

**May 25, 2022 - Revised RFVHC Snowmass Rodeo Safety Report
DESIGN ITEMS WITH SAFETY IN MIND**



The RFVHC wants to bring the Rodeo Safety Report to the TOSV Planning Commissioners' attention and ask that the current design being submitted for permitting be altered and rearranged to accommodate

1. Space for contestant warm-up 2. Clearly defined and ample parking for trucks and trailers 3. Enough space for the flow and interaction between the spectators and the contestants, the vendors, the food and bar tents and room for the children to enjoy their special events and 4. The addition of the guide & outfitter staging area for trail riders to enjoy the Upper North Mesa Trail, one of the Roaring Fork Valley's only equestrian & hiker trails located in Snowmass Village.

The RFVHC represents the equestrians, farmers and ranchers that live and work in our valley. It has come to our attention that the plans that have been submitted to the TOSV Planning Commissioners are missing some vital details and we ask for your review of our Rodeo Safety Report.

In the newest 2022 plans, the placement of the rodeo arena bleacher seating is redesigned to become an East / West orientation. The safety and efficiency of the plans should be the driving force for making decisions for the rodeo contestants and for the public spectators.

1. We ask for assurances from the professional designers that the afternoon sun with dust and light will not endanger any contestant from having 100% visual clarity while performing. In this new East / West orientation, the sun may be in competitor's eyes, when leaving the roping boxes. We want to make sure the designers have considered this potential liability and have discussed the situation with the competitors and the contestants have signed off on this change.
2. There is a reduced footprint of the Rodeo Grounds that is caused by the addition of two Flex Space/soccer fields on the north side of the arena. The addition of these sports fields will make a dynamic change to the rodeo as we know it. The rodeo grounds footprint is being made smaller and the footprint is constricting the rodeo space needed for an overall successful and safe rodeo operation.

3. The contestant's warm-up area has been eliminated by building new houses and subdivisions. The Flex Space/soccer fields area needs to be available for rodeo use for competitor horse warm up area. The contestants now warm up on asphalt bike trails, which are slippery, especially when it rains. Once the parking lot is paved, according to the current Town Park Plans, the contestants will have no open space area to exercise their horses.
4. Future equine events, like inviting the Lipizzaner Stallions to preform, or leasing the grounds for a Buck Brannaman Clinic, or holding a championship event would be limited by the rodeo grounds lack of a "warm-up area" or a second arena for participants.
5. When the gates open before the rodeo begins, the spectators arrive to enjoy a petting zoo for the small tykes, kid's roping, mechanical bull rides, a cowboy saloon, and the famous BBQ dinner. Where on the plans is the space for the children's gathering area to participate in the "calf catch", a fun and safe family event? All these family entertainments are happening before and during the Western rodeo experience. The children love all these smaller parts of the rodeo, they pal around, interact and watch – and not from the grandstand. Kids need room to move around, and we know the community expects that too.
6. The new East / West orientation has eliminated the staging area for the summertime daily Snowmass Village Trail Rides. The equestrian outfitter business was situated at the west end of the existing rodeo grounds. This location is also the trailhead for one of the Roaring Fork Valley's only hiker/horseback trail - Upper North Mesa Trail. The RFVHC wants to understand where the TOSV designers intend to place the home base location for the Snowmass Creek Outfitter's equestrian business? The staging area needs to be thought out and planned to meet the Western Heritage criteria the TOSV has promised the community.
7. The current plan has diminished the rodeo grounds footprint to the point that the valley equestrians, horseback riding enthusiasts and rodeo supporters cannot properly or safely enjoy the Old West traditions. All the Snowmass Village area was originally a ranch. The Alpine Bank building was the ranch barn. We have been told that the two sports fields are simply place holder spots for future activities. This space is needed by the rodeo.

8. We conclude that the current footprint design of the entire rodeo arena grounds is too small for the weekly 2000-2300 spectators and competitors. There is no room for the rodeo to function and to grow.

Rodeo Arena – Items of Importance for competitors and the RFVHC

We agree that the rodeo needs a new arena, stock pens, fencing, loading chutes, bucking chutes and return alleys to see the rodeo into the future. The damage that has been done to the arena fencing is from the town snowplows, not by the rodeo animals.

