

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City of Aspen Planning and Zoning Commission; Pitkin  
County Planning and Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Ben Gagnon, City Special Projects Planner  
Ellen Sassano, County Long Range Planner

**THRU:** Chris Bendon, City Community Development Director  
Cindy Houben, County Community Development Director

**DATE OF MEMO:** August 13, 2009

**MEETING DATE:** August 18, 2009, 4:30pm in Courthouse Meeting Room  
(1<sup>st</sup> Floor – Jury Room; Former BOCC Meeting Room)

**RE:** Managing Growth Open Discussion

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**SUMMARY:** Staff would like to thank all Planning and Zoning Commission members for their willingness to meet on short notice this past Tuesday, Aug. 11. Your work helped clarify the process going forward, and helps clarify the role of staff.

The following was taken from the memo provided by P&Z following the Aug. 11 meeting, outlining the purpose of the first meeting on any given topic:

1. The first meeting on any subject will be for PZ discussion about intent and philosophy, and if we have enough time, a brainstorming session on specific action items. Staff will keep notes, and if requested generate real time text for the Intent/Vision/Philosophy statements. Staff will keep notes listing any action items that are suggested during the discussion.
2. In lieu of Staff presentations, Staff will give PZ members a packet of all relevant info and context about facts in current and proposed AACP on the subject as well as referral agency or resource documents or surveys to study approximately one week prior to the meeting, so that all PZ members can read before the meeting and be prepared to immediately discuss. Staff will describe what has changed in data from the 2000 AACP, such as loss of free market worker owned or rented housing. Staff will be available to answer questions of PZ members at each session.
3. For the first meeting on any section of the AACP, Staff will formulate questions for PZ that need to be considered in formulating the Intent/Vision/Philosophy statements for that Section of the AACP. There is no need for Staff to present any of its conclusions at this time or any opinions on the Intent/Vision/Philosophy statements so that PZ members can play the major role in formulating the Intent/Vision/Philosophy statements.

The following memo describes the background material and series of questions that could spur P&Z discussion on Aug. 18 and Aug. 25. Staff's intent is to start with broader questions that might help address more directed questions as we move forward with the open discussion. Staff is basing these questions partly on public feedback as well as the P&Zs initial Managing Growth discussion on February 24 (please see Exhibit D).

**AUGUST 18:** Questions for the P&Zs could start with the following:

- What is the purpose of Growth Management?
- Should the AACP Update establish a population ceiling for the Urban Growth Boundary, as was established in the 1993 and 2000 AACPs? What is the purpose of establishing a population ceiling?
- How does growth relate to infrastructure?

Staff is providing a white paper called "The Concept of Carrying Capacity" (please see Exhibit A), as well as a review of past and current population estimates from the Aspen Consolidated Sanitation District (please see Exhibit B). Staff is also providing an Infrastructure Table that offers an overview of capacity issues (please see Exhibit C). Finally, staff is providing the powerpoint presentation given by staff in February called "An Overview of Managing Growth," which provides a brief history on the local history of Growth Management and how it has changed over time (please see Exhibit F).

Another discussion for the Aug. 18 meeting would focus on both the public feedback and/or P&Z perspectives on the following topics:

- To the degree that growth occurs, in what areas should growth be encouraged? In what areas should growth be discouraged?
- The existing Urban Growth Boundary was adopted in the 2000 AACP with the intent of eliminating sprawl, encouraging a clear urban area and protecting rural character. Should we maintain the current Urban Growth Boundary, or should this boundary be adjusted?

**AUGUST 25:** For the Aug. 25 meeting, staff is expecting to have more detailed research available on the subject of residential build-out, including future potential for scrape and replace projects. For the Aug. 25 meeting, questions to address include:

- Based on the findings of new staff research, is there a concern about the future potential for scrape and replace projects? Why?
- Should there be changes to house size limits in the City? In the County? Why?
- Should there be some kind of annual limit on building permits, especially with regard to scrape and replace projects? Why?
- Should there be additional mitigation on scrape and replace projects and what kind of mitigation do we want? Why?
- Limiting the annual number of building permits has been a goal dating back to 1976 but has never been implemented. Why do you think this goal has never become a reality? If the P&Zs wish to recommend an annual limit on building permits, what is the rationale for this annual limit?

Some P&Z members asked whether it makes sense to combine the topics of Managing Growth and a Sustainable Economy. To the extent that lodging and commercial/retail growth are subject

to Growth Management, staff believes this makes sense. Staff would like to know if the P&Zs would like to follow this course, and have an open discussion on the lodging and retail sectors on September 1 – before staff drafts the Managing Growth chapter. This approach could result in a draft of the Managing Growth chapter and a draft of at least a large section of the Sustainable Economy chapter for P&Z review.

If P&Z chooses this approach, staff would suggest the following questions to spur discussion on the lodging and retail sectors:

**SEPTEMBER 1:** Questions to address include:

- Within the category of a lodge use, there are different types of lodging. The city land use code already does this to the extent that proposed new or redeveloped lodges with smaller lodging rooms are eligible for a range of incentives. Should we attempt to further define types of lodging, such as high-amenity lodging versus low-amenity lodging?
- Within the category of retail stores, there are different types of retail. Should we attempt – for the first time in the City of Aspen – to define different types of retail, such as “local-serving retail” versus “tourist-oriented retail,” or “international designer brand luxury merchandise chains”?

