

2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan

An Element of the Vail Comprehensive Plan



November, 2013

Resolution No. 14, Series 2013

RESOLUTION NO. 14
Series of 2013

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2013 GERALD R. FORD PARK MASTER PLAN,
AND SETTING FORTH DETAILS IN REGARD THERETO.**

WHEREAS, on April 16, 2013, the Vail Town Council instructed Town Staff to prepare a new master plan for Gerald R. Ford Park;

WHEREAS, the new master plan was to be a compilation of previous planning efforts for the Park and the articulation of recommendations for new improvements with the Park;

WHEREAS, the new master plan is intended to be an element of the Vail Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS, the new master plan is intended to have a ten year life span with periodic updates and amendments when needed;

WHEREAS, the primary purposes of the new master plan are to protect the Park from over development, to define expectations for the use of the Park, and to assist in decision-making regarding capital improvements and other changes proposed in the Park;

WHEREAS, the new master plan was prepared in collaboration with the Vail Recreation District, Vail Valley Foundation, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, Vail Economic Advisory Council, Art in Public Places Board, Planning & Environmental Commission and many other interested citizens from the Vail community;

WHEREAS, on July 22, August 12, and August 26, and September 9, 2013, the Town of Vail Planning and Environmental Commission held public hearings on an application to adopt a new master plan for Ford Park;

WHEREAS, on October 28, 2013, the Town of Vail Planning & Environmental Commission forwarded a recommendation of approval, with modifications, of the 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan amendments to the Vail Town Council;

WHEREAS, the Vail Town Council finds and determines that the new master plan recommendations are consistent with the applicable elements of the adopted goals, objectives and policies outlined in the Vail Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the development objectives of the town; and,

WHEREAS, the Vail Town Council finds and determines that the new master plan promotes the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the town and promotes the coordinated and harmonious development of the town in a manner that conserves

and enhances its natural environment and its established character as a resort and residential community of the highest quality.

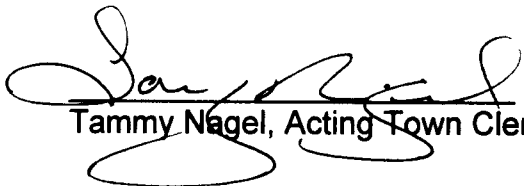
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF VAIL, COLORADO THAT:

SECTION 1. The 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan is hereby adopted as depicted in Exhibit A attached hereto.

INTRODUCED, PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Vail Town Council of the Town of Vail held this 19th day of November, 2013


Andrew P. Daly, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tammy Nagel, Acting Town Clerk



2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan

Prepared for:

The Town of Vail

Prepared by:

Town of Vail Department of Community Development

and

Braun Associates, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Vail Town Council

Andy Daly, Mayor

Ludwig Kurz, Mayor Pro-tem

Jenn Bruno

Dale Bugby

Dave Chapin

Greg Moffet

Margaret Rogers

Vail Planning and Environmental Commission

Bill Pierce, Chair

Henry Pratt, Co-Chair

Susan Bird

Luke Cartin

Pam Hopkins

Michael Kurz

John Rediker

Former Vail Town Council

Kerry Donovan

Kevin Foley

Susie Tjossem

Vail Recreation District

Vail Valley Foundation

Art in Public Places

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Site Assessment/Existing Conditions	6
3. History of the Park and Previous Planning Efforts	10
4. Goals, Objectives, Policies and Action Steps	19
5. Ford Park Sub-Areas	36
6. Illustrative Plan	54
7. Park Management	62
8. Appendix	64

Due to the volume of material, the information listed below is provided in a separate document, the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix.

- Ordinance No. 6, Series of 1973, authorizing the purchase (by condemnation) of the property known as the Antholz Ranch.
- The Vail Plan, 1974
- Resolution No. 1, Series of 1977, naming the property commonly known as the Antholz Ranch to Gerald R. Ford Park.
- The Gerald R. Ford Park and Donovan Park Master Plan Development Final Report, 1985
- Resolution No. 27, Series of 1987, designating the seven acres around the Nature Center as an area to be preserved as an example of the Gore Valley's natural history.
- Resolution No. 44, Series of 1988, amending the 1985 Master Plan to add four tennis courts and to change the location of the aquatics center.
- Ford Park Management Plan, 1997
- Ford Park Management Plan Update, 2012
- BFAG Building – Site Evaluation Matrix, 2013
- Betty Ford Alpine Gardens – WBFW Site Evaluation, Martin/Martin, August 15, 2013

2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan

November 2013

“Whereas, President Gerald R. Ford has brought to the Town of Vail his interest and encouragement; has shown through his private life and public life a commitment to recreation, the environment and places set aside therefor; and believes that a statement of the community’s appreciation and respect for Gerald R. Ford is appropriate and called for; that the property commonly referred to as the Antholz Ranch is hereby named the Gerald R. Ford Park.”

Resolution approved by Vail Town Council, January 18, 1977

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Town of Vail acquired the 38 acre Anholtz Ranch in 1973 for the stated purpose of “creating a major recreation facility for the total town” (The Vail Plan, 1974). Since that time the property has increased in size to more than 47 acres and has evolved into one of Vail’s most widely used and highly cherished assets. The evolution of the Antholz Ranch to what has become Ford Park was originally contemplated by one of Vail’s earliest planning efforts:

“The intended use program is a comprehensive one and eventually the park will include an impressive number of facilities in addition to extensive open turf space and the delight of the natural earth forms and mature tree growth adjacent to Gore Creek.”

The Vail Plan, 1974

The goal of the 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan (the Plan) is to maintain the essence of what Ford Park (the Park) is today and what was envisioned for the Park in 1974 – a combination of natural open space along the Gore Creek corridor coupled with recreational, social and cultural uses and facilities to serve the needs of residents and guests of Vail. The primary purposes of this Plan are to protect the Park from over development, to define expectations for the use of the Park, and to assist the Town in decision-making regarding capital improvements and other changes proposed to the Park. Only those changes deemed to be in compliance with applicable elements of this Plan will obtain approvals from the Town.

The Town has completed four planning efforts for the Park. These plans have directly influenced the development of Ford Park and each has contributed to the role the Park plays in the community. These previous planning efforts were:

1974 Vail Plan – While the primary purpose of this plan was to address Vail's growth and development, it did include a chapter on recreation and defined at a very broad level the role Ford Park could play in providing recreational, cultural and community-oriented uses.

1985 Gerald R. Ford Park/Donovan Park Master Plan Development Final Report – At the time this plan was prepared; ballfields, tennis courts, and parking had already been developed and construction of an amphitheater had commenced. The purpose of this plan was to “guide the future development of the park and establish guidelines for the implementation of improvements” (1985 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan).

1997 Ford Park Management Plan – This plan was initiated in response to several development proposals for the Park. The plan was a product of extensive focus group and public input sessions and in essence served as an amendment to the 1985 plan.

2012 Update to the Ford Park Management Plan – This plan was done to acknowledge improvements proposed for the Park that were initiated when Vail voters approved re-allocating a portion of the Convention Center Funds to Ford Park.

Summaries of these previous plans are found in Chapter 3.

While the impetus for these planning efforts varied, each involved extensive community input, debate, and at times, controversy. These planning processes revealed the community's intense passion for the Park as town staff, elected officials and the public worked to find the appropriate levels of development and activity for the Park. The 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan presents a compilation of these previous planning efforts along with new direction and ideas that have evolved from this latest planning effort. The primary objectives of this Plan are to:

- Incorporate key elements of previously completed plans for Ford Park into one document, specifically those guiding principles that have successfully shaped the development of the Park from its inception,

- Establish clear expectations for the future use, development and management of the Park,
- Protect the Park from over-use and over-development;
- Define effective tools for decision-making regarding the future of the Park, and
- Provide a single, comprehensive document to serve as the master plan for the Park.

With the adoption of this Plan, previous plans for Ford Park will be archived and no longer used as guides for future decision-making or planning for the Park. The 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan will serve as the Town's sole planning document for the Park.

The development of Ford Park has evolved over a number of decades. While the majority of the Park is developed, and notwithstanding the most recent phase of improvements to the Park, there is no reason to think that the Park will not continue to evolve in the future.

This Plan was prepared with the expectation that it will provide the community with a document to guide the use and development of the Park for the next ten years. That said, it is likely that during this time new ideas or issues not addressed by this Plan will arise, be they proposals for enhancements to existing facilities, the development of new facilities, or new uses for the Park. This is to be expected as the needs of the community will change over time and as they do changes to the Park may be appropriate. As dialogue and debate occur regarding any changes to the Park, it is critical that decisions made by the Town maintain the essence of what Ford Park is, why it was established, and how it provides environmental, recreational, educational, cultural or social benefits to the community.

The 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan was adopted by Resolution No. 14, Series 2013 by the Vail Town Council following recommendation from the Vail Planning and Environmental Commission. Future amendments to this Plan may be initiated by the Vail Town Council, the Planning and Environmental Commission, or members of the community. Any such amendment proposal shall be reviewed by the Vail Town Council following recommendation from the Vail Planning and Environmental Commission.

Elements of this Plan

This Plan includes the following chapters:

1. Introduction

The section provides an introduction to the plan, the purpose of this planning effort and outlines the major elements of the 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan.

2. Site Assessment and Existing Conditions

This section explains how site and surrounding conditions influenced the initial planning and design of the Park.

3. History of the Park and Previous Planning Efforts

The 1997 Plan has provided the basis for this history and background of the Park and the summaries of the four previous planning efforts that have taken place. Site plans of the Park produced during these planning efforts are to provide a history and context for how the Park has evolved over the years.

4. Goals, Objectives, Policies and Action Steps

While the 1997 Plan provided a framework for this section, the goals, objectives, policies and actions steps have been refined to better express the current vision for the Park.

5. Ford Park Sub-Areas

Seven sub-areas are used to describe specific areas of the Park, their unique features, the role they play in the Park, how they will be managed and provide recommendations for improvements that could occur in the future.

6. Illustrative Plan

The 2013 Illustrative Plan is a refinement of the 2012 Illustrative Plan; it depicts existing improvements and at a general level describes improvements that may occur in the future.

7. Park Management

This chapter provides a brief summary of the various management and operational aspects of the Park that are managed by the Town of Vail.

8. Appendix

Documents relative to the history of the Park and previous park planning efforts are provided in a separate document, the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix.

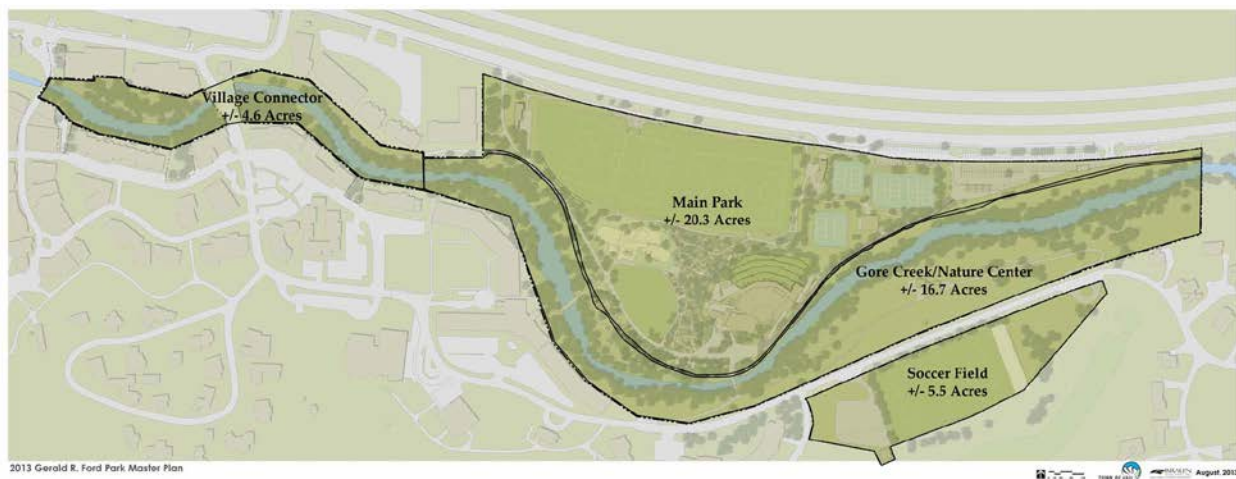
Chapter 2 - SITE ASSESSMENT/EXISTING CONDITIONS

Located immediately east of Vail Village, the proximity of Ford Park to Vail Village and the convenient access it affords residents and guests is one of the Park's most significant attributes. This is no coincidence as the 1974 Vail Plan documented how the location of Ford Park was a key factor in it being purchased for a community park and in defining the initial vision for the Park to be a major center of cultural and recreational activity for the community.

