

THE CITY OF ASPEN

2000
ASPEN AREA
COMMUNITY PLAN

February 28, 2000

Citizens who contributed their valuable time and effort!



Sven Alstrom • Debbie Ayers • Deborah Barnekow • Sally Barnett • Steve Barwick • Howard Bass • Gary Beach • **John Bennett** • Jeremy Bernstein • Bob Blaich • **Kitty Boone** • Joan Bracken Bain • **Steve Buettow** • Joy Caudill • Cowan Chang • Anne Chapman • Steve Child • Patty Clapper • Sha Cohen • Jennifer Cohen • **Jim Collins** • Karen Coordes • Carol Craig • **Jennifer Craig** • Jim Curtis • Bob Daniel • Don Davidson • Tammie Dawson • Nick and Maggie De Wolf • Pete Dempsey • **Jane Dinsmoor** • Susan Dodington • John Doremus • Tom Dunlop • Janey Elder • Gayle Embrey • Donnelly Erdman • Ron Erickson • Michael Ernemann • Bill Fales • Pat Fallin • **Steve Falender** • Dorothea Farris • Barbara Field • Heidi Friedland • Anne Gardner-Smith • **Janet Garwood** • Linda Gerdenich • Evan Griffiths • Ted Guy • Jeffery Halferty • Roger Hanneman • Georgia Hanson • Connie Harvey • Patti Hecht • Carol Hershey • Patricia Hill • Mary Hirsch • Heidi Hoffmann • Phil Holstein • Heather Hopton • Martha Horan • Keith Howie • Ellen Hunt • **Roger Hunt** • Mick Ireland • Shad Johnson • Deborah Jones • John Kane • **Stephan Kanipe** • Jackie Kasabach • Chad King • **Helen Kalin Klanderud** • Joanie Klar • Jamie Knowlton • Toni Kronberg • John Krueger • **Leslie Lamont** • Bob Langley • Darnell Langley • Marcella Larsen • Donnie Lee • Scott Levine • Jonathan Lewis • Scott Lindenau • **Bill Lipsey** • Carol Loewenstern • Shelley Lundh • Lynne Mace • John McBride • **Lisa A. McManigal** • Peter Martin • Susan Melville • Jamie Miller • Tim Mooney • Roger Moyer • Mark Nieslanik • John Noonan • Damian Panetta • Fonda Paterson • Terry Paulson • Frank Peters • Tony Petrocco • Jody Phillips McCabe • Roberto Posada • **Kaaren Ray** • **Suzannah Reid** • Jim Reser • Doug Rhinehart • **Rachel Richards** • Ann Rickenbaugh • Melanie Roschko • **Shellie Roy-Harper** • Scott Russell • Nasser Sadeghi • Patrick Sagal • Gilbert Sanchez • **Sheri Sanzone** • **John Sarpa** • Steve Saunders • **Tim Semrau** • Sandy Simpson • Doug Smith • John Starr • Charlie Tarver • Nida Tautvydas • Laura Thielen • Peter Thomas • Dave Tolen • Roz Turnbull • Jasmine Tygre • Chris, Jackie and Jessica Tyler • **Doug Unfug** • Jill Uris • Chuck Vidal • John Walla • Randy Wedum • EM Weinstein • Jannette Whitcomb • Steve Wickes • Wilk Wilkinson • Steve Whipple • King Woodward • Mary Woulfe • John Young • Brad Zanin • Robert Zupancis

Names in **bold** denote Oversight Committee Members and Alternates



Acknowledgments



Adopted by the Aspen City Council on February 28, 2000.

Mayor Rachel E. Richards

Tony Hershey

Jim Markalunas

Tom McCabe

Terry Paulson

Adopted by the Pitkin County and City of Aspen Planning and Zoning Commissions by Joint Resolution on January 25, 2000.

Aspen/Pitkin County Community Development Department

Steve Barwick, Aspen City Manager

Amy Margerum, Former Aspen City Manager

Julie Ann Woods, Aspen Community Development Director

Cindy Houben, Pitkin County Community Development Director

Stephanie Millar, Former Senior Long Range Planner

Amy Guthrie, Senior Planner-Historic Preservation Officer

Chris Bendon, Senior City Planner

Stephan Kanipe, Chief Building Official

Lynn Hoffman, Long Range Planning Assistant

Additional Assistance Provided By:

Tom Baker

BBC Research and Consulting

CDR Associates

Civitas, Inc.

Stan Clauson, Former Com Dev Director

Community Matters, Inc.

James Duncan and Associates

Kevin Dunnett, City Parks Department

David Hoefler, Assistant City Attorney

Mitch Haas, Former City Planner

Claude Morelli, Former City Transportation
Planner

Otak Rock Creek Studio

Alan Richman Planning Services

Rebecca Schickling, City Parks Department

Robert Schultz Consulting

John Worcester, City Attorney

Illustrations provided by David E. K. Panico

This document was made possible by funding from
the Aspen City Council and the Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners.



Table of Contents



Acknowledgments	page i
Executive Summary	page 1
1993 Original Community Vision Statement	page 4
Accomplishments Since the Adoption of the 1993 Plan	page 5
2000 Vision for the Aspen Area	page 7
2000 Community Themes	page 9
Community Development Features	page 10
Three Decades of Growth Management has Shaped Aspen's Character	page 11
Community Development Process	page 12
Community Action: How This Plan Will Be Used	page 14
Managing Growth	page 16
Transportation	page 20
Housing	page 24
Economic Sustainability	page 30
Parks, Open Space, and the Environment	page 33
Historic Preservation	page 38
Design Quality	page 41
Arts, Culture & Education	page 44
Addendum A: Aspen Area Community Plan Update Action Plan	page 47
Addendum B: Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan	page 64
Glossary of Terms	page 83
Overview Maps	page 84
Resolutions of Approval	page 91



Executive Summary



The 1993 Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP) established a blueprint for Aspen's future. The 1993 Plan focused on four major themes that were generated by citizen committees. They were: Revitalizing the Permanent Community; Providing Transportation Alternatives; Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Development; and Maintaining Design Quality/Historic Compatibility.

In the five years between the completion of the 1993 AACP and the initiation of the Update in 1998, the community was very successful in meeting most of the goals it laid out for itself. However, new issues have emerged. The 2000 Update added four new themes to help address changes in the community since the original Plan: Capturing the Impacts of Growth and Change; Containing Development to Limit Sprawl; Economic Sustainability; and Arts, Culture & Education.

Why Update the 1993 Plan?

The Aspen Area Community Plan calls for an update every five years. Nothing ever stays the same for long, so it is good to revisit community planning documents. Among the many changes that have occurred, *job growth* stands out for many members of the community. In 1995, there were almost 6,000 more jobs than residents in the Aspen Metro Area! That means a lot of people may be working more than one job, and many people are commuting from other communities to Aspen for work. In 1997, it was estimated that 65% of the Aspen workforce commuted to work from outside of town.

Who Updated the AACP?

The update was initiated in the Spring of 1998. Citizens worked on committees

representing different sections of the plan. In December of 1998, the committees submitted their final recommendations to an Oversight Committee made up of two members each from the City Council, the Board of County Commissioners, and the City and County Planning Commissions and one representative from each Focus Area Citizen Committee. The Sections for the Plan Update include Community Character; Growth; Affordable Housing; Transportation; Economic Sustainability; Parks, Open Space and the Environment; Historic Preservation; Design Quality; and Arts, Culture and Education.

What Are the Recommendations of the Update?

A few things have changed between the 1993 Plan and the 2000 Update. Following are the key elements of the 2000 recommendations:

- A change in how we *count* growth – we feel we missed capturing the impacts of change in use, remodels, and job growth since the 1993 Plan. The Plan Update recommends that we count and capture all growth impacts. Recommendations include requiring mitigation for remodels and changes in use, and ultimate limits to growth.
- The creation of a new Aspen Community Growth Boundary which focuses development inside the boundary while discouraging urban levels of development outside. This might require some upzoning and special incentives within the city to encourage infill development, and limitations on development outside of the Community Growth Boundary to maintain open or rural lands between Aspen and other down-valley communities.



Executive Summary



- A new section of the Plan recognizes the importance and contribution of Arts, Culture and Education to our community. Recommendations address how we can sustain these important community assets into the millennium.
- Recommendations on “Economic Sustainability” that endeavor to make our community better, *without getting bigger*. At the same time, the plan recognizes the importance of strengthening local ownership of businesses.

In addition, in the 2000 Plan, the Action Items are not included in the body of the document, but form a separate, companion Action Plan that supports the goals and philosophies of the 2000 Plan.

Reflecting the Desires of the Community

The Plan was developed to address not only issues of the *quantity* of growth, but also the *quality*. The Update continues to support the premise of a growth management system in order to address the desires of the community, though it does recommend modifications to the Growth Management System to better capture the impacts of all growth. Following is a list of highlights identified by the community in the 2000 Plan.

MANAGING GROWTH

- Develop an Aspen Community Growth Boundary to promote density and a sustainable mix of land uses inside the boundary and protect open lands and provide for only low density development outside of the boundary.

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Create an affordable housing environment in which units are integrated with the existing community.

MANAGING TRANSPORTATION

- Build upon our success in limiting automobile traffic in the City of Aspen by developing a multi-modal valley-wide transportation system.
- Improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit riders, and automobiles in the Aspen area.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Promote a healthy and diverse economic base that supports the local economy and the tourist industry.

MANAGING PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Maintain valued open space and wildlife corridors, both inside and outside of the Aspen Community Growth Boundary.
- Provide land needed for active and passive recreational uses.
- Encourage an environmentally conscientious community through individually responsible lifestyles and responsible building practices.

MAINTAINING COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

- Maintain and create places and opportunities for social interaction and lifestyle diversity.
- Promote a standard of design that is of the highest quality and is compatible with the historic features of the community and the environment.