By answering these questions, the P&Zs will then be in a position to answer the following questions, which are critical to subsequent amendments to the Growth Management Quota System:

- What types of uses do we want more of, and why?
- What types of uses do we want less of, and why?

**ATTACHMENTS:** Exhibit A: White Paper on “The Concept of Carrying Capacity”

Exhibit B: “Population Estimates and the ACSD.”

Exhibit C: Infrastructure Table

Exhibit D: P&Z summary, Feb. 24, 2009

Exhibit E: Public Feedback on Managing Growth

Exhibit F: Powerpoint: Overview of Managing Growth

### The Concept of Carrying Capacity

On numerous occasions in recent months, members of the Planning and Zoning commissions have asked whether there is a “carrying capacity” in the Aspen Area or the Roaring Fork Valley. Staff thinks it’s important to focus on the usefulness and the limitations of this planning concept.

The phrase “carrying capacity” was first used to describe the amount of cargo that could be safely transported on a ship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a relatively simple exercise that was perhaps complicated by the routes to be taken, seasonal storm tendencies, the age and condition of the ship etc.

#### Ecological & Quantitative Applications of Carrying Capacity

The concept of carrying capacity was further developed in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in relation to managing livestock ranges in the American West. It has continued to be used to determine the number of animals a given area can support. It’s not unusual for cattle ranches listed for sale to include a carrying capacity such as 2,000 AU (Animal Unit).

More recently, Colorado State University and the Colorado Division of Wildlife have used carrying capacity models to determine whether deer and elk are so numerous as to be damaging ecosystems, and should be culled in various hunting regions in the state. In this context, carrying capacity is the amount of animals that can be sustained in a given environment without starting to degrade the natural resource.

In recent decades, the concept of carrying capacity has been carried outside the realm of shipping cargo and ecosystem analysis. One Austrian study focused on space as a non-renewable resource – in other words, how many people can enjoy a certain beach without degrading the experience.

#### Social and Qualitative Applications

The language in the Wilderness Act of 1964, including, “outstanding opportunities for solitude,” has led to a number of studies on the social carrying capacity of Wilderness Areas. There remains a divergence of opinion on the usefulness of these studies. For example, some people crave extreme solitude, while others find quality in occasionally encountering other people in the wilderness and sharing stories. It is difficult to impose scientific norms on the experience of solitude. Rather than working with objective standards that result in a reliable, quantitative solution, this kind of analysis provides *context and information* for decision-making.

Not surprisingly, these studies have not resulted in a numerical ceiling established for the number of people visiting Wilderness Areas, but more importantly, the *standard* of experience described in the Wilderness Act has been the basis for taking steps *to minimize the degradation of wilderness areas*, such as the prohibition on vehicles going up Maroon Creek Road in the summer. In this case, it is not necessary to know the population ceiling of a wilderness area – it

is enough to know that *less* vehicles and a smaller parking area help us *get closer* to the standard of experience described in the Wilderness Act.

As the notion of carrying capacity has come to include standards for the *experience* of tourists and even the *experience* of locals in a tourist destination, the carrying capacity exercise has grown exponentially more complex.

“Assessment has extended from ecological thresholds to include notions of visitors’ recreational experience, indicators and criteria of psychological satisfaction and so forth,” according to 2004’s *The Challenge of Tourism Carrying Capacity Assessment: Theory and Practice*, edited by Harry Coccossis and Alexandra Mexa. “Note however that in making this shift, much of the determinism characterizing initial ecological limits-based perceptions of carrying capacity is being lost and it can no longer be treated as a scientifically objective concept.”

In 2005’s *Global Tourism*, William F. Theobald talks about the “negative effects” felt by local residents in a tourist environment.

“From a social perspective, carrying capacity refers to a destination’s ability to absorb tourism without unacceptable negative effects being felt by local residents. *Levels at which inappropriate impacts occur are dependent on values determined by the community* as opposed to the visitor. Identifying these values in a tourism destination requires considerable consensus building amongst community stakeholders. From a carrying capacity management perspective it involves *identifying the desired conditions* for a destination area, and deciding how to effectively manage tourism toward those ends.”

A carrying capacity discussion for the Aspen area grows more complex if we consider that the desired conditions for year-round residents may diverge from the desired conditions for visitors – although there is certainly common ground between the two groups. Gauging consensus on community values and identifying a desired future is a critical step in long-range planning and growth management.

### Infrastructure Analysis

Conducting an infrastructure analysis to determine how much development can be supported in a given area is similar to the exercise used for calculating freight loads in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In most cases, public infrastructure can be expanded. For example, \$11 million worth of improvements to the Sewer Treatment Plant at the AABC means there is plenty of capacity at this time. Does this mean development should occur until the plant reaches capacity? No. The State Department of Environmental Health requires sanitation districts to draw up plans for expansion when plant capacity reaches 80 percent.

Can we limit the extension of sewer lines? Yes. But that is done by establishing a policy such as the adoption of a Community Growth Boundary, which rests on the concept of protecting rural character from sprawl. Maintaining rural character is a “desired condition” expressed through community consensus; it is *not* a function of inherent limitations on infrastructure.

In short, an infrastructure analysis does not yield a “magic number” for how much development can be supported, largely because infrastructure can almost always be expanded. A theoretical population ceiling or growth limit has much more to do with a shared community consensus on “quality of life.”

