



Virtual Open House

September 2020

Virtual Open House Feedback Summary

A Virtual Open House for the West Vail Master Plan was held over the first few weeks of September 2020. The community's ideas will be at the heart of the plan, and this Virtual Open House was the public kickoff – the public's first opportunity to provide their vision for the West Vail neighborhood. The Virtual Open House combined the presentation of project background and initial analysis with survey questions on issues, desired future conditions, and other plan topics. This virtual format allowed the public to participate safely amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. An online survey was open from August 31, 2020 to September 21, 2020 and received 235 responses. A webinar was held on September 10, 2020 and 45 people attended and answered polling questions. The polling questions were a sample from the longer survey. Results from both feedback opportunities are summarized below.

Respondent Demographics

The largest portion of survey respondents were West Vail full-time residents (43%), and 28% were part-time residents in the area. The survey did receive responses from full-time residents from elsewhere in Town of Vail and Eagle County (39% of respondents combined). This question was also asked to webinar participants, of whom 40% were full-time West Vail residents with the rest of the breakdown similar to that of the survey. Hereafter, West Vail full-time residents who responded to the survey are referred to as West Vail respondents.

Survey respondents primarily work elsewhere in Town of Vail (38%) or are retired (29%). Only 12% work in West Vail and 12% were fully remote workers, self-described as such prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. West Vail respondents were more likely to work elsewhere in Town of Vail (46%) or in West Vail (23%) and less likely to be retired than respondents as a whole. Webinar participants displayed a similar breakdown, with a slightly higher percentage working elsewhere in Eagle County.

About half of survey respondents were between age 45 and 64 (48%) with the remaining respondents divided relatively evenly between the 25 to 44 and 65+ age brackets (25% and 26%). A smaller proportion of West Vail respondents were 65+, with greater relative participation from the 25-44 age bracket.

About half of respondents had spent 20+ years in the area (46%) and 68% had spent at least 10 years in the area. About 13% of respondents had spent less than five years in the area. For this question, West Vail respondents had a very similar trend to that of all respondents.

Survey respondents primarily had a household income of \$150,000+ (41%) and 95% had household incomes greater than \$50,000 per year. West Vail respondents' incomes trended

slightly lower than those reported by all respondents. 20 survey respondents live in deed-restricted housing in West Vail (20%), with an additional 7 respondents living in deed restricted housing elsewhere in Town of Vail and Eagle County.

Visioning and Issues

Respondents were asked what they appreciated about West Vail at present and what they wanted to see in the future. Respondents selected the five they felt were most important from a longer list. The following tables show the five most popular responses amongst all respondents and the most popular responses amongst West Vail respondents.

TABLE 1. WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT WEST VAIL?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Grocery stores	1) Grocery stores
2) Parks and trails	2) Parks and trails
3) Walking and biking options	3) Walking and biking options
4) Locally-owned businesses	4) I know my neighbors!
5) Local-serving businesses	5) Convenience

A common thread through these responses is recreation, connectivity, and the locals “feel” of the area – with grocery stores and other local-serving businesses, convenience, and neighborly environment frequently mentioned. Webinar participants mentioned the convenience, neighborhood feel, walkability, parks and trails, and commercial options repeatedly.

TABLE 2. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN WEST VAIL IN THE FUTURE?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Pleasant streetscapes (lighting, benches, landscaping)	1) Sidewalks and bike lanes in residential neighborhoods
2) People who work here can live here	2) Easy walking and biking to trails and parks
3) More local-oriented businesses (i.e., hardware store, dry cleaners)	3) Easy walking and biking for errands
4) Easy walking and biking to trails and parks	4) Pleasant streetscapes (lighting, benches, landscaping)
5) Sidewalks and bike lanes in residential neighborhoods	5) People who work here can live here

Many respondents stated that enhanced mobility and streetscapes were high priorities for the future, especially West Vail respondents. Webinar participants were most interested in a shopping center with a new layout, design, and businesses; retention and expansion of businesses for locals; and more inviting streetscapes.

Respondents were asked to select five key issues in West Vail at present. The following table shows the five most popular responses amongst all respondents and the most popular responses amongst West Vail respondents.

TABLE 3. WHAT ISSUES DO YOU SEE IN WEST VAIL?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Highway noise	1) Highway noise
2) Outdated commercial area	2) Outdated commercial area
3) Aging housing stock	3) Speeding
4) Speeding	4) More and more short-term rentals
4) More and more short-term rentals	5) More and more second homes

All respondents and the West Vail respondents were most concerned about the highway noise, the outdated commercial area, and speeding. West Vail respondents were very concerned about the transformation of housing into short-term rentals and second homes. Notably, few respondents were concerned about the limited tourist traffic to West Vail.