Executive Summary



What *Hasn't* Changed?

Fundamental to both the original plan and the 2000 Plan are:

- *Our commitment* to open space and the environment.
- *Our commitment* to preserving and/or providing an appropriate amount of affordable housing.
- *Our commitment* to managing the impacts of automobile traffic in Aspen.

What is the Aspen Community Growth Boundary?

The Aspen Community Growth Boundary is intended to help preserve open space, discourage urban sprawl and manage the transportation impacts of new developments. In order to make the boundary effective, the County may need to maintain and potentially lower acceptable density levels in areas outside of the boundary, and the city will need to pursue infill in existing neighborhoods. The Community Growth Boundary would also serve as the basis for a future annexation agreement between the City and the County and would require intergovernmental

coordination for any development approvals in the joint planning area.

Why is this Plan Important?

The purpose of the Aspen Area Community Plan is to serve as a guide for the future. It is a vision, a map, and a plan of action for achieving the goals and values we share. The plan considers the balance between the physical environment and the social well-being of Aspen. The plan also considers the balance and interaction between *Aspen the Community* and *Aspen the Resort*, the important relationship between transportation and land use planning, and the context of the natural and built environments. It focuses on many aspects of life within Aspen's city limits, as well as the immediately adjoining lands in Pitkin County, known since 1993 as the Aspen Metro Area. The Aspen Area Community Plan is broad in scope and does not address every issue or parcel individually. The plan should be interpreted to apply generally to all properties and issues in Aspen and the immediately surrounding area. The Future Land Use Map should be referenced in all land use hearings.



1993 Original Community Vision



Citizens' Vision for the Aspen Area Community

The City of Aspen is blessed with a beautiful physical environment that has fostered a rich and intriguing history of colorful characters and events. The spirit that is Aspen draws its vitality from a unique patchwork of miners, entrepreneurs, ranchers, artists, intellectuals, sports-minded people, free spirits and visionaries. It is this unique balance between all sectors of the community that we are striving to retain and enhance. We believe that Aspen's diverse mix of people is still its most important resource and that people should take precedence over buildings and institutions. Public architecture should seek to support and enhance town life.

Our goal is to be a community that is environmentally responsible and economically sustainable. Along with real estate and construction, winter and summer tourism are the major economic forces of the community. Recognizing the inter-dependence between the local community and the tourism industry is a

valuable key to understanding this community. Contributions to Aspen's vitality are made by the permanent and part-time residents and tourists, however, we believe that the kind of vitality brought to Aspen by its full time residents is being diluted by the inability of working people to live in Aspen.

We seek to create a community of a size, density, and diversity that encourages interaction, involvement and vitality among its people. Aspen's unique spirit is in danger of eroding into a bland and irrelevant society lacking its former character. The key to reversing this trend lies in restoring the ability to attract, nurture, and learn from these disenfranchised characters. The image of Aspen as an organized façade needs to be injected with the "messy vitality" that originally created Aspen's renowned cultural and sociological diversity. Aspen as a community should avoid an environment that is too structured, too perfect, and that eliminates the funkiness that once characterized the town.

The success of *Aspen the Resort*, depends on the success of *Aspen the Community*.

Accomplishments Since the Adoption of the 1993 Plan



The 1993 Aspen Area Community Plan laid out several action items to be accomplished. Generally, the City and County have successfully addressed many of these goals. In most Action Plan areas, our rate of success was over 70%! Following is a list of our achievements in each Action Plan area from the 1993 Plan. In addition, many other things were accomplished which were not in the 1993 plan but which had related impacts. In order to conserve space, only accomplishments from the 1993 plan are listed here.

Growth Management Achievements

Among the Action Items from the 1993 Plan that we have successfully accomplished are the following:

- ✓ Combined the Aspen and Aspen Metro area growth management areas and quota allocations
- ✓ Reduced the permitted annual growth rate for new residential, commercial, subdivision and lodging development from 3.4% to less than 2%
- ✓ Eliminated the 30% minimum allocation guarantee from the Growth Management Quota System (GMQS)
- ✓ Developed a simplified review process for affordable housing developments and deducted affordable housing projects from the annual allotments in GMQS
- ✓ Modified the GMQS review criteria to minimize the role of standardized infrastructure improvement in the scoring system
- ✓ Coordinated the use of city and county utility extension policies to reinforce the Community Plan and Growth Management Policy
- ✓ Created GMQS scoring priorities to encourage on-site family owned affordable housing
- ✓ Reduced the overall number of free market units allowed

Transportation Achievements

In the area of transportation planning and management, the decade of the 1990s has been a period of great achievement for Aspen. In the span of just a few short years, the

community has managed to realize an extraordinary set of accomplishments, including the following:

- ✓ Developed Transportation Demand Management concepts including commercial core paid parking and the Transportation Options Program, with all parking revenues going into a separate fund for transit and parking alternatives
- ✓ Purchased the Rio Grande right-of-way as a transportation corridor for rail/trail and open space
- ✓ Passed an additional 1/2-cent sales tax for implementation of the Rio Grande purchase, development of a fixed guideway approach to the Entrance to Aspen, downvalley RFTA improvements and other transit-supportive improvements
- ✓ Doubled transit service between Aspen, Snowmass and mid-valley
- ✓ Established a residential permit parking system
- ✓ Implemented East End Dial-a-Ride Service
- ✓ Implemented a pilot West End Dial-a-Ride Service; prepared to implement reverse Hunter Creek Loop as soon as RFTA is able to hire a sufficient number of drivers
- ✓ Implemented the Galena Street Shuttle service

Housing Achievements

Among the housing achievements are the following:

- ✓ Developed a Resident Occupancy (RO) program
- ✓ Revised the City Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Cottage Infill program to promote registration and deed restriction of units
- ✓ Revised the housing qualifications program so that an employer building affordable units has the right to designate the units for the use of his or her employees
- ✓ Purchased the following sites for affordable housing: Lone Pine, 7th and Main, Aspen Mass, Burlingame, Truscott expansion, and Snyder
- ✓ Revised the Housing Authority Affordable Housing Guidelines to ensure priority is given to permanent year-round residents
- ✓ Ensured that development along Maroon Creek Road has a mix of affordable and free market units
- ✓ Encouraged tenant buy-out and resident ownership at existing mobile home parks
- ✓ Conducted surveys of employers and employees to

Accomplishments Since the Adoption of the 1993 Plan



determine the true extent of affordable housing needs

Commercial/Retail Achievements

In the area of commercial, retail, office and lodging, the community was able to achieve only a few of the goals it laid out for itself in the 1993 Community Plan. It failed to successfully address the Commercial Action Items laid out in the 1993 plan. This was due to two problems. For the “superblock” effort, partnering opportunities crucial to the success of the project fell through. For several of the other items, there was an inability to reach consensus on a definition of “locally serving.” Three significant items accomplished were the following:

- ✓ Conducted a study and issued recommendations regarding the Service/ Industrial/ Commercial (SCI) Zone
- ✓ Sponsored a forum of small lodge owners and revised the Lodge Preservation zone district
- ✓ Updated the lodging inventory

Open Space/Recreation and Environment Achievements

Among the achievements in the area of open space, recreation and the environment are the following:

- ✓ Implemented a tree distribution program
- ✓ Continued to hold biannual Community Clean-Up days
- ✓ Ongoing implementation of the Ecological Bill of Rights
- ✓ Revised snowplowing techniques to reduce air pollution and continued a salt free policy for snow removal and maintenance
- ✓ Retained the Holden-Marolt Parcel and North Star Nature Preserve as natural open space
- ✓ Maintained the library plaza above the parking garage as open space
- ✓ Implemented the recommendations of the Pedestrian Walkway and Bikeway Plan
- ✓ Amended the GMQS scoring system to encourage the use of recycled materials

- ✓ Developed a centralized recycling center
- ✓ Established a requirement to replace existing trees as a part of every development
- ✓ Investigated opportunities to reduce noise impacts from downtown dumpsters
- ✓ Investigated opportunities to reduce noise from large equipment, vehicles and RFTA buses
- ✓ Made efforts to move towards cleaner burning buses
- ✓ Worked to stabilize the embankments and curtail erosion on Independence Pass

Design Quality and Historic Preservation Achievements

We were able to accomplish most of the goals established in the 1993 Plan in the areas of Design Quality and Historic Preservation. Goals in process include reviewing Floor Area Ratio allowances and developing a County Historic Preservation Program. Accomplishments achieved include the following:

- ✓ Provided assistance and encouragement to neighborhoods outside existing historic districts to establish their own set of Character Guidelines
- ✓ Continued public review of projects
- ✓ Encouraged front porches through changes in Aspen’s Land Use Regulations
- ✓ Retained the Red Brick School for public use
- ✓ Ensured the continued public use of the Yellow Brick School building
- ✓ Amended the Historic Preservation Guidelines to encourage compatible rooftop activities in the commercial core
- ✓ Amended the City Code to require review of alterations and additions to all historic resource structures identified on the Aspen Inventory of Historic Sites and Structures
- ✓ Studied the Hunter Street corridor for increased buildout with aesthetic quality as it relates to the historic district and the gondola



2000 Vision for the Aspen Area



Since the 1993 AACP "Messy Vitality" vision statement, the Aspen Area Community's center of balance has shifted down valley, and economic disparities have widened significantly. The ability to maintain and enhance Aspen's once unique character hinges on understanding these fast-changing demographics.

To build character and sense of community is far more difficult than to erode it. Much of the warm, supportive, and creative spirit Aspen has enjoyed has been destroyed and is being replaced by a big-city anonymity. The community must work together to reverse this trend and must focus on building and enhancing the community's unique character.

The genuine character of our community should be measured by the quality of our human interactions, and not by the physical look of our man-made artifacts or the magnificent beauties of nature surrounding us. Aspen is a "magic" place with a unique mix of people, many of whom are well educated and traveled, reinforcing each other with a sophisticated small town spirit. Character has to be created, not merely purchased.

