

# **AGENDA**

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

**Sister Cities  
Aspen, Colorado**

**September 22, 2009**

### **4:30 PM WORKSESSION**

1. Review of the Aspen Area Community Plan update
  - a. Review of Managing Growth – AABC/West Maroon area Philosophy Discussion
  - b. Review of Managing Growth – Vision & Philosophy

### **7:30 PM ADJOURN WORKSESSION**

## MEMORANDUM

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

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

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

**DATE OF MEMO:** September 17, 2009

**MEETING DATE:** September 22, 2009, 4:30pm in Sister Cities

**RE:** Managing Growth & Economic Sustainability

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**SUMMARY:** At the September 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, the P&Zs agreed to start the September 22 meeting with the last “open discussion” on Intent and Philosophy, focusing on the AABC area. Staff has invited people who have been involved in recent Pitkin County meetings on the future of the AABC to attend. (The P&Zs should consider all references to the “AABC area” as the entire area between Maroon Creek Road and the western end of the airport on both sides of Highway 82.)

After the discussion on the AABC area, the P&Zs can begin their review of the Intent and Philosophy section of the Managing Growth and Economic Sustainability chapter. Staff will return to the technique of showing the wording on-screen and making revisions based on the input of the P&Zs. (A hard copy of this draft statement was provided at the September 8 meeting, and e-mailed as well. Another copy is provided electronically as Exhibit E. Please contact staff if you need another hard copy.)

Staff does not expect there will be time remaining to get into a discussion on Goals and Action Items. Staff intends to generate a complete list of Goals and Action Items for P&Z revision on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

**QUESTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 22:** The following includes important background information as well as suggested questions to help guide discussion on September 22.

Draft Intent and Philosophy for Managing Growth & Economic Sustainability: Sub-section on the future of the AABC area

The area west of the Maroon Creek Bridge along Highway 82 to the end of the airport is a unique area of Pitkin County that is located within the Aspen Urban Growth Boundary. This area provides a transition between the urban resort community of Aspen and the rural portions of Pitkin County. It has evolved from being primarily a service center for Aspen in the 1970s, to

being a complex mix of residential, commercial, public, institutional, light industrial and recreational uses, and functions literally and figuratively as the “Entrance to Aspen.”

This update is the first time that the AABC area will have its own chapter in the AACP, due to the changing mix of land uses in this area during the last 10 years, the potential for additional growth – and the resulting potential for change in the function of this area as it relates to Aspen.

Based on the recognition that any changes to zoning in this area could have significant impacts on uses within the commercial core of Aspen, Pitkin County has delayed consideration of zoning changes in recent years until it could work cooperatively with the City in developing a sub-area plan as part of the update to the AACP.

On September 22, the P&Zs will discuss how the future of the AABC area fits in with its philosophy of Managing Growth and Economic Sustainability. But it’s important to recognize that the P&Zs will also have an opportunity to talk about how the future of the AABC area fits in with its philosophy of Affordable Housing – and with its Philosophy of Transportation.

Finally, once we have drafted the chapters on Managing Growth & Economic Sustainability, Affordable Housing and Transportation, we will then go into further detail when drafting a chapter on the future of the AABC area. As will be true for other interrelated topics, we are likely to end up revising current drafts as we continue to go through this process chapter-by-chapter.

As the P&Zs discuss what they would like to say about the AABC area in the Philosophy section of Managing Growth & Economic Sustainability, it will be helpful to consider the questions posed in the “Clicker” sessions and the Community Survey (please see exhibits B and C) as well as the following:

**Question 1)** Considering the mix of uses in the AABC area today, what are the most important kinds of uses and characteristics for the future?

- Affordable Housing
- Free market residential
- Service commercial small business park uses (non-retail)
- The visual and physical entrance and transition from rural to resort area
- An incubator for affordable businesses
- Part of the tourist economy (lodging, base of Buttermilk)
- A hub for public/institutional uses (airport, CMC, ACSD, RFTA, etc.)
- A potential civic center (Pitkin County)

**Question 2)** What is the impact of growth in the AABC area on Aspen’s commercial core? Are there types of uses that will draw vitality out of the commercial core? Are there types of uses that will compliment the commercial core?

Draft Intent and Philosophy for Managing Growth & Economic Sustainability

**Question 3)** Has staff missed anything important in its draft of the Vision/Intent and Philosophy section for Managing Growth & Economic Sustainability? Are there any red flags for P&Z members? Does it accurately reflect the P&Zs discussions to this point? Has it answered the questions regarding what types of uses we want to encourage, and what types of uses we want to limit? Is it close enough to completion so the P&Zs can comfortably move on to a discussion of Goals and Action Items on October 13?

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Exhibit A: Summary of September 8 P&Zs meeting

Exhibit B: Clicker session results on AABC area

Exhibit C: Community Survey results on AABC area

Exhibit D: Excerpts from AABC community meetings

Exhibit E: Copy of Draft Managing Growth and Economy Intent and Philosophy Section

## Summary of Joint Planning and Zoning Commissions Meeting

Rio Grande Meeting Room / September 8, 2009

*The following is not intended to serve as minutes, but to summarize P&Z discussion on the questions posed in the memo. The summary of P&Z responses incorporate elements of previous P&Z discussions.*

**Cliff Weiss Presentation:** City P&Z Commissioner Cliff Weiss gave a presentation on house size in the UGB and areas adjacent to the UGB. Cliff's presentation included numerous photographs of large homes under construction as well as new roads into the backcountry. His comments included a desire to:

- Establish "scenic zones" in the County in areas immediately adjacent to the UGB that would limit scenic impacts in areas outside of the UGB;
- Establish a hard cap of 7,500 square feet in FAR for residential development;
- Look at the City and County TDR programs and possibly lower the amount of floor area one gets from a TDR (with the expectation that when the house size cap is lowered, the amount of floor area gained from landing a TDR is also lowered but is equally/more valuable);
- Amend the County TDR program to establish a floor area scale so that more floor area is awarded for a TDR if it originates in a "scenic zone";
- Require mining claim owners to turn the mining claims into TDRs and not allow 1,000 square foot cabins;
- Ensure the back country remains rural in nature and is not over developed;
- Make it more difficult to have two story "great rooms" by capturing those areas in volumetric FAR calculations.

