



2024

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



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Town of Vail Five Year Strategic Plan

1. PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan’s purpose is to create real and meaningful results for our residents, businesses, and guests to address the most important issues identified in community surveys, plans and community conversations. This Strategic Plan, once approved, will provide a framework to align both human and financial resources to achieve critical results in addressing our community’s most important issues.

On Feb. 26 and 27, 2024, the Town Council met and created the mission, priority issues, and strategic results included in this plan. The planning session started with a review of feedback received by five focus groups, as well as feedback from community and guest surveys, a recent branding process, and the Vail’s Stewardship Roadmap project.

2. MISSION AND VISION

The mission or purpose of the Town of Vail defines why we exist as a local government in serving our residents, businesses, and guests. Our vision provides a direction and destination of where, as a community, we want to move towards in the future. In February 2024, the Town Council articulated the following mission:

The Mission of the Town of Vail is to provide exceptional public services, to people who live, work, and play here so they can connect to the community and to nature, create memories, find opportunities to thrive, and have the time of their lives.

The Town of Vail’s vision is:

To be the premier mountain resort community in the world.

3. FEEDBACK AND ISSUES

Staff compiled themes from the town’s most recent surveys, including the biennial [Vail Community Survey](#) last fielded in the spring of 2022; [surveys](#) conducted in the summer of 2022 to help shape [Vail’s Stewardship Roadmap](#); and [post-visit guest surveys](#) from winter 2022/2023 and summer 2023.

“Housing” ranks as the topic of highest concern in all resident surveys, with overall “Affordability” ranking highest with guests. “Parking” is the most frequent theme that crosses both resident and guest surveys.

Surveys fielded to both Vail residents and down valley residents as part of Vail’s Stewardship Roadmap process indicated “Housing” was by far the top concern for both groups, though the down valley response was even more intense (9.42/10.0) than Vail residents' (8.60/10.0). Both identified “Parking Pressures” as their second-most concerning issue, followed by “Crowding and Damage to Trails.” Vail residents felt more strongly about Crowding and Damage to Trails, while Parking Pressures were more

concerning for down valley residents. Both rated their fifth-ranked concern --"Loss of a Sense of Community" -- at nearly the identical level of intensity.

While overall affordability was of greatest concern, guest surveys indicate parking is a factor affecting their likelihood to return to Vail and to recommend Vail to others. Guests cite both cost and availability as concerns; however, parking still received a net positive score in both summer and winter surveys.

It should be noted that as part of the Vail Community Survey, the previous Town Council requested input on a series of potential priorities they identified for evaluation. As in 2020, the single highest rated priority in terms of average score was given to "Actions to protect and enhance Gore Creek," followed by "Actions to protect wildlife habitat."

However, a follow-up question asked, "Which two actions from the previous question are most important to you?" Respondents chose their top two priorities from the overall list. When asked in this way, "Housing for resident occupied households" was at the top of the list, followed by "Actions to protect wildlife habitat" and "Actions to protect and enhance Gore Creek."

The Town also reviewed demographic and housing data. A key finding was that there are approximately 1,336 free market resident occupied homes out of a total of 7,206 dwelling units in Vail. This number has been decreasing over time due to real estate and economic trends. Vail has plenty of housing stock but it is rarely available to employees in the Town. The median sales price of a home is \$2 million in Vail and the median household income is \$96,667. An affordable home based on national standards (30% of your income going for a mortgage) for a household income of \$96,667 would be about \$400,000 to \$425,000.

Prior to the strategic planning session at the end of February 2024, the Town held 5 focus groups and the facilitator for this process met with each Town Council member. In both the business and resident focus groups care was taken to ensure a diversity of individuals, including new and long-standing residents, new and established businesses, and young leaders that had both been raised in the valley and those who are new and trying to figure out how to navigate life in Vail. All shared that making a life in a mountain town is very challenging and a certain pioneering spirit and tenacity is required to make a living in the valley. These focus groups included representation from:

- A group of long time and new residents of the Town of Vail
- Business leaders
- Young adults and service employees
- Town department directors
- Town employees