“all properties of significant size within the Town limits were researched and the recommendation made that the Anholtz property, adjacent to development at the east end of the Village, was the only site satisfying the recreational uses anticipated. Selection criteria included such factors as ease of walking distance from the Village, adequate space within a single parcel for large, meadow-like turf areas, proximity to the Frontage Road for simple and direct access by autos or buses, natural beauty such as the Gore Creek provides, and directness of connection to major bicycle and pedestrian trails.”

The Vail Plan, 1974

When purchased, the original Anholtz property was +/-38 acres. Today, Ford Park is approximately 47.1 acres. The four areas of the Park and their acreages are depicted below:



Ford Park, 2013

In January of 1977, Resolution No. 1, Series of 1977, was passed re-naming the Anholtz Ranch to the Gerald R. Ford Park. A copy of this resolution is included in the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix.

Existing Conditions

In the past forty years many improvements have been made to Ford Park. Foremost among these are athletic fields, the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater, the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, a children's playground, the Vail Nature Center, the Vail Tennis Center and parking and transit facilities. Infrastructure necessary to serve the Park is largely in place and vehicle and pedestrian access to and within the Park has been established. With the exception of the Gore Creek Corridor, the majority of the Park has been improved with buildings, facilities or other related site improvements.

Access and circulation is a key factor in how the Park functions. On-site parking is provided, but in keeping with the original concept for the Park the amount of parking is limited to +/-200 spaces along the Frontage Road and +/-65 spaces at the Soccer Field. Parking for major Park events is provided in the Town's parking structures. Access from these structures to the Park is provided by pedestrian corridors and the Town's transit system. Pedestrian access is provided via the Gore Creek Trail, a sidewalk along the South Frontage Road and by two bridges in the Golden Peak neighborhood. The Park's main transit stop is located on the South Frontage Road with additional stops on Vail Valley Drive. These stops are served by the in-town shuttle and by dedicated express bus service during special events.

Site Characteristics and Park Design

Physical characteristics of the land and the relationship of the Park to surrounding uses and facilities influenced the earliest design concepts for the Park. Significant influences in the early design of the Park include the South Frontage Road (that establishes the north boundary of the Park), Gore Creek and adjoining wetland and riparian habitat (that run the entire length of the Park), site topography, vegetation and views.

Topography of the main portion of the park between the Frontage Road and Gore Creek includes a prominent and well-defined grade change that creates an "upper bench" and "lower bench". Over time this grade change, created in large part by grading from the construction of Interstate 70, became a point of demarcation for the predominantly active recreation uses on the Upper Bench and the cultural and passive recreation uses on the Lower Bench.

Much of Ford Park was initially developed without the benefit of a detailed design or development plan. The 1974 Vail Plan did, however, set the stage for the future of the

Park by defining a number of basic design parameters for how the Park could be developed. There are many examples of how these basic design parameters and existing site characteristics directly influenced the design and development of the Park.

Parking and Transit

These facilities were located on flat terrain immediately adjacent to the South Frontage Road and on the perimeter of the Park. This location minimizes the impacts of vehicles on other areas of the Park.

Athletic Fields

Fields along the Frontage Road were located on what at that time was the Park's broadest expanse of relatively flat terrain. Not only did the fields "fit" on this portion of the Park, the flat terrain minimized the need for site grading and associated site disturbance. The fields also provide a buffer between highway noise and other quieter areas of the Park.

The Amphitheater

The Amphitheater essentially straddles the grade transition between the Upper and Lower Bench. This location allowed the Amphitheater to utilize sloping terrain to create terraced seating areas within the Amphitheater. This location also affords stunning views to the Gore Range.

Nature Center

The Nature Center is located within the relatively undeveloped Gore Creek Corridor. The natural character of the creek corridor provides a fitting location for the environmental education programs offered by the Nature Center.

The 1985 Ford Park Master Plan spoke eloquently about the philosophy of good park design and the role site conditions and characteristics should play in the design process.

"Compatibility of the park development within the environment is the most significant aspect of the master plan. The existing landscape is an integral part of each plan and not merely a backdrop against which the plans are staged. This is essentially necessary with parklands, for there we expect the landscape to be stable, pleasant and above all, functional. Accordingly, the planning and design process was founded on a sound understanding of the features and dynamics of the park site environment."

Just as a tapestry is woven from many threads of different colors, textures and strengths, so the landscape is composed of a variety of components such as slopes, soils, plant communities and aquatic features. Each of these must be identified and described, but more than that, the role of each must be understood as a dynamic entity so that limitations and opportunities can be properly understood. This involves the translation of forms, such as slopes and soil type, into processes, such as runoff and soil leeching, and the definition of critical inter-relationships among them.”

1985 Ford Park Master Plan

Integrating improvements with the landscape in order to create a pleasant and functional park should be the goal of any park design. While developed without the benefit of a comprehensive, detailed design plan, the major elements of the Park have been located and designed in a manner that is very responsive to site conditions and other influences. Ford Park today reflects many elements of the original vision for the Park as outlined in the 1974 Vail Plan and as further defined by the 1985 Ford Park Master Plan.

Chapter 3 - HISTORY OF FORD PARK and PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

During the past forty years the Town of Vail has completed four major planning efforts for Ford Park. This chapter summarizes the purpose, process and outcome for each of these planning efforts and provides information on the history and development of Ford Park.

Ordinance No. 6, Series of 1973 (a copy of which is included in the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix), authorized the purchase (by condemnation) of the property known as the Antholz Ranch. At that time the 38-acre park site represented the last remaining parcel of undeveloped land central to use by all residents and visitors of the Vail community. The ordinance listed a variety of possible uses for the property including the following:

- for park and greenbelt purposes,
- to preserve the natural and physical character of the area to be condemned,
- for bicycle, equestrian and hiking trails,
- for children's playground,
- for performing arts and civic center,
- for a ski lift and related facilities,
- for picnic areas,
- for recreational facilities such as tennis courts, swimming pools, gymnasium, ice skating rink,
- for theater and assembly halls, convention center, public schools,
- for possible exchange or trade of condemned land, or a portion thereof, with other property which may exactly meet the needs of the town, and
- to construct and maintain water works, transportation systems, and other public utilities relating to public health, safety, and welfare.

The four major planning efforts for Ford Park include:

The Vail Plan, 1974

The Vail Plan was completed in August of 1973 and adopted in 1974 (a copy of this plan is found in the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix). In the early '70's Vail pressures from growth and development were radically changing the character of Vail and the primary purpose of the Vail Plan was to help the town respond to growth pressures with the goal of "creating a recreationally-based community of individuality, beauty and pleasure that can be unique in the United States" (The Vail Plan, 1974). The plan included a chapter on the Town's recreation system. The Antholz Ranch

property was mentioned as “the only site capable of satisfying the anticipated recreational needs of the community” (The Vail Plan, 1974).

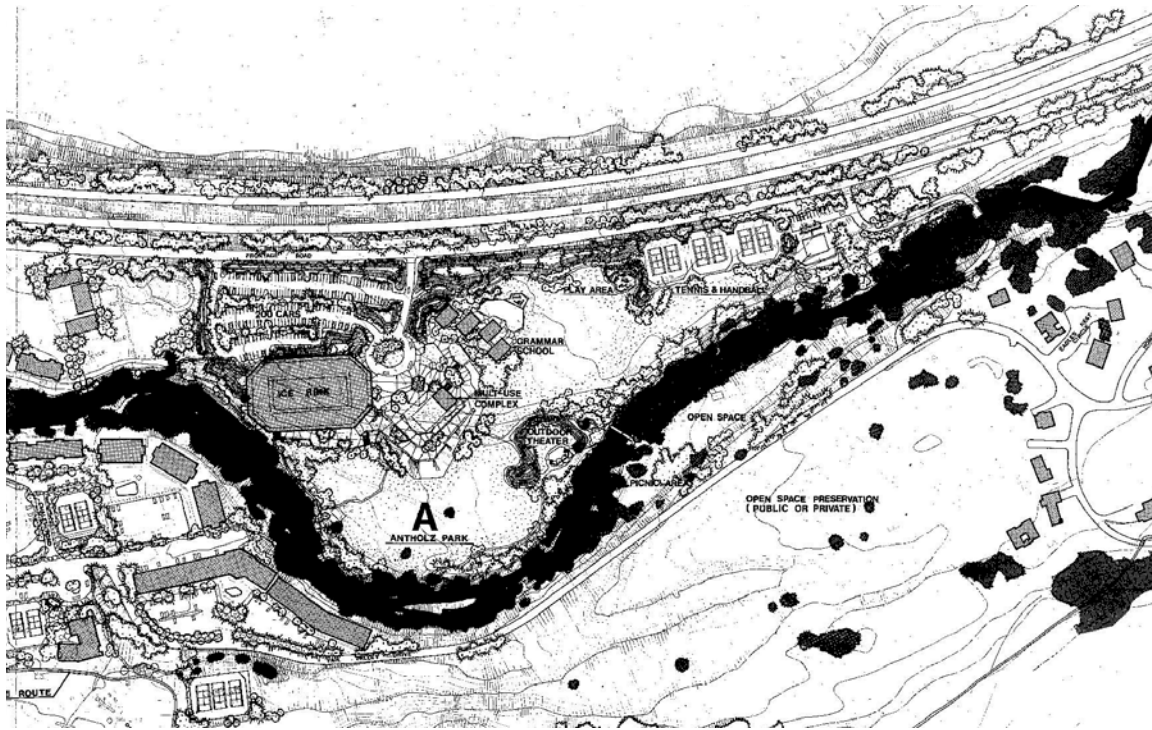
The Vail Plan’s vision for the Antholz Ranch was to create a “major community park-cultural center.” A wide range of potential uses for the park were identified:

- a place for showing and creating art, crafts, etc.,
- an indoor theater and an 800 seat outdoor amphitheater,
- meeting rooms and community workshops,
- wide outdoor terraces and natural landscapes
- indoor ice arena,
- tennis and handball courts
- children’s play facilities and space for family activities,
- headquarters for the Annual Vail Symposium and local television,
- a possible location for an ecologium (nature center), and
- a grammar school.

As a balance to this extensive program of uses and facilities for the Park, the Vail Plan contemplated the preservation of the Gore Creek corridor as a passive, quiet place to enjoy the natural beauty of the site.

The plan called for 200 surface parking spaces to meet the daily parking needs of the park. Parking for major events was planned to be provided in the Vail Transportation Center with town transit and various trails and bikeways providing alternative means to access the Park. The Vail Plan also depicted a potential road connection at the east end of the park that would link the Frontage Road with Vail Valley Drive.

While the Vail Plan did not include a detailed design plan for the Park, the conceptual site plan provided a vision for how the Park could be developed. A number of existing park improvements reflect some of the basic concepts from the 1974 Plan.



Conceptual Plan for Ford Park, Vail Plan, 1974

Gerald R. Ford Park and Donovan Park Master Plan, 1985

In August of 1985 the Gerald R. Ford Park and Donovan Park Master Plan Development Final Report was adopted by the Vail Town Council (a copy of this plan and Resolution No. 19, Series of 1985 is found in the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix).

When the 1985 planning process was initiated, improvements in the Park were limited to athletic fields, tennis courts and parking. A foundation for an amphitheater was in place but this project was not yet completed. At that time the very eastern end of the Park along the Frontage Road was utilized as a snow-dump.