Our nature has been consciously inclusive and has abhorred exclusivity. Aspen has flourished because it has accepted people for who they are and not for whom we think they should be. A stratified class system is foreign to Aspen and is in opposition to our concept of a healthy valley. Valuable 'accidental' cross-cultural interaction is now being blocked. Encouragement of a more classless and interactive Aspen is necessary if we are to have a spirited community.

Openness is closing and hidden agendas are increasing. Difficulties of survival

and career competition are hampering our cooperation. Our heritage as a very special place is being challenged. We must allow change without restrictive rules dictating a level of conformity that stifles community creativity. The excessive body of regulations must not keep expanding and many should be reconsidered.

As Aspen moves into the third decade of its second hundred years, residents need to remember and to preserve its history and to be thankful that the town has survived to welcome us. Historic preservation is important, but it must not attempt to replace common sense with rigid and restricting regulations.

The relationships between the citizenry and the government need improvement. More open and sincere communications are needed. Although the government does encourage much public input, some community members feel a sense of opaqueness and tolerant inattentiveness. The distance between apparent agreement and action is too wide, and citizens often feel ignored in the outcome. Rather than creating new rules, community members should creatively solve problems. The community should encourage more citizen-inspired contributions, while being sympathetic to the excessive demands placed on our government. The task of protecting us from over-zealous exploitation is wearying. Micro-management too often muzzles sensible immediate solutions: the citizens and the government should become closer partners.

Any measures, even extreme ones, to make Aspen a more pedestrian oriented town will enhance our interactivity: Let's put our feet first! A substantial investment in bicycle infrastructure should be accelerated. We



2000 Vision for the Aspen Area



should pioneer in the use of light electric vehicles.

Affordable housing must be carefully allotted and managed to maintain the dignity and worth of the inhabitants. Because we are long on jobs and short on housing, employer-owned housing carries great risks of unfair demands. Our zeal for more affordable housing must be tempered with careful consideration of the impacts on character.

Growth can be overrated as the sole cause of our problems, as it is possible to grow, yet build strong community character. To measure our growth, much better use of indicators and data are needed, and the definitions of these numbers should not be manipulated to satisfy an objective. The nature of growth is more important than size.

Aspen needs more get-together places and public activities that naturally encourage an informal mix of our diverse population. The community must support and enhance such

places, and not allow those precious to us to slip away.

The arts and culture of our valley should continue to encourage local creators as well as to import celebrity talent. Our schools, groups, and conferences of art, music, dance, theatre, film, multimedia, literature, and design are at the heart of our cultural liveliness and accessibility. The high educational level of our citizens demands a strong cultural environment, as will our new web-connected arrivals.

The success of *Aspen the Resort*, depends on the success of *Aspen the Community*. The powerful influences of exploitation must be countered by a caring and tolerant citizenry and government, or we will degrade into a Disneyland for private jets. A better balance is needed between the priorities of the community and the resort, as well as closer ties. We must elevate the best interests of people, and we must demonstrate our good will towards each other and all comers.



2000 Community Themes



Visionary Themes: A Framework for Action

The 1993 Aspen Area Community Plan focused on four major themes that were generated by the citizen committees. They include: Revitalizing the Permanent Community; Providing Transportation Alternatives; Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Development; and, Maintaining Design Quality/Historic Compatibility. In the years between the completion of the 1993 AACP and the

initiation of the update, the community was very successful in meeting most of its goals, but new issues have emerged.

In addition to the original themes, the major themes identified or reaffirmed by the focus committees include: Revitalizing the Permanent Community; Capturing the Impacts of Growth and Change; Maintaining and Enhancing Community Character; and, Containing Development to Limit Sprawl.

Themes for the 2000 Community Plan

Revitalizing the Permanent Community

Recognize, include and empower our youth and the elderly

Provide incentives for small, diverse, locally-owned businesses

Encourage a more balanced permanent community

Provide assurances for the continued vibrancy of arts and culture as part of our community

Increase resident housing

Capturing the Impacts of Growth and Change

Capture mitigation for "Changes in Use" and remodels

Capture employee generation from single family homes

Create a "growth boundary" to encourage compact development

Maintaining & Enhancing Community Character

Encourage a diverse population

Encourage a diverse retail environment

Ensure quality design and construction

Preserve and enhance our historic resources

Containing Development to Limit Sprawl

Preserve important open spaces

Create a "boundary" to encourage compact development

Limit the overall growth rate



Community Development Features



Community Development

Plan process which build a framework for a Community Action Plan.

The Aspen Area Community Plan was developed by citizens in an effort to address not only the traditional issues of quantity, but also those of quality. In an effort to assess community needs, specific features were identified in 1993 and again during the 2000

The community endorses the continued base of a growth management system, though somewhat revised, in order to address the desires of the community outlined below.

Community Development Features

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- Develop an Aspen Community Growth Boundary to promote density and a sustainable mix of land uses inside the boundary and protect valuable open lands outside of the boundary.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Create an affordable housing environment in which units are integrated throughout the existing community.

TRANSPORTATION

- Build upon our success in limiting automobile traffic in the City of Aspen by developing a multi-modal valley-wide transportation system.
- Improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit riders, and automobiles in the Aspen area.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Promote a healthy and diverse economic base that supports both the local economy and the tourist industry.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

- Maintain valued open space, both inside and outside the Aspen Community Growth Boundary.
- Provide land needed for active and passive recreational uses.
- Encourage an environmentally conscientious community through individually responsible lifestyles and responsible building practices.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

- Maintain and create places and opportunities for social interaction and lifestyle diversity.
- Promote a standard of design that is of the highest quality and is compatible with the historic features of the community and the environment.

Three Decades of Growth Management has Shaped Aspen's Character



Background

Since the early 1970's, the Aspen area has taken the position that controlled growth is essential in order to maintain quality of life for the residents and visitors to the community. The 1976 Growth Management Policy Plan established the framework for implementing growth control regulations for residential, commercial and lodging sectors of the community.

The two major goals of the 1976 Growth Management Policy Plan were as follows:

- To preserve the environmental and social quality of life to which residents have become accustomed; and,
- To obtain and develop a balanced harmony between the economic needs and fiscal capabilities of the community.

The community now has almost 25 years of experience with growth policies and regulations. Growth Management has succeeded in meeting many of its overall goals. However, due to changing community priorities, unexpected changes in the cost of living in the community and other factors, new issues have emerged.

The Growth Management System was adopted, in part, to give the community time to plan for necessary capital improvements and to better preserve Aspen's community character. The community has achieved a fair degree of success in providing new services in conjunction with growth during the past 20 years.

However, our experience over the past 20 years tells us that we as a community have not been equally successful in anticipating and

addressing the social consequences of our plans and regulations.

The growth management process did not anticipate or plan for the increase in the number of second homes, or the movement of long time local residents to other communities down the valley due to the rising cost of housing and shortage of affordable units. The 1993 AACP did not anticipate the impacts of businesses changing use or the substantial increase in jobs available in the community. The percentage of employees working and living within the community dropped from 45% in 1993 to 35% in 1997. This left us even farther from our 1993 goal of housing 60% of our workforce up-valley of Aspen Village.

Because a limited amount of buildable land remains in the Aspen area and because our goals for restoring the community are ambitious, it is essential that all future development help take us towards our goals. Managed growth provides an opportunity to monitor the effects of our actions and to make the necessary adjustments. The Citizens of Pitkin County share a commitment to preserving open lands for wildlife, recreation and views; to providing affordable housing; to supporting a more sustainable local economy; and, to maintaining a sense of unique community character.



Community Development Process



“This community plays an important role in the American national scheme of things. If Aspen preserves its environment, something greater than a national park is preserved; if the environment is not protected then Aspen becomes one of the endless score of American communities without identity or purpose.”
(Growth Management Policy Plan, 1976)

Purpose and Process

The purpose of the Aspen Area Community Plan is to serve as a guide for the future. It is a vision, a map, and a plan of action for achieving our shared goals.

The plan considers the balance between the physical environment and the social well-being of Aspen, the balance and interaction between *Aspen the Community* and *Aspen the Resort*; the important relationship between transportation and land use planning; and the context of the natural and built environments. It focuses on many aspects of life within Aspen’s city limits, as well as the immediately adjoining lands in Pitkin County, known since 1993 as the *Aspen Metro Area*. The Aspen Area Community Plan is broad in scope and does not address every issue or parcel individually. The plan should be interpreted to apply generally to all properties and issues in Aspen and the Aspen metro area.

This plan has been built upon the community’s vision for itself through the work of hundreds of citizens on committees, in public meetings, through interviews, and through the Internet.

This plan has taken shape during the past several years. The update of the Plan was initiated in the Spring of 1998. At a kick-off community meeting in March of that year,

citizens formed committees matching the original plan sections with a few variations. At the recommendation of citizens, a committee to discuss “Arts, Culture and Education” was added and the “Commercial, Retail, Office, and Lodging” section was expanded to address the broader topic of “Economic Sustainability.”

The Focus Area Sections for the 2000 Plan include the following:

- Community Character
- Growth
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Sustainability (*formerly Commercial, Retail, Office and Lodging*)
- Parks, Open Space, and Environment (*formerly Open Space/Recreation and Environment*)
- Historic Preservation
- Design Quality
- Arts, Culture and Education (*new section*)

In December 1998, the committees completed their work and submitted their recommendations. Consensus was sought on this plan by bringing together representatives of the different committees with elected and appointed officials to work through the key issues and differences between the groups. The Oversight Committee was composed of one representative from each of the Focus Area Committees and two elected or appointed officials from the City Council, Board of County Commissioners, and the City and County Planning and Zoning Commissions. This group met periodically for six months to work through conflicts in the recommendations made by Focus Area Committees and to create a unified vision for the 2000 Plan.



