

AGENDA

JOINT WORK SESSION CITY OF ASPEN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSIONS & PITKIN COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

**Sister Cities
Aspen, Colorado**

May 25, 2010

4:30 PM WORKSESSION

1. Review of the Aspen Area Community Plan update
 - a. Review West of Maroon Creek Vision and Philosophy

7:30 PM ADJOURN WORKSESSION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pitkin County and Aspen Planning and Zoning Commissions

FROM: Cindy Houben, County Community Development Director
Jessica Garrow, City Long Range Planner
Ben Gagnon, City Special Projects Planner

THRU: Chris Bendon, City Community Development Director

DATE OF MEMO: May 19, 2010

MEETING DATE: May 25, 2010 at 4:30 pm in Sister Cities

RE: West of Maroon (AABC) Chapter- continuation of vision and philosophy discussion

BACKGROUND: On May 11th the PZ's meet to discuss the background information for the West of Maroon area. This is a new section of the AACP and as such created a great deal of discussion and debate about the future land uses for the area. The attached draft of the *West of Maroon Creek Area* Chapter contains *Vision* and *Philosophy* statements which are intended to reflect P& Z's direction at the AACP meeting of May 11, 2010.

While some consensus could be found on some threshold issues, other details are yet to be discussed and direction given by the PZ's.

Some threshold items that were resolved include:

- 1) The area is a transitional area that should not be developed at the same level of density and intensity as within the Core of Aspen;
- 2) The AABC should remain primarily a business park that supports Aspen and not a separate small town /hamlet or self supporting community;
- 3) The West of Maroon area should be brought more into the community of Aspen through a priority on convenient, efficient and safe transit and pedestrian connections;
- 4) A specific comprehensive plan needs to be done for the West of Maroon area;
- 5) The area is part of the gateway entrance into the City of Aspen and should evoke a sense of arrival into the community of Aspen. It should not be an urbanized tunnel of development with additional traffic lights and curb cuts;

- 6) Underlying land costs should not dictate what is allowed or not allowed to happen from a land use perspective in the West of Maroon area;
- 7) No free market residential should be allowed at Buttermilk and that area;
- 8) There should be no lodging at the AABC; and
- 9) If there is increased zoning potential in the area the use of TDR's from the rural area should be considered.

Questions still on the table include:

- 1) Now that we understand more about what we do not want to see (tunnel of development, more lights and curb cuts) what do we want to see? Please describe in more detail the “pockets of experiences” along the corridor and what you envision for those areas (County owned area across from the Airport below the snow dump; area of animal shelter, Public works and RFTA bus barn; The AABC , Affordable Housing, including Burlingame; Buttermilk, Inn at Aspen, Senior housing are and pomegranate apartments);
- 2) Are there priorities regarding the design of the uses along the corridor which will keep the “pockets of experiences” separate and distinct , such as:
 - Ensure natural features such as ridgelines and views of mountains are preserved;
 - Design should reflect the use and be identifiable and distinguish the use rather than disguise it or confuse it with multiple uses;
- 3) What future uses in the West of Maroon area will complement the idea of planning the area of West of Maroon and the City of Aspen together? What uses will distract from the overall goals of the AACP? We heard some of the following:
 - a. The AABC should remain primarily a business park that supports Aspen and not a separate small town /hamlet or self supporting community;
 - b. No free market residential should be allowed at Buttermilk and that area.
 - c. There should be no lodging at the AABC;

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Draft West of Maroon Creek Chapter

WEST OF MAROON CREEK AREA DRAFT CHAPTER

Vision

The West of Maroon Creek Area should provide a transition from the rural expanses of the county to the more urbanized atmosphere of downtown Aspen. The area should feature separate and recognizable “pockets” of activity, creating a series of experiences that signal arrival to the Aspen Area. Unobstructed views of ski areas and open space should be preserved in order to maintain the transitional nature of the area. Efficient and reliable transportation links are integral to ensuring this area is fully connected to the Aspen core. For the first time, we are committed to including all of these goals in a comprehensive land use plan for the West of Maroon Creek Area.

Philosophy

The *West of Maroon Creek Area* is located in the county, but to a visitor it is the “gateway” to Aspen. The visual experience of this gateway corridor is of primary importance, and the many different views of our natural mountain surroundings and riparian areas are paramount when it comes to future planning. Any development of the area should maintain the natural features such as ridgelines, public view of the ski mountain and open spaces within the corridor.

The West of Maroon Creek Area is home to a wide variety of important uses that reflect and enhance an interesting and changing gateway experience – including the airport, a community college, Buttermilk Ski Area, affordable housing, and local businesses. Although much of the corridor has seen development, the potential for additional growth means that comprehensive planning can fundamentally change the way this area looks, feels and functions.

The West of Maroon Creek Area Plan can establish separate development criteria that reflect individual “nodes” of activity that visually reflect a set of prescribed and limited uses. There is no need, for example, that the entire length of the corridor features the same setback – some uses could be closer to the road, others more distant. In other words, this area should not become an urbanized tunnel-like corridor, with the kind of repetitive development and feeling of “sameness” that defines the worst kind of urban sprawl. For this reason, visual modeling should be an important part of comprehensively planning this area.

The core of Aspen should remain the primary commercial center for employment, goods and services. All the uses and services that make a self-contained town should be located in Aspen, and not be pushed to the West of Maroon Creek Area due to convenience or cost. The Aspen Airport Business Center should remain as a business service area for Aspen residents and businesses, while the

residential neighborhoods in the corridor should enjoy basic services that limit their need to travel into Aspen. In a similar vein, lodging in the corridor should remain at a low density and intensity and at an affordable level – we must not use this area to fulfill perceived lodging needs for the Aspen Area as a whole. No lodging should exist at the AABC. And no free market residential development should be developed at the Buttermilk area.

At a functional level, it’s imperative to more closely connect the City of Aspen with the West of Maroon area by improving transit services, as well as integrated bike and pedestrian paths. Ease of movement between the city and the West of Maroon Creek Area will create a healthier and more sustainable environment for every use along the corridor – whether it’s the college, the small business park, the airport or residential neighborhoods. The year-round and visiting population in the City of Aspen should feel that connecting with the variety of uses and services in the West of Maroon Creek corridor is a viable choice and not a matter of struggling through barriers to mobility.

We must also recognize that one result of the haphazard planning for this corridor was an infrastructure built for vehicles, and did not anticipate residential neighborhoods – so establishing safe pedestrian connections is now a priority within the AABC and along the corridor, with particular emphasis on connecting to mass transit.

POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

The following policies and action items are adopted to address the following critical issues:

The action items are arranged alongside the policies, so the purpose of the action item is understood. Each Policy is numbered, while the associated Action Items are lettered. For instance, Action Item “1.a” is associated with Policy “1.” Because this is a ten year plan, the action items are prioritized in terms of “immediate” (“I”) and “longer term” (“LT”), so that there is immediate progress made to implement the immediately necessary policies of this section, while still allowing for development of ideas and legislation that may further the broader policies of the plan in the long-term. The government department or agency responsible for any given action item is indicated as follows: Planning (“P”); Building (“B”); Airport (“A”); Open Space & Parks (“OS/P”); and Transportation (“T”).

Policies	Action Items
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