Economics and Housing

Respondents were asked several questions about businesses they'd like to see in West Vail, where they currently shop, and appropriate housing types for West Vail.

TABLE 4. WHAT TYPES OF BUSINESSES DO YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT TO KEEP, ADD, OR EXPAND IN WEST VAIL?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Grocery store	1) Grocery store
2) Casual dining	2) Casual dining
3) Hardware and home improvements	3) Hardware and home improvements
4) Liquor store	4) Liquor store
5) Gas stations	5) Coffee shop

Respondents were very interested in retaining local-serving businesses such as grocery stores, hardware stores, and liquor stores. Casual dining was also a top priority, which is somewhat limited in West Vail at present. Notably, West Vail respondents responded very similarly to the overall group, except for more interest in a coffee shop relatively. Overall, respondents were less interested in fine dining, gift shops, clothing stores, automobile businesses, and real estate businesses. Webinar participants were very interested in having or expanding casual dining/fast casual and coffee shops.

The following table shows the primary shopping location for different types of purchases for all respondents and West Vail respondents specifically.

TABLE 5. WHERE DID YOU MAKE YOUR PURCHASES (PRE-COVID) – PRIMARY LOCATION

	All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
Food and Beverage Shopping	West Vail	West Vail
Dining	Elsewhere in Town of Vail	Elsewhere in Town of Vail
Retail (clothing, sports equipment, etc.)	Online	Online
Household goods (hardware, furniture, etc.)	Elsewhere in Eagle County	Elsewhere in Eagle County

Respondents typically conducted the vast majority of their food and beverage shopping in West Vail, although those living in elsewhere in Eagle County primarily went to other locations in the County. Dining spending was more evenly distributed, with about 40% elsewhere in Town of Vail, 25% elsewhere in Eagle County, and 20% in West Vail for all respondents and West Vail respondents. Respondents reported minimal retail spending in West Vail (5%), with the majority Online and about 20% in both elsewhere in the Town of Vail and elsewhere in Eagle County. Household goods spending was primarily distributed between elsewhere in Eagle County (40%), Online (30%), and West Vail (20%).

Respondents were asked about the types of housing they would like to see more of in West Vail. The top three responses are listed here, as there were fewer choices presented.

TABLE 6. WHAT TYPES OF HOUSING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN WEST VAIL?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Smaller single-family homes	1) Smaller single-family homes
2) Townhouses	2) Townhouses

3) Deed-restricted affordable housing	3) Duplexes
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Respondents were more interested in smaller or attached dwellings than larger options (apartment buildings and multi-family developments). Notably, deed restricted affordable housing was of higher interest overall than it was for West Vail respondents, with deed-restricted affordable housing as the top interest for residents of elsewhere in Town of Vail and the #2 interest for residents of elsewhere in Eagle County. Webinar participants were most interested in townhomes, mixed-use development housing, and small-single family homes.

Design Character and Development

Respondents were asked about how they viewed the existing residential character of West Vail and the desired future character. The most popular response for existing character was varied, with some respondents referring to it as eclectic and mountain town. For the future, a mountain town character was strongly desired, with some respondents seeking an eclectic or European-inspired character. These responses did not vary significantly between all respondents and those living in West Vail. In the write-in responses many referred to the existing residential character as “run down” or by other similar terms. Webinar participants primarily chose the term “dated”, with some calling it eclectic or mountain-town. Webinar participants were also asked if they liked the character of the residences and businesses in West Vail. The majority (54%) said they mostly like it, but there are some areas they don’t like, with 36% saying they mostly don’t like it, but there are some areas they like.

Respondents were asked what they most wanted to see in the West Vail commercial area in the future. The following table shows the five most popular responses from all respondents and West Vail respondents.