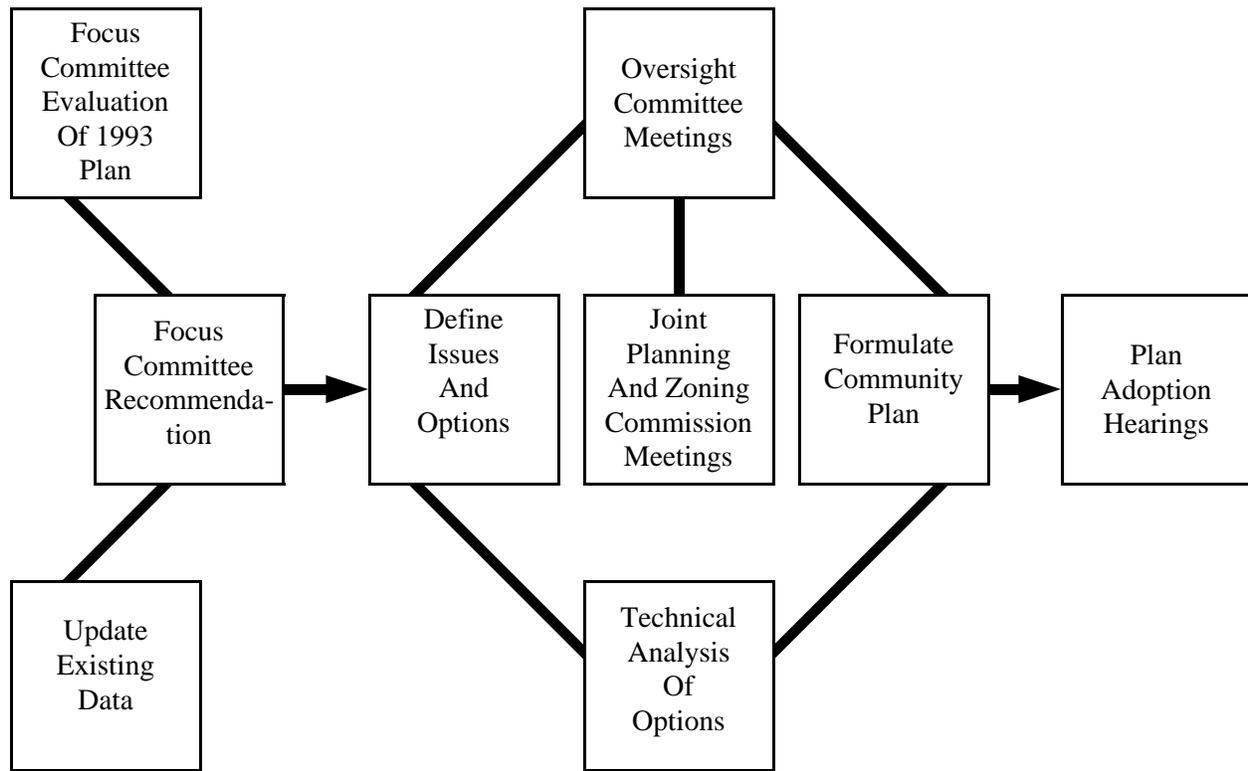
Community Development Process



In May, the Oversight Committee made its final changes to the Plan and recommended that the draft be forwarded to the City and County Planning and Zoning Commissions for consideration. After an additional six months of review, reevaluation, revision, and

debate, the joint Commissions recommended that the draft, as amended, was ready to begin the public hearing process for final adoption. Public Hearings were held in January and February of 2000.

Aspen Area Community Planning Process



PHASE I
Collect Ideas

PHASE II
Identify Issues/
Consider Options

PHASE III
Make
Recommendations



Community Action



The Character Based Plan

Community character is a comprehensive representation of an area that includes the *relationships* between the natural and built environment. It deals concurrently with all aspects of the community – land use, public facilities, arts and culture, social and economic features and the physical environment. Community character analysis provides a model for describing a community’s identity and addressing the land use and economic development issues that affect it.

Supporting Documents

The plan’s supporting documents and studies are available from the Aspen/Pitkin Community Development Department or through other City or County Departments. The supporting documents used in the development of this plan include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Aspen Area Community Plan Existing Conditions Report, 1999
- Aspen Valley Improvement Association 1998 Housing Study, 1998
- Current Travel Patterns, Volumes 1 and 2. Healthy Mountain Communities Regional Transportation Partnerships Project, 1998
- The Entrance to Aspen Record of Decision, 1998
- Resort Housing and Worker Friendly Employment, Mick Ireland, 1998
- Analysis of Employee Housing Needs in Pitkin County, Colorado. Rees Consulting, Inc. Boulder CO., 1998
- Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan, 1998

- Downtown Enhancement and Pedestrian Plan, City of Aspen Community Development, 1998
- Creating Better Communities: The LUTRAQ Principals, 1000 Friends of Oregon, 1996
- Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, 1996
- The Economic Impact of the Arts Community On Pitkin County, Aspen/Snowmass Council for the Arts, 1995
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Aspen Parks Department, 1995
- Aspen Area Community Plan, 1993
- AACP Phase One Report and Executive Summary, 1991
- Pedestrian and Bikeway Plan, Aspen Parks Department, 1990
- Roaring Fork Greenway Plan, 1973

Supplemental Action Plan

The Action Item recommendations developed by the eight Focus Area Committees, the Oversight Committee, and elected and appointed bodies have been organized into a companion Action Plan. The Action Items build upon and support the Intent, Philosophies, Policies, and Goals outlined in this Plan.

The 2000 AACP and Action Plan build upon the 1993 plan and endeavor to address a number of issues. The Action Plan will help formulate the work program for City and County staff during the coming years and will help inform our decision makers by providing further guidance on the desires of the community.



Community Action



How This Plan Will Be Used

The Aspen Area Community Plan is a philosophical and guiding document used by elected officials, appointed Boards and Commissions, City and County staff, and the general public.

It is intended to be a long-range plan to be updated as needed, but no more often than every five years upon adoption by the City and County. The review will serve as a checkpoint to ensure that the document is providing clear direction to elected officials and that it is still consistent with community goals, values and needs. A check will also be done to ensure that the companion Action Plan Action Items are being implemented on schedule. The update will also provide the opportunity to amend the plan if circumstances in the community warrant a change. This can be done at any time. The amendment process involves a public hearing and approval by the joint Planning and Zoning Commissions, and by the Aspen City Council. The plan shall remain in effect until amended.

The companion AACP Action Plan will be used by the elected officials to provide staff with direction in the areas of yearly work programming and budgeting. Many of the actions recommended in the plan require further study or formal adoption or amendment of ordinances or regulations. This process requires further public review and formal public hearings. The Action Plan will be reviewed during the annual budgeting process by staff who will make recommendations to the elected officials who will then select those action items it intends to address and/or implement in the coming year. Each

department will be required to present implementation strategies through a specific work program and budget line items.

Additionally, the Community Development Department has the responsibility to communicate the Action Items to the private sector and to seek its assistance in achieving identified community goals. The Board of County Commissioners and the City Council may also request that non-profit groups help facilitate the implementation of the AACP goals in return for financial assistance throughout the year.

Aside from being used on an annual basis during budget hearings, the plan will also be used on a daily basis by the planning staff. All new development and redevelopment will include an analysis section entitled "Relationship to the Aspen Area Community Plan" to ensure compliance with the community's goals and policies.

A private individual or developer's representative may also use the Aspen Area Community Plan to become more familiar with the Aspen area community goals. The Plan provides Background, Intent and Philosophy statements, as well as Policies and Goals that cover the major issues identified by the community during the update.

The citizens who developed this plan recognize that not every aspect of the community or the valley has been addressed. It should be assumed the plan applies generally to all properties and issues.



Managing Growth



Managing Growth



Intent

◆Encourage land use to occur in such a way that it protects and enhances the existing physical and natural environment of the valley. Limit the ultimate population in the Aspen area through a Growth Management System.

Philosophy

More than 2,000 years ago Plato compared a community to an individual with the need to keep various functions balanced. Today, the same wisdom applies to our community. Growth within a community needs to be like that of an individual with the need to keep various functions balanced. Too much too fast can bring indigestion. Additionally, as one matures, growth must slow and finally stop. We feel that ceiling is fast approaching where we will be at the maximum in economy, physical space, and quality of life.

The Aspen area is comparable to that of a maturing individual. Natural and human made resources are reaching their capacity: from land, water, and air quality to highway capacity and parking. As a consequence, this Plan endorses the continuation of a Growth Management System to limit and pace the population build out of the Aspen area. The existing Growth Management System needs to be revised and updated to eliminate loopholes found in the 1993 Growth Management Quota System. A maximum population of 28,000 to 30,000 persons within the community growth area is recommended based on the busiest month in 1998, July.

The 1993 Growth Management System reduced our 1993 actual rate of growth from

3.47% to an allowed simple growth rate of 2% on new development of residential subdivisions, commercial structures, and tourist accommodations. Although by measuring the same indicators our rate of growth has decreased to less than 2% since 1990, the growth experienced has *felt* much higher. The 1993-revised Growth Management Plan also concerned itself with the character of the community. That plan honored projects and applications that are community serving.

Recently, a high rate of growth has been seen in job generation. The level of staffing has increased in retail stores, restaurants, hotels, and in demand for higher levels of services associated with construction and operation of free-market homes.

As was called for in 1993, we again call for a critical mass of permanent residents and employees to be housed within the community growth area. Our goal is to reverse the tide and bring back the ebbing balance of our community/resort. We feel this needs to occur at a rate faster than the allowed 2% growth rate. If possible, this should be done without new growth and with minimal new construction. The conversion of existing free-market units to affordable deed-restricted units is preferred. Construction of new affordable housing units should be economically durable and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

We should endeavor to bring the middle class back into our community. We should discourage sprawl and recognize its cost to the character of our community, our open spaces and our rural resources as well as the fiscal expenses associated with the physical infrastructure of sprawl.