Perhaps the most telling example is the transportation system. When more than 750 cars per hour are trying to get in and out of Aspen, the level of congestion starts to rise exponentially. The subject of eliminating the S-Curves in favor of a new alignment to increase roadway capacity has been debated for decades. Many who were opposed to a new alignment explicitly said the S-Curves would limit development. This has not turned out to be a solid premise. The more relevant measure has to do with the threshold of misery that commuters are willing to endure versus their interest in working in the Aspen Area. It turns out that the threshold of misery for commuters has been high enough to endure traffic congestion in Aspen, while many who live in town see their quality of life degraded during the commuter hours to an unacceptable level. Again, the question for the people living in town is more about a “desired condition” than it is about infrastructure limitations. It’s about a shared concept of quality of life, not how many more houses the water system can support.

At the same time, understanding the capacity of our infrastructure is important, especially if we’d like new development to help carry the burden of providing that infrastructure. Mitigation, impact fees and taxes are among the methods for sharing increased infrastructure costs.

#### Carrying Capacity: It’s not Scientific or Objective

The “conclusions” section of the book: *The Challenge of Tourism Carrying Capacity Assessment: Theory and Practice*, also talks about “*envisioning desired conditions.*”

1. Carrying capacity cannot be about absolute, constant and universal limits, reducible to single numbers. Such a task is beyond the reach of our intellectual capacity and far beyond the resources available for the task.
2. Carrying capacity can not be a scientifically objective concept. This should not be seen as a limitation or a drawback as it is an inherent characteristic of the notion of sustainability. Sustainability is not a universal, value-free objective criterion that can be defined with recourse only to science. It depends also on dynamic perceptions and values and on a plurality of perspectives. *It is through an institutionalized process of dialogue, compromises and value resolution that shared vision should be developed about what citizens want to achieve.* This suggests a move from the identification of thresholds to the envisioning of ‘desired conditions.’
3. The above mark a shift from an assessment of carrying capacity to a broader, multi-dimensional and participatory assessment based on various sources of information and with the use of multiple indicators, the aggregation of which should be part of a politicized, scientific discourse. Development of shared visions can complement strict scientific assessments. Information on the carrying capacity limits and the various thresholds of certain systems can still be vital parts of this discourse, providing guidance for certain impacts to be faced if certain courses of action are followed. The objective should be to inform on trade-offs and to facilitate, not to dictate choice.

Trying to identify a “shared vision” is what the first phase of the AACP public process attempted to do. This is exactly what the 240 people who attended the focus groups were asked to generate – and what the 410 people who attended the “clicker” sessions were asked to comment on.

Theobald adds that, “When applied within planning systems that focus on managing growth for desirable and acceptable change, some components of the carrying capacity management concept offer potential. Knowledge of the consequences of exceeding desired impacts can be used to direct management policies and practices in keeping with a more sustainable tourism.”

Local planning efforts have a track record of some agreement on “limits to growth,” but far less on identifying “desired conditions.” For example, the 2000 AACP established the 1993 traffic levels across the Castle Creek Bridge as a limit beyond which quality of life would be degraded. This was essentially a defensive position – this “limit to growth” was not a scientific number, but a number that the community agreed was the maximum acceptable impact based on their experience of traffic congestion in 1993. Going beyond those limits would be “exceeding desired impacts.” This limit to growth has spawned a number of effective steps, ranging from improvements to the transit system to a vote that approved two dedicated bus lanes in 2007.

Similarly, the 2000 AACP established an average daily population ceiling within the Community Growth Boundary of between 28,000 and 30,000. Again, these were not science-based statistics. Instead, the citizen planners at the time had experienced this average daily population in July 1998, and determined that it was acceptable but shouldn’t be exceeded. Getting at these kinds of judgments was one reason staff asked at the keypad sessions whether there were “too many people in Aspen.” (Interestingly, only 10 percent said yes. Forty-four percent said no, and 46 percent said, “sometimes but I can live with it.”)

Along the same lines, one possible approach to limit construction impacts is to establish a certain year – say 2006 – when there was consensus that construction impacts were seriously degrading quality of life. Staff could explore methods for pacing construction so we don’t reach that unacceptable impact again.

### Setting a Goal, Moving Toward It

Identifying desired conditions is a greater challenge. The 1993 AACP included a policy that 60% of employees should be housed above Aspen Village. This may sound like a desired condition, but it was derived from a previous local condition, experienced in the mid-1980s. The community has been unable to reach this 60% goal again, but has taken many steps in pursuing it. The value of defining a shared vision is the resulting ability to simply move toward it.

Regarding affordable housing, the 2000 AACP decided the goal was 800 to 1300 more units – a very ambitious figure that took months of haggling and debate to establish. This is no surprise, because there is no scientific method to establish such a number. However, we can try to establish “desired conditions” to help plan for an ultimate affordable housing ceiling.

The P&Zs went through an exercise where members identified a number of *social indicators* for strong community, such as having enough year-round residents so there is healthy political

debate on shaping the future, or the after-work recreation programs are heavily populated. These indicators are difficult to scientifically measure, but some can be tracked, and others can be gauged through annual opinion surveys.

Establishing a pseudo-scientific number for an affordable housing target may be a waste of breath – does anyone think such a number will prevail when the community is debating a major affordable project in 2018? Does anyone think the upper limit of 1,300 additional units established in the 2000 AACP remains a “hard” upper limit today?

More relevant is the current rate at which free market inventory is being “gentrified” by new buyers and no longer available for locals to rent, or the rate at which people will retire in their housing, or the housing price trends in downvalley communities. Also relevant is any public consensus-building exercise, such as the conclusions of the 2007 Housing Summit, which called for moving forward with public land-banking and affordable housing development as rapidly as possible.