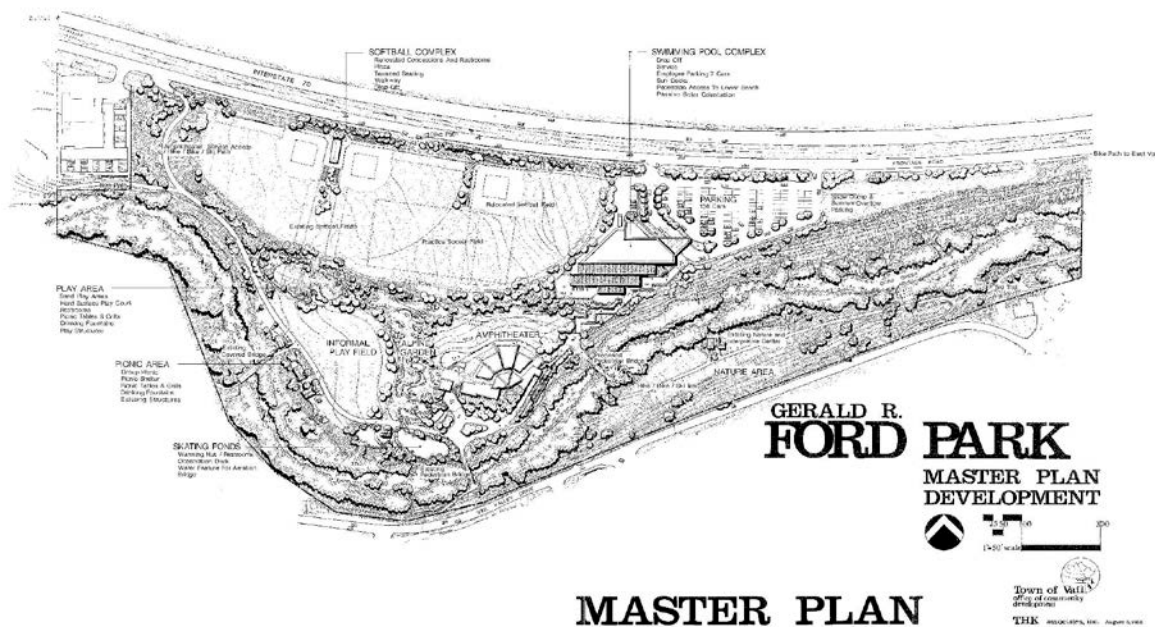
The purpose of the 1985 plan was to prepare a more detailed plan for the future development of the park and to establish guidelines for the implementation of park improvements. The master planning process included a Recreation Needs Analysis Survey and extensive community input via workshops and community meetings. The outcome of these efforts was an indication of the type and extent of improvements the community wanted to see in the Park. Alternative site plans were considered and a final, preferred plan was selected. This final plan included a swimming pool complex, “neighborhood park improvements” (on the Lower Bench), a pond/skating rink (on the Lower Bench), and the realignment of the eastern softball field. Development of the neighborhood park improvements on the lower bench were completed in 1988 and

included restrooms, playground area, open turf area, picnic facilities, and the west access road.

The first major structure to be constructed in the Park, the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater, was completed in July of 1987 and shortly thereafter a Parking and Transit Study for the Amphitheater was completed. This study made five recommendations:

1. the Village Structure should be considered the major parking facility for Ford Park (with improvements to the signs, sidewalks, and bus service being necessary);
2. extend shuttle bus service to the soccer field;
3. disallow Frontage Road parking;
4. construct a vehicle turn-around and passenger unloading area at Ford Park; and
5. do not schedule concurrent events in the Park.

These recommendations validated many of the recommendations for parking and transit outlined in the 1974 Vail Plan.



Ford Park Master Plan, 1985

The 1985 Plan identified a location for an alpine garden and in 1989 the first phase of the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens was completed. Since that time a number of expansions to the Gardens have been completed, including the Perennial Garden, the Meditation Garden, and the Alpine Rock Garden.

Following approval of the 1985 Master Plan the following steps were taken regarding the planning of Ford Park:

Resolution No. 27, Series of 1987, was passed on November 3, 1987. This resolution designated the seven acres around the Nature Center as an area to be preserved as an example of the Gore Valley's natural history. Vehicular traffic was to be restricted and certain policies and procedures for preservation and maintenance of the grounds and facilities were established by the resolution. (a copy of resolution No. 27, Series of 1987, is included in the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix).

In December of 1988, the Vail Metropolitan Recreation District (Now the Vail Recreation District) and the Town of Vail, requested an amendment to the 1985 Ford Park Master Plan. The two phase amendment was adopted by Council as Resolution No. 44, Series of 1988. A copy of the resolution is included in the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix. Phase one of the amendment was to allow the construction of four additional tennis courts. Phase two of the amendment changed the proposed location of an aquatic facility to the eastern softball field. Funding of the aquatic facility was rejected by voters in a special election on February 6, 1989. Vail Town Council was presented with a petition to delete all reference to an aquatics center from the Ford Park Master Plan in April of 1990. No record of Council action on the petition was found. While the tennis center building is not mentioned in the Master plan amendment, the VRD did receive a Conditional Use Permit for the project on May 8, 1990.

The Vail Village Master Plan, adopted in 1990, addresses Ford Park as a specific study area. This plan acknowledged the use of the Park to accommodate overflow skier and local parking needs. It recommended that the Park be studied further as a site for additional skier parking to serve expansion of the eastern side of Vail Mountain. Action Step #5 under Goal #5 states: Study the feasibility of an underground (recreation fields would remain) parking structure in Ford Park. The Parking and Circulation Plan (an element of the Vail Village Master Plan), identified the western portion of the upper bench for potential parking beneath the Park, and called for separated bike/pedestrian ways along the South Frontage Road and Vail Valley Drive.

The Vail Transportation Master Plan, completed in 1993, states that the existing Ford Park Parking area (at the east end of the Park) should be considered for a possible 2-level parking facility with the second level below existing grade. Ford

Park and the athletic field parking area are also listed as two possible sites for over-sized vehicles if the lot east of the Lionshead Structure becomes developed.

Ford Park Management Plan, 1997

The planning process that resulted in the 1997 Ford Park Management Plan process was initiated in June of 1995 in response to several development proposals which had been formally and informally discussed for the Park. These development proposals included an Educational Center for the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, a cultural/performing arts center, expansion of the tennis facility, athletic field fencing, and a community parking structure. This planning process was also seen as a means for addressing park management issues such as parking deficiencies, Frontage Road access, pedestrian access and circulation, access for the elderly and mobility impaired, utilization of the lower bench, conflicts between uses within the Park, conflicts with adjacent property owners, and the delineation of financial responsibilities.

At the time the project was authorized the Vail Town Council expressed concern that a new master plan for Ford Park could result in an excessive amount of new development. In response, staff noted the intention of the project was to create a management plan as a means to adequately and consistently evaluate development proposals, with the goal of limiting development and protecting the character of the Park.

Park leaseholders, two neighborhood representatives and town staff served as the Stakeholder Group for the planning process and a third party facilitator was retained to coordinate this effort. The Stakeholder Group developed alternative design solutions addressing parking, vehicular access, Frontage Road improvements, additional sports facilities and management policies. These plans were presented to the public in an open house at the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater in June of 1996.

The open house presentation was a turning point in the process of developing the Management Plan. Several residents were alarmed by the alternatives included in the presentation and initiated a grass-roots movement to place a referendum on any future expansion/development within the Park. This strong public reaction, combined with a lack of closure within the Stakeholders Group, prompted the Vail Town Council to revise the process to include more community involvement. Three Focus Group meetings and public input sessions were held throughout the fall of 1996.

The results of the focus groups and public input sessions and a preliminary master plan framework were presented to the Planning and Environmental Commission and the Vail Town Council in late 1996. Following these meetings staff was directed to proceed with

drafting the management plan as an amendment to the 1985 Ford Park Master Plan based on the input received and presented. The management plan was adopted in April of 1997. Major elements of the plan were six goal statements along with objectives, policies and actions steps intended to define the future direction for the Park. The 1997 Plan also included an Illustrative Plan that identified a number of future improvements. Foremost among these was identifying a site next to the Soccer Field parking lot for an Educational Center for the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens.

Following approval of the 1997 Management Plan the following related actions were taken regarding the planning of Ford Park:

Goal #4 of the Vail Village Plan Master Plan (as amended in 1998) addressed the preservation of “existing open space areas and expansion of green space opportunities.” An action step associated with this goal is to “explore the feasibility of expanding Ford Park to the west to Vail Valley Drive and/or Slifer Plaza along the Gore Creek stream tract to provide improved pedestrian and handicapped access to the Park.”

The 2009 Vail Transportation Master Plan identified a wide range of roadway improvements designed to accommodate traffic levels anticipated to meet 2025 demands. One of these improvements contemplates a roundabout at the west end of Ford Park to “serve as a means of “u-turning” (eastbound to westbound) and to potentially serve a future parking structure.”

2012 Management Plan Update

In 2012 the 1997 Ford Park Management Plan was updated to reflect numerous improvements proposed for the Park. Plans to improve the Park were initiated when Vail voters approved re-allocating a portion of the +/- \$9,000,000 Convention Center Funds to Ford Park. The other stakeholders in the Park also participated in the funding of these improvements.

The 2012 Update maintained the general direction for the Park as established by the 1997 Management Plan. With only a few exceptions, the 2012 Update suggested no significant changes to the uses, facilities and activities that currently take place in the Park. One exception was the 2012 Update included the development of an Education Center for the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens along Gore Creek adjacent to the main entry to the Gardens. All of the existing major uses in the Park – athletic fields, passive recreation, the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater, the Alpine Gardens and Tennis Center were to remain in place. The Update did not change any of the six major goal

Time Line of Ford Park Activities:

April 1973	Condemnation of Anholtz Ranch, Ordinance 6, 1973
August 1973	Completion of Vail Plan
January 1977	Anholtz Ranch named Gerald R. Ford Park, Resolution 1, 1977
August 1985	Completion of Ford/Donovan Park Master Plan,
July 1987	Amphitheater construction completed
August 1987	Alpine Demonstration Garden completed
November 1987	Preservation of Nature Center, Resolution 27, 1987
December 1987	Vail Valley Foundation lease signed
November 1988	Lower Bench improvements completed
December 1988	Ford Park Master Plan amendment by VRD, Resolution 44, 1988
December 1988	Service agreement with VRD, Resolution 46, 1988
May 1989	Tennis Center receives Conditional Use Permit
July 1989	Alpine Perennial Garden completed
January 1990	Completion of Vail Village Master Plan
February 1990	Aquatic Center rejected by voters in special election
April 1990	Council petitioned to delete Aquatic Center from Master Plan
May 1990	Tennis Center construction completed
June 1991	Alpine Meditation Garden completed
April 1993	Completion of Vail Transportation Master Plan
December 1993	Vail Recreation District agreement renewed
June 1994	Vail Alpine Garden Foundation license agreement signed.
June 1995	Town begins Ford Park Management Plan
October 1996	Council allows Betty Ford Alpine Gardens to proceed through process with Educational Center plans at Soccer Field parking lot
April 1997	Ford Park Management Plan adopted
1999	Lease with Vail Valley Foundation renewed
2008	Lease with Vail Recreation District renewed
2009	Vail Transportation Plan Update completed
November 2011	Voters approve use of Conference Center Funding for Ford Park Improvements
May 2012	Completion of 2012 Update to Ford Park Management Plan

Chapter 4 - GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND ACTION STEPS

This plan includes five statements that convey the community's goals for Ford Park. These goal statements provide broad direction on the preservation of the Park, how the Park should be used, vehicles, pedestrian circulation, coordination between park users and financial considerations relative to operations and capital improvements. Each goal statement includes a series of objectives, policies and action steps. Collectively these statements reflect input from the Vail Town Council, the community and leaseholders during the 2013 master plan update process. These statements will be used to provide guidance in decision-making on the management and use of the Park.

The goals, objectives and policies of this Plan will be considered during the review process for any new development, changes or improvements proposed for the Park. Only those proposals deemed to be in compliance with these statements (and other applicable elements of this Plan) will gain approvals. Project proposals deemed to not comply with these statements and other applicable elements of this Plan will be denied.