Managing Growth



Aspen Community Growth Boundary

To conserve resources, an Aspen Community Growth Boundary (**Map A: Boundaries and Physical Constraints**) has been identified. The City agrees to accept greater density within the boundary in exchange for the preservation of important open spaces in the outlying County and key parcels in the City, maintaining the separation between communities, and the prevention of sprawl (**Map B: Future Land Use Composite**).

Growth should be accommodated within the tightly delineated boundary, and the County should not approve or provide infrastructure to support development outside of it. Within the boundary, we encourage greater levels of density for affordable housing built with quality and attention to the character of the neighborhood. A Community Growth Boundary will focus and reduce infrastructure expenditures, reduce the spread of development into the countryside and maintain a rural character between communities. At the same time, the boundary will promote concentrations of development supportive of transit and pedestrian accessibility. Transit Oriented Development nodes outside of the community growth boundary are consistent with the intent of this plan provided they are located within ¼ to ½ mile of a transit stop and are designed in such a way as to be conducive to transit use and the adopted Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan (Addendum B). With these factors in mind, a compact and definitive Community Growth Boundary is delineated which will replace the “metro area” and “extended metro area” boundaries of the 1993 Plan.

County lines and city boundaries do not divide the Roaring Fork Valley when it comes

to big issues. Intergovernmental agreements should be attempted on all issues that will affect the neighboring government.



“During the implementation of this plan, the community should always be aware of and address any unintended consequences on the remainder of the valley.”

(1993 Aspen Area Community Plan)



Policy

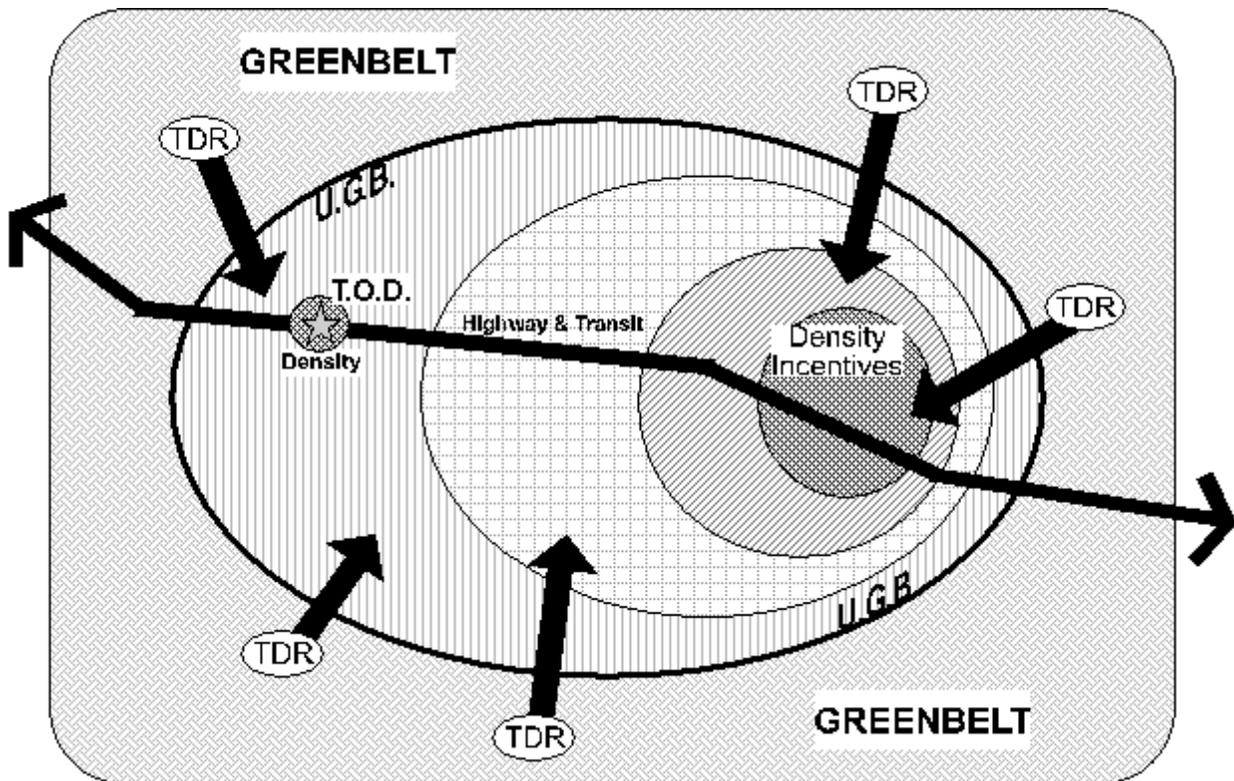
Ensure that future zoning amendments do not permit development in the Aspen Community Growth Boundary area beyond acceptable levels of growth in this plan.

Goals

- A. Through the Growth Management System and good land use planning, limit the ultimate population in the Aspen area in order to preserve the quality of life for residents and enjoyment for visitors.
- B. Provide for a “critical mass” of permanent local residents by providing a limited number of new affordable housing units within the Aspen Community Growth Boundary.
- C. Revise the Growth Management System to implement a true rate of growth that counts all of the growth occurring locally including job generation, changes in use of property, remodeling of existing structures, and infrastructure. Pace the actual rate of all growth (with the exception of affordable housing) to less than 2% annually by limiting the allocation of building permits or a quota system of some kind.

- D. Contain development with the creation of an Aspen Community Growth Boundary and intergovernmental agreements between the City of Aspen and Pitkin County to ensure development is contained and sprawl is minimized.
- E. Foster a well-balanced community through integrated design that promotes economic diversity, transit and pedestrian friendly lifestyles, and the mixing of people from different backgrounds.
- F. Develop a better database and tracking system for land use and affordable housing planning.
- G. Utilize and encourage a regional approach to land use planning whenever possible.

Concentric Ring Theory (GMQ Policies)



The drawing above illustrates the direction the City of Aspen would like to grow, with greater densities located in town and the downtown core and alternative development near transit-oriented development (T.O.D.) sites. Transfer Development Rights (T.D.R.) indicate the desire to transfer development rights from areas in the county to developments within the urban growth boundary.



Transportation



Transportation



Intent

♦**The community seeks to provide a balanced, integrated transportation system for residents, visitors, and commuters that reduces congestion and air pollution. Walking, bicycling and transit use is promoted to help us reach that goal.**

Philosophy

Aspen’s future should be one in which the automobile plays a smaller role in people’s everyday lives. Other modes of travel should be made as safe and convenient as possible to facilitate that goal. Residents, guests, and visitors including skiers should have multiple options for all of their trips. Traffic volumes in Aspen should be less in the future than they are today. The trail system should be fully integrated into the transportation system for general-purpose travel. Fewer trucks and other heavy vehicles should traverse the city’s streets.

Future transportation planning and land management should build on the successes of the 1993 Plan. Without continued improvements in transit service, as many as 4,000 additional parking spaces may be needed in town to accommodate cars by the year 2018.¹

Because of our commitment to clean air, quieter streets, and enhancement of our unique community character, we support the Entrance to Aspen Record of Decision.

The emphasis in transportation system design should be improvement of air, water, climate, noise, and visual quality. Transit

vehicles operating within the Aspen city limits should be clean and quiet.

Local and regional land use and development patterns should enable and support travel by alternative modes of transportation. New development should take place only in areas that are, or can be served by transit, and only in compact, mixed-use patterns that are conducive to walking and bicycling (**Map C: Transportation Improvements**). The amount of surface land area devoted to the automobile (particularly for parking) should decline from the 1998 level.

Realizing this vision will require citizens, developers, elected officials, and others to recognize that a healthy transportation system includes many different modes, not simply the private automobile. Rather, the level of investment in new transit services and infrastructure, and more and better bikeways and walkways should increase. The volume of traffic on streets and highways in the Aspen area should not be allowed to grow, and ideally should decline.

To encourage use of transit and other alternative modes of travel, travelers should feel comfortable on all legs of a trip: from door to door. Safe, direct and attractive walkways should be provided to transit stops. Walking distances to transit should be minimized. The “burden” of riding transit vehicles should be minimized by strict attention to maintaining schedules, speeding up routes were possible, and providing “creature comforts” (e.g., adequate reading lights, comfortable seats, ski/snowboard/bike storage, etc.). Personal safety and security should be a top priority for all transportation modes.

¹CDOT, *Entrance to Aspen Record of Decision*, Project STA 082A-008, August 1998.



Transportation



Policies

- Ensure consistency among all plans or projects affecting transportation in Aspen including, but not limited to, the following: the Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP), the Entrance to Aspen Record of Decision, the Corridor Investment Study (CIS), the Downtown Enhancement and Pedestrian Plan (DEPP), the Aspen Walkway and Bikeway System Plan, and the Aspen Traffic Calming Plan.
 - Limit traffic on Highway 82 into Aspen to 1993 volumes.
 - Reduce the internal flow of traffic within Aspen. Establish an accurate baseline of traffic flow data in 2000.
 - Preserve the character, safety and traffic-limiting capacity of State Highway 82 into Aspen by maintaining it as a two-lane facility for automobiles, with extra capacity reserved for transit use only.
 - Structure new growth in the community in compact, mixed-use patterns that enable and support travel by foot, bicycle and public transportation for all types of trips.
 - Hold the supply of public parking within the Aspen Community Growth Boundary to 1998 levels, with the exception of affordable housing parking.
 - Increase the percentages of all types of trips made by alternative modes of transportation throughout the region.
- Ensure that local and regional transportation and land use policies and decisions are mutually supportive.
 - Require all employment, school, social, recreation or other activities that generate demand for travel to mitigate traffic impacts through support of alternative transportation modes in proportion to trips generated.
 - Reduce automobile congestion in the downtown core, particularly in the evening and on weekends so as to foster economic sustainability.

