



Memorandum

TO: Vail Town Council

FROM: Community Development Department and Environmental Sustainability

DATE: April 2, 2019

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 14, Series of 2019, a resolution for the adoption of the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan as a component of the Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan, and setting forth details in regard thereto. (PEC19-0001)

Applicant: Town of Vail, represented by Peter Wadden, Town of Vail Water Quality Education Coordinator
Planner: Jonathan Spence

I. SUMMARY

The applicant, Town of Vail, represented by Peter Wadden, Town of Vail Water Quality Education Coordinator, is requesting approval from the Vail Town Council, pursuant to Section 12-3-7, Amendment, Vail Town Code, for the adoption of the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan (the Interpretive Plan) as a component of the Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan.

On February 25, 2019, the Planning and Environmental Commission (PEC) forwarded a unanimous recommendation, for the adoption of the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan, pursuant to Section 8-3, Amendment Process, Vail Town Code. Please find the staff memorandum to the PEC included as Attachment B and the minutes from the February 25th meeting included as Attachment C.

Based on feedback received from Town Council at the March 19 meeting, staff has updated the Interpretive Plan to include recommendations on how the proposed interpretive installations may be incorporated into the Vail Ap.

II. ACTION REQUESTED OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Vail Town Council shall approve, approve with modifications, or deny Resolution No. 14, Series of 2019.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE REQUEST

The applicant, Town of Vail, represented by Peter Wadden, Town of Vail Watershed Education Coordinator, is requesting that the Vail Town Council, pursuant to Section 12-3-7,

Amendment, Vail Town Code, for the adoption of the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan as a component of the Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan. The Interpretive Plan provides education topics and enumerates education and outreach goals and objectives. It identifies specific installations at specific locations that would help raise awareness in the community by providing opportunities to engage with the unique natural features of Gore Creek, learn what is being done to protect the creek, and where there are opportunities to do more.

IV. BACKGROUND

The Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan, adopted by Town Council in 2016, identifies education and outreach as key strategies to raise community awareness to encourage individuals to both take responsibility and action to restore aquatic health.

At the direction of Town Council to implement the educational outreach strategies outlined in the Action Plan, staff worked to develop a plan for an interpretive installation along the Gore Valley Trail in 2018. The interpretive design firm, Conservation by Design was selected to help manage the stakeholder process and draft the Plan.

In July 2018, representing the consulting team, Melanie Pierson, a certified interpretive planner and exhibit developer facilitated two interpretive messaging workshops with stakeholders in Vail. Stakeholders involved in this process represented the Town of Vail, Vail Nature Center, Walking Mountains Science Center, Eagle River Watershed Council, Vail Resorts, Eagle River Water & Sanitation District and the Vail Public Library.

In addition to meeting with stakeholders, Ms. Pierson spent time assessing the trail and other relevant interpretations in the area. The Gore Valley Trail, often locally referred to as the “bike path,” is a 12-mile trail that winds along Gore Creek through the length of the Town of Vail and up Vail Pass. The busiest stretches of trail see as many as 1,000 users on a summer day. Both locals and guests, of all ages, use the trail for a wide range of activities that include serious endurance pursuits to casual dog walking. The popularity of the trail among the community and its proximity to Gore Creek make it an ideal location for targeted educational outreach exhibits. that reach a variety of community members, from locals to guests and serious endurance athletes to casual dog walkers.

V. REVIEW CRITERIA

The adoption of a new plan needs to be in concert with the Town of Vail’s existing Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan, other adopted plans which make up the Comprehensive Plan, and Town Zoning Code. The adopted plan shall support, strengthen, and further the objectives of the town. The Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan: (a) establishes education and outreach goals, (b) provides objectives, (c) describes specific interactive installations that will engage trail users in the Gore Creek ecosystem and (d) provides resources to trail users about what they can do to help *Restore the Gore*. In reviewing the proposed Interpretive Plan, staff considered the applicable goals and objectives of the following:

- The Vail Land Use Plan;

- Vail Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan (2009);
- Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan (2016);
- Town Council Action Plan (2018-2020);
- Zoning Code

Vail Land Use Plan

The goal statements which staff believes are applicable and supportive of the review and of the Interpretive Plan are as follows:

1.1 General Growth/Development

1.2 Vail should continue to grow in a controlled environment, maintaining a balance between residential, commercial and recreational uses to serve both the visitor and the permanent resident.

1.3 The quality of the environment including air, water and other natural resources should be protected as the Town grows.

