



## Memorandum

**To: Mayor and Town Council**  
**From: Town Manager's Office**  
**Date: November 3, 2020**  
**Subject: Municipal Operations Update Winter Season 2020-2021**

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the memo is to provide updates to a number of the town's municipal operations for upcoming winter season, 2020-21. Town staff continue to monitor public health orders and impacts on its municipal services. As the town prepares for the upcoming winter, staff will plan for the ability to react quickly in its municipal operations in order to comply with revisions to public health orders as the state of the COVID cases changes in coming months.

- Transit Guidance Update
- Guest Service Advocate Program
- Winter Enhancements Updates
- Noise Ordinance
- Ski Area Guidance Plan & Status
- Vail Winter Messaging (Communications Campaign)

### III. MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS UPDATES

#### Transit Guidance Update

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has released draft updated guidance for public transportation providers across the State and Eagle County transit providers including Vail have provided input. In short, the revised guidance from the State will continue to include a mask mandate on buses and provide capacity guidance on buses to 50%. Assuming significant skier visitation this winter, this 50% capacity limit poses a major challenge for Vail's transit system to effectively implement during peak periods this winter.

Vail Transit is making every effort to transport passengers in a safe and efficient manner using guidance provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Some of the Covid-19 measures Vail Transit will be implementing this winter include:

- Face coverings are required to be in use at all times by drivers and passengers (2 years old and older); remember to cover your nose and mouth.
- Complimentary face coverings are available on the bus to ensure compliance.
- Face coverings are required to be worn at all transit stops when others are present.
- Plexiglass partitions are in place to separate drivers from passengers with primary loading and unloading via the rear doors. Access remains available through the front doors for ADA when needed.

- Passengers are asked to be respectful of others by creating physical separation between non-related parties to the extent possible.
- Rider capacity will vary at any given time due to multiple stops for loading and unloading.
- To accommodate passenger demand, extra buses will be in service during peak times including Friday-Sunday on the busiest outlying routes, East Vail and West Vail South.
- Vail has pioneered use of a microbial reduction system on all buses. The continuous, chemical-free system complements the town's additional cleaning protocols to provide wide-ranging environmental protections. Interior surfaces are disinfected nightly.

### **Guest Service Advocate Program (replacing Community Host Program)**

In light of the public health crisis, the volunteer community host program has been suspended for the season. Replacing that program will be a Guest Service Advocate Program whereby Town of Vail will hire employees who will educate guests and residents on community and public health safety measures, provide wayfinding services, and amenity information including current Vail Mountain operations. The goal for this group is to interact with the community to promote advocacy about safety expectations while creating a warm and welcoming first impression. The town's volunteer Community Host Program has traditionally been made up of those most hit-hard by the COVID-19 outbreak and focused on guest services. Since there are now public health orders and restrictions in place, it was deemed most appropriate to transition this programming with a new focus.

### **Winter Enhancements Updates**

- ❖ **Explore the idea of tenting existing expanded premises for restaurants to provide additional indoor dining with social distancing for the winter months, with a focus on dinner service.**

The Town has been diligently working to implement the winter tenting program that would help to continue the expansion of outdoor premises. Social distancing requirements and the 50% limit on operational capacity for restaurants continue to place major burdens on the viability of Vail restaurants, especially moving into the winter season. In addition, there will likely be limitations on Vail mountain for gathering, which will necessitate more dining options in the villages. The program is close to being launched with upwards of a dozen restaurant commitments for both temporary and seasonal tenting options. The town has offered to pay for all tenting costs and restaurant owners would cover operational costs associated with the tents.

- ❖ **Create “warming area locations” with vertical patio heaters and/or portable fire pits for guests to utilize as places to warm, dine on carry out and/or wait for dining in the villages.**

Staff is evaluating a number of options to provide multiple areas for outdoor warming in the villages. The proposed areas will take into account public safety, public health order requirements, and operational impacts to provide guests and residents additional areas for outdoor warming this winter. The plan will likely include smaller structures (igloos, greenhouses, etc.) and firepits and patio heaters, placed in pockets around the villages instead of a single large warming tent. This village enhancement would be beneficial throughout the day for guests to use as a place to warm, eat, drink, or wait for restaurant seating to become available. It would be a complementary effort to the above proposal of tenting expanded premises and serve guests, residents and the entire business community.