TABLE 6. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE WEST VAIL COMMERCIAL AREA?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Outdoor dining	1) Outdoor dining
2) Walking and biking paths	2) Underground parking
3) Underground parking	3) Walking and biking paths
4) Mixed use buildings	4) Mixed use buildings
5) Affordable housing	5) Safer street crossings

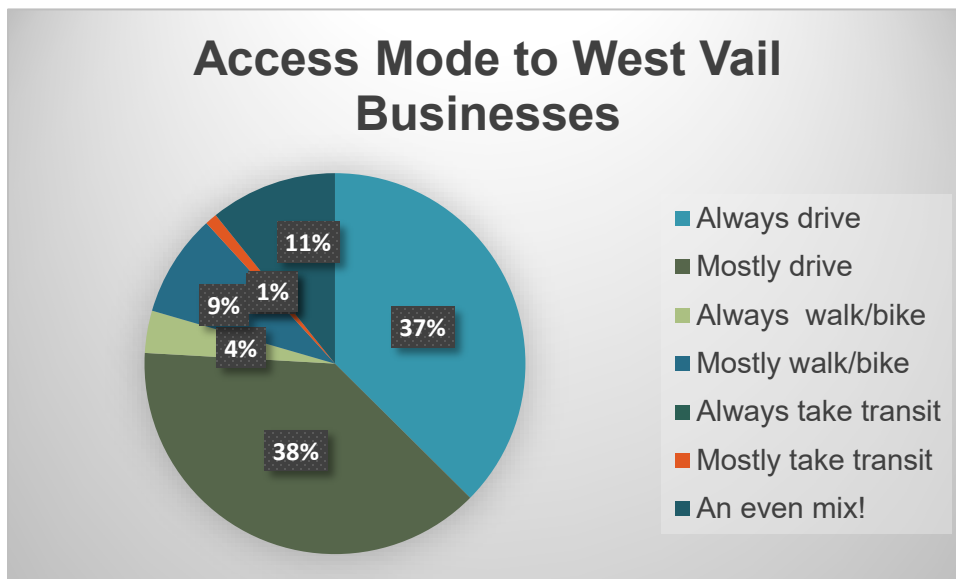
Respondents were primarily interested in enhancing the outdoor space, through outdoor dining options, bike-ped friendly routes, and burying the parking. Notably, residents of elsewhere in the Town of Vail and elsewhere in Eagle County listed affordable housing as their top desire for the

West Vail commercial area. Of the options presented, there was the least interest in high-end housing and hotels.

Respondents were asked about places they've seen that they would like the West Vail commercial area to look like. Frequently repeated responses were: Pearl Street in Boulder, Edwards Riverwalk, Aspen, Highlands in Denver, Salida, Whistler, Crested Butte, and Jackson. Overall, these responses suggested a desire for a walkable downtown with a more western feel (such as Jackson, Crested Butte, or Salida).

Transportation and Mobility

Respondents were asked how they typically get to West Vail businesses.



Driving was certainly the most popular mode, but a strong percentage do walk/bike some of the time. Among West Vail residents, only 20% always drive, with 45% mostly driving, resulting in a higher percentage of those who walk/bike some of the time.

The following table shows primary barriers respondents listed to walking and bike more.

TABLE 7. WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM WALKING OR BIKING MORE IN WEST VAIL?

All Respondents	West Vail Respondents
1) Weather/snowy and icy conditions	1) Weather/snowy and icy conditions
2) High-speed traffic	2) High-speed traffic
3) Lack of comfortable trails or sidewalks	3) Lack of comfortable trails or sidewalks
4) Unsafe crossings for walking/biking	4) Unsafe crossings for walking/biking
5) Long distances	5) Indirect crossings for walking and biking

Respondents mentioned the innate challenge of the weather conditions but also lack of facilities and high-speed traffic. Few felt the steep slopes were a deterrent. Many also wrote in the inconvenience of walking/biking with their groceries and difficulty crossing the roundabouts. Amongst those who lived beyond West Vail, the distance was a primary deterrent. Webinar participants primarily stated unsafe crossings, lack of comfortable trails and sidewalks, and indirect connections for walking and biking.

A similar question was asked about barriers to transit use. Primarily, respondents mentioned the ease of other modes of transport (driving, walking, and biking). Some people also named the lack of frequency, distance to stops, and inconvenience of routes.

Webinar participants were asked a more general question about the top issues around parking, transportation, and mobility. Primary responses were speeding vehicles, walking feels unsafe, infrequent transit, and biking feels unsafe. Too much traffic and challenging to find parking were not considered top issues.

Final Comments

Respondents could provide any additional comments at the end of the survey. Key themes that emerged were the importance of focusing on community, concerns about short-term rentals, enhancing the quality of the neighborhood (housing + businesses), outdoor spaces, aesthetics, walking connections, preserving open space, concerns about over-development, small-town feel, and local feel.

Webinar participants were asked what are the most important things for this master plan to accomplish. The primary responses were creating a development vision for the commercial area, reconcile zoning issues and create a housing strategy for the area, and preserve and expand local businesses opportunities. Participants were less interested in enhancing parks, trails, and recreation.