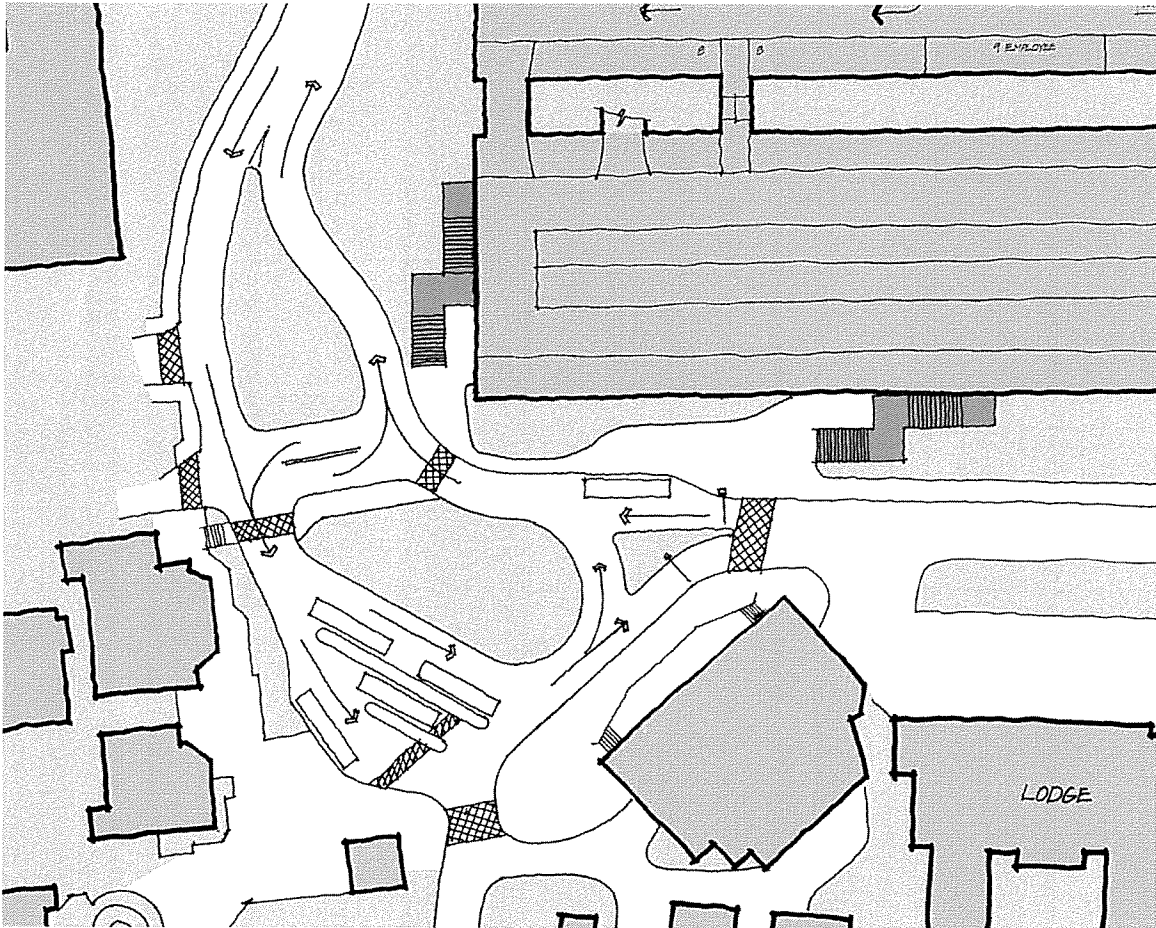


Figure 5. E. Lionshead Circle Turnaround Site

- Does not add new access to Frontage Road (CDOT approval not required)
- Potential for funding synergy between TIF and federal transit sources

CONS

- If full transit operations capacity is realized, uphill bus movement could result in congestion at the Frontage Road/E. Lionshead Circle intersection, especially in concert with a peak-period “relief” exit from the parking structure
- Local traffic inbound on East Lionshead Circle is forced to go through a bus lane
- Increased bus traffic could conflict with E. Lionshead Circle residential traffic
- Slightly longer and less desirable bus routing pattern, given grade and low-speed residential character of E. Lionshead Circle

- Proximity to residential condos could translate to opposition to increased traffic and diesel bus noise and emissions
- Large retaining wall structure would be required in front of the Lionshead Centre commercial building—potential pedestrian/ADA access challenges
- Potentially undesirable entry to Lionshead, with increased pavement and vehicular movement.
- Potential to make parking structure site redevelopment less attractive by occupying what would otherwise be a connection between the parking structure site redevelopment and the entry to Lionshead
- Limited future transit center expansion potential
- Would require the relocation of existing Youth Services facility

CONCLUSIONS

The Pro/Con analysis documented in this report has led to the following preliminary conclusions:

1. Concert Hall Plaza is an inappropriate site unless cost is the only criterion
2. North Day Lot has the most advantages and least disadvantages
3. Lionshead is best Town – controlled property
4. Should not, in any scenario, build transit center on the existing Lionshead structure in Phase 1 (can only be temporary)
5. A Transit Center in the redeveloped Lionshead Parking Structure would be the most cost effective option, but has the least certainty
6. The Lionshead Turnaround site has some merit as a potential site
7. North Day Lot is the best overall transit center location

As a result of the analysis documented in this report, the consulting team recommends the Town consider the North Day Lot site the preferred site for a new transit center. The E. Lionshead Circle turnaround site would also have sufficient advantages to warrant consideration, and the Lionshead parking structure options should be considered viable.