Goals

- A. Improve the quality, affordability and reliability of commercial air service to Aspen and Pitkin County.
- B. Maintain and improve the convenience, comfort, affordability, safety, security, and hospitality of transit service in the Roaring Fork Region.
- C. Maintain and improve the appeal of bicycling and walking for a wide variety of trips in the Aspen area by adding sidewalk connections, replacing sidewalks, and requiring sidewalks as part of development approvals, where appropriate. The City should follow up on enforcement to ensure sidewalks are maintained and snow is removed.
- D. Maintain and improve the appeal of carpooling or vanpooling for a wide variety of trip types.



Transportation



- E. Reduce the adverse impacts of automobiles on the Aspen area.
- F. Manage the supply of parking to limit adverse impacts of automobile use and to conserve land in the Aspen area.
- G. Provide a wide range of flexible transportation management tools and techniques to reduce single-occupant automobile use.
- H. Reduce the adverse impacts of freight and construction vehicles on Aspen.
- I. Continue to improve travelers' Aspen experience by providing local travel information at bus stops, on the Internet, through brochures, etc. Reduce travel by visitors in automobiles through support of innovative traveler services.
- J. Ensure that urban form of the Aspen area supports the goals of the AACP Transportation element.
- K. Improve the ability of elected officials, staff and citizens to understand transportation problems and the effectiveness of solutions by collecting better data on local travel patterns.
- L. Consider other innovative transportation modes.
- M. Ensure that RFTA continues to be a primary means of transit and is kept economically healthy to serve the valley.

Housing



Housing



Intent

♦Create an affordable housing environment that is appropriately scaled and distributed throughout existing and new neighborhoods, is affordable, and respects our overall community concerns, as expressed in the Aspen Area Community Plan.

Philosophy

Aspen is committed to balanced growth and respect for the environment that has preserved it as a special place.

We still believe that a “critical mass” of local working residents is needed to sustain our community. Our situation prior to 1987 represented a desirable social balance between working residents and second homeowners - a balance between “Aspen the Community” and “Aspen the Resort.” As our workforce has increased dramatically since then, our 1993 goal of housing 60% of our workforce up-valley of Aspen Village may represent an unacceptable level of growth and an unobtainable goal.

While we still believe that “*our goal is not to house everyone who would like to live here,*” we believe it is important for Aspen to maintain a sense of opportunity and hope (not a guarantee) for our workforce to become vested members of the community. We believe that continuing the creation of affordable housing units is necessary to achieve this desired balance coupled with continual monitoring of the progress towards this goal.

Aspen’s affordable housing program should be about building community. The primary goal is to preserve and enhance those qualities

that have made Aspen a special place by investing in our most valuable asset – people.

Our healthy mix of people with different economic conditions has made Aspen a vibrant place. Our housing policy should bolster our economic and social diversity, reinforce variety, and enhance our sense of community by integrating affordable housing into the fabric of our town. A healthy social balance includes all income ranges and types of people. Each project should endeavor to further that mix and to avoid segregation of economic and social classes by project.

The community reaffirms and emphasizes the 1993 statement: “*housing should be compatible with the scale and character of the community and should emphasize quality construction and design even though that emphasis necessarily increases costs and lessens production.*” Affordable housing built since 1990 has largely met that goal (**Map D: Affordable Housing Sites**). To ensure continued success, there should be a method of retrospectively evaluating the success of such projects.

Housing policy should emphasize the development of neighborhoods and community, not just units. Housing sites should be rated with emphasis placed on living within walking distance of transit, employment areas and social connections. The guidelines and criteria in the Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan should be utilized so that decisions regarding affordable housing policy are not recreated with each land use review.

Development of affordable housing within the traditional town site should be encouraged so as to protect our open and rural lands. Infill



Housing



projects within the town site can preserve and enhance our sense of community, our economic viability, and our partnership with the environment. When employees have the ability to live near where they work, their reliance on the automobile lessens and they have greater opportunities to become a part of the town's social fabric.

No one location or type of housing can be relied upon to solve our problems. The conversion of resident housing to second homes threatens our community. A buy-down program that preserves the existing housing stock for working residents must accompany new housing production. Preservation will regain the neighborhoods for working residents. While a buy-down program may be costly, it can increase housing opportunities for working residents in a relatively benign manner. This "buy-down" alternative maintains other community goals of growth, open space, and community character.

Aspen's affordable housing program should facilitate the production of affordable housing by several means. The 1993 AACP stated that *"the private sector must be encouraged financially and morally to solving the problem."* Opportunities should be sought through Public - Private Partnerships, and new methods should be explored. The private sector and non-profits can play an important role in the affordable housing dilemma. The burden of providing affordable housing should not lie solely on the shoulders of the Housing Authority. The local business community, the non-profits, and local developers have much expertise and a personal interest in affordable housing. They, too, should be encouraged to contribute.

Public monies should be spent in a financially responsible manner. Each potential affordable housing site has an optimum development potential based on its physical characteristics. While it is difficult to pre-determine these optimums, site planning should be driven by the physical capacity of the land and the character of the neighborhood, not an arbitrary per-bedroom subsidy. Our decision-makers, the elected and appointed officials, should contemplate these optimums on an individual project basis.

Finally, growth, transportation, the consumption of our rural and agricultural lands, and the limited supply of quality affordable housing are issues that extend beyond the Aspen Area. These are truly valley-wide problems and can be best addressed with regional cooperation. A better relationship and greater coordination among the Roaring Fork Valley communities can reinforce our common goals.

Policies

- Provide 800 to 1300 additional affordable housing units within the Aspen Community Growth Boundary. Consideration should be given to minimize the development footprint of all affordable housing projects without compromising the appropriate density or the livability of the project.
- The Growth Management Quota System should be reflective and supportive of our affordable housing goals.
- Encourage development of housing to occur within the city limits and emphasize "good city form" to protect our rural and



Housing



open lands from development and to reinforce and enhance our social well-being, our economic viability, and our partnership with the environment. The production of units cannot be viewed as a means to an end. The people living in them should partake in and contribute to the “Aspen Experience.”

- The burden of providing affordable housing should not lie solely on the shoulders of the Housing Authority. The local business community, non-profit entities, and local developers have much expertise and a definite interest in affordable housing and should be encouraged to contribute.
- Affordable housing should reinforce and enhance our community. A healthy social balance that includes all income ranges should be a primary goal of our affordable housing program. Segregating types of people based on their housing need challenges our social stability and should be avoided. Celebrate our diversity by reflecting it in our housing inventory. Avoid housing developments that inadvertently create segregation.
- Promote a high quality of site planning and architecture in affordable housing to enhance the character and charm of Aspen.
- Provide clear direction to developers on the needs and expectations for quality design and construction. Provide clear and consistent direction on the development process, incentives and procedures.

- To the extent possible, expedite the review time required for projects meeting the Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan Criteria and the Philosophies, Policies and Goals of this document.

Goals

- A. Manage the growth of our community to preserve and enhance our community.
- B. Encourage development to occur within the Aspen Community Growth Boundary and emphasize “good city form.”
- C. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure success in providing affordable housing.
- D. New affordable housing projects should reinforce and enhance a healthy social balance for our community and enhance the character and charm of Aspen.
- E. Encourage greater participation by the private sector in developing affordable housing.

Housing Criteria

Housing Criteria are derived from the Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan. Though used as a guideline, all affordable housing projects should strive to meet as many of these criteria as is feasible:

Criteria 1: Community Growth Boundary location

Criteria 2: Proximity to available public mass transit



Housing



Criteria 3: "Containable Development" compatible w/ neighborhood & does not promote sprawl

Criteria A: Contiguous to existing public facilities and infrastructure

Criteria B: Amenable to transit, bike and pedestrian oriented design (non-automotive)

Criteria C: Visual compatibility with surrounding area

Criteria D: Optimize the site's development potential

Criteria E: Contribute to the Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Goals

Criteria F: Quality of life: range of income groups, mixed uses, access to open space

Criteria G: Quality of design and construction

Criteria H: Utilize and conserve natural features

Criteria I: Fiscal impact of site compared to other sites

Please see the [Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan](#) for more detail (Addendum B).

Publicly Owned Affordable Housing Sites

During discussion with the Oversight Committee in February of 1999 and with a broader group of appointed and elected officials in August of 1999, consensus was established that the Housing Office be directed to aggressively pursue developing affordable housing on sites already publicly owned. The Committee determined that we should focus our energy on developing affordable housing on these sites, and other sites that meet the Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan Criteria, as they become available. These sites are not ordered by rank. This list is not exhaustive. Other opportunities may emerge over time.

- 7th and Main
- Stillwater
- Truscott Expansion
- National Forest Service Site, 7th & Hallam
- Burlingame Parcel D (Next to US West at AABC and possibly including US West)
- Aspen Mass
- Burlingame Village (pending agreement with Zoline Family)
- Bass Park

In addition, we can not underestimate the importance of the preservation of existing units and efforts should be made to preserve free market units as affordable units by any means possible, including buy-downs to help contribute to our affordable housing stock.

The private sector is encouraged to come forward with affordable housing proposals of their own. Public-private partnerships are encouraged as well as private affordable housing ventures.

Potential Affordable Housing Sites

During discussion with the Oversight Committee in February of 1999, consensus was established on a number of potential affordable housing sites. The Committee determined that we should focus our energy on developing affordable housing on these sites, and other sites that meet the Housing Guideline Criteria, as they become available. These sites are not ordered by rank and unit counts are estimates based on property size and types of units expected.

