

## 2011 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey: Executive Summary

### Purpose

The core purpose of the 2011 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey was to collect input from the community on language in the preliminary draft of the AACP. This survey provides statistically valid data to supplement that which came from many other community input options including the keypad polling sessions that were conducted in November 2010.

This survey included questions that were asked at the keypad polling sessions, and therefore provides an opportunity to compare results gathered via this random selection process and the self-selected keypad polling events.

In addition, our community like many others has experienced a great deal of change over the past two years when the initial 2008 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey was conducted. This survey instrument includes questions from the 2008 survey, providing a unique opportunity to see how our changing economic and community conditions have affected community priorities and attitudes.

### Methodology

In November 2010, Design Workshop Inc. was contracted to administer a scientific survey of Aspen area residents and second homeowners. The Pitkin County Voter Registration and Assessor lists were used to sample local residents including homeowners, second homeowners, renters, and business owners. Random sampling techniques were employed to select the samples. Letters were sent in January 2011 to the randomly selected potential respondents directing them to go to the internet to fill out the survey. All respondents were assigned identification numbers (IDN) to assure that no duplicate responses were counted. After two weeks, non-respondents received a second letter again inviting them to take the survey on-line.

**2010 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey Sample Data**

Samples:	Sample Frame	Mailed	Delivered	Returned	%	*Standard Error
County Assessor	5,305	1,987	1,934	310	16.02%	+/- 5.6
Voter Registration	6,720	2,001	1,747	220	12.59%	+/- 6.6
Total	12,025	3,988	3,681	530		

\* 95% Confidence Level

The chart above details the size of the original sample frame, the number of surveys that were mailed, the number of surveys delivered (meaning those not returned by the Post Office as 'undeliverable'), the number of surveys completed and returned, the % of response, and the resulting margins of error for each sample frame. The chart below details the number of responses received from each of the two mailings. For more detailed information on the sampling process, see the section on Purpose and Methodology.

## Highlights of the Survey Results

### 1. Thumbnail Profile

Following are the most selected responses to some of survey questions:

Most respondents were 55 – 64 year old males, are full-time residents living in the Aspen Townsite and have lived in the Aspen area for 21+ years. Most respondents had not participated in the AACP process previously. The four most important issues Aspen will face in the next five years were identified as: preservation of small town character, traffic, economic development and managing growth.

Most respondents prefer to let the market decide about what development occurs, but would be willing to discourage the development of larger lodging units. They identified that development should be compatible with the neighborhood, that new buildings should fit into their surroundings, and that downtown Aspen should be allowed to evolve past the Victorian era.

Most respondents felt there was too much development activity during the 2005-6 construction boom, but rather than creating a construction pacing system, indicated we should work to manage impacts. When asked how much growth should occur, the majority stated the rate of growth should be about the same as at present. They indicated there should always be some flexibility in housing mitigation and that affordable housing should not be required to be on-site.

Most respondents care very much about maintaining Aspen's small town character and that we are doing best at recreation opportunities and worst at economic development and traffic management.

### 2. Comparison of the 2008/2011 Surveys and the Keypad Polling Results

By in large, the results of all three survey processes were very similar. The respondent pools were demographically very similar as were their responses. Of the 51 questions or sub-issues in a question that were shared by two or more of the surveys, there were only five instances in which the top three choices differed.

- (Q10) Five Most Important Issues – The 2008 Survey included 'preservation of open space' in the top five issues and the 2011 Survey did not. The 2011 Survey had 'economic development' in the top five while the 2008 survey did not.
- (Q13) Development to Discourage – Keypad Pollers were inclined to discourage affordable housing and tourist oriented retail; 2011 Survey respondents recorded office space and public/institutional development as ones they would discourage.
- (Q11 + 33) Values/Assessment Scattergram – The 2011 survey respondents registered less dissatisfaction with traffic than the 2008 respondents, and they registered more dissatisfaction with economic development than did the 2008 respondents.
- (Q12) Development to Encourage – Keypad Pollers were inclined to encourage the development of smaller lodging units. This was not selected as one of the top three choices in the 2011 Survey.