This chapter includes thirty-six action steps. In some cases action steps involve a single, defined task intended to implement an objective or policy statement. An example of this would be initiating refinements to the park design guidelines specific to Ford Park. Other action steps involve on-going tasks. An example would be the coordination and management of events in the Park. The Community Development Department, with participation from the Public Works Department, will prioritize action steps and present recommendations annually to the Planning and Environmental Commission regarding that year's work program for implementing action steps. The Planning and Environmental Commission will provide a recommendation on the work program that will be forwarded to the Vail Town Council who will make final decisions on the work program along with any necessary budget expenditures.

Goal #1:

Protect the natural environment along the Gore Creek corridor and ensure that any new use or building within the Park does not adversely affect the character and quality of the Park or the overall experience of park users.

Objective 1.1: Limit uses and future development to that which is consistent with these goals, objectives and policies and is consistent with the Ford Park Sub-Areas and Illustrative Plan.

Policy Statement 1: Maintain the variety of uses and facilities currently located within the Park.

Policy Statement 2: Proposals for new (or changes to existing) facilities or uses that would displace existing public uses will not be permitted unless there is either a compelling public interest or adequate alternative facilities can be provided.

Policy Statement 3: Uses other than those listed as “allowed uses” (below under Action Step 1.1.1) may be proposed, provided that such uses are not specifically listed as a “prohibited use”.

Objective 1.1 Action Steps:

Action Step 1.1.1: Draft a new ordinance to exclude those uses listed in Ordinance No.6, Series of 1973, now considered to be inappropriate, and to redefine the allowable uses within Ford Park. The following uses that are allowed and prohibited for Ford Park shall take precedence over Section 12-9C-2 of the Vail Town Code concerning the General Use Zone District:

Allowed Uses

Park and greenbelt
Bicycle and hiking trails
Children’s playground
Active recreation
Passive recreation
Outdoor amphitheater
Botanical gardens
Educational centers
Historical center

Picnic areas
Recreation and athletic facilities
Public utility easements
Parking (surface parking/structured parking)
Administrative offices for the operation of uses occurring within the Park
Public Art Display
Concerts and Special Events Venues

Prohibited uses

Ski lift and related facilities
Civic center, convention/conference center, public schools, gymnasium,
and assembly hall
Equestrian trails
Residential Dwelling Units

Action Step 1.1.2: Town of Vail will review legal descriptions of existing lease areas in consultation with the Vail Recreation District, the Vail Valley Foundation and the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens and modify, as deemed necessary, so legal descriptions correspond with existing and proposed improvements and uses.

Objective 1.2: Maintain all facilities and improvements in the Park at a high level of quality.

Policy Statement 1: Any proposed development or change to Park facilities or uses shall conform to the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan, including but not limited to:

- Goals, Objectives and Policy Statements,
- Sub-Area Plans, and
- Illustrative Plan.

Policy Statement 2: Any new development or change to existing Park facilities shall be reviewed for compliance with Section 12-11-6 Park Design Guidelines of the Town of Vail Municipal Code, as well as other applicable Town regulations.

Policy Statement 3: Any proposed development or change to Park facilities or uses shall provide a needed environmental, recreational, educational, cultural or social benefit to the community.

Policy Statement 4: Maintain and operate existing facilities, uses and functions within the Park at a high standard of quality reflective of the Vail Brand.

Policy Statement 5: Park leaseholders shall demonstrate the financial capability necessary to adequately operate and maintain any buildings and facilities located within the Park.

Objective 1.2 Action Steps:

Action Step 1.2.1: With participation of all Park stakeholders, Town staff to prepare standards which outline expectations regarding the appearance, maintenance, and operation of facilities within the Park.

Action Step 1.2.2: Evaluate the park design guidelines in Section 12-11-6 of the Vail Town Code and modify as necessary to address design considerations specific to Ford Park.

Action Step 1.2.3: In conjunction with the review of any new building or improvement, or in conjunction with any new lease or the renewal of an existing lease, Town staff will evaluate the adequacy of leaseholders financial capability to adequately maintain and operate facilities and buildings.

Objective 1.3: Preserve and protect the environmentally sensitive areas along the Gore Creek Corridor.

Policy Statement 1: Uses and improvements within the Gore Creek Corridor shall be limited to only those prescribed in the Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area.

Policy Statement 2: No new buildings should be permitted within the Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area.

Policy Statement 3: Any new improvements within the Gore Creek Corridor shall consider the 100-year floodplain and minimize impacts to wetland or riparian habitats.

Objective 1.3 Action Steps:

Action Step 1.3.1: Evaluate the merits of strengthening preservation controls within the Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area via a conservation

easement or the Natural Area Preservation Zone District “Open Space” designation.

Action Step 1.3.2: Inventory existing conditions of the creek bank and vegetation within the Gore Creek corridor, initiate programs to stabilize or restore these areas as may be necessary.

Objective 1.4: Utilize Ford Park as a showcase for environmental sensitivity and sustainability.

Policy Statement 1: Encourage all lease holders and events at the Park to implement comprehensive recycling programs.

Policy Statement 2: Sustainable design and environmentally “friendly” materials and construction methods should be utilized on all new development within the Park.

Policy Statement 3: Maintain, protect and enhance the environmental character of natural open space areas.

Policy Statement 4: New improvements within the Park and the ongoing management of the Park should be done using sound environmentally sensitive practices.

Objective 1.5: Limit the number and scale of buildings and structures within the Park to no more than necessary to meet the needs of park operations and to provide appropriate services and facilities to park users.

Policy Statement 1: As an alternative to new buildings, encourage shared or joint-use buildings and/or facilities among Park lease-holders.

Policy Statement 2: The design of new buildings or structures shall be integrated with the land with a subtle, understated, low-profile in appearance so as to not dominate the Park’s landscape.

Policy Statement 3: Park stakeholders may have administrative office space within the Park, provided that such space is limited in size to no more than what

is necessary only for the management and operation of facilities and uses located within the Park.

Goal #2:

Provide open space, facilities, and programs within Ford Park to meet the passive and active recreational, educational, social and cultural needs of residents and guests of Vail.

Objective 2.1: Provide open space areas within the Park for the passive enjoyment of nature and to reinforce the Park's connection to the natural environment.

Policy Statement 1: Preserve the “delight of the natural earth forms and mature tree growth adjacent to Gore Creek” (The Vail Plan, 1974) found within Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area and limit uses and activities within this area.

Policy Statement 2: The primary use of the open turf area within the Commons Sub-Area should be to provide a place for un-programmed and informal passive recreation. The use of this area for special events should be limited in frequency and scope in order to minimize impacts on the primary use of this area.

Objective 2.1 Action Steps:

Action Step 2.1.1: Establish management and operational policies for special events within the open turf area of the Commons Sub-area.

Action Step 2.1.2: Identify key viewsheds from strategic locations within the Park and as may be necessary, establish designated view corridors to ensure the protection of these viewsheds.

Objective 2.2: Utilize Ford Park to meet the community's needs for active recreation and formal team sport activities.

Policy Statement 1: The Active Recreation and Soccer Field Sub-Areas shall be managed first and foremost to provide facilities for active recreation and team sports.

Policy Statement 2: Landscape berms and buffers around active recreation areas should be maintained and enhanced to mitigate potential impacts of noise and activity on other sub-areas of the Park.

Objective 2.3: Maintain, and enhance where appropriate, the role of the Park in providing facilities for the enjoyment and exploration of the arts, music, dance, education and other cultural pursuits.

Policy Statement 1: Maintain the Ford Amphitheater as a principal summer-time performing arts facility in the Town of Vail.

Policy Statement 2: Support the Art in Public Places Board in its efforts to continue public art programs (i.e. interactive events, projects, art installations, educational activities, etc.) within the Creekside area of the Commons Sub-area (and other areas of the Park as may be deemed appropriate).

Policy Statement 3: Support the educational programs provided at the Nature Center and the programs provided by the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens.

Objective 2.3 Action Steps:

Action Step 2.3.1: Work with the Vail Valley Foundation on their efforts to create a new “public plaza” at the entry to the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater.

Action Step 2.3.2: Work with the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens on their proposal to create an educational and visitor center within the Park.

Action Step 2.3.3: Promote and support the use of the Nature Center and surrounding area as a center for environmental education programs.

Objective 2.4: Enhance the use of the Historic School House and preserve the historic character of the building.

Policy Statement 1: Maintain public access to the School House and continue the utilization of the building in accordance with the terms of the lease with the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens.

Objective 2.4 Action Steps:

Action Step 2.4.1: Evaluate alternative uses for the School House that will maintain public access and potentially involve the display of historic photos and artifacts or other activities in keeping with the historic nature of the building.

Action Step 2.4.2: Complete an architectural assessment of the School House and establish a plan to protect and enhance the historic character of the building.

Objective 2.5: Enhance and restore the Nature Center building and the landscape surrounding the building.

Policy Statement 1: Limit vehicular access to only those vehicles necessary for the operation of the building and educational programs.

Policy Statement 2: Uses proximate to the Nature Center should be limited and shall be consistent with the Gore Creek Preservation Sub-Area.

Policy Statement 3: Restore the architectural and historical character of the Nature Center building.

Objective 2.5 Action Steps:

Action Step 2.5.1: Work with the Vail Recreation District to implement measures for controlling vehicular access to the Nature Center building.

Action Step 2.5.2: Complete an architectural inventory of the Nature Center building to define steps that could be taken to restore the historic character of the building.

Action Step 2.5.3: Eliminate the parking areas around the Nature Center building and reclaim these areas to a natural landscape condition.

Action Step 2.5.4: Prepare a master plan and an operations/management plan for the Nature Center facility and surrounding area.

Goal #3:

Reduce vehicular intrusions into the interior of the Park and minimize to the greatest extent feasible the impact of vehicular activity on users of the Park, particularly on the passive use areas of the Lower Bench and along pedestrian walkways.

Objective 3.1: Reduce the presence and frequency of vehicular trips into the Lower Bench (the Lower Commons, Gardens, Amphitheater and the Gore Creek Preservation Sub-Areas) of the Park.

Policy Statement 1: Proposals for any new facility or use or the expansion of any existing facility or use in the Lower Bench shall not generate an unnecessary or appreciable increase in vehicular activity in the Lower Bench area of the Park.

Policy Statement 2: Uses in the Lower Bench shall operate in a manner that limits vehicular traffic to the greatest extent possible. Vehicular access to the Lower Bench of the Park should be limited to: maintenance; delivery of goods or materials too large or too heavy to be carried by non-motorized means; use of golf carts or similar means to provide access for people with limited mobility; and emergency services.

Policy Statement 3: Require all delivery vehicles to utilize East Betty Ford Way to enter and exit the Lower Bench. Due to difficulties in maneuvering, large trucks (semi's) shall access the Lower Bench via East Betty Ford Way and may exit via West Betty Ford Way.

Policy Statement 4: Passenger vehicle access to the Alpine Gardens, the Amphitheater, AIPP programs or other uses in the Lower Bench shall not be permitted other than vehicles used to provide access for people with limited mobility or to deliver goods or materials too heavy to be carried by non-motorized means.

Objective 3.1 Action Steps:

Action Step 3.1.1: Establish a system (i.e. signage, control gates, electronic controls) for managing truck movements proximate to the Amphitheater loading dock and for coordinating truck use of East Betty Ford Way.

Action Step 3.1.2: Coordinate delivery schedules to reduce the frequency of delivery and service vehicles into the Lower Bench during peak use time periods.

Action Step 3.1.3: Require stakeholders to utilize on-site storage facilities to reduce and control the frequency of delivery and service vehicles into the Park.

Action Step 3.1.4: Improve traffic gate operations and restrictions on both the east and west ends of Betty Ford Way to eliminate unnecessary and unauthorized vehicular intrusions into the Park. Consider closing the western access point of Betty Ford Way to all vehicles except trucks too large to utilize East Betty Ford Way (for exiting the Park).

Objective 3.2: Utilize the Parking/Transit Sub-area as the primary means for satisfying the Park's parking and transit needs.

Policy Statement 1: All stakeholders are required to adhere to the Parking and Transit Management Plan.

Policy Statement 2: There shall be a "no-net loss" of the +/-200 parking spaces within the Parking/Transit Sub-Area and the +/-65 spaces at the Soccer Field Sub-area. Any net loss of parking spaces shall only be considered when off-set by a demonstrated improvement or enhancement of public transit use or alternate means of transportation to the Park.