Perhaps the simplest answer is that when the community thinks the job has been done on providing affordable housing, this sentiment will start emerging over time in citywide elections on the subject.

There is a similar challenge when it comes to lodging. While lodging consultants use the concept of “unaccommodated demand” to estimate how much more lodging a community can accommodate, the public might use another kind of standard for decision-making. Some might say they don’t want Aspen to grow any further as a resort. Others might say the downtown restaurant and retail environment depend on short-term visitors to thrive. Still others might want more lodging that is relatively affordable so a new generation can discover Aspen. Some might want to provide public financing; others might see this as providing an unfair competitive edge.

Essentially, we are left with attempting to build a shared consensus. Yes, the occupancy rates are relevant, the condition of the existing lodge product is relevant, costs are relevant – as is the desire to welcome the next generation. Feeling our way through these issues, armed with relevant information, is OK.

### Community Character

The Aspen Area community has debated the issue of carrying capacity before, and it emerged with a consensus that it is not an effective tool in planning for growth. The conclusion instead favored a “community character analysis” that focused on community “identity.”

“The paper on limits to growth illustrated the difficulty of establishing finite limits to growth in the Aspen Area by examining the drinking water supply, wastewater treatment, roads and air quality,” according to the 1993 AACP. “The results of this evaluation indicate that based upon existing conditions, future demand, desired level of service standard, funding for facilities and the legal and other institutional forcers that affect these facilities, a purely technical carrying capacity analysis is not the appropriate tool to place real limits on growth. Another tool, ‘community character analysis,’ was thus examined as the fundamental underpinning of the Aspen Area Community Plan.”

The 1993 AACP described community character analysis as an exercise in defining the community's "identity."

"Community character is a comprehensive representation of an area that includes the relationship between the natural and built environment," according to the 1993 AACP. "It deals concurrently with all aspects of the community – land use, public facilities, 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. Community character analysis can be used to predict the impact of various land use alternatives on the future character of the planning area."

### Population Analysis

Of course, statistics play an essential role in long-term planning.

Looking back, statistics can identify trends that might confirm our sense of how the community is changing. Statistics should be considered as we decide if we want *more* of something, or *less* of something else. They can help us strike a balance of uses that reflects community values.

One approach is to use a variety of methods to gauge the average daily population in the Community Growth Boundary (CGB), generating (for example) a ratio that illustrates the existing balance between the number of people who live and work in the CGB, the number of commuters, the number of visitors staying in lodges, the number of part-time homeowners etc. We can examine how this ratio has shifted over time, and whether the trends match our desired "identity" for the future. If we don't like the trends, we can examine the tools at hand that might reshape the community's future.

Statistics can help tell us how we got to this point, but they can't tell us where we want to go. *It is through an institutionalized process of dialogue, compromises and value resolution that shared vision should be developed about what citizens want to achieve.* Once that heavy lifting has been done, statistics can tell us in the future if we're getting closer to that shared destination.

## Exhibit B

### Estimating Population in the Urban Growth Boundary: Aspen Consolidated Sanitation District Data

Because the boundaries of the Aspen Consolidated Sanitation District (ACSD) are roughly the same as the Community Growth Boundary, it would seem to be a strong source of information regarding the population of the area. In fact, the 2000 AACP recommended a “maximum population of 28,000 to 30,000 persons” based on the July 1998 average monthly population of 28,667, calculated by the ACSD using a 90 gallon per capita daily usage rate.

As it turns out, the ACSD’s estimated average monthly population has matched this number only once since 1998 (July 2001) and has in fact, dropped by roughly 30%.

**Table 1 ACSD Population Estimates**

<b>Year/Month</b>	<b>Ave. Pop.*</b>
July 1998	28,667
July 1999	27,111
July 2000	23,556
July 2001	28,667
July 2002	22,000
July 2003	20,333
July 2004	20,667
July 2005	19,889
July 2006	21,222
July 2007	19,333
July 2008	20,667

\*Based on 90 glns/per cap/day

There are several reasons why it appears that average daily population has dropped over the last 10 years, and why the ACSD is probably not a good indicator of population within the Community Growth Boundary on any given day.

In the mid-1990s, the ACSD bought a video camera system to run through its sewer lines as part of an effort to identify problem areas, where cracks allow inflow into the system. The video makes its way through the entire system every five years. During the last 10-15 years, the repair of problem areas has steadily and cumulatively resulted in fewer gallons per day entering the treatment plant.

In 1995, the ACSD implemented a Line Improvement Fee of \$1,000 per 3,500 square feet, as well as separate Development Impact Fees for large developments. In short, the development

booms in Aspen since 1995 has resulted in more money to improve sewer lines – thereby reducing the gallons per day estimate and steadily reducing population estimates over time.

At the same time, the City of Aspen Building Code began requiring water-saving shower-heads, toilets and dishwashers in the mid-1990, which has also steadily reduced the amount of effluent at the sewer treatment plant. For example, the standard 4.5 gallons per minute toilet flush has been reduced to 1.6 gpm.