A common theme came out of all five focus groups which involved ensuring we have a strong community so that we continue to have outstanding customer service and support our resort economy. The notes from these five focus groups can be found in the [packet materials](#) for Feb. 26, 2024. It should be noted that the themes and priorities from the focus groups are consistent with feedback received from survey data. However, the emphasis on community is an important message that was reinforced in the focus groups. Based on the feedback the Town received, creating a strong community includes:

- Creating a continuum (rental to for-sale) of new community housing opportunities to not only support new service employees but also managers who have families,
- Preventing the loss of full time local occupied housing,
- Accessibility of transit and parking is critical to our employees,
- Creating a fun environment for younger and older generations,
- Creating places for the community to connect (recreation center, Dobson/more Yeti games, library, fun community events and entertainment),
- Supporting and creating new childcare opportunities,
- Support younger entrepreneurs in creating new businesses in Vail (West Vail could be an opportunity for this),
- Providing leadership and management training to support the growth of the next generation of leaders in our community.

The message of “community first” to support a strong tourism community was consistent across these focus groups and provides a reason why creating housing is a critical goal; however, additional programs and initiatives are needed to support the next generation of business and community leaders.

4. 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

The following section includes the Mission, Priority Issues, and Results from the Feb. 26 and 27, 2024 planning session.

Mission: The mission describes our purpose and the fundamental services we provide to the community and the desired impact of those services.

The mission of the Town of Vail is to provide exceptional public services to people who live, work and play here so they can connect to the community and to nature, create memories, find opportunities to thrive, and have the time of their lives.

Issues and Results: The following critical issues and results tie back to the feedback the Town received from the community. The Town Council worked toward consensus in developing the following issues and strategic results.

- A. **Strategic Priority – Create a strong community and create affordable housing opportunities:** With ever increasing housing costs causing a lack of opportunity for employees working in Vail to make a home in Vail, or even within 30 to 40 miles of Vail, the sustainability of our economy and community are threatened. This has resulted in a net loss of population for both the Town of Vail and Eagle County as a whole. Although a pioneering spirit has always been required to call Vail home, without a continuum of new housing and business opportunities in Vail the next generation of residents, community leaders, and business owners may not be readily present in the future.

Desired Results:

- A.1 By 2027, the Town of Vail will have acquired 1,000 new (compared to 2017) deed restricted homes bringing the total number of deed restrictions to 1,688.
- A.2 By 2029, the Town of Vail will have expanded upon the continuum of housing through an increase in the diversity of home types thereby ensuring Vail residents have access to a mix of housing opportunities ranging from homes for seasonal employees to retirees including for-rent apartments and for-sale condominiums, and homes suitable for families.
- A.3 By 2033, double the supply of deed-restricted homes from 1,034 to 2,370 for our year-round and seasonal Vail residents through a collaborative and regional approach while also increasing in the Town of Vail the permanent population by 2% (currently estimated at 4,804) by 2029.
- A.4: By 2027, Vail will increase commercial opportunities for local businesses that provide goods and services by 10% as measured by commercial square footage. The total commercial square footage in the Town of Vail is approximately 530,000 sq. ft.

- B. **Strategic Priority – Support our Workforce:** Given the high cost of living in the Vail Valley, retaining employees, and creating a succession of business and community leaders is threatened. Maintaining a high level of customer service to support Vail’s vision requires creating a succession of business leaders and retaining high performing and experienced employees in the community.

Desired Results:

- B.1: By December 2025, working with our partners, Vail’s workforce will have access to leadership training, mentorship, and entrepreneurial skills development, as evidenced by the number of new businesses created.
- B.2: By 2029, 95% of our workforce has access to information about healthcare coverage, mental health resources, and other resources.
- B.3: By 2029, working with our partners, expand the current employee mental health assistance programs (EAP) for Vail workforce and provide timely access to care.
- B.4: By 2029, parents/caregivers working in Vail needing childcare have access to affordable childcare (7 to 10% of income) located where they need it, measured by a reduction in waitlist numbers at Vail childcare facilities compared to the average waitlist in 2024 for both the Childrens Garden of Learning and Vail Childcare Center.