Policy Statement 3: Provide parking for daily park-use within the Parking/Transit Sub-Area and utilize the Vail Village Parking Structure to satisfy peak parking demands of the Park.

Policy Statement 4: Maintain a central trash/dumpster/recycling facility within the Parking/Transit Sub-area and mandate all Park leaseholders use the central facility.

Objective 3.2 Action Steps:

Action Step 3.2.1: Town Staff, with coordination from Park stakeholders, shall prepare a Parking and Transit Management Plan, to include, but not be limited to the use and access of parking lots, fee structures, transit operations, etc.

Action Step 3.2.2: As demand warrants, continue operation of the In-Town bus route beyond Golden Peak to provide service along Vail Valley Drive.

Action Step 3.2.3: Implement an improved wayfinding sign program directing pedestrians from the Village Parking Structure and Slifer Square in Vail Village.

Goal #4:

Provide a safe, enjoyable and efficient pedestrian circulation system within Ford Park and between Ford Park and Vail Village.

Objective 4.1: Provide clear and effective directional and informational signs to and within Ford Park.

Objective 4.1 Action Steps:

Action Step 4.1.1: Develop a comprehensive sign plan to direct Ford Park visitors from Vail Village and from each level of the Village Parking Structure to destinations within Ford Park.

Objective 4.2: Encourage and promote park users to access the Park via pedestrian routes from Vail Village and the Vail Transportation Center.

Policy Statement 1: The five existing pedestrian access points to the Park from Vail Village and Golden Peak should be maintained and enhanced to maximize their effectiveness in providing access to the Park.

Policy Statement 1: Encourage leaseholders in Ford Park to utilize their marketing efforts to promote walking, biking and the use of Town buses as an alternative to driving to the Park.

Objective 4.2 Action Steps:

Action Step 4.2.1: Implement enhancements to the Gore Creek Trail that will improve safety, grading, surfacing, and lighting.

Action Step 4.2.2: Evaluate opportunities for additional seating areas, public art and other features to enhance the walking experience along the Vail Village Connector (within the Gore Creek Sub-area) and where appropriate provide rest/sitting areas along all pedestrian routes to the Park.

Action Step 4.2.3: Establish gateways or portals (signage, monuments, landscape elements, etc.) at the main entries to the Park (Frontage Road, Gore Creek Trail, Manor Vail, Slifer Plaza, Vail Valley Drive and the Parking/Transit Sub-area).

Objective 4.3: Improve internal pedestrian circulation within Ford Park.

Policy Statement 1: New developments or other improvements in the Park shall not diminish the quality of the pedestrian circulation system and when appropriate shall include provisions to improve pedestrian circulation.

Policy Statement 2: Existing ADA routes should be enhanced and where feasible new ADA access within the Park should be established.

Objective 4.3 Action Steps:

Action Step 4.3.1: Upgrade the portion of Betty Ford Way within the Commons Sub-area to create a high quality pedestrian corridor with improved surface materials, lighting, seating and landscaping.

Goal #5:

Maintain compatible relationships between all venues and all uses within Ford Park.

Objective 5.1: Manage the carrying capacity of the Park by scheduling events to prevent overlapping or simultaneous events that exceed the availability of community parking or other park infrastructure.

Policy Statement 1: The Town of Vail through its designee shall coordinate with leaseholders an annual schedule for events and uses at all Ford Park venues.

Policy Statement 2: No one event or type of use will be allowed to dominate the usage of the Park.

Policy Statement 3: The Park is a Town of Vail community facility and in the case of conflicting uses, functions that best serve the interests of the community will have the highest priority. In all cases, final decisions regarding the use of the Park shall rest with the Town of Vail.

Policy Statement 4: The day-to-day management and coordination of activities in the Park will be assigned to the Town of Vail. The Town of Vail, through its designee, will coordinate as necessary with representation from the Vail Valley Foundation, the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens and the Vail Recreation District.

Objective 5.1 Action Steps:

Action Step 5.1.1: Expand the master schedule kept by the Town Clerk to include all venues within the Park.

Action Step 5.1.2: Hold preseason event/activity coordination meetings with all affected stakeholders.

Action Step 5.1.3: Hold semiannual (or as deemed necessary) coordination and input meetings with the Town of Vail, leaseholder representatives, and neighborhood and adjacent property owner representatives.

Objective 5.2: Provide sufficient separation, berms and landscape buffers between facilities and uses.

Policy Statement 1: The adequacy of berms and landscape buffers between different facilities and uses shall be considered when evaluating proposed changes to the Park. The type and extent of buffers to be provided shall be determined based on the nature of the use, the site design of the proposed facilities or uses, and the design parameters outlined in the Ford Park Sub-Areas and the Illustrative Plan.

Policy Statement 2: Maintain and where necessary improve existing berms and landscaping between facilities and uses.

Objective 5.2 Action Steps:

Action Step 5.2.1: Enhance existing landscape buffers between tennis courts adjacent to the Active Recreation Sub-area and the Parking/Transit Sub-area and evaluate the need to enhance landscape buffers between other uses throughout the Park.

Objective 5.3: Foster a spirit of cooperation between all leaseholders within the Park regarding their use of the Park and how to collectively use and manage the Park for the benefit of all.

Policy Statement 1: Encourage the shared use of buildings and facilities.

Policy Statement 2: Decisions regarding proposals for new buildings or improvements are to be made in the best interest of the Park and the Vail community, not just in the interest of the leaseholder.

Objective 5.4: Establish a capital improvement plan for the Park and equitably share the costs of park management and operations with Park lease-holders.

Policy Statement 1: All Ford Park leaseholders shall participate in cost sharing with the Town of Vail for common operating costs at a level proportionate to the leaseholders benefit from or relationship to said operation or management cost. (or as may be outlined in current lease or license agreement). Management and operations cost may include but are not limited to, electrical for pedestrian path and parking lot lighting, trash removal, and parking lot and pedestrian path maintenance costs.

Objective 5.4 Action Steps:

Action Step 5.4.1: Town staff to complete an inventory of existing park operations and associated costs, and in conjunction with park leaseholders, quantify the level of benefit realized by each leaseholder from such operations.

Action Step 5.4.2: Research current lease, license and use agreements to determine existing financial responsibilities of each lease holder.

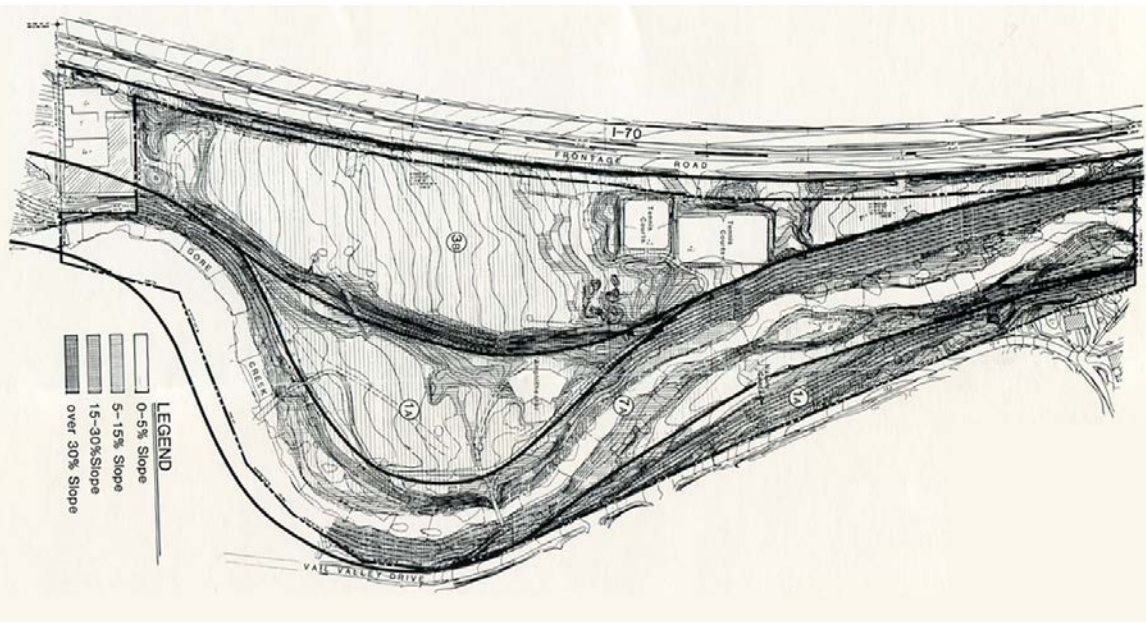
Action Step 5.4.3: With input from the Vail Town Council, work with leaseholders to modify existing leases to correct any inequities in utility billing procedures and distribution systems, current utility use, and cost sharing relationships.

Action Step 5.4.4: Create and maintain a five-year capital improvements program for Ford Park.

Chapter 5 - FORD PARK SUB-AREAS

“The basic structure of Ford Park is comprised of two broad terraces, or benches as locally referred to, which step down the north side of the Gore Creek and is typical of mountain, valley and stream physiography.”

1985 Ford Park Master Plan



Ford Park topography/1985

Early plans for Ford Park (the Vail Plan) anticipated recreation-oriented uses (and a number of buildings) on the Upper Bench with passive open space areas and an amphitheater on the Lower Bench. Initial development of the Park included athletic fields, tennis courts and parking facilities on the Upper Bench. Decisions on locating these uses on the Upper Bench were made based on the terrain (availability of flat land) and accessibility to the Frontage Road. Passive open space and the development of an amphitheater were initiated on the Lower Bench. These plans and the early development of the Park reinforced this Upper Bench/Lower Bench distinction. Over time the Upper Bench came to be regarded as recreation-oriented while the Lower Bench was regarded as being more oriented to cultural uses and passive open space.

The characterization of athletic use on the Upper Bench and passive and cultural uses on the Lower Bench remains valid today, and the terms Upper Bench and Lower Bench provide a good, albeit generalized description of the Park. However, to discuss the

future of Ford Park in terms of just the Upper and Lower Bench does not acknowledge the many subtleties and distinctions throughout the Park that need to be considered in this master planning process. It is for this reason that sub-areas are used to more clearly articulate the goals and objectives for specific areas of the Park. Sub-areas are intended to provide a forum for defining the unique areas of the Park, where improvements or changes may be acceptable and where improvements and changes may not be acceptable.

The seven sub-areas described below were defined based primarily on the existing uses and site characteristics within the Park. In some cases, sub-areas define one single use. Examples of these include the Amphitheater and Alpine Gardens Sub-areas. In other cases sub-areas include a number of related uses. Examples of these are the Gore Creek Preservation and the Commons Sub-areas. In many cases the pedestrian corridors that link the sub-areas and facilitate the movement of people throughout the Park are used as boundaries between sub-areas.

The sub-area boundaries were defined based on a variety of considerations. They should not be considered hard, inflexible parcel lines. It is reasonable to anticipate that when considering future improvements for the Park some latitude with the location of a sub-area boundary may be appropriate. Any consideration to modify a sub-area boundary shall be made in the context of the goals for the Park and for that particular sub-area.

The use of sub-areas to better understand how the Park functions and to express how the Park may change in the future is not an attempt to divide the Park into parts. Rather, the sub-areas provide an effective means for discussing the unique areas of the Park in the context of the goals and objectives for the entire Park. With Ford Park the adage “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” clearly applies.

The diagram below depicts the seven sub-areas defined for the Park. The narrative that follows addresses the following considerations for each sub-area:

- Existing uses and facilities,
- The role the sub-area plays in the overall context of the Park,
- The relationship of the sub-area to adjoining sub-areas,
- Improvements or changes that may be appropriate at some point in the future,
- Any parameters or other limitations relevant to the future uses and activities within the sub-area, and
- Any other considerations.

Sub-area discussions address the Park at a fairly broad, master planning level. More specific discussion of potential future improvements that may be appropriate for the Park is found in the Illustrative Plan Chapter of this Plan.