- (Q23) Construction Pacing – When offered the statement, “I would support a construction pacing system, but only if it place annual limits on only the...” the third most selected response by Keypad Pollers was: Lodging development. That was the fifth most selected response among the 2011 Survey respondents.

Differences between the 2008 and 2011 surveys seem mostly to have been influenced by the intensifying economic down turn over the past two years, and the resulting community impacts including the decreased dissatisfaction with traffic and increased dissatisfaction with economic development.

The sentiment to “let the market decide” had significant support in several survey questions notably Questions 12 and 13, which asked what types of development to encourage and discourage. The concept of relaxing regulation and policy that would inhibit economic development was expressed more abundantly in the 2011 survey and in the Comments section. (See #5 for a review of the Scatter gram illustrating Values vs. Assessment.)

### 3. Five Most Important Issues

Question 5 in the 2011 Survey asked, “What are the five most important issues that will be facing the Aspen area in the next five years?” The 2008 and 2011 surveys had four of their top five issues in common, although in slightly different priority order. But, ‘preservation of open space’ which was in the top five in 2008, was replaced by ‘economic development’ in the top five in 2011.

Comparison 2008 and 2010 Surveys	Total 2011 Survey		Total 2008 Survey	
	Count	%	Count	%
Public transportation	70	7.46%	141	5.8%
Affordable housing	65	6.93%	78	3.2%
Cost of living	87	9.28%	259	10.6%
Economic development	89	9.49%	106	4.4%
Preservation of open space	67	7.14%	205	8.4%
Preservation of small town character	103	10.98%	316	13.0%
Visual impact	56	5.97%	154	6.3%
Water quality	34	3.62%	87	3.6%
Air quality	34	3.62%	105	4.3%
Traffic	95	10.13%	327	13.4%
Construction impacts	42	4.48%	168	6.9%
Public safety	24	2.56%	31	1.3%
Managing growth	89	9.49%	231	9.5%
Child care	15	1.60%	23	0.9%
Senior services	45	4.80%	74	3.0%
Historic preservation	23	2.45%	71	2.9%

1 <sup>st</sup> Choice
2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice
3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice
4 <sup>th</sup> Choice
5 <sup>th</sup> Choice

#### 4. Values versus Assessment

Question 11 and 33 provided respondents a list of 18 community issues such as affordable housing, economic development, public transportation, and recreation opportunities and asked them to rate those issues in terms of their ‘importance’ and then later to rate those same issues on ‘performance’ or how effectively the Aspen area is addressing those issues. By comparing the importance and performance ratings, we can identify the things that community members are satisfied with and the things that they might want to see improved.

