

Boundaries and Maps

By the Incorporate Vail AZ

The Incorporate Vail AZ (IVA) committee has been working from a detailed eight-page project plan. The major milestones are established by State statute and the work breakdown structure by the steps required to achieve the intermediate goals. Municipal incorporation is a complex, timely, and expensive process. It all starts with a map.

The IVA produced its first preliminary map six months ago and called it the “Area of Interest” map. Since that first map, it’s been amended multiple times to accommodate different entities including Pima County, active developers, City of Tucson, and the State Land department. It’s been a very dynamic process – sometimes with weekly changes! The result of the current map is an aesthetically awkward, wonky boundary but mostly intact by population and residential area. Some of the notable changes from the first “Area of Interest” map to the current map are:

- The IVA met with a group in Corona de Tucson to compromise on Vail’s south-western boundary.
- The IVA met with the Tanque Verde incorporation group to discuss the north-western boundary.
- Pima County agreed to include Colossal Cave Mountain Park and county-owned conservation lands in the Vail boundaries. This gives Vail parkland and open space.
- Diamond Ventures, the developer of new Rocking K, asked to be eliminated from the Vail map because of a prohibitive legal agreement with Pima County and statute ARS 9-101.01F.
- Without Rocking K, the area north of Old Spanish Trail was removed because it became a disconnected piece of land – an island – from the rest of Vail. Arizona law only allows islands of disconnected land on an exception basis as approved by the County.
- Recognizing Rocking K Estates, the original planned development in Vail, Diamond Ventures and Pima County agreed to a connecting land bridge to prevent it from becoming an island.
- The City of Tucson required the removal of five parcels (~5,000 acres) of state land that is currently being annexed by the City in exchange for their permission for incorporation. The City of Tucson is constantly annexing on its perimeter. Sometimes it’s parcel by parcel but most often it’s been state-owned land. The City of Tucson completed annexations in the Vail area in 1985, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2005, and 2013.
- The State Land department required the IVA to remove large parcels of its uninhabited land as per ARS 37-202G. The IVA was able to gain some concessions to avoid having disconnected islands of population.

As difficult as these negotiations were, the IVA also got concessions from Diamond Ventures, Pima County, City of Tucson, and the State Land Department. While holding strong to their own interests, all of these entities also saw benefits of incorporation and the rights of Vail citizens to determine their own destiny. The map of today will not be the map of tomorrow as the Town of Vail pursues its own vision of the future.

It was late in this incorporation process that we learned about the five current City of Tucson annexation efforts with the State Land department in the Vail area. This land is attractive to the City of Tucson because of the great community Vail has created. People want to live here. The City of Tucson is not to be blamed. Vail is a victim of its own success because of our disregard for declaring local sovereignty. Now is our chance!