A number of locations that would provide appropriate space for social distancing requirements to be met are being evaluated.

#### ❖ **Ambient and Music Entertainment (2020 – 2021)**

With town council approval to fund ambient music and family entertainment in the villages, the economic development team has prepared an RFQ for release this month requesting interested vendors submit proposals to produce entertainment for approximately 150 days throughout the winter and summer seasons. The RFQ includes a scope of work, a sample schedule of dates throughout the year, and a proposed event budget estimated at \$300K. This budget has been included in the 2021 budget and is offset by savings from the larger events that can no longer occur because of the public health order restrictions. This effort also remains a priority moving into the winter months with a goal of continuing to add vibrancy to the villages and enhance the guest experience.

#### **Noise Ordinance**

Council has requested staff review the town's code section related to its noise regulations, Section 5-1-7 – Noise Prohibited. There have been some calls about noise exceeding allowed decibel levels per the town code this past summer. It is noted there was an increase in outdoor programming related to ambient and music entertainment in the villages because of the public health crisis and the need for more outdoor activation to comply with social distancing orders. Noise complaint calls have not been exceedingly high in recent years and are more common during summer months. Staff has been reviewing the code section to ensure it is offering the appropriate guidelines with noise standards and the appropriate process for the issuance of noise permits. Several staff from various departments have reviewed legislation from peer resort communities to compare the decibel standards and permitting process. The decibel levels identified in the town's code typically align with other communities; special events typically receive variances for decibel levels in a number of communities. Staff will continue to review what measures might be considered to ensure an appropriate balance is offered between noise levels and music activations in the villages. Once these measures have been identified, an update will be presented to the council.

#### **State of Colorado Ski Area Guidance Plan**

Guidance for Colorado ski areas and resorts for operations during the public health crisis has been addressed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado State Emergency Operations Center. See the link below which addresses this information:

Link: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/safer-at-home-in-the-vast-great-outdoors/guidance-by-sector/ski-areas-and-resorts>



## Guidance for Colorado ski areas and resorts

### Vail Winter Messaging (Communications Campaign)

A coordinated communications campaign is being developed in partnership with Vail Mountain and Vail Chamber & Business Association that will be used to provide consistent, communitywide messaging for the winter season. This will include an on-street presence by the Guest Service Advocates, informational signage, pre-arrival information, etc. These resources will be easily accessible by businesses, employees, guests, and community members with the goal to clearly communicate requirements and set expectations in order to deliver a safe and successful ski season from start to finish. Examples include:

- Discover Vail.com webpage: Business toolkit and guest facing COVID page
- Vail.com webpage with “what you need to know for winter” information: link: <https://www.vail.com/explore-the-resort/about-the-resort/winter-experience.aspx>

The screenshot shows a webpage with a navigation menu on the left: Winter in Vail, Getting Here, Photos and Videos, Guest Services, Summer in Vail. The main content area has a header with 'WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR WINTER' and sub-headers for 'Parking & Getting Around' and 'On-Mountain Experiences'. Below the header is a quote: 'This season, our unrivaled commitment to safety takes on more importance than ever. We are implementing some changes with your safety in mind.' The main content is divided into four sections, each with an icon and a title:

- COMMITMENT TO SAFETY**: Face coverings will be required to access our mountain and we have re-imagined our resort experience to allow for physical distancing. More Below.
- PASS HOLDER RESERVATIONS**: For your safety, we are managing on-mountain access this season. Reservations will be required, and our pass holders will get priority access. [Learn More >](#)
- LIFT TICKETS**: Lift tickets will go on sale Dec. 8 after our pass holders reserve their priority days. Lift tickets will not be sold for the early season, but Epic Day Passes are available now.
- CASHLESS TRANSACTIONS**: For your safety, all transactions across our resorts this season will be cashless (unless required by local regulations). This includes at our hotels, restaurants, Ski & Ride School, activities and all other points of sale. Please bring your American Express, the Official Payment Partner of Vail Resorts, or other credit or debit cards for any in-resort transactions. For the best experience, book online in advance via the resort website.