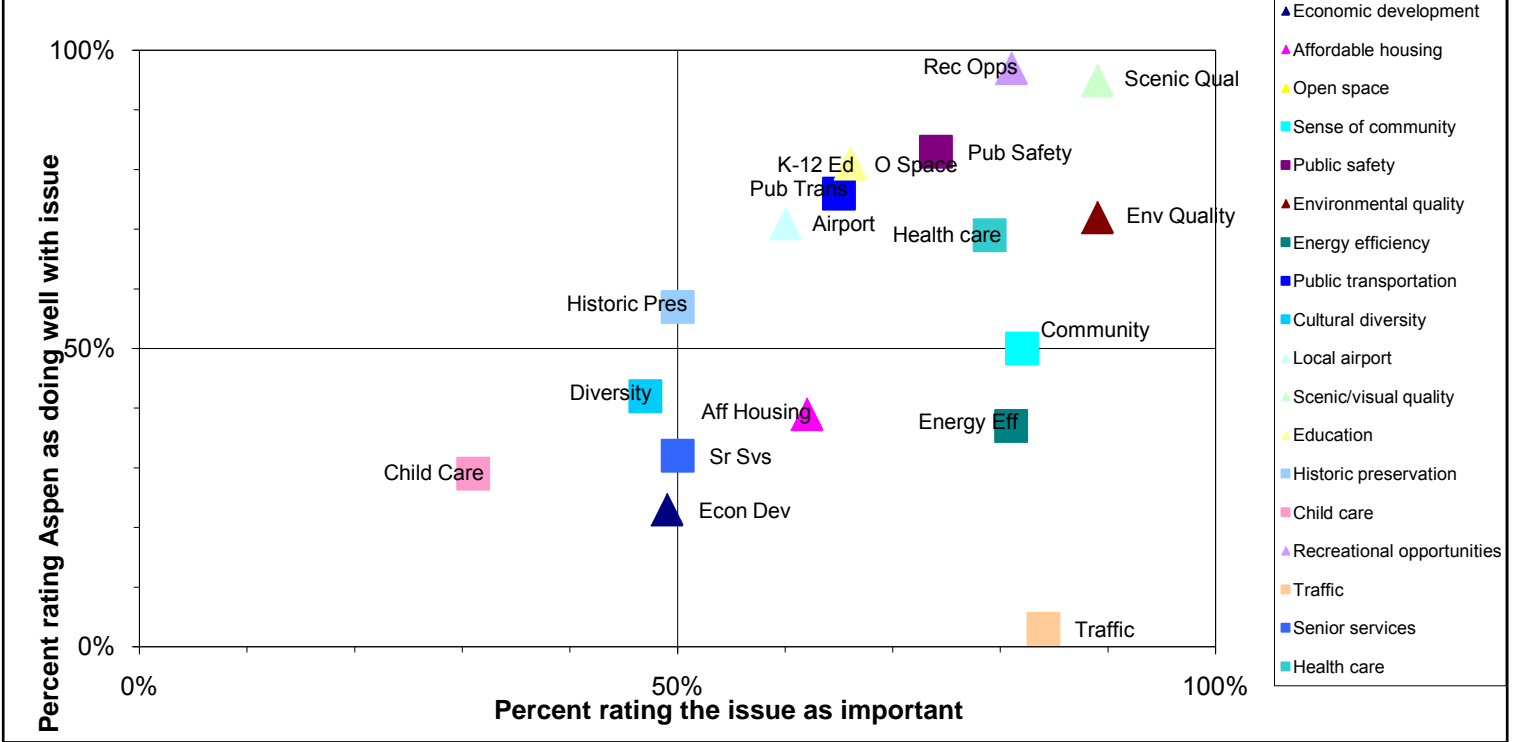
Following are two displays of this information. The table shows the ‘difference’ between the importance and performance rating for each issue. Positive scores mean that expectations are being exceeded. A negative score means that respondents believe we are underperforming on that issue.

The foursquare Scattergram tells an additional element of this story. If we consider the four quadrants of the Scattergram as: Quadrant 1: Low Importance/Low Performance; Quadrant 2: Low Importance/High Performance; Quadrant 3: High Importance/Low Performance; and Quadrant 4: High Importance/High Performance. There is a strong suggestion that the most attention should be paid to those issues that fall in Quadrant 3 – High Importance but Low Performance – in the 2011 Survey, traffic and economic development fell into this quadrant.