Parking/Transit Sub-area

The Parking/Transit Sub-area provides on-site parking for the Park and includes a transit stop, a passenger car drop-off area and a central trash/storage facility. Strategically located along the South Frontage Road and on the periphery of other park facilities and uses, this sub-area plays a vital role in how the Park functions by separating parking and vehicles from other areas of the Park. The transit facility is a key component of the Park by facilitating direct bus service to the Town's parking structures (which provide parking for peak demand days). This parking/transit concept had its origins in the original planning of the Park.

“This major community park-cultural center will contain parking for more than 200 cars and will also be served directly by the Town bus system. Major parking will be accommodated in the transportation center.”

Vail Plan, 1974

Since the mid-70's the parking plan for Ford Park has been to provide daily use parking at the Park with parking for special events provided at the Town's parking structures. This parking plan was validated by a parking and transportation study for the amphitheater completed in 1979. This parking plan remains valid today. Functional transit facilities along with pleasant, safe pedestrian corridors between the Park and the Village Parking Structure are key elements to ensure the on-going effectiveness of this parking plan.

Prior to making improvements to the athletic fields in 2013 (to be completed in 2014) the Park had approximately 200 on-site parking spaces. The athletic field expansion displaced approximately 50 parking spaces at the west end of the parking lot. These 50 spaces were re-established by re-designing other portions of the parking lot, maintaining the approximately 200 on-site parking spaces.

A “no net loss of parking” policy is in effect for the +/-200 on-site parking in this sub-area. Any proposed reduction to existing on-site parking spaces will only be considered in conjunction with concurrent improvements to alternative means of transportation to the Park. An example of this would be reducing the number of parking spaces in order to improve transit facilities.

The parking lot was designed such that it can continue to be used for concerts and other special events. The parking lot also serves as a turn-around area used to manage local traffic when eastbound I-70 is closed. It is anticipated that both of these uses will continue.



Future Improvements

With parking lot and transit improvements scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014, it is anticipated that the Parking/Transit Sub-area will adequately address the needs of the Park for the foreseeable future. Improvements that may be considered in the future include:

- Design and installation of park entry features at the two pedestrian portals from the parking lot into the Park.
- Installation of traffic control devices (gates or other means) at the east and west ends of Betty Ford Way.

The potential improvements listed above are also described in the Illustrative Plan section of this Plan.

The idea of constructing structured parking below the existing surface parking lot has been discussed in the past. This could accomplish two objectives – increase the supply of on-site parking (parking that could also address other town needs) and allow for some alternative use on top of the structured parking. On a related note is the idea of developing parking below the tennis center and re-constructing the tennis center on the surface of the structure. While structured parking in either of these locations could create opportunities for new uses on these areas of the Park, costs would be significant. Based on studies completed in 2009-2010, the Town Council at that time determined structured parking to not be financially feasible. If or when this idea is discussed in the future, an initial step would be to evaluate implications on the goals for the Park and if necessary initiate amendments to this Plan.

Active Recreation Sub-area

This sub-area is the focal point of active recreation, team sports, tournaments and other special events. The location of these uses is consistent with some of the earliest design direction established for the Park. It is expected that these uses will continue in order to meet the community's needs for active recreation facilities.

Significant plantings have created a landscape buffer between these active recreation uses and other surrounding uses. These buffers should be maintained and continually enhanced where necessary. Specific attention should be given to enhancing landscaping between the Frontage Road and the athletic fields. This improvement would provide a buffer between the Park and the road and also provide shade for spectators. Noise and other compatibility issues with use of the athletic fields and adjacent uses will need to continually be managed (refer to Goal 4 in Chapter 4 of this Plan).



Future Improvements

Improvements to the Active Recreation Sub-area initiated in 2012 (expected to be completed in 2014) were extensive and included expansion and re-organization of the athletic fields and construction of a new restroom/storage building and a new concession/restroom building. It is anticipated that these improvements will address the active recreation needs of the community for the foreseeable future. Potential improvements contemplated for this sub-area are:

- Design and installation of park entry features at the west end of the Park along the Frontage Road and the two pedestrian portals from the parking lot.

- Ongoing enhancement of the landscape buffer around the perimeter of the Sub-area.
- The 2009 Town of Vail Transportation Plan contemplates a roundabout at the west end of Ford Park to “serve as a means of “u-turning” (eastbound to westbound) and to potentially provide access to a future below grade parking structure. No detailed design work on this improvement has been done, but conceptually this roundabout could be located just west of the athletic fields.

The existing Tennis Center is located between the Parking/Transit Sub-area and other portions of the Park. East Betty Ford Way provides convenient and pleasant pedestrian access to the Lower Bench of the Park along the southern end of the Tennis Center. However, the tennis center presents constraints to establishing a convenient and graceful pedestrian entry between the parking/transit area and the rest of the Park. If or when the relocation of one or more tennis courts is considered, study should be given to how improved pedestrian flow and new uses could be established in this area. The Tennis Center building has been in existence for over 25 years and the design of the building is inconsistent with the architectural character of buildings recently constructed in the Park. If or when this building is to be re-developed, consideration should be given to a design more consistent with the design objectives for the Park. In addition to the design of the building, consideration should also be given to the use of the building and the potential for shared use to accommodate other Park users.

The possibility of locating an education center for the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens within Ford Park is discussed in the Alpine Gardens Sub-area. The preferred location for this building is along West Betty Ford Way. If the West Betty Ford Way site is subsequently determined to not be a viable location, the Tennis Center site is a suitable alternative. The potential site for this building is proximate to or integrated with the Tennis Center building. Coordination and cooperation from the VRD will be necessary if this site is to be pursued.

Commons Sub-area

The Commons Sub-area plays an important role in the Park by providing structure, or organization to the overall design of the Park. The area provides a transition zone between other uses in the Park and Betty Ford Way, which runs through the sub-area, and provides a delightful arrival experience for pedestrians entering the Park from the West. The Commons Sub-area also provides some of the Park’s most important and popular facilities that collectively address a number of goals and objectives for the Park. Specifically, the Commons Area provides places for recreational use, public art, the

passive use and the quiet enjoyment of the Park. The sub-area also provides buffers between Park uses, a transition to the Gore Creek corridor and creates an important sense of openness within the Lower Bench.

This sub-area should continue to be managed to provide the uses and park features listed above. There are no major changes contemplated to the three distinct, yet related uses that occur in this sub-area. These three uses are:

Children's Playground

The playground is an immensely popular area of the Park. This use should continue. While refinements and/or upgrading of play structures and facilities within the playground may be made in the future, the basic size or "footprint" of the playground should remain unchanged. The restrooms at the playground provide facilities for the entire Lower Bench and there is a need to upgrade these facilities in the near future in order to meet the demands of park users. No other buildings are contemplated in the playground area.

Open Turf Area

Aside from natural open space areas along Gore Creek, the open turf area is the only area of the Park that is not programmed with organized uses and activities. It is important that this area remains open and available for informal use by patrons of the Park in the future. The area provides space for picnics, rest, informal games and other passive recreation use. The open turf area also provides an important buffer, or transition from the more actively developed areas of the Park and the Gore Creek Corridor. Given this area's adjacency to Betty Ford Way, it is critical to limit vehicles in this area of the Park in order to prevent conflicts between park users and vehicles.

The open turf area should not be reduced in size and no buildings or structures should be permitted in this area. If Betty Ford Way is improved, all streetscape improvements (lighting, landscaping, seating, etc.) should be located on the south side of the walkway so as to not reduce the size of the open turf area. In the past the southern end of the open turf area has been used for events (weddings, parties, etc.) that have involved the placement of temporary tents and other features within the open turf area. While these events may continue, the number and extent of such events should be limited and events that would monopolize the open turf area and prevent its use by other users of the Park should not be permitted. Any events in the open turf area should be managed in accordance with Park procedures, specifically to minimize the time temporary facilities are in place, minimize the number and extent of vehicles necessary to service the event, etc.



Creekside Area

The Creekside area is a narrow strip of land south of Betty Ford Way and north of Gore Creek. A few small structures (i.e. the “art shack, an open air picnic shelter) are located in this area. Arts in Public Places (AIPP) may pursue remodeling or enhancing the art shack at some point in the future. AIPP has placed permanent art installations in this area and also runs summer art programs in this part of the Park. Art programs may include activities such as interactive events, educational and participatory activities, and temporary art installations. The passive use and the limited number of permanent improvements within this area make it an excellent transition to the more natural, undisturbed Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area.

The use and character of this area should remain unchanged. No new buildings should be permitted. New art installations may be appropriate, but if pursued, they should be done in a way that minimizes impacts to other surrounding uses and facilities and is sensitive to the natural landscape.

Future Improvements

Improvements contemplated for this Sub-area include:

- Upgrading restroom facilities at the children’s playground.

- Further enhance the buffer between the athletic fields and the children’s playground.
- Additional art installations within the Gore Creek Corridor.
- Upgrade to Betty Ford Way to include, decorative pavers, seating areas, lighting and other streetscape improvements.

The restroom and Betty Ford Way improvements are described in greater detail in the Illustrative Plan chapter.

Amphitheater Sub-area

An outdoor amphitheater was contemplated in original plans for Ford Park dating back to 1974. Completed in 1987, the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater has evolved into Vail’s most prominent venue for music, dance and other cultural events. The facility is managed by the Vail Valley Foundation and is host to approximately 60 events each summer. The amphitheater is considered one of the community’s most important cultural assets.

In 2013 the Foundation completed an initial phase of improvements to the amphitheater. Improvements included re-contouring the lawn seating, new restrooms, expansion of concession areas, and other improvements. While not a project of the Foundation, the Town of Vail recently made major improvements (decorative pavers, widening, and reduction to grade of walkway) to East Betty Ford Way. The Foundation has plans for a second phase of improvements to the Amphitheater that would create a new “public plaza” at the entry to the Amphitheater.



The relationship between the Amphitheater and the neighboring athletic fields will need to be continually monitored to ensure compatibility between these (and all) park users is maintained. It is important to protect and enhance areas of existing vegetation in and around the Amphitheater and where appropriate improve the physical buffers between these uses. The implementation of noise mitigation at the north end of the amphitheater to minimizing noise impacts from the athletic fields and Interstate 70 has also been discussed. The Foundation has completed acoustic studies of the amphitheater and concluded that mitigating noise impacts from the fields and Interstate 70 would have the unintended consequence of impacting sound quality within the amphitheater. As such, noise mitigation is not being pursued.

The Amphitheater is a significant generator of people and also generates a significant amount of vehicular traffic into the Lower Bench. Vehicular traffic into the Lower Bench conflicts with a number of goals and objectives for the Park. It is important for the Town and the Vail Valley Foundation to continue to work together to minimize vehicular traffic to the Amphitheater. No new uses or expansion of existing uses at the Amphitheater that would generate appreciably more vehicular traffic into this area of the Park should be permitted. Managing and limiting vehicle traffic that may result from the proposed public plaza will be an important consideration in establishing operational standards for this new facility.

Future Improvements

Potential improvements contemplated for the Amphitheater Sub-area include:

- Development of a “public plaza” at the entry to the Amphitheater.
- Restoration of the stream bank adjacent to the Amphitheater south of Betty Ford Way and east of the pedestrian bridge.
- Upgrading of the fence/screening of the utility installation along Gore Creek west of the pedestrian bridge.

There are a number of important parameters to be considered in the design and development of the public plaza. These parameters are described in greater detail in the Illustrative Plan chapter of this Plan.

Alpine Gardens Sub-area

What began with completion of a demonstration garden in 1987 has evolved into a +/- 1.5 acre network of perennials, rock gardens and waterfalls hosting an array of high

alpine plants. The Betty Ford Alpine Gardens (BFAG) provides an important educational and experiential element of the Park. The gardens and the mission of the organization are in keeping with one of the original goals for Ford Park to provide environmental and educational facilities for the community. The Alpine Gardens have become one of Vail's most popular summer attractions.

The Alpine Gardens has pursued the development of an "alpine education center" in the Park for a number of years. The 1997 Ford Park Management Plan identified the location for this facility to be within the Soccer Field Sub-area. During the 2012 Ford Park Management Plan Update the BFAG proposed a location adjacent to Gore Creek for the education building and the 2012 Plan recommended this site for a new building. The Vail Town Council subsequently reconsidered this recommendation from the 2012 Update, and while expressing support for the BFAG to develop an educational building within the Park, initiated a new evaluation of site alternatives for the building.