Other significant operational changes have reduced the amount of effluent going to the treatment plant since the mid-1990s, including:

- People who travel and use services within the planning area but stay at campgrounds (ACSD stopped taking waste from Forest Service campgrounds at least 15 years ago. “Outhouse” openings big enough so people throw in beer cans, broken antlers, elk legs, old parkas.)
- People who travel and use some services within the planning area but live outside the UGB and rely on septic systems (ACSD stopped taking septic waste from outside the district boundaries at high seasons 10 years ago due to high Biological Oxygen Demand of waste, and stopped accepting septic waste entirely four years ago when employee housing was built in the area where a manhole was designated for that use.)
- Commuting construction workers who use Port-o-Potties at construction sites
- Non-residents attending special events, using Port-o-Potties (ACSD stopped accepting Port-o-Potty waste 10-15 years ago because it included toxic formaldehyde and trash. Port-o-potty waste goes to South Canyon landfill.)

There are also many people who are present in the planning area on any given day, who are not measured through the ACSD – or who are undercounted for various reasons, including:

- People who travel in RV/Campers (The ACSD does not accept this waste, and there are no other outlets for RV/Camper waste in the study area. Main Street Texaco used to accept it, but no longer does.)
- Day-trippers in the planning area who don’t stay overnight (May use public toilets, but gallons/day are lower than average.)
- Commuting workers (Use bathrooms at work, but gallons/day substantially below average.)
- Out-of-district students (Use bathrooms at school, but gallons/day substantially below average.)

Conclusion: In some ways, the measure of population via ACSD data has become more accurate over the years, due to a reduction in sewer line infiltration. That means that as the sewer line system comes closer to optimum efficiency, greater accuracy will mean more reliable trend-lines. But for the same reason, the population trend-lines since the mid-1990s are very unreliable.

At the same time, the fact that the ACSD has stopped taking effluent from the Forest Service and from Port-o-Potty operators means that campers, special events attendees and many commuting construction workers are no longer counted, and will not be counted going forward. This

operational change means that estimating the population on any given day is more unreliable than it was in the past.

The underlying measure that produces population (gallons per capita per day) is always an educated guess. For example, while more affluent areas tend to produce *more* gallons per capita, dramatic gains in the efficiency of newer plumbing fixtures will tend to *reduce* effluent to the treatment plant. Also, all commuters use substantially fewer gallons per day than a resident who lives in the Aspen Area.

Overall, planning staff finds that using ACSD data for population estimates on any given day in the planning area is unreliable, considering that construction workers, commuters, day-trippers and campers are either not counted or are substantially undercounted.

On any given day, ACSD data is most reflective of the total number of people who live and work (or attend school) in the Aspen Area, year-round retirees, the number of people staying at second homes and the number of people staying at lodges/condos etc. Of course, ACSD data cannot distinguish the number of people in each of these demographic groups.

Infrastructure Capacity Summary

INFRASTRUCTURE	CAPACITY	BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Water	Significant capacity available.	Water is available for at least 600 new single-family homes, but this calculation relies on early 1990s average usage levels, which have been greatly reduced due to conservation efforts.
Sewer	Significant capacity available.	Due to \$11 million in recent improvements to the treatment plant, current capacity is three million gallons per day, while the average daily use in 2008 averaged 1.5 million gallons per day.
Stormwater System	Inadequate capability, funding available for improvements.	Capacity to handle between 10-year and 50-year storms in most areas. In 1997, voters approved \$12 million over 15 years for improvements to handle 100-year storms in many areas, as well as water quality improvements.
Transportation	Constrained condition. Performance deemed unsatisfactory.	Community Survey found traffic congestion to be the most “underperforming” type of infrastructure in the area. The 2000 AACP established a goal to limit traffic over Castle Creek Bridge to 1993 levels, as a method to encourage alternative modes of travel. RFTA service remains the primary alternative, with plans to implement BRT system by 2012. Installation of two bus-only lanes in 2008 intended to encourage transit usage.
Public Safety	Somewhat constrained regarding space needs.	The Aspen Police Department (APD), Pitkin County Sheriff’s Office (SO), Aspen Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD), Aspen Ambulance District (AAD) and Mountain Rescue appear to have adequate staff and equipment. AVFD recently built a substation at the AABC and is completing renovation of Hopkins Street Headquarters Station. Space needs are an ongoing issue for the APD and SO.

(Continued)

Medical Services	Adequate capacity, plans for expansion in place.	Recent conceptual approval for a major expansion at Aspen Valley Hospital will address issues regarding quality and scope of service.
Child Care	At capacity. Projected shortfall in near future.	Pitkin County Child Care Needs Assessment predicts reaching capacity by 2012, largely due to needs of commuting population. At capacity ...
Senior Services	Nearing capacity for services, including nutrition and fitness. Exceeded capacity at Whitcomb Terrace. Significant need for expanded services projected in coming decades.	Pitkin County Senior Services believes some seniors are leaving the community due to a lack of adequate services. Nutrition and fitness/wellness program nearing capacity due to limited space at Senior Center. Whitcomb Terrace has a long waiting list. The CCRC Committee is exploring the potential for a large senior housing complex, ranging from independent living to assisted living and clinical care. The Senior Housing and Care Needs survey found that almost one-third of second homeowners intend to retire here and almost half of year-round residents intend to retire here.
Secondary Education	Nearing capacity at high school.	Both the high school and middle school have been expanded since 2003. The 2006-07 Aspen School District Annual Report rated the Elementary School at 83% capacity, the Middle School at 64% capacity and the High School at 90% capacity.
Landfill	Limited capacity.	Estimated to reach capacity between 2033 and 2038 unless new programs and technologies produce less waste.
Recreation	Adequate capacity. Some requests for additional playing fields.	Extensive recreation opportunities are provided, ranging from tennis, golf, fitness/wellness, skating, playing fields, bicycle/walking trails.
Local Government	At capacity.	For the City of Aspen, recent expansion into Hopkins Street Annex for City Building and Engineering Departments and Canary Initiative has relieved space needs issue at current city staffing levels. Aspen