1. We ask that a winter snowplow plan be created and followed to protect any piece of rodeo equipment on the grounds to safeguard TOSV's and the Rodeo's SWHA investments.
2. The RFVHC recommends using the Priefert Company, Americas #1 name in ranch and rodeo for over 50 years. The company has designed a map of the Rodeo Arena, which is excellent, but information is incomplete or missing from the maps.
3. A safe and usable arena floor has a minimum dimension of 130 to 150 ft width by 240 ft length. Typical size for most arenas is 150 ft by 240 ft. The dimensions that we see on the TOSV maps is 130' x 235.3.
4. Safe arena footing is critical for horses and riders' welfare and should be of professional grade. We need that assurance. No short cuts.

Loading & Bucking Chutes -

5. Currently, the Loading and Bucking chute set up allows only one angle for departure out of the gates. Rough stock - horses and bulls - perform best coming out of the chutes facing either left or right. The stock contractor is asking for dual return alleys for loading animals facing the animals preferred direction and is asking for 4 gates. Two of the gates would allow for right sided horses & bulls, and two gates would allow for the left sided horses and bulls. These 4 new chutes will replace the three, 30-year-old, current chutes.

We want to confirm there are not changes to how the heavy-duty loading chutes fits into the new plan. This size and weight and bulk is critical for unloading livestock for animal and human safety. This is a very important upgrade for the Stock Contractor and for rodeo safety issues.

Return Alleys for Roping Steers & for Rough Stock

6. The bucking horses and bulls will have two separate alleys to service the bucking chutes. The roping steers are sent through a return alley the length of the area to the back of the “Header & Heeler” boxes and are then fed into the chute between the two boxes for release. The return alley on all maps needs to be labeled. There are no dimensions or labeled identifications on the maps that we can identify easily.
7. The Header and Heeler boxes need to be 16 ft deep and 9 ft wide in size. There are no dimensions listed. We ask that the Priefert dimensions be included by the designers on the Rodeo Arena map for contestants to understand.
8. We want to confirm that the large holding pen for the bucking horses is not removed and has been placed back into the design. The largest holding pen that we see as per the 2.9.22 design is ONLY 10 ft by 10 ft. This is adequate for only 1-2 horses at the most. This is a safety issue. We also want to confirm the current back stock pens will not be made any smaller in the new plans.



Barrel Racer's run out –

9. On the rodeo arena maps that we have reviewed, there is no option shown on the map for the barrel racers to have a run out for slowing down and stopping after they complete their run through the timers. Gates on two of the pens on the right side of the arena could open and be used for barrel racers to enter and use as the run out onto the compacted dirt contestant staging area. The RFVHC asks that this upgrade be delivered by the designers for the benefit of our cowgirls and their sport. Barrel racing is an equine activity that could utilize the rodeo arena on multiple nights. We need the best possible layout for young, old, amateur and professional barrel racers.

10. The competitor and EMT in and out gates of the arena are also missing from the maps.
11. The watering of the livestock and watering accessibility and ease for the handlers is redesigned with all issues in mind. There is no reason for any shortcuts to be made. This is a critical issue that needs contestant and rodeo contractor approval.

Spectator Entrances, Spectator Services & Handicapped Parking

The spectators for any event at the rodeo arena need space. There cannot be bottlenecks, nor can the spectator space be taken up by pop-up merchants. These are safety issues and with space, flow and access the spectators will be protected and happy.

The space needed especially for spectator services needs to be near the porta potties and be handicapped accessible from the spectator entry gate and from the handicapped parking areas.

The RFVHC recommends that some handicapped parking for the contestants in the parking area with the horse trailers and trucks is a good idea. Handicapped parking in general for the public should be kept well away from the competitor areas and should be near the “roll up wheelchair viewing area” and shaded for spectating comfort.

Bleacher Walkways & Double Fence to Control Crowds

RFVHC recommends at least a 12-foot walkway for spectators to enter and exit the bleachers/grandstands. Fire department regulations will determine what is needed, but we have found that at least 12 feet makes for a safe and comfortable way for children and older people to navigate. A center walkway would be a positive addition for safe spectator departures.