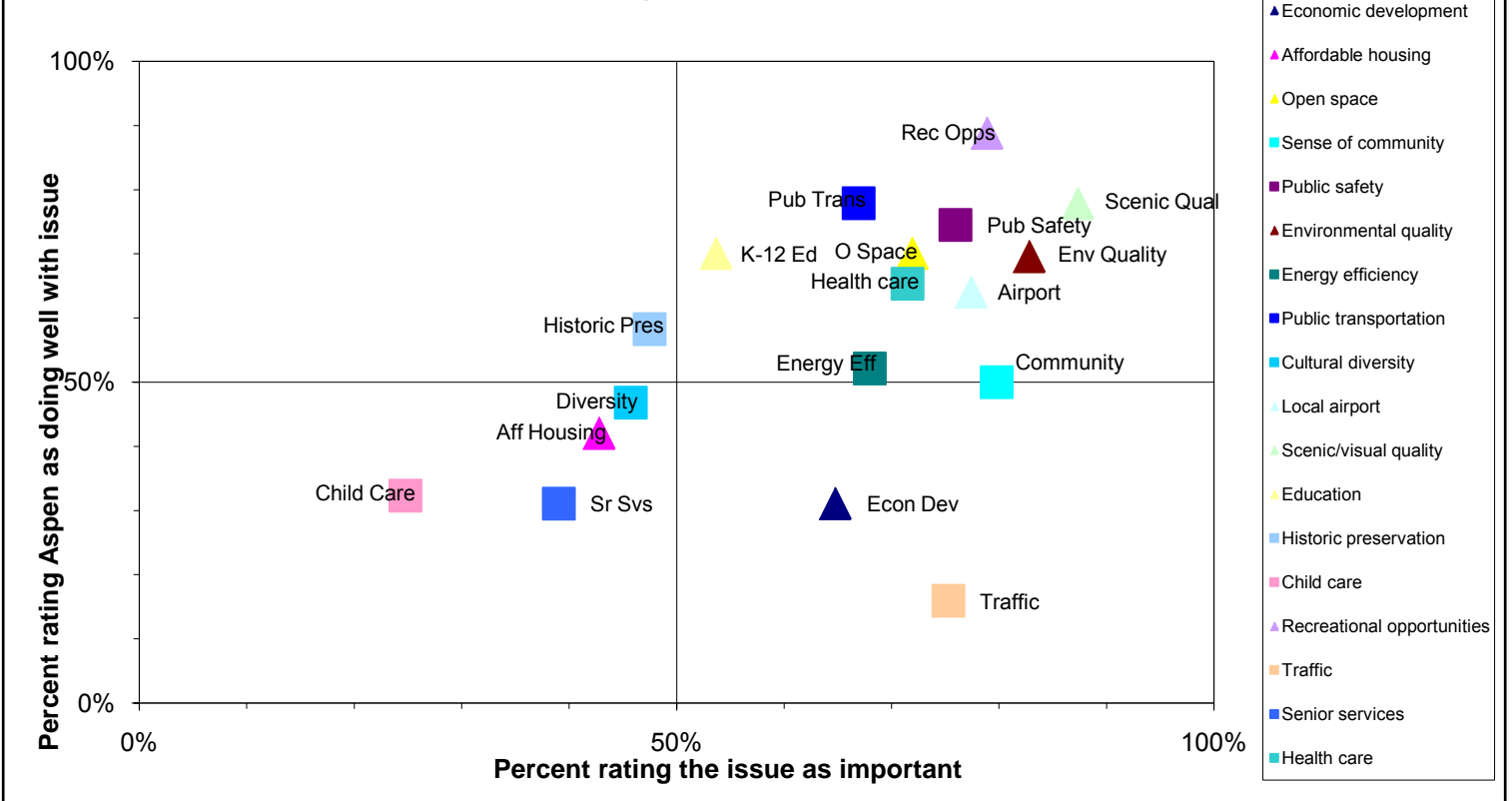
It is possible to have a large negative differential on an issue that still falls in the High Importance/High Performance area...or in the Low Importance/Low Performance quadrant. So, looking at the differential coupled with identifying which quadrant the issue occupies provides additional information for making priority decisions.

