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## Memorandum

To: Vail Town Council

From: Public Works Department

Date: June 16, 2020

Subject: Vail Valley Drive Safety Improvements – Advisory Bike Lanes Trial UPDATE

### I. SUMMARY

Vail Valley Drive is a narrow residential road that carries vehicles and a significant number of pedestrians who use the Gore Valley Trail. Providing a safe, separate facility for pedestrians has been a critical goal of the town for decades. However, past efforts of moving forward have been hindered by; limited alternatives, cost, impacts to neighboring properties, concern about “urbanizing” the road with curb and sidewalk, and a commitment to move forward by the town. Congestion continues to increase, and a renewed interest in accommodating a separated recreational path has resurfaced.

Over the past year the Town along with the design team of RFE Engineering & Norris Design have engaged the public and received feedback on potential options for Vail Valley Drive. Initial options were presented to Council last November with refinement and final options presented this past March. At the March Council meeting staff was directed to implement Advisory Bike Lanes (ABL’s) from the Ford Park parking lot to Sunburst Drive as a trial this summer.

Staff is continuing to move forward with the implementation of the ABL trial and is prepared to install striping and signage within the next week. Engage Vail ([www.engagevail.com](http://www.engagevail.com)) has been updated to educate users on the use of ABL’s and will be the hub for receiving comments regarding users experiences.

### II. ADVISORY BIKE LANES

ABL’s are striped shoulder bike lanes that allow for two-way vehicular traffic to share a narrowed single center lane while pedestrians and bicyclists utilize the ABL’s on each side separated from vehicular traffic by dashed lines. The center lane is only wide enough for one vehicle, requiring vehicles to yield and move over to the right into the ABL, yielding to pedestrians and cyclists, when an on-coming vehicle is approaching. This roadway configuration originated in the Netherlands where they have over 50 years of experience with this practice and is now gaining traction in the United States.

The photo below is from an ABL installation in New Hampshire that closely resembles what Vail's trial ABL will look like.



*Hanover, NH (5'-10'-5')*

### III. VAIL VALLEY DRIVE TRIAL

The ABL trial along Vail Valley Drive will extend from the Ford Park Soccer Field parking lot entrance to a point just west of Sunburst Drive. The center drive aisle will have a width of 11' and the two Advisory Bike Lanes will have a width of 5' each.



In order to safely have a single 11' wide center lane for two way vehicular traffic on a low volume road with a posted speed limit of 15 mph, the minimum Stopping Sight Distance (SSD) is 160'. However, a more comfortable SSD would be 230', allowing for more reaction time and for speeds up to 20 mph. The majority of Vail Valley Drive has adequate sight distance of over 230', however these three below locations have less:

- Hole #6 Curve: This curve is limited to ~190' of clear sight distance, with up to 230'+ when looking through existing limbed up trees, providing adequate sight distance.
- Maintenance Shed Curve: This curve is limited to ~160' of sight distance; which will likely make drivers uncomfortable through this curve, though not necessarily unsafe, since drivers always have the option to move to the right and share the ABL. Staff recommends adding SLOW 15 MPH postings/paint marks and potentially future minimal impact widening as warranted.
- Sunburst Curve: This curve is limited to ~100' of sight distance due to the tight curve and large shrubs. Therefore, the minimum sight distance requirements are not met, and staff recommends starting the ABL striping just west of curve.

The Vail Valley Drive ABL trial is tentatively scheduled to be signed and striped within the next week. Once the trial begins staff will monitor user experience through email and [engagevail.com](https://engagevail.com) comments and feedback.

#### **IV. SEPARATED PATH**

As also discussed at the March Council meeting, Staff has engaged RFE Engineering to provide a preliminary design for a separated path from the Ford Park Soccer Field Parking Lot to the Town of Vail Bus Turnaround to provide an extension of the existing path with minimal impacts. This extension can remain an option to implement at any time in the future and staff will present the preliminary design along with an opinion of cost once the preliminary design is complete later this summer.

#### **V. NEXT STEPS**

Staff is prepared to sign and stripe the new Advisory Bike Lanes within the next week, and to collect public feedback through the [engagevail.com](https://engagevail.com) website. Later this summer, pending feedback and comments, staff will report back to Council on the results of the trial. It is anticipated that the striping will remain through the fall and winter and be mostly worn off by next spring, at which time Council can determine if the Advisory Bike Lanes should become a more permanent installation.

#### **VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff requests that the Town Council confirms the current direction and to direct staff to continue to move forward with the Advisory Bike Line trial.

#### **VII. ATTACHED**

Presentation