The Vail Town Council's primary criterion for selecting a site for the educational center building was that it not be located on the Lower Bench. Seven sites were evaluated, three of which were determined to be viable sites for the building. The BFAG Building Site Evaluation Matrix outlines the factors considered in this evaluation. A copy is found in the Supplemental Appendix.

For a variety of reasons the preferred location for this building was determined to be adjacent to West Betty Ford Way just west of the Children's Playground. Located directly on the grade transition between the upper and lower bench, the Vail Town Council determined that this location conforms to their site selection criteria that the building not be located on the lower bench. The other two sites that were considered viable alternatives are at the Soccer Field and within the Tennis Center. These sites could still be considered if following further study it is determined that the Betty Ford Way site is not viable.

The primary purpose of the building is to provide educational programs for the community and accordingly the uses within the building are expected to include rooms for interpretive displays, meeting/class rooms, a greenhouse and a limited amount of administrative space necessary to support on-site operations of the Gardens.



Future Improvements

Potential future improvements within the Alpine Gardens Sub-area include:

- Development of an alpine gardens educational center.
- Extension of gardens along the northeast entry in order to create a buffer from the adjoining athletic fields and improve pedestrian arrival to the Gardens.

There are a number of important parameters to be considered in the design, development and operation of the educational center. These parameters are described in greater detail in the Illustrative Plan chapter of this Plan.

Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area

The Gore Creek Preservation Sub-area includes the entire length of the Gore Creek Corridor that passes through the Park. The sub-area is more than 21 acres in size and is generally defined by the park boundary on the south and the 100-year flood plain, the 50-foot Gore Creek setback and/or topographic features on the north. Gore Creek,

associated wetland and riparian habitat and stands of specimen trees are the primary features of the creek corridor. Existing improvements within this sub-area are limited to bridges, trails, utility improvements and the Nature Center.

The Gore Creek corridor is the Park's most significant natural feature and provides the Park with delightful open space for the quiet enjoyment of nature. The corridor also provides a critical pedestrian link to Vail Village. The designation of this corridor as a preservation zone is in direct response to a number of goals and objectives from previous park planning efforts. The preservation of and enhancement to this area is also suggested by Goal #1 of this Plan. It is essential that adjacent uses respect the natural environment of this sub-area and that effective buffers be maintained between other more intensive uses within the Park.

It is intended that existing uses and improvements within the Gore Creek Preservation Sub-Area be maintained and in keeping with the goals of preserving this area no new buildings are to be constructed within the sub-area. Any other new uses or improvements should be limited to those that will complement the natural character of the creek corridor and will minimize impacts to this sensitive environment.

Resolution No. 27 of 1987 designated the seven acres around the Nature Center as an area "to be preserved as an example of the Gore Valley's natural history." The resolution stipulated that "vehicular traffic is to be restricted and certain policies and procedures for preservation and maintenance of the grounds and facilities" should be enacted. It is acknowledged that the Nature Center will bring a certain level of activity to this sub-area. Nature Center activity should be concentrated on the "upland" portions of the Nature Center in order to minimize impacts to the creek corridor.

Improvements within the sub-area should be limited to low-impact improvements such as soft surface walking paths, creek enhancements to improve fish habitat, fishing access, re-vegetation and creek/stream bank restoration projects. In all cases such improvements should be designed and constructed in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts (i.e. avoid wetland habitat and wetland, maintain existing natural vegetation, use of "best management practices", etc.). The underlying goal of any new trail development and/or bridge crossing should be to improve access in order to enhance awareness of this important natural environment.

Utility improvements should not be located within this sub-area unless no other practical alternative is available.

The Gore Creek corridor between the main portion of Ford Park and Slifer Square provides important pedestrian access to and from the Park and Vail Village (and the Vail Village Parking Structure). This corridor is heavily travelled and provides access to the Park for many park users. Enhancing the walking experience along the corridor will ensure its effectiveness as an alternative means of accessing the Park.



Fishing access to Gore Creek, while currently not an issue (i.e. excessive use from foot traffic resulting in damage to riparian areas and vegetation), could become an issue in the future. A creek access point was considered at the east end of the Nature Center (using the bus turnaround on Vail Valley Drive as an unloading area) was discussed during the 1997 Planning effort but was rejected as being contradictory to the intended use of the Nature Center.

An Action Step suggested for this area (refer to Chapter 4 of this Plan) is to evaluate the benefits of establishing a conservation easement for this area or to apply the “Open Space” designation via the Natural Area Preservation Zone District. The protection afforded by either of these steps would define more permanent limitations on the use of this area and in doing so establish a degree of permanence in preserving this creek corridor.

The existing condition of the Nature Center Building and the surrounding area has been a point of discussion. Potential improvements to the Nature Center are further discussion in Chapter 6 – Ford Park Illustrative Plan.

Future Improvements

Future improvements contemplated for this Sub-area include:

- Enhancement and restoration of vegetation along the creek corridor, creek bank stabilization and fishing habitat enhancements.

- Enhancements to the walkway between Vail Village and the Park to include improvements such as seating, art installations, etc.
- Design and installation of park entry features at the three pedestrian portals to the Park along the Gore Creek Corridor.
- Initiate steps to improve the physical condition of the Nature Center.

These improvements are discussed in greater detail in the Illustrative Plan chapter.

Soccer Field Sub-area

The Soccer Field Sub-area, while often overlooked as an element of Ford Park, provides a valuable community asset. The full-sized athletic field serves the soccer and lacrosse communities, the sand volleyball courts are heavily used and the 65-space parking lot is used year-around. A cul-de-sac at the east end of the sub-area allows in-town buses to turn around when providing express service to Ford Park. These uses should continue as they directly address the broad goals for the Park of “providing the recreational needs of the community” (1985 Plan) and is consistent with the objective of locating active recreation areas “away from the meadow and creek” (1985 Plan).

Separated from the rest of Ford Park by Vail Valley Drive and physically removed from the more developed portions of the Park, the Soccer Field Sub-area does not have compatibility or relationship issues with surrounding uses or facilities. No major changes are contemplated to the existing recreational facilities in this sub-area.

While no major improvements are anticipated in the near future, the Soccer Field sub-area is unique from the rest of the Park. For example, the uses and activities in this sub-area do not impact other areas of the Park, the sub-area has direct vehicular access that does not impact other park users, and the sub-area has no direct impact on the Gore Creek Corridor. For these reasons this sub-area could be a suitable location for new park uses or buildings to meet the future needs of the Park. If or when new uses may be proposed for this sub-area, consideration should be given to applicable elements of this Plan, how the proposed use could affect surrounding uses, private covenants and other considerations.



Future Improvements

Potential future improvements within the Soccer Field Sub-Area include:

- Expansion of the existing sand volleyball courts.
- Expansion of landscape buffers.

The possibility of locating an education center for the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens within Ford Park is discussed in the Alpine Gardens Sub-area. The preferred location for this building is along West Betty Ford Way. If the West Betty Ford Way site is subsequently determined to not be a viable location, the Soccer Field site has been determined to be a viable alternative. The potential location for this building is at the northwest corner of the sub-area. Private covenant issues (with the neighboring Northwoods Condominiums and with the Vail Village Seventh Filing) will need to be addressed prior to constructing an education center on the soccer field site.

Chapter 6 - FORD PARK ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

The Ford Park Illustrative Plan provides a general description of future improvements contemplated for Ford Park. The Plan indicates the general location of the improvements, a summary of the proposed improvements and parameters or criteria to be considered in the design, development and operation of the improvement. The design parameters and criteria are of particular importance as they establish specific expectations for the proposed improvement. Conformance with these parameters and criteria is a requisite to the Town approving any improvements in the Park.

The 2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan discusses a wide range of potential improvements for the Park. The design and development of some improvements are in progress. Other these improvements are only general ideas and will need further study and design, an example being the installation of art along the Gore Creek Corridor connection to Vail Village to enhance the walking experience. Other improvements are not viable in the near-term but could be viable at some point in the future, examples being structured parking under the athletic fields or a Frontage Road roundabout at the west end of the Park.

It is not the intention of this Plan that only those improvements depicted on the Illustrative Plan may be proposed for the Park. Improvements not depicted on the Illustrative Plan may be proposed and will be reviewed relative to their conformance with the goals, objectives and policies for the Park and the applicable Ford Park Sub-areas. It should also be noted that improvements being depicted on the Illustrative Plan does not ensure if or when they will be implemented.

Any improvement proposed for the Park is subject to approval by the Vail Town Council and further review by the Town's review boards prior to being implemented. This review may involve the Planning and Environmental Commission (Conditional Use Permit, Development Plan review) and the Design Review Board prior to being implemented.

On the following page is the Ford Park Illustrative Plan and descriptions of future improvements that may be made to the Park.



2013 Gerald R. Ford Park Master Plan / Illustrative Plan



USA/ENL November 2013

Improvement #1 – Gore Creek Corridor Restoration

There are a number of areas within the Gore Creek corridor where erosion, over-use or other factors have disturbed or otherwise adversely impacted existing vegetation. A restoration program should be implemented to improve vegetation along the creek corridor. Restoration will improve the visual quality of this area and improve water quality by preventing erosion. A detailed assessment of the creek corridor is necessary in order to determine precisely where and to what extent restoration is needed. Following completion of this assessment, a detailed landscape plan for the restoration of the corridor should be prepared and implemented.

A parallel effort should be to evaluate the condition of the creek bank in order to identify the potential need for stream bank stabilization to protect the bank from erosion. Another opportunity to consider for Gore Creek is how pools or other features could be created in the creek to improve the quality of fishing or potentially improve the creek for other uses. A detailed assessment of the creek corridor is necessary in order to determine precisely where and to what extent these improvements may be feasible. Following completion of this assessment a detailed improvement plan for the creek corridor could be prepared.

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #1, Objective 1.3, Action Step 1.3.2.

Improvements #2 – Gore Creek Village Connector

The Gore Creek corridor between the west end of Ford Park and Slifer Square provides important pedestrian access to and from the Park and Vail Village (and the Vail Village Parking Structure). Enhancing the walking experience along this connection will improve its effectiveness as an alternative means of accessing the Park. The installation of seating areas, creek overlooks and public art are examples of improvements that could be made to animate this walkway.

Any future improvements shall be outside of wetland areas, the 100-year flood plain or other environmentally sensitive areas. An inventory of the creek corridor to identify such areas should be completed prior to initiating any improvements.

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #4, Objective 4.2, Action Step 4.2.2.

Improvement #3 – Entry Monuments at Park's pedestrian entries

Pedestrians arrive to Ford Park from one of seven existing entries as identified on the Illustrative Plan. Currently there is inadequate signage or other features identifying

these locations as entry points to the Park. The goal of this improvement is to formally identify these portals and announce them as gateways, or arrival points to Ford Park.

Landscape features, signage, bollards, monuments, archways or other design features, or some combination thereof, could be used to identify these locations. Landscape enhancements to areas proximate to these entries may also be appropriate. A design process is necessary to determine design solutions for these improvements. While specific solutions for these park entry improvements could vary between locations, all should share a common design vocabulary. It will also be important to locate these improvements in a way that compliments the adjacent pedestrian corridor and does not compromise pedestrian circulation.

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #4, Objective 4.2, Action Step 4.2.3.