2011 Survey				2008 Survey			
2010 Topics	2010 Value Importance	2010 Assessm't How well	2010 Assessm't Value Difference	2008 Assessm't Value Difference	2008 Value Importance	2008 Assessm't How well	2008 Topics
Traffic	75%	16%	-59%	-81%	84%	3%	Traffic
Economic development	65%	31%	-34%	-26%	49%	23%	Economic development
Sense of community	80%	50%	-30%	-32%	82%	50%	Sense of community
Energy efficiency	68%	52%	-16%	-44%	81%	37%	Energy efficiency
Local airport	77%	64%	-13%	11%	60%	71%	Local airport
Environmental quality	83%	70%	-13%	-17%	89%	72%	Environmental quality
Scenic/visual quality	87%	78%	-9%	6%	89%	95%	Scenic/visual quality
Senior services	39%	31%	-8%	-18%	50%	32%	Senior services
Health care	71%	65%	-6%	-10%	79%	69%	Health care
Open space	72%	70%	-2%	15%	66%	81%	Open space
Public safety	76%	74%	-1%	9%	74%	83%	Public safety
Affordable housing	43%	42%	-1%	-23%	62%	39%	Affordable housing
Cultural diversity	46%	47%	1%	-5%	47%	42%	Cultural diversity
Child care	25%	32%	8%	-2%	31%	29%	Child care
Recreational opportunities	79%	89%	10%	16%	81%	97%	Recreational opportunities
Historic preservation	47%	58%	11%	7%	50%	57%	Historic preservation
Public transportation	67%	78%	11%	11%	65%	76%	Public transportation
Education	54%	70%	16%	15%	66%	81%	Education

**2008- How important are these issues and how well is the Aspen area doing with respect to these issues?**



**2011 - How important are these issues and how well is the Aspen area doing with respect to these issues?**



## 5. Non-consensus Issues

There were two questions on which the opinion was nearly evenly divided. Question 20 which asked, “What is your preference for how development applications should be reviewed?” had the following response ratios in the 2011 Survey and the Keypad Polling:

2011 Survey - Aggregate Table	Total	
	Count	%
Development should never be varied	234	44.2%
Development should be negotiated.	223	42.1%
I don't know enough about this topic to express an opinion.	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)	40	7.5%
Missing	33	6.2%

2010 Keypad Polling - Aggregate Table	Total	
	Count	%
Development should never be varied	68	47.6%
Development should be negotiated.	71	49.7%
I don't know enough about this topic to express an opinion.	4	2.8%
Other (please specify)	0	0.0%
Missing	0	0.0%

Question 30 asked, “In general, do you think things in the Aspen area are headed in the right or the wrong direction?” Both the 2008 and 2010 Surveys showed a similar lack of consensus about that question.

2011 Survey - Aggregate Table	Total	
	Count	%
Right direction	218	41.1%
Wrong direction	204	38.5%
Other	93	17.5%
Missing	15	2.8%

2008 Survey - Aggregate Table	Total	
	Count	%
Right direction	230	40.6%
Wrong direction	208	36.7%
Other	106	18.7%
Missing	23	4.1%

**6. Survey Results by Age**

The Aspen area is, to some extent a bifurcated community, economically and generationally. Some of the issues facing our area may look very different depending on which end of an economic or age spectrum a respondent rests. In the Appendix are data tables in which the survey data is cross tabulated based upon age.

**7. Survey Methodology – Internet vs. Paper Surveys:**

A two-stage mailing was used for both the 2008 and 2010 survey. In the 2008 survey, the second mailing included a hard copy of the survey with a postage paid return envelope. In the 2011 survey, the second mailing was a reminder to take the survey on-line or to request a hard copy survey.

In comparing the results in 2008 and 2011 Surveys (tables below), the total response amount is very similar. The age breakdown for respondents is virtually the same. It appears, based on the results of the second mailing in the 2008 survey that if a hard copy was provided, that is what people used. It also appears that the response rate in the 2011 survey was not compromised by offering the survey primarily on-line with hard copies only available upon request.

2011 Survey	1st Mailing	2nd Mailing	Total	%
Internet	183	369	552	97.53%
Paper Survey*	10	4	14	2.47%
Total	193	373	566	100%

\* Paper surveys were made available upon request during both mailings.

2008 Survey	1st Mailing	2nd Mailing	Total	%
Internet	230	28	258	48%
Paper Survey	0	276	276	52%
Total	230	304	534	100%