Priority Sites	Type of Project	Low Unit Estimate	High Unit Estimate
AABC	Partnership	20	50
Core and in-town Infill	Partnership	45	100
MAA Seasonal Housing (in progress)	Partnership	100	100
Private Property (7th and Hopkins)	Private	20	40
Moore Property	Private	0	30
Buttermilk Base Housing	Private Mitigation	0	88
7th and Main Street (in progress)	Public	11	11
Stillwater - Lot 1	Public	12	15
Truscott Expansion (new units)	Public	100	150
US Forest Service Site	Public	50	120
North 40 (in progress)	Private	72	72
Hines/Highlands (in progress)	Private Mitigation	112	112
Moore PUD (in progress)	Private Mitigation	31	31
Aspen Country Inn (completed)	Public	40	40
Snyder (completed)	Public	15	15
SUBTOTAL		628	974

In addition, we can not underestimate the importance of the preservation of existing units. However, these do not count against our total because they are not new construction. Examples of “buy-downs” that have recently been completed:

Martinson-Nostdahl Condominiums	10 units
Woody Creek Mobile Home Park	54 units

It is understood that the approximate numbers of units and bedrooms on available sites may vary with community planning processes, land use constraints and financial constraints. Therefore,

the Plan also calls for the community to continue to discuss the following potential affordable housing sites:

- Bass Parcel
- Burlingame Ranch
- Moore Open Space
- City Golf Course through changes in layout
- Aspen Mass (*in conjunction with USFS Site and Transit Oriented Development*)
- Cozy Point (up to 5 units)

These sites may become more important if the community is unable to meet affordable housing needs at the agreed upon locations.



Economic Sustainability



Economic Sustainability



Intent

♦Maintain a healthy, vibrant and diversified year-round economy that supports the Aspen area community; to maintain and enhance existing business and cultural entities; and, to support and promote the "Aspen Idea" of "mind, body and spirit."

♦Enhance the wealth-generating² capacity of the local economy while minimizing the rate at which cash flows through the local economy ("throughput") and limiting the expansion of the physical size of the community.

Philosophy

The Aspen community includes full- and part-time citizens. We share our community with a large number of guests. Our economic and business decisions should support and sustain the environment and future generations. They should ensure balance and integration between "Aspen the Resort" and "Aspen the Community."

Aspen's economic base is real estate, tourism, arts, and recreation, especially skiing. Retail, lodges, services, professionals, and nonprofit organizations also support and are supported by the resort economy. Essential to long-term viability is the unique, varied, high quality, and welcoming experience Aspen offers to both residents and a diverse visitor population. They demand a lively, small-scale downtown with diverse and unique shops and varied choices of accommodations, including small lodges.

² Generating wealth involves increasing profits, wages, and savings.

Local ownership of business helps maintain our community's unusual character, tends to return more money to the local economy, and provides additional opportunities for upward mobility of working people.

Externally-owned businesses can positively affect the community too. For example, some are locally-*serving* businesses, which should be supported because they make commerce more convenient and strengthen the local economy by causing transactions to take place in the community that otherwise would take place elsewhere (import replacement). Another example: some externally-owned businesses are locally-*involved*. They contribute volunteers, cash, and in-kind support to community and nonprofit activities.

The community and its governments should support local ownership as well as externally-owned businesses that are locally-*serving* and locally-*involved*.

A vibrant economy requires positive working relationships between people and institutions, especially between the private and public sectors. Therefore, we must foster mutual respect, civility, and friendship, and continually improve our capacity to work together for the common good.

A sustainable community's economy can get better without getting bigger. The economy and local businesses strengthen their positions, not by continually increasing throughput but by maximizing benefit and profit with existing throughput.



Economic Sustainability



Policies

To retain and recirculate wealth within the community, we should strive to do the following:

- Foster a high-quality, well-trained, service-oriented, educated work force.
- Encourage local ownership of businesses.
- Create opportunities for entrepreneurs so that local residents can start businesses and move beyond wage-earning jobs.
- Ensure government support of a diverse business and nonprofit community.
- Utilize our public and private infrastructure (transportation, parks, buildings, businesses, etc.) to full capacity to ensure the

maximum return on existing investments (though we also understand the value of the off-season).

- Support public/private partnerships.
- Encourage resource efficiency, environmental responsibility, and cultural and community sensitivity in local organizations and in construction.

Goals

- A. Improve ways to track changes in our economy.
- B. Create a long-term sustainable economy that respects the underpinnings of the community such as the environment and the people.

*Parks,
Open Space,
& the
Environment*



Parks, Open Space, & the Environment



Intent

♦**Preserve, enhance and restore the natural beauty of the environment of the Aspen area.**

♦**Provide low-impact facilities to support the sustainable use of unimproved areas.**

♦**Support an environment that better the lives of all, preserves our natural resources and provides opportunities and access for all to enjoy.**

♦**Further the growth and development of outdoor recreation through expanded partnerships among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the general citizenry.**

In order to maintain and preserve our existing inventory of trails, parks and open space, fees should be collected for the commercial use of these areas. This money can then be “reinvested” into our parks and open space facilities to maintain and restore the resource. In addition, these funds could be used to establish an educational program that furthers the community’s understanding of the importance of preservation and protection of our natural resources.

The natural environment is one of the community’s greatest assets and the reason many people choose to visit or make the Aspen area their home. From sensitive land development to air and water quality, to recycling efforts, to habitat restoration, life in this community must reflect the commitment to preserve our environmental and wildlife resources (**Map F: Wildlife and Biodiversity**). Our community’s active and passive recreational needs must be constantly reassessed and addressed in order to maintain one of the most valued features of the Aspen area.

Philosophy

Implicit in the development and growth of the other elements of the Aspen Area Community Plan is the continued acquisition and preservation of open space within our developed area, as well as the further development, management and preservation of our parks and trails (**Map E: Open Space and Trails**). In an effort to balance these important community values, including the implementation of affordable housing development plans and transportation plans, there is a need to continually evaluate how to achieve these goals while minimizing the impacts to the other elements of the plan.

There is widespread agreement that open space is vital to Aspen’s sense of itself. Constant vigilance is required to ensure that this resource is protected for its visual and recreational contribution to our community as well as for its immediate accessibility from all parts of town.

Policies

- No open space or trail interest acquired with Open Space/Trails Funds should be sold or conveyed, nor should any interest be converted unless such open space or trail interest is replaced with another open space or trail interest of equivalent value. Such sale or conversion should be approved by a majority of the electorate at a general or special election called for this purpose. City and County regulations should be made consistent in this regard. Equivalent value for any replacement property must take into consideration the



Parks, Open Space, & the Environment



conservation value for which the property was acquired, such as wildlife or native habitat, scenic vista, riparian corridor protection, fisherman access, etc.

- If joint housing and open space/park proposals are considered, housing should be clustered and the property should be planned to allow for the preservation of the most important open space features (e.g. wildlife habitat or river corridor protection). Housing and transportation planning criteria should also be considered in site design. The park spaces in all housing developments should be preserved for use by everyone rather than as private open space.
- All developments should be in accordance with the Wildlife and Biodiversity map and the Parks, Open Space, and the Environment map to protect sensitive habitat areas (e.g. riparian corridor and Elk habitat). Sites should be developed and designed with regard to the existing landscape. Buildings should be clustered and the property should be planned to allow for the preservation of the most important open space and natural features.
- Elected and appointed Boards and Commissions should consider environmental and wildlife issues in all land use deliberations, discussions, and decisions.
- Preserve key open space parcels that help to establish the character of the Aspen area.
- Where economically and politically feasible, look beyond the existing boundaries of the AACP plan to include areas

such as Woody Creek, Snowmass Village, and down valley in all trail planning, open space preservation and park development. Establish intergovernmental agreements or memorandums of understanding to implement the goals for expanded recreational access and opportunities. Look for opportunities to ensure that some portion of land on large development projects is designed to retain significant areas of open space and trail connections.

- Seek opportunities to discourage sprawl in order to preserve open spaces between communities. Encourage infill projects that integrate more housing into the existing urban fabric. Ensure that development associated with the valley-wide rail plan is compact in order to preserve open space. Incorporate trails and other recreational amenities into affordable housing development plans.
- Recognize the important natural features that define the character of Aspen. Such features are identified in the Future Land Use Map and include the preservation of and access to the river corridor, maintenance of a green entryway into town and other items consistent with the Roaring Fork Greenway Plan.

Goals

- A. Implement the “Greenfrastructure” Plan as identified on the Future Land Use Map.
- B. Improve public access to parks and recreation facilities.
- C. Provide maintenance to protect and enhance the quality of our parks and open



Parks, Open Space, & the Environment



spaces.

- D. Plan for future parks and open space needs by updating the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- E. Protect and enhance the natural environment.



Because of our strong sense of responsibility to the natural environment, we have reprinted here the Mohawk Nation strategy statement for human sustainability and interaction with the earth. We believe Aspen should be guided by these principles as a community as the Mohawk are guided by them as a nation.

Quote from: Haudenosaunee Environmental Restoration An Indigenous Strategy for Human Sustainability

“The underlying philosophy among the Haudenosaunee is that in every aspect of our way of life, in our government, and with every decision that we make, we must always be of one mind and always make our decisions in consideration of the ‘Seven Unborn Generations.’ This centuries old Haudenosaunee philosophy reflects the importance of decision making and its effects upon the continuity of Haudenosaunee existence. From this philosophy comes a strong sense of responsibility for the earth and life upon it. The first game seen on the hunt is not harvested, the first berries are not picked, to make sure these gifts will always be there as a resource. The thought is that if you don’t pick the first, you won’t be the one to pick the last. The Haudenosaunee harvest only what can be eaten or used, and thanks is always given to the Creator for these bountiful provisions.”

“The Constitution of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy requires that lawmakers consider the effects of our decisions on the natural world, of which we are a part and for which we feel we bear special obligations. The duty of human beings and our governments toward the natural world leads the Haudenosaunee to treat the natural world with respect and protect it for the unborn generations.”