Placing a **double fence** along the main grandstands will keep spectators and very small children away from the rough stock (bulls and broncs). This is a very important line of defense, and this alley way needs to be no less than 4 feet wide. We have been told that there is no way to keep the kids and enthusiastic spectators away from the action. As you can see in these two photos, a second fence or a cow return is a very effective measure, and the second fence can be moveable and useful for other events.



Clovis, New Mexico's beautiful Rodeo Grounds has center walkways and double fencing between the base of the grandstands and the arena to keep spectators safe

Double fencing in front of bleachers as well as being the roping cattle return alley acts as a barrier for spectator safety at a more casual rodeo grounds



Food & Bar Tents –

We want to recommend that the dining and bar areas for the public are not near the livestock holding areas or the competitor staging areas. This is a busy area and needs to be completely clear of spectators. Food, flies, injury to people and livestock by unintended interaction can be avoided with proper placement of the public gathering areas.

Trucks, food delivery and generators will need a service road to the backside of the dining and bar areas.

The Bar is critical to the revenue success of any caterer. Does the concessionaire decide on the placement of the food tent and bar tent? These options for positioning need to be well thought out in advance so future events can easily install their food and bar needs. A new alternative use event may not have the staff to handle two separate tents on opposite sides of the venue. The small footprint of the rodeo grounds is taking away more than just the parking.



Children's calf catch is a Rodeo favorite for locals and visitors alike.

The Entrance To Snowmass Village



According to the maps submitted to the TOSV Planning Commissioners for your approval, the first view people will see when driving into TOSV is 350 lineal feet of decorative metal screen fencing that the planner wants to use to shield the stock pens and rodeo grounds from view.

With the construction of this very expensive art fence, the view from the arena will also be blocked from the arena and the rodeo competitors will not be able to see their trucks and trailers in the parking area.

Many competitors have horses tied to their trailers waiting for competition and families in the trucks. Often contestants enter many events and have alternate horses for roping and barrel racing contests.

Also, if the public wanders into the competitor parking area, which is screened, they could be injured without someone seeing what is going on. The screen between the arena and the competitor parking area is not a safe choice nor a safe idea. The RFVHC asks that this expensive budget item in the plan be eliminated. The western appearance of a NEW well designed rodeo arena and bleachers will enhance the entrance and welcome our visitors to the Snowmass Village.

In the TOSV submitted permitting documents the RFVHC agrees that the Rodeo Arena and Rodeo Grounds character should be preserved. We quote: "The character that the comprehensive plan has determined is appropriate for this CPA overlay is to be rustic, western, understated, and retaining Snowmass Village's ranching heritage including farming and ranching artifacts remaining from earlier periods of the Valley's history. The proposed design aims to preserve the character described above largely through the strategic placement and aesthetic improvement of the rodeo and the preservation and enhancement of the pond and Brush Creek/wetlands."

Parking Surface – Information for Designers/Planners

A parking area must be level to allow full use of the area, safe trailering and parking of unit, safe and comfortable loading and unloading of horses, trailer and trailer door clearances, etc. It must also have good drainage and be free of mud. **Small crusher run gravel on a base of stabilizing large gravel** is the most suitable for trucks and horse trailers. Small gravel is easier on the horse's feet. Asphalt is slippery. Grass is acceptable but can be a problem in wet weather and requires maintenance. Here is a link for info: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/page11.cfm

Truck & Trailer size allowances – Information for Designers/Planners

The 12' space between trailers as seen on earlier plans is not enough space. There must be at least 18' between each truck and each trailer parked side by side in any equestrian contestant parking area. Trucks and trailers, people and other horses have been kicked in tight parking places. This amount of space will also make room for horseback riders passing between trailers on the way to the rodeo area.

We are suggesting that the contestant parking lot needs further review for safe truck and trailer parking. For further information please go to the Federal Highway Administration Equestrian Design Guidebook.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/page14.cfm#area

To determine the optimum width for parking spaces, consider the trailer width, stock requirements, and space needed for walking behind the stock. Generally, trailers are 8 feet (2.4 meters) wide. Horses and mules tied to the side of the trailer need about 12 feet (3.6 meters) at the side of the trailer, if they stand perpendicular to the trailer. Another 4 feet (1.2 meters) is needed for a person to safely walk or lead an animal behind tied stock. Where space allows, add an extra 4 feet for open doors on neighboring vehicles, for a parking space that is 28 feet (8.5 meters) wide.