		<p>Police Dept. and Sheriff's Office has inadequate space and facilities. Courthouse has inadequate space. Pitkin County seeks to consolidate offices in a central facility. Lack of adequate public meeting space was identified in 2006 Civic Master Plan. New meeting room at new Hopkins Street Fire Station may provide some relief.</p>
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## Summary of Joint Planning and Zoning Commissions Meeting

Sister Cities Room / February 24, 2009

*The following is not intended to serve as minutes of the 2/24/09 meeting, but to summarize areas of consensus and discussion on major issues.*

Purpose of AACP Update: There was consensus that the new AACP should feature purposeful and strong goals that include a well-stated rationale for each goal. There was consensus that action items should be adopted so that policy makers have clear direction on how to accomplish the goals.

Definitions of growth: For the purposes of clarity in P&Z discussions, there was an interest in establishing some common definitions of growth. When the P&Zs discuss managing growth in more detail toward the end of this process, staff will prepare definitions to help bring greater clarity to those discussions.

Pace of growth: There appeared to be consensus that GMQS is not operating effectively with regard to the pace of construction. There appeared to be a consensus in favor of controlling the pace of development, as well as an interest in stating the purpose behind it. For example, pacing growth could reduce burdens on the transportation system and improve quality of life.

The method for controlling the pace of growth will need further discussion under Action Items at a future date. Whether to pace all types, or some types of growth will need further discussion.

Focus on desired uses: There was discussion about identifying the kinds of growth that is desired. There appeared to be consensus on the need for more affordable housing. There was some support for growth in the lodging base. Specific goals and tools will need further discussion at a later date.

Amount of growth: There appeared to be consensus to at least pursue discussions on limiting allowable FAR in the city and county. Reasons for limiting FAR included an interest in reflecting the historic pattern of development; limiting construction impacts and job generation, reducing pressure on the transportation system.

Job generation: There was some discussion on how to grapple with job generation. Are we primarily concerned about job generation with regard to all types of growth? Or – considering that we are rapidly approaching build-out -- are we primarily concerned with what uses we want to encourage and what uses we want to limit?

**MANAGING GROWTH**

**Community Comment / 2009**

General Comments

When asked what are the “most important issues facing the Aspen Area in the next five years,” Managing Growth ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among voters, 4<sup>th</sup> among full time homeowners, 4<sup>th</sup> among second homeowners, and 3<sup>rd</sup> among all homeowners. While Managing Growth was ranked as an important issue, it did not rise to the level of traffic.

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Most Important Issue: Managing Growth	46%	53%	48%	38%
Note: This question asked people to identify five of the top issues that will be facing the Aspen Area in the next 5 years. They chose from 17 topics.				

In an exercise when people had to split \$100 among nine topic areas, people attending the Small Group Meetings ranked Managing Growth 5<sup>th</sup> among nine topics.

The Community Survey included a similar exercise, splitting \$100 among nine topic areas: Managing Growth was the 6<sup>th</sup> choice of voters and the 3<sup>rd</sup> choice for full-time homeowners, the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of second-homeowners, and 2<sup>nd</sup> for all homeowners. Consistently, second-homeowners rank Managing Growth as more important than voters. In fact, voters ranked “Public Transit” and “Human Services” as more important than “Managing Growth.” Only “Parks, Open Space, and Trails” ranked higher for second-homeowners.

One of the common themes at the Small Group Meetings was a conflict over the pros and cons of growth and redevelopment. Some described growth as necessary to meeting community goals, like affordable housing. Others described growth as undermining their sense of small town character because of the mass and scale of new development. A third group took the middle ground, saying that we could change the uses of our existing buildings to meet our community goals. This idea was tested at the Community Vision meetings, where people were asked to choose between these three positions. Only 19% of Community Vision meeting participants felt that growth and redevelopment resulted in a shift away from their vision for the community.

<b>Which statement do you agree with the most? (Select one)</b>	
	<b>Responses (percent)</b>
We need to grow and redevelop to reach my vision for the community.	41.42%
We can reach my community vision by changing the uses of existing buildings rather than building additional structures.	39.90%

When we grow and redevelop, we get further away from my community vision.	18.68%
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Community Survey respondents were asked to identify how much growth they would like to see. The survey indicated the community is generally split on whether there should be more or less new growth.

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
No Growth/Less Growth	55%	53%	54%	49%
About the Same as Today/More Growth	43%	45%	43%	48%

Note: The answers to this survey question were combined. The answers "Zero Growth" and "Less growth than at present" were combined and the answers "About the same rate of growth as at the present," "More growth but some controls," and "No growth controls" were combined.

Assuming some growth will occur, Community Vision meeting participants chose the Buttermilk/AABC area and the core commercial areas from the river to the mountain as the places that are appropriate for future growth. Coming in third was the lodging area at the base of Aspen Mountain.

Both the 1993 and 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan included a goal of “limiting the ultimate population in the Aspen area in order to preserve the quality of life for residents and enjoyment for visitors.” Tested in the Community Survey, 62% of second-homeowners thought this goal would be a benefit or great benefit. However, full-time homeowners and voters didn’t feel as strongly. Only 50% of full-time homeowners and 51% of voters supported the idea.