It is a major priority to see that our unborn generations are born into a world no worse than it is presently, and that the world’s condition will hopefully get better. When we walk on Mother Earth, we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget the seven unborn generations in any of our collective or individual decisions. Since the Seventh Generation will soon be walking the same earthy path as the Haudenosaunee do today, we try to ensure that our future children will have a path to walk, and that the path will be much better than the one we have walked upon.”

Reprinted with permission of the Mohawk Nation
No uses beyond those associated with the AACP may be made without permission from James Ransom, Director,
Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force, (518) 358-3381.



Historic Preservation



Historic Preservation



Intent

◆**Preserve Aspen’s irreplaceable historic resources.**

Philosophy

The mission of the preservation community is based on two interlocking convictions: a desire to safeguard a broad representation of our region’s cultural, natural, and historical treasures; and, the belief that by promoting appreciation of our history we maintain a “sense of place” and a sense of community while strengthening our local economy through tourism. The wealth of buildings, traditions, and stories that one generation leaves to the next are inherited assets. The purpose for encouraging preservation is to protect those assets for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Aspen’s distinctive history is irreplaceable whether it be the late nineteenth-century miners’ cottages, the Bauhaus buildings introduced by architect Herbert Bayer, or the faux-chalets built by ski instructors in the 1950’s and 60’s. Aspen is not a great example of a mining camp; the architectural context is much more varied. Our heritage also includes a rich intellectual, recreational, and social history. Our town’s unique character is what attracts visitors and residents to our community. We must continue to build on what we have by authentically preserving historic structures and creating thoughtful new buildings that encourage and shape that feeling of historical continuity. Every marker of community spirit brings us closer together.

Aspen should strive to be a lively and viable resort community, not a theme park tourist

destination. We recognize that the travel and tourism industry is a powerhouse for economic growth and that the development and marketing of tourism is necessary to sustain our local economy and way of life. Decades of economic booms and busts have brought significant changes and periods of redevelopment to Aspen. This opportunity for constant revitalization of our town must be directed in ways that continually enrich Aspen rather than challenge its heritage. We must consider what we hope to pass on to future generations. A historically significant building torn down is an asset destroyed, whereas a building that is respectfully restored continues its useful life.

While the overall goal of protecting individual historic sites or the historic character of a larger area are foremost, the preservation process must be one of reason and balance, predictability, and economic fairness. The importance of historic preservation may not at first be apparent to members of the community who are struggling to earn a living or to those who are new to the community. It is possible, however, to let history inform all levels of development through sensitivity to scale. Many land use policies that have been implemented defy the traditional development pattern in Aspen. We encourage returning to higher density development within the city limits where appropriate.

To promote and perpetuate historic preservation and to protect and preserve Aspen’s distinctive cultural heritage, we must assist those involved to understand Aspen’s history and its current vision of itself. We must raise community awareness through education and communication. A community united and firmly grounded in local circumstances can accomplish much.



Historic Preservation



Policies

- Retain and support an eclectic mix of historical structures in our community.
- Provide support and education for the preservation of historic resources.
- Ensure that the rules and regulations regarding development and historic preservation in our community create projects that are consistent with our broader community goals.

Goals

- A. Create a more vibrant town with appropriate mixed uses and a variety of building sizes. Allow historic patterns to inform new development throughout town.
- B. Work to improve the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review process.
- C. Do not approve “copyecture” solutions. Encourage sensitive additions and talk

about compatibility in terms of “sympathetic, subservient, and contextual.”

- D. Refine the Historic Preservation review process to make decisions less subjective.
- E. Improve compliance with the recommendations and “Conditions of Approval” of the mandatory review process.
- F. Protect all buildings and sites of historic significance.
- G. Improve communication, education, and advocacy for historic preservation, and create better tools to accomplish this goal. Raise community awareness of the importance of preserving our local history and of the value of having a Historic Preservation Commission.
- H. Maintain and add innovative ways to make preservation work in Aspen, such as the historic landmark lot split.



Design Quality



Design Quality



Intent

◆Ensure the character of the built environment in Aspen is maintained through public outreach and education about quality design, historical context, and the influence of the existing built and natural environments.

The spaces between buildings, particularly in the public realm, i.e. streets, plazas, parks and yards, are often more important than the buildings themselves.

Zoning, our primary means of shaping the built environment, must encourage appropriate and lively design.

Philosophy

As Winston Churchill said, “*we shape our buildings and they shape us.*” Our built environment speaks volumes to us about who we are and to future generations about who we were. Thus, every increment of the man-made environment represents an opportunity and should be developed in a way that enriches and enlivens the whole.

Quality in design is difficult to insure by zoning alone. Lively design cannot come from a committee of “design police.” It comes from a deeper place.

An incompetently designed Victorian style house detracts from the visual fabric of the community, while a competently designed contemporary may add to it. Similarly, the use of expensive materials does not necessarily lead to a better product than inexpensive materials used appropriately. Quality design works both socially and economically. It creates civic pride. Good design inspires us and allows us to be ourselves.

Aspen is a living, working resort town, not a themed tourist environment. The streetscape of Aspen is about freedom and diversity as well as historical continuity. Our design history ranges from Victorian to Bauhaus, from 50’s “ski instructor” to postmodern, to contemporary. Our design philosophy is inclusive, recognizing the need for a “both/and” approach, rejecting a black and white “either/or” approach.

To improve quality, we must make it easier for designers of private and public projects, small and large, to understand Aspen’s history as well as its current vision of itself. In lieu of even more regulation, we must strive to raise community awareness of design through education. Only then can we debate design issues intelligently and make wise decisions. All new public projects must, by example, raise standards of design quality. We need to foster quality in the “pre-application” phase rather than redesign by committee in the “approval” phase, or overreaction to mediocrity in the built phase.

We favor diversity tempered by context, sometimes historical, sometimes not, as opposed to arbitrariness. “Context” refers first to region, then town, neighborhood, and finally the natural and manmade features adjoining a particular development site. Decisions regarding scale, massing, form, materials, texture, and color must be first measured by context. Contextual appropriateness transcends “style” alone.



Design Quality



As a community, we face several challenges that we hope to resolve by working together. Our principal challenge is to develop a better method for increasing design quality in the built environment of our community. We endeavor to raise design quality without specifically defining or dictating through ordinances the nature of design solutions. We wish to encourage creativity that results in design solutions that are fresh and innovative, yet are net additions to the built environment by being contextually appropriate and harmonious without being copies of that which already exists. This will require the reduction of the risk of being creative in the community's approval processes. We will strive to generate awareness within our citizenry as well as within project developers and their designers of the history of our built environment, its evolutionary nature, and the context it presents for design at all levels (immediate, neighborhood, town, valley, and region.) Perhaps of greatest significance, we wish to broaden the public's understanding of how important our built environment is to the quality of our lives. Through this effort, we envision that the value of the built environment and quality design will be raised in the eyes of the community.

and raise the level of design quality in the community.

- B. Make every public project a model of good development, on all levels, from quality design to positive contributions to the community fabric.
- C. Develop a big picture view and a "pattern language" for Aspen. Tools should be developed to help achieve our design quality goals that are simple, clear, and well coordinated.
- D. Take advantage of Aspen's assets: the historic town form, the natural boundaries to sprawl created by the topography, and the residents' desire for a high quality of life.

Policy

- Retain and encourage an eclectic mix of design styles to maintain and enhance the special character of our community.

Goals

- A. Educate everyone involved in the future of built Aspen, including property owners, architects, and developers. Develop a shared sense of the importance of design



Arts, Culture, & Education



Arts, Culture and Education



<p style="text-align: center;">Intent</p>	
<p>◆Recognize the contribution of the arts, culture and education to the quality of life in Aspen. Support the arts and the cultural community in its efforts to increase awareness of its significance to the future and quality of life in Aspen.</p>	<p>culture, and education as a part of our daily lives where citizens of all ages can think, learn, care, and achieve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nurture intellectual and spiritual growth that enriches our lives while challenging our imaginations. ▪ Preserve and build upon our heritage. ▪ Celebrate social and ethnic diversity through arts, culture, and education.
<p style="text-align: center;">Philosophy</p>	
<p>Walter Paepcke helped found Aspen as a unique community where the life-long improvement of mind, body, and spirit became more than a dream. His vision created an enlightened community in which arts, culture, and education provide essential cornerstones of our lifestyle, character, and economy. Today, these cornerstones are increasingly vital to the uniqueness of our community and to our economic and spiritual well being. Therefore, arts, culture, and education are acknowledged as essential to Aspen’s thriving year-round economy, its vibrant international profile, and its future as a unique place to live, work, and learn.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase community support for all facets of quality education. ▪ Make educational, cultural, and artistic experiences more accessible for all valley residents. ▪ Develop and cultivate local artists. ▪ Foster artistic, cultural, and educational experiences where artists and audiences interact. ▪ Recognize the extent to which arts, culture, and education strengthen and stabilize our year-round economy.
<p>The City of Aspen will continue to be an innovative leader in arts, culture, and education. It will foster artistic creativity and excellence, promote cultural diversity, and provide continuing learning opportunities. Our city is dedicated to increasing community awareness and dialogue about arts, culture, and education, and to providing access to all residents and visitors of the Roaring Fork Valley.</p>	
<p>Our philosophy includes the desire to do the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inspire our community to embrace arts, 	<p style="text-align: center;">Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the continued vibrancy of the arts in our community. ▪ Support activities and education for youth.



Arts, Culture and Education



Goals

- A. Encourage collaboration in Arts, Culture, and Education.
- B. Provide educational outreach to contribute to lives of community members and visitors.
- C. Ensure sufficient funding for arts, culture, and education valley-wide.
- D. Ensure the provision of affordable housing to sustain arts, culture and education in the community.
- E. Ensure the provision of public facilities and services to sustain arts, culture and education in the community.