Figure 8-7--Saddling a horse or mule requires access to all sides of the animal, and tight quarters make the job difficult. Note the difference in the horse trailers. The trailer on the left has parallel horse stalls, and the trailer on the right has slant-load—angle stalls with a storage area behind the partially closed door.



Figure 8-8--Adequate space in parking areas makes it easier and safer to saddle and care for horses and mules. They are more comfortable and are more apt to wait quietly.

Due to the current calculations on the Town Park maps, the RfVHC cannot be certain that there is enough parking area for the rodeo contestants. On the submitted documents, the plans refer to 46 trucks and trailers and then later, on another map 40 trucks and trailers. On a third map we see that multiple trucks and trailers are being parked in the “chain-up area”. We do not advise the that contestants be permitted to park on Brush Creek Road in the limited space in the “chain-up area”.

In addition, we learned that the Snowmass Rodeo needs 48-50 parking spots for rodeo employees. RfVHC is asking to require the designers to please make dedicated space on the plans for these required helpers.

Unloading Zone & Ingress and Egress

The rodeo parking lot for the Upper North Mesa Trail is the trail head for local Guides & Outfitters, the public and the Rodeo contestants, The RfVHC recommends a “horse unloading zone” that will prevent accidents and increase recreational usage. Horses that are unloading backwards from trailers can slip on asphalt and their legs can get caught under the trailer, or they may fall down. This is a major safety issue. The RfVHC recommends making an area that is flat, of road base/ bedding-sand for loading and unloading horses. After unloading, the truck drivers would then move to the parking area.

A minimum 17.5ft inside radius and 34.5ft outside radius (larger rigs may need 35ft ID x 51.5ft OD radii) should also be considered to make maneuvering easy into parking spaces and around perimeter drive. Angling any designated parking spaces 30, 45 and 60 degrees helps provide an adequate turning radius and maximizes use of space. The RfVHC does not see on the maps any careful layout for these long rigs to arrive and depart safely.

Parking Lot Organization - Per Rodeo Lease

In our outreach we discovered that there is a TOSV Recreation Department decision that could be altered in the softball practice parking that takes place during the Wednesday night rodeo. There are parking issues.

According to #12 Exclusivity clause in the 2022-2025 Snowmass Western Heritage Rodeo Lease

#12 - “This agreement shall not preclude any other activity whatsoever at the Rodeo by TOSV, its employees, agents or invitees so long as such activities do not interfere with scheduled and approved events or activities of SWHA. Further, TOSV acknowledges and agrees that SWHA intends to cooperate and partner with other non-profits and entrees to jointly host and market certain activities and events at the Rodeo. “

The RFVHC feels strongly that parking problem for Wednesday afternoon and evening is worsened by other sports activities. We ask TOSV for their consideration that this overload in the parking lot somehow be corrected for the 2022 season. We will also encourage all Snowmass Rodeo and TOSV Recreation Facility users to take the bus to the rodeo, which will free up space for Rodeo Parking.



Liability –

We will be encouraging the residents and visitors of Snowmass Village and our Aspen communities to become involved. This safety aspect for the rodeo contestants, their animals, the stock contractor and the spectators is the driving factor for decision making.

The Town Park Plan, which was submitted to the planning commission is inadequate to sustain a safe efficient rodeo. The RFVHC requests that the **TOSV Planning Commissioners** not rubber stamp a plan that the Town Council has submitted to you without the review and in-put from the rodeo contestants, staff and spectators.

We ask for a total review of this incomplete plan, because we know that the footprint is smaller due to the addition of the two Flex area / soccer fields and there is no warm up area for equestrians. The Fire Department has approved 2300 spectators for the Rodeo. How can 2300 people even be expected to move around in such a small area? And how will the rodeo contestants, rodeo staff and spectators squeeze into this active busy space.

No approvals should be given by the Planning Commission without comprehensive information on the efficiency and safety of the rodeo grounds plan, which we are now providing to the TOSV Planning Department.



Respectfully Submitted,

Holly McLain – Communication Chairman
Karin Reid Offield - President

For the Board of Directors of the RFVHC –

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*** 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization ***

Top speak with Holly McLain RFVHC Communication Chair - 970-948-2151

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