Asked if there “are too many people in Aspen,” only 10% of Community Vision meeting participants said yes. Forty-six percent said “sometimes, but I can live with it,” while 44% said, “no.”

A similar question was posed at the 2006 Core Beliefs keypad sessions, focusing on special events. Twenty-five percent said, “There is a perfect amount now but we don’t need any more” and 47% said, “Bring them on – they make Aspen the place that it is.”. Also at the Core Beliefs session, 71% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the notion that downtown “feels too overwhelming with buildings, events, traffic, people.”

Pace and Character of Development

While growth management establishes an annual quota on different types of land uses, it does not regulate the total amount of construction that can occur each year. The issue of construction impacts has become a major part of the community dialogue about growth. The topic was covered extensively in the Core Beliefs keypad meetings, at a time when there was an extensive amount of construction occurring in town.

While there was a serious concern about the pace of development at that time, there was an equal or greater concern about the character of growth. Seventy-seven percent of people at the Core Beliefs meetings were worried about both the “character” and “pace” of development. And, 64% of people felt that the city should have “a major” or “the ultimate” role in regulating the pace of development.

A similar response was given to the Community Survey, with approximately 60% of people in support of controlling the pace of new development.

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Control the pace of new construction and redevelopment impacts by limiting the allocation of building permits or a quota system of some kind.	64%	61%	62%	59%

Note: Survey uses a scale of 1-5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. The figures above add the results of those who chose 4 or 5.

### Scrape and Replace

The fastest growing segment of the construction industry is the practice of demolishing and replacing existing homes, typically doubling the size of the demolished home. This is referred to as “scrape and replace.” Neither the city nor the county impose an annual limit on scrape and replace projects. People at the Community Vision meetings were asked what “concerns” them the most about this trend – only 22% said “it doesn’t really bother me.” At 35%, the greatest concern expressed was that many existing homes are converted from locals housing to second homes and the size of the new homes.

<b>With regard to the growing trend of demolishing and replacing existing homes, what concerns you the most? (Select one)</b>	
	<b>Responses (percent)</b>
It doesn't really bother me	22%
The greater size of the new homes	19%
The waste of environmental resources	12%
The pace and overall construction impacts	10%
The fact that many are converted from locals housing to 2nd homes	35%
I don't know enough to have an opinion	2%

Despite some concerns on the impact of scrape and replace project, 60% of Community Vision respondents were opposed to placing an “annual limit on the number of homes that are demolished and replaced.”

The topic of homes becoming too large in Aspen and surrounding Pitkin County neighborhoods came up repeatedly at the Small Group meetings, but when tested at the Community Vision

Meetings, there was no strong consensus. While 54% said that Aspen’s “residential neighborhoods are seeing larger houses that don’t reflect my vision for the Aspen area,” 35% said neighborhoods are “evolving in a way that I can live with” and 8% said “this does not matter to me.”

When asked the same question about the surrounding county neighborhoods, only 48% agreed that “residential neighborhoods are seeing larger houses that don’t reflect my vision for the Aspen Area,” 38% said neighborhoods are “evolving in a way that I can live with” and 10% said “this does not matter to me.”

General Growth Restrictions

One of the core functions of Growth Management is to identify which types of growth should be restricted and which should be encouraged. As the community has identified new priorities over time, the growth management system has evolved to meet them.

Community Survey respondents wanted more regulation across the board, with the exception of second homeowners wanting less regulation of Free Market Residential land uses. There was some support for maintaining the current level of regulation on lodging. Some might be surprised by the desire to have more regulation for affordable housing. This may reflect the controversy regarding the perceived excessive cost of the Burlingame Affordable Housing development. All the other methods of public feedback reflected a desire to develop and fund affordable housing (see Housing Chapter).

**Residential - Free Market**

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Less Regulation	33%	48%	39%	34%
(Same as today)	30%	29%	29%	29%
More Regulation	38%	23%	33%	37%

Note: Survey uses a scale of 1-5, 1 represented "Less Regulation" and 5 represented "More Regulation." The table combines 1 and 2 for "Less Regulation," 4 and 5 for "More Regulation," and lists 3 as Same as today.

**Residential - Affordable Housing**

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Less Regulation	20%	19%	20%	28%
(Same as today)	34%	36%	35%	34%
More Regulation	36%	45%	45%	38%

Note: Survey uses a scale of 1-5, 1 represented "Less Regulation" and 5 represented "More Regulation." The table combines 1 and 2 for "Less Regulation," 4 and 5 for "More Regulation," and lists 3 as Same as today.

**Commercial**

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	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Less Regulation	16%	18%	18%	22%
(Same as today)	34%	37%	35%	39%
More Regulation	50%	45%	47%	39%

Note: Survey uses a scale of 1-5, 1 represented "Less Regulation" and 5 represented "More Regulation." The table combines 1 and 2 for "Less Regulation," 4 and 5 for "More Regulation," and lists 3 as Same as today.

### Lodge/Tourist Accommodations

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Less Regulation	25%	23%	26%	27%
(Same as today)	33%	40%	36%	41%
More Regulation	43%	37%	40%	32%

Note: Survey uses a scale of 1-5, 1 represented "Less Regulation" and 5 represented "More Regulation." The table combines 1 and 2 for "Less Regulation," 4 and 5 for "More Regulation," and lists 3 as Same as today.