Improvement #4 – Betty Ford Alpine Gardens Education Center

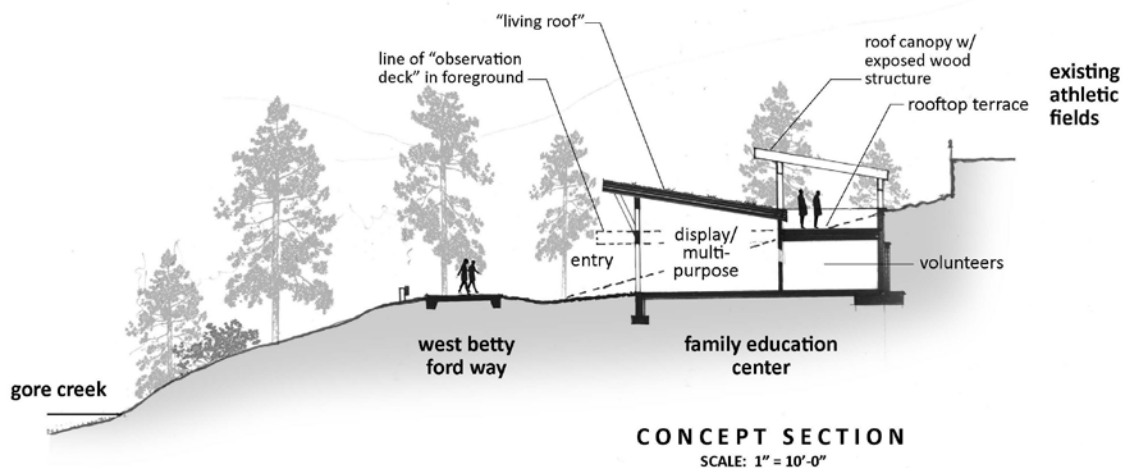
The education center is envisioned to include multi-use space for year-around educational programs and other activities, a greenhouse and limited administrative space. Below are design, development and operational parameters and/or criteria to be considered in the detailed design of this facility.

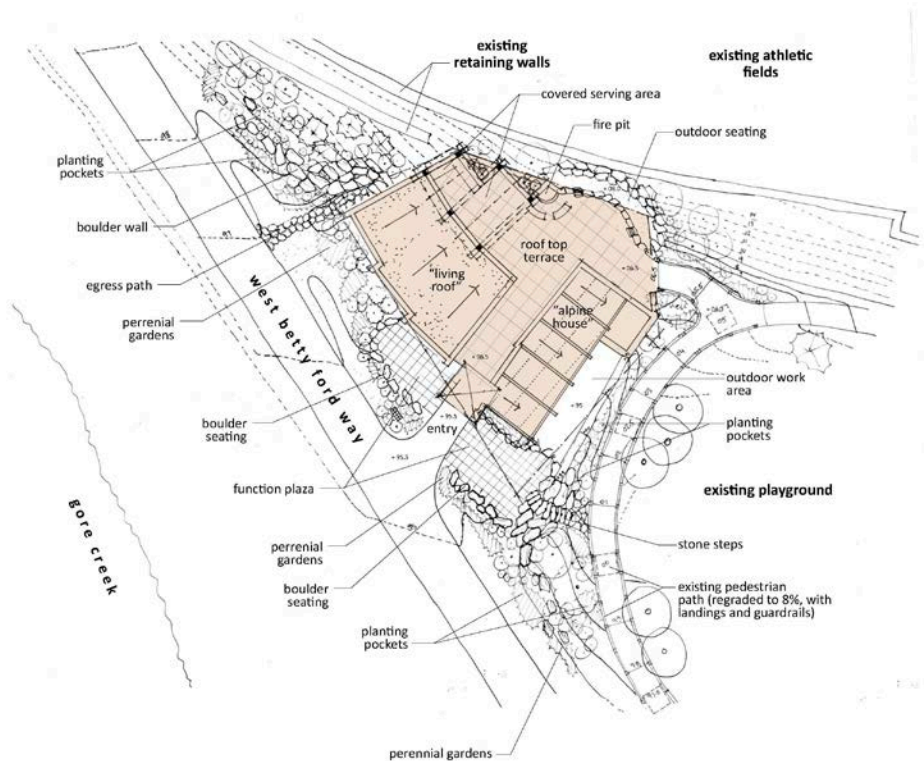
- Building and site improvements provide adequate clearances from existing utility lines and drainage improvements and when necessary such lines or improvements are relocated to provide adequate clearances.
- A building of approximately 3,500 square feet of gross floor area.
- Building designed with a low-scale appearance that does not visually dominate the surrounding area and does not loom over West Betty Ford Way.
- Provide appropriate horizontal separation from West Betty Ford Way and from the children's playground in order to not diminish the quality of these spaces.
- Ability to construct the project in a manner that does not adversely impact other facilities or uses in the Park.
- A viable access management plan designed to minimize to the greatest extent feasible the number and frequency of vehicles accessing the education center. It is acknowledged that a service vehicle or delivery vehicle may occasionally need to drive to the center. However, daily or frequent vehicle access by staff or patrons of the center will not be permitted

- Acceptable emergency vehicle access to the building and identification of any site improvements necessary to accommodate such access.
- Identify the anticipated parking demand from the building and how it will be addressed. No parking shall be provided at the building.
- Adequate storage space to meet the operational needs of the building and to minimize the need for vehicle trips to the building.
- Coordination with the Vail Recreation District on the need to expand fencing at the athletic fields to protect the building from errant balls.
- Evaluate the feasibility of providing public restrooms within the center (see Improvement #7 in Illustrative Plan – Children’s Playground Restrooms)

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #2, Objective 2.3, Action Step 2.3.2.

The site plan and cross-section are conceptual studies for how a building could be designed on this site. While provided by the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, these sketches do not represent a development or design proposal. They are merely depictions of how the building could be designed and there is no implied approval of the concepts depicted below.





Improvement #5 – Nature Center

Over the years a number of additions and modifications have been made to the nature center building. Many of these changes have altered the historic character of this building. An assessment of the building should be completed in order to understand steps that could be taken to restore the architectural integrity of this building and the surrounding area.

A current deficiency of the Nature Center is the lack of restroom facilities. If the building is to be renovated consideration should be given to how restrooms could be incorporated into the building. Other improvements to the Nature Center include, reclaiming the informal parking areas proximate to the building and taking steps to limit vehicular access to the site. These site improvements would most efficiently be designed in conjunction with the evaluation of the building.

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #2, Objective 2.5, Action Step 2.5.1-2.4.3.

Improvement #6 – Ford Amphitheater Entry Upgrade/Public Plaza

The Vail Valley Foundation has proposed plans for transforming the existing Amphitheater entry into a re-designed and re-purposed Public Plaza. The plaza is intended to provide a more gracious and more functional entry to the amphitheater. The design intent and objective of this improvement is to create a multi-use outdoor space that serves as the primary arrival for the Amphitheater as well as a pre-convene and post-function space during scheduled events. The Public Plaza would also provide a venue for smaller gatherings hosted by other park leaseholders and also be open for public use when not being used for scheduled events.

Other elements of the Public Plaza include a tensile roof covering, a tribute to the Ford Family, a small stage within the courtyard, a new donor wall, enhancements to the concession building and ticket windows, and new entry gates to the Amphitheater.

Parameters and criteria to be considered:

- Plaza design should be done to facilitate/not encumber truck turning movements necessary to provide loading/delivery to the Amphitheater.
- Plaza design should be sensitive to and integrated with immediately adjacent improvements at the Alpine Gardens.
- Trees removed to accommodate the Public Plaza should be re-located within the Park and to the extent feasible be relocated proximate to the amphitheater.
- The space should be available for use by the public when not being used for private functions.
- The space should be available for gatherings that support other Park stakeholders (TOV, VRD, BFAG and AIPP).
- Any structures/roof elements associated with the public plaza should harmonize with the Amphitheater, not dominate the surrounding area, and conform to the Town's park design guidelines.
- Any fencing that may be required to define the courtyard space or for liquor license or other purposes should be subtle and visually unobtrusive. Landscape materials should be used to soften the appearance of the fence.
- A viable management plan for minimizing vehicular access to the social courtyard (employees, service vehicles, deliveries, etc.), and for servicing the facility in a manner that minimizes impacts on pedestrian use of Betty Ford Way.

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #2, Objective 2.3, Action Step 2.3.1.

Improvement #7 – Children’s Playground Restrooms

The playground restrooms provide facilities for the entire Lower Bench. These facilities are under-sized and in need of upgrade and expansion to meet current demand. When designed, the new bathroom building should be one level and be sized no larger than necessary to meet the needs of park users. The location currently considered for the new restrooms is west of the existing facility where play apparatus are currently located. New play apparatus will be provided with the removal of the existing restroom building. The building should not encroach on the adjacent open turf area.

The adjoining Alpine Gardens Sub-area identifies a site along West Betty Ford Way and next to the playground for the development of an alpine gardens education center. The potential to incorporate restrooms for playground users within the alpine garden education center should be evaluated. The goal of this approach is to minimize the number of buildings in the Park. Coordination between the Town and the Alpine Gardens will be necessary in order to evaluate the feasibility of this idea

Improvement #8 – Betty Ford Way Traffic Control

While it is acknowledged that the Alpine Gardens, the Amphitheater and other uses in the Lower Bench require vehicular access, an underlying goal for the Park is to minimize vehicular traffic in this area. Betty Ford Way provides car and truck access to this area. As a means for better regulating traffic into the Lower Bench, the installation of gates, bollards or other improvements will be necessary at either end of Betty Ford Way. In addition to improvements designed to limit car and truck access to the lower bench, a system for managing large truck use on East Betty Ford Way should also be explored. This section of Betty Ford Way is essentially a one-lane road. The purpose of this effort is to prevent two trucks from utilizing East Betty Ford Way at the same time.

Refer to Chapter 4, Goal #3, Objective 3.2, Action Step 3.2.3.

Chapter 7- PARK MANAGEMENT

Four organizations play a role in the management and operation of Gerald R. Ford Park. The Town of Vail is the owner of the Park and manages the community park on the Lower Bench, the stream tract, parking lot areas and pedestrian corridors. In addition, the Town provides park management and coordination with the Park's three leaseholders. The leaseholders manage and operate their respective facilities:

The Vail Recreation District lease includes the Tennis Center, athletic fields and land that includes the Nature Center. The Tennis Center Building is on land owned by the Town but was developed and funded by the VRD. VRD offers environmental education and research opportunities at the Nature Center.

The Vail Valley Foundation manages and maintains the Ford Amphitheater and immediate surrounding grounds. The amphitheater seats up to 2,500 people and is scheduled an average of 60 days during the summer months.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens manages the Gardens. The Gardens have developed in four phases that began in 1987.

In its role as the overall park manager, the Town addresses a variety of management and operational considerations. Often times this requires the involvement of different town departments and town commissions and boards. Ultimately the Vail Town Council is asked to review and approve management practices. The Town involves one or more of the Park leaseholders when addressing these management topics and in some cases the lease agreements with the Recreation District, the Vail Valley Foundation and the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens address these topics. Below is a list of park management topics the Town is responsible for:

- Parking – Management of parking spaces, allocation of spaces to leaseholders, rates at times pay-parking is implemented, etc.
- Special events on parking lot, athletic fields and open turf area – coordination with promoters of events, scheduling, pre and post-event operations, etc.
- Park Calendar – While not responsible for scheduling events within leaseholder facilities, the Town coordinates (with leaseholders) a comprehensive events schedule for the Park.
- Transportation – management of transit operations between the Park and the Vail Transportation Center, including periodic implementation of a Golden Peak bus route.
- AIPP projects – The review of art programs and installations in the Park.

- Proposals for new uses, new building or changes to the Park – The review of any proposed change to the Park will involve the Vail Town Council and may also involve the Planning and Environmental Commission, the Design Review Board, AIPP and the Commission on Special Events.

Chapter 8 - APPENDIX

An extensive number of documents relative to the history of the Park and previous park planning efforts have been assembled. Due to the volume of this material, these documents are provided in a separate document, the 2013 Ford Park Master Plan Supplemental Appendix. Material found in the Supplemental Appendix includes:

1. Ordinance No. 6, Series of 1973, authorizing the purchase (by condemnation) of the property known as the Antholz Ranch.
2. The Vail Plan, 1974.
3. Resolution No. 1, Series of 1977, naming the property commonly known as the Antholz Ranch to Gerald R. Ford Park.
4. The Gerald R. Ford Park and Donovan Park Master Plan Development Final Report, 1985.
5. Resolution No. 27, Series of 1987, this resolution designated the seven acres around the Nature Center as an area to be preserved as an example of the Gore Valley's natural history.
6. Resolution No. 44, Series of 1988, amending the 1985 Master Plan to add four tennis courts and to change the location of the aquatics center.
7. Ford Park Management Plan, 1997.
8. Ford Park Management Plan Update, 2012.
9. BFAG Building Site Evaluation Matrix.
10. Betty Ford Alpine Gardens – Site Evaluation, Martin/Martin, August 15, 2013.