- C. **Strategic Priority - Provide an Authentic Vail Experience:** Vail’s vision of being the premier mountain resort community despite a trend towards homogeneity in the ski industry will be achieved by creating programming and events authentic to Vail’s pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit. We are a community that celebrates the sport of skiing and mountain town living.

Desired Results:

- C.1: By 2027, Vail will create and/or enhance 1 to 2 showstopper, unique events in the winter and summer seasons which are consistent with the authentic Vail vibe. Examples: GoPro Mountain Games, X Games, Burton US Open, Street Beat, Dew Tour, Loveland Derby, Ski Races, Bravo!
- C.2: By 2029, Vail will create a seamless, vibrant, inclusive experience as people move from the mountain into town and from town onto the mountain as measured in guest intercept surveys. As our guests and residents' transition, whether on skis, bikes or on foot, between the Town and Vail Mountain they will be enticed and welcomed by programming that creates an energetic and fun vibe ready to greet them at the base area.
- C.3: By June 2025, modify town codes to support vibrancy (special events, live entertainment, night life).
- C.4: By 2027, 70% of individuals under 40 will state "Vail is a kickass place" as measured by the net promotor score.
- C.5: By 2025, The Town of Vail municipal government will provide excellent customer service through clear definitions, measurements, and reporting.

- D. **Strategic Priority - Transportation:** The increasing number of commuters traveling to and from Vail for business and pleasure impacts public safety, generates an expensive need for parking, reduces the guest experience by causing parking on the Frontage Roads, and contributes to carbon emissions.

Desired Results:

D.1 By 2029, people who live, work, and recreate in Vail use the Eagle Valley Transportation Authority and Town of Vail Bus Systems as their preferred method of transportation as evidenced by a reduction in the percentage of vehicles parking in the Vail and Lionshead Parking structures that originate from Eagle County from ~72% to ~50%. More specifically, reducing the percentage of parked vehicles which start their day in Vail from 32% to 20%; and reducing the percentage of parked vehicles which begin their day in Eagle County but outside of Vail from 40% to 30%.

- E. **Strategic Priority - Environmental Sustainability:** Our sensitive alpine environment supports our economy, and the Town must continue to be a responsible steward of our sensitive natural resources and should continue to be a leader in environmental sustainability for mountain resort communities across the world.

Desired Results:

- E.1 By 2029, Gore Creek is no longer a 303(d) listed impaired waterway which would reduce near term risk of losing the gold medal fishery status.
- E.2: By 2027, Vail and its partners have a cohesive wildlife/environmental management plan that

identifies Vail's role in sustaining ecosystem biodiversity in its various habitats.

E.3: Reduce 2014 baseline carbon emissions by 25% by 2025, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050.

5. NEXT STEPS

Staff would propose approving this plan via resolution as a next step after the language for mission, priority issues, and results are acceptable to the Town Council. Staff will create an action plan to implement the strategic results in the month of June 2024 and add that action plan as an appendix to this strategy. Staff will review this action plan with Council and then this strategic plan and its associated actions and strategies would be utilized in future budgets to align time money, and resources in the future.

This strategic plan is focused on the next 2 to 5 years. However, it should also be noted that the action plan from 2023 is actively being implemented. The Town is executing on the goal of 1,000 new deed restrictions by 2027. The Civic Hub and particularly decisions on Dobson Ice Rink are significant projects to that will have an impact on capacity and available resources assuming Council would like to continue implementation. The Town has until 2030 to expend \$50+ million in Tax Increment Financing funds. There are also the other 26 actions from 2022 that are being implemented currently. The 2024 Plan will provide new focus and alignment from 2025 to 2029 (and beyond).

Moving forward, staff will provide updates in the Town Manager report on progress related to results. A dashboard is envisioned that will be on the Town's website and used in updates. It is recommended that after a Council election (every two years) the Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated as necessary.

Finally, staff will create business plans for each Town Department to ensure that the Council strategic results are effectively implemented, and the manager, department heads, and individual staff members are aligned and accountable to achieve the results. The business plans for departments would also speak to the day-to-day services that Departments provide to their customers. Feedback from departmental customers would be solicited and issues and goals would be developed to ensure the highest level of customer service based on available resources.

Attachment A: Action Plan (when completed)