1.4 The quality of development should be maintained and upgraded whenever possible.

1.13 Vail recognizes its stream tract as being a desirable land feature as well as its potential for public use.

Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan (2016)

Elements that staff believes are applicable and supportive of the review and adoption of the Interpretive Plan are as follows:

*Activities such as lawn-care workshops, friendly competitions and **increasing informational signage** will help reach full-time residents, part-time residents, and visitors at different locations across town and during critical periods throughout the year.*

*Partner with existing non-profit organizations . . . to organize, manage and **implement education and outreach activities that increase basic riparian literacy** and familiarity with best management practices for creek friendly landscaping practices. Include an explanation as to how riparian vegetation can prevent property loss to the stream.*

The Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan identifies education and outreach as key strategies in the effort to Restore the Gore. Among the specific education and outreach objectives the plan identifies are several that lend themselves well to an interpretive installation.

- *Partner with existing non-profit organizations to organize, manage and implement education and outreach activities that increase basic riparian literacy and familiarity*

with best management practices for creek friendly landscaping practices. Include an explanation as to how riparian vegetation can prevent property loss to the stream.

- *Offer educational opportunities for homeowners, contractors, HOAs, landscaping companies, and commercial businesses to obtain more information about BMPs for yards and gardens and other creek side landscapes. See that these educational opportunities include discussions of water conservation, permeability, and retention practices for lawns and gardens.*
- *Stormwater Basics - Discuss importance of stormwater management and identify common urban runoff pollutants. Provide guidance for protecting water quality on residential, municipal, and commercial properties.*
- *Watershed Background - Provide maps of the watershed that identify land uses, surficial geology, impervious areas and major tributaries to Gore Creek. Discuss prior efforts in watershed planning, historical and current water quality in Gore Creek.*
- *Pollution Prevention - Discuss what to watch for and ways to help. Link to relevant municipal resources, identify contact(s) to report problems.*
- *Provide information about pet waste, lawn and garden, vehicle maintenance, household hazardous waste, storm drain protection, and opportunities to get involved at the individual level.*

Vail Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan (2009)

Goals and objectives staff believes are applicable and supportive of the review and adoption of the Interpretive Plan are as follows:

Goal 3: Ensure that the natural environment, specifically air and water quality, water quantity, land use and habitat are maintained to current or improved levels of biological health.

- *Objective 1. Maintain Gore Creek watershed as a Gold Medal Fishery, while working to maintain tributaries; meet and/or exceed aquatic life standards set by the state of Colorado through the management of urban stormwater.*

Goal 5: Increase public education and awareness, communication and environmental stewardship in the Town of Vail.

Town Council Action Plan (2018-2020)

Initiatives and goals staff believes are applicable and supportive of the review and adoption of the Interpretive Plan are as follows:

Initiatives

- *Pursue measures to meet requirements of Sustainable Destinations certification*
- *Public outreach and ongoing education relating to Town initiatives*

Goals

- *Implementation of Gore Creek Plan*

Zoning Code

The general and specific purpose statements which staff believes are applicable and supportive of the review and adoption of the Interpretive Plan are as follows:

12-1-2: Purpose:

A. General: These regulations are enacted for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the town, and to promote the coordinated and harmonious development of the town in a manner that will conserve and enhance its natural environment and its established character as a resort and residential community of high quality.

B. Specific: These regulations are intended to achieve the following more specific purposes:

1. To provide for adequate light, air, sanitation, drainage, and public facilities.
2. To secure safety from fire, panic, flood, avalanche, accumulation of snow, and other dangerous conditions.
5. To conserve and maintain established community qualities and economic values.
8. To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the town.
9. To conserve and protect wildlife, streams, woods, hillsides, and other desirable natural features.
11. To otherwise provide for the growth of an orderly and viable community.

Staff finds that the proposed Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan supports and furthers the objectives of the Town and is in concert with the Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan and the Vail Town Zoning Code.

VI. RECOMMENDED MOTION

Should the Vail Town Council choose to approve Resolution No. 14, Series of 2019, the Community Development Department recommends the Council pass the following **motion**:

"The Vail Town Council approves, Resolution No. 14, Series of 2019, a resolution for the adoption of the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan as a component of the Gore Creek

Strategic Action Plan, and setting forth details in regard thereto.”

Should the Vail Town Council choose to approve Resolution No. 14 Series of 2019, the Community Development Department recommends the Council make the following findings:

“Based upon the review of the criteria outlined in Section V of the staff memorandum to the Planning and Environmental Commission dated February 25, 2019, and the evidence and testimony presented, the Town Council finds:

- 1. That the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan is consistent with the adopted goals, objectives and policies outlined in the Gore Creek Strategic Action Plan and advances the development objectives of the town; and*
- 2. That the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan is compatible with and suitable to adjacent uses and appropriate for the surrounding areas; and*
- 3. That the Gore Valley Trail Interpretive 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.”*

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Resolution No. 14, Series of 2019
- B. Staff Memorandum, PEC19-0001, February 25, 2019
- C. PEC Minutes, February 25, 2019
- D. Gore Valley Trail Interpretive Plan