### Industrial

	Full time Homeowner	Second Homeowner	ALL Homeowners	VOTER LIST
Less Regulation	15%	17%	16%	19%
(Same as today)	35%	26%	31%	42%
More Regulation	50%	57%	52%	39%

Note: Survey uses a scale of 1-5, 1 represented "Less Regulation" and 5 represented "More Regulation." The table combines 1 and 2 for "Less Regulation," 4 and 5 for "More Regulation," and lists 3 as Balance.

The Community Survey used general land use categories, while a series of follow up questions at the Community Vision meetings used a more detailed approach. People at the Community Vision Meetings were given a list of land use types and asked to decide which should have the most growth restrictions and which should have the fewest. If growth is to occur, people would prefer to see smaller lodging units, affordable housing, day-to-day retail services, and arts and cultural facilities, over other types of land uses.

<b>I would place the fewest restrictions on the following kinds of development: (Select up to four)</b>	
	<b>Responses (percent)</b>
Smaller lodging units	16.94%

Affordable housing	16.55%
Day-to-day retail services (basics, essentials)	16.47%
Arts and cultural facilities	15.07%
Let the market decide	8.90%
Public/Institutional	8.51%
Free market housing	6.09%
Tourist-oriented retail space	4.29%
Larger lodging units	3.75%
Office space	3.43%

In contrast, if growth occurs people want to see restrictions on larger lodging units and free market housing. This could indicate the community feels we have enough of these land use types.

CORE BELIEFS QUESTIONS – CLICKER SESSIONS JULY 2006

SCRAPE AND REPLACE

**33.) I believe the City should manage the pace of scrape and replace developments...**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Strongly Agree	39.20%	156
Agree	23.87%	95
Neutral	7.04%	28
Disagree	16.58%	66
Strongly Disagree	13.32%	53
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>398</b>

**34.) I'm worried about City's management of scrape and replace development because...**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
It will affect my ability to remodel	19.78%	73
It will slow down redevelopment in town	26.02%	96
I'm not worried, please regulate it	54.20%	200
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>369</b>

**28.) The City should limit the amount of construction going on in each neighborhood so no one neighborhood is overwhelmed.**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Strongly agree	30.81%	122
Agree	23.48%	93
Neutral	14.39%	57
Disagree	19.19%	76
Strongly Disagree	12.12%	48
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>396</b>

**29.) If the City limits construction in neighborhoods, I would rather...**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
See limited construction over a longer period so it's not so overwhelming	54.55%	210
Let the construction occur at once so we can just get it over with	45.45%	175
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>385</b>

PACE etc.

**27.) The City should have \_\_\_\_\_ role in the pace of development.**

no  
 limited  
 some  
 a major  
 the ultimate

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
no		2.38%	10
limited		12.14%	51
some		21.67%	91
a major		46.90%	197
the ultimate		16.90%	71
<b>Totals</b>		100%	420

**12.) Due to the amount / pace of development right now Aspen is....**

Likely to become more vibrant and interesting  
 Noisy, dusty and congested  
 Unfriendly to tourists  
 Evolving into something I think I will enjoy  
 Losing its character  
 None of the above

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
Likely to become more vibrant and interesting		19.18%	121
Noisy, dusty and congested		27.26%	172
Unfriendly to tourists		2.85%	18
Evolving into something I think I will enjoy		13%	82
Losing its character		33.91%	214
None of the above		3.80%	24
<b>Totals</b>		100%	631

**14.) Regarding the pace of development in Aspen:**

It's overwhelming and degrading my quality of life  
 It's a natural cycle and I just live with it  
 Development has more positive features than negative  
 Construction goes with a healthy economy  
 Short-term negative impacts are worth it in the long-run

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
It's overwhelming and degrading my quality of life		45.67%	190
It's a natural cycle and I just live with it		15.87%	66
Development has more positive features than negative		8.89%	37
Construction goes with a healthy economy		13.70%	57
Short-term negative impacts are worth it in the long-run		15.87%	66
<b>Totals</b>		100%	416

**15.) I would be more comfortable with the pace of development...**

If I knew it was going to slow down at some point soon  
 If the City had a better plan for managing and controlling growth  
  
 I am comfortable with the pace now  
 I'll never be comfortable with the current pace no matter what

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
If I knew it was going to slow down at some point soon		10.40%	52
If the City had a better plan for managing and controlling growth		52.40%	262
I am comfortable with the pace now		19.80%	99
I'll never be comfortable with the current pace no matter what			

	17.40%	87
<b>Totals</b>	100%	500

16.) “What worries me is not the pace and amount of development going on in Aspen, but the character of what is being built.”

	<b>Responses</b>	
	<b>(percent)</b>	<b>(count)</b>
I'm worried about both equally	21.73%	88
I'm worried about both, but character worries me the most	42.47%	172
I'm worried about both, but pace worries me the most	13.09%	53
Character is hard to define	10.12%	41
I'm not worried about either	12.59%	51
<b>Totals</b>	100%	405

17.) The city needs to do a better job of addressing the negative impacts of construction i.e. traffic, dust, noise etc.

	<b>Responses</b>	
	<b>(percent)</b>	<b>(count)</b>
Strongly Agree	55.31%	229
Agree	26.57%	110
Neutral	9.42%	39
Disagree	6.52%	27
Strongly Disagree	2.17%	9
<b>Totals</b>	100%	414