

# West of Castle Creek Corridor



## Vision

The West of Castle Creek Corridor area should continue to provide a gradual transition from the rural expanses of Pitkin County to the more developed neighborhoods of the West End and the urbanized atmosphere of downtown Aspen. The area should continue to feature separate and recognizable “pockets” of uses, maintaining a land use pattern and scenic quality along the Highway corridor that creates a distinct series of visual experiences that signal arrival to the Aspen Area.

## Philosophy

Maintaining the transitional character of the area means a gradual lowering of density and massing as we approach the edge of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), as well as preserving and prioritizing views of the mountains and open space between the “pockets” or “nodes” of uses. The density, size and scale of the built environment must complement rather than detract from the natural environment or become the focal point of views.

The West of Castle Creek Corridor area is the “gateway” to Aspen, and its success relies on a comprehensive planning effort that strives to maintain a memorable arrival experience. For the first time, we are committed to including all of these goals in a comprehensive land use plan for this important portion of the Aspen Area.

The West of Castle Creek Corridor is home to a wide variety of important uses that define the gateway experience – the airport, a community college, a local business center, a ski area, affordable housing, and golf courses - all of which are important components of our community. Each use is different in character and purpose, representing distinct, physically separated “nodes” of activity.

To maintain these separate and distinct functions, planning for this area should support a well-defined visual pattern and a defined set of prescribed and limited uses for each node. This area should not become an urbanized tunnel like corridor, with repetitive development and the feeling of “sameness” that define the worst kind of urban sprawl.

It is important to define and maintain the relationship between the West of Castle Creek Corridor and Aspen, with the core of Aspen remaining the primary commercial center for tourism, employment, goods and services. While convenience and land cost may encourage increased development in the West of Castle Creek Corridor, development should be limited to existing nodes in order to maintain undeveloped spaces between them.

The Airport Business Center (ABC) should remain a business service and limited light industrial area for Aspen residents and businesses. While the residential neighborhoods in the corridor should enjoy basic commercial services within the

ABC that limit residents' need to travel into Aspen. The Base of Buttermilk should continue to function as a vital recreational and lodging component of the Aspen resort community.

Critical to the success of the West of Castle Creek Corridor and the entire Aspen Area is improving our transportation system. A seamless connection between the City of Aspen and the West of Castle Creek Area can be achieved by improving transit services, integrating bike and pedestrian paths, implementing innovative Transportation Demand Management concepts and potential physical improvements to the Entrance to Aspen between the roundabout and 7th and Main.

We are committed to developing a West of Castle Creek Corridor Land Use Master Plan that incorporates all aspects of this philosophy.



## What's Changed Since 2000

Since 2000 there has been momentum to update and improve aging facilities and infrastructure to allow this area to continue to function optimally in all the capacities it serves for the Aspen area. Facility master plan updates for the Aspen Airport, Roaring Fork Transit Agency (RFTA) and the base of the Buttermilk Ski Area have been initiated, as have plans for redevelopment of the Inn at Aspen, adjacent to the ski area base.

Community facility improvements include the Aspen/Pitkin Animal Shelter, constructed in 2005 and the North 40 Aspen Fire District Station, constructed in 2009 to ensure that emergencies within the district outside of the Aspen core could be readily served. With respect to transportation, the Airport gained approval to extend the runway to 1,000 feet in length to better accommodate existing air service; and bus-only lanes were constructed from the Airport to the round-about at Castle and Maroon Creek Roads to ease traffic congestion on Highway 82 as it enters Aspen. As part of an overall plan to improve transit service in the region, the Roaring Fork Transit Authority completed planning for a new Bus Rapid Transit program which will include improvements to bus stations at Buttermilk and at the ABC. Given the high level of auto and pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the area, plans were also initiated for development of safe pedestrian access across the Highway in at least one location in the vicinity of the ABC.

To help ensure that traffic continues to flow as efficiently possible given anticipated improvements in the area, Pitkin County initiated the Highway 82 Access Control Plan in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Transportation, to determine the best location for intersections and turning movements along the Highway from the round-about to Owl Creek Road.

As the area continues to provide a somewhat less expensive alternative to land prices in Aspen, it has also been the location for the purchase of lands for, and/or development of workforce

The West of Castle Creek Corridor is located from the round-about to the end of the UGB on Highway 82. It includes all parcels of land in proximity to the highway right-of-way.

housing in close proximity to Aspen. The first phase of Burlingame workforce housing was built in 2006. The City of Aspen purchased and annexed the Harbert Lumber Yard with the intent of building workforce housing. Soon to follow, the Airport Business Center (ABC) upgraded its grocery store to meet demands of the growing local resident population in the immediate vicinity of the Business Center and in nearby Burlingame.

## What's New in the 2011 AACCP

As development in the West of Castle Creek Corridor area continues to evolve, so too has the desire to balance and better define its role as the entrance to Aspen, and as it relates to the Aspen core. The West of Castle chapter is new in the 2011 Plan. Though aspects of this area were addressed in broad terms in previous Aspen Area Community Plans, the new chapter provides a framework for direction as we move forward, and recognizes the need to follow up with a subsequent physical plan for the area to provide more detailed direction.

## Linkages:

This plan recognizes that community goals are often inextricably linked: sometimes they complement each other, and at times they come into conflict. The new West of Castle Creek Corridor Master Plan will seek to identify and balance a wide range of factors that contribute to the success of the area, including air and ground transportation, preventing sprawl, retaining scenic views, important institutional and commercial uses, recreational opportunities that include a ski area and trail system, affordable housing, a positive "gateway" experience and protecting the natural environment. Also critical to this planning effort is understanding and addressing how this area relates to the downtown.



*Both commuters and recreationalists use the bike paths connecting the Airport Business Center to the City of Aspen.*

# West of Castle Creek Corridor Policies

# Policy Categories

## I. LAND USE

I.1. Planning for the West of Castle Creek Corridor should support a well-defined visual and functional pattern for a series of distinctly different “nodes” of activity supporting limited uses that are physically separated by open space.

*Community Goal*

## II. SCENIC

II.1. The density, size and scale of all new development and redevelopment in the West of Castle Creek Corridor should maintain, and if possible enhance, the views of the natural environment seen as one travels through this portion of the Highway 82 corridor.

*Community Goal*

## III. TRANSPORTATION

III.1. Improve the convenience, reliability, comfort, affordability, safety, capacity, and quality of experience of transit services and improve efficiency and coordination between all related aspects of transportation in the West of Castle Creek Corridor.

*Community Goal,  
Collaborative Initiative*

III.2. Ensure safe and efficient pedestrian and bike connections exist within the West of Castle Creek Corridor and connect the area to the Aspen downtown.

*Community Goal,  
Collaborative Initiative*