**P&Z Response to the Presentation:** There were several areas of consensus, including:

- House sizes in the UGB should be lowered. We should examine how TDRs might play a role in allowing property owners to increase their house size.
- We should examine adding volumetric calculations into how we calculate floor area. Staff was directed to bring back information on why the city eliminated Volumetric FAR calculations.
- Both the City and County land use codes should be strengthened to minimize development on slopes and in scenic areas (i.e. amend City Code so there is no development on 30% slopes, strengthen the 8040 Greenline Review). Identify any "loopholes" in the codes that allow for degradation of visual quality.
- The City and County codes should be examined for differences. To the extent possible, the codes should be the same for the area within the UGB, in terms of how they treat development on slopes, in scenic areas, and how they count floor area.
- Examine the fees, especially the affordable housing fees, and determine if there are ways to make the field more level for locals and second homeowners.

**Areas that need further discussion/follow up:** There were several ideas that were discussed, but a consensus was not reached, including:

- Should there be an "exponential curve" applied to fees (housing, environmental, etc) as house size gets bigger? There was some agreement on this idea, but also

concern that larger homes cause negative impacts and more mitigation leads to the need for more housing in a region where we are nearing build-out.

- Should we define the maximum house size as well as an exact “hard cap,” and if so, at what square footage is going to work in the best interest of preserving historic integrity and quality of life?
- Should sub grade space be allowed? There were some members who wanted to limit it due to job-generation and other impacts. Other members thought it was more important to limit the visual impacts of mass and scale above grade, so sub-grade space should be allowed and perhaps encouraged.
- Look at the “scenic zones” idea and standardize it in the UGB area. Need to determine where the boundary of these areas might be.
- Consider allowing local property owners to defer mitigation until the property is sold, and allow such property owners to “go to the front of the line” with regard to a potential building permit allocation system.

**Next meeting:**

The P&Zs agreed to finish the philosophical discussion on Growth by discussing the AABC area. There was agreement that the discussion should include the area west of Maroon Creek Road and not just the AABC itself. Following the AABC discussion the group will review the draft Intent and Philosophy for Managing Growth and Economic Sustainability. If there is time, the P&Zs will review Goals and Action Items. The group agreed to have staff draft some initial goals and action items that the P&Zs could use as a starting point for their discussion. It was also agreed that prior to the meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup>, Commissioners would submit ideas to be incorporated in Staff’s first draft of goals and action items.

**Exhibit B**

**“Clicker” Session Results Regarding the AABC Area**

**42.) Regardless of the pace of growth or the type of growth (assuming there will be some growth in the future) where should growth occur? (Select up to three)**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
The core commercial areas – from the river to the mountain.	23.60%	194
The neighborhoods surrounding the core commercial areas.	18.25%	150
The traditional lodging area – base of the mountain.	20.19%	166
The Buttermilk/AABC area.	23.97%	197
Downvalley from the airport.	10.58%	87
I don't know enough to have an opinion	2.55%	21
This does not matter to me	0.85%	7
<b>Totals</b>	100%	822

**63.) In 20 years, the Airport Business Center (AABC) should have: (Select one)**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
A focus on residential development	3.46%	14
A balance of residential and commercial/office/light industrial	77.78%	315
A focus on commercial/office/light industrial	16.54%	67
I don't know enough to have an opinion	1.23%	5
This does not matter to me	0.99%	4
<b>Totals</b>	100%	405

**64.) What level of growth are you willing to see along the Highway 82 corridor between the roundabout and the airport if there are no substantial improvements to today's transportation system? (Select one)**

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Much more than exists today	13.42%	53
A little bit more than exists today	23.04%	91
About the same rate as today	25.57%	101
There should be no new growth in this area	35.70%	141
I don't know enough to have an opinion	1.27%	5
This does not matter to me	1.01%	4
<b>Totals</b>	100%	395

**65.) What level of growth are you willing to see along the Highway 82 corridor between the roundabout and the airport if there are substantial improvements to today's transportation system? (Select one)**

							<b>Responses</b>	
							<b>(percent)</b>	<b>(count)</b>
Much more than exists today							34.00%	136
A little bit more than exists today							28.25%	113
About the same rate as today							18.25%	73
There should be no new growth in this area							18.50%	74
I don't know enough to have an opinion							0.75%	3
This does not matter to me							0.25%	1
<b>Totals</b>							<b>100%</b>	<b>400</b>

**66.) An increased number of lodging units should be built in the area between the Airport/AABC and the roundabout to provide more lodging options in the Aspen Area. (Select one)**

							<b>Responses</b>	
							<b>(percent)</b>	<b>(count)</b>
Strongly agree							14.39%	59
Agree							33.41%	137
Disagree							31.46%	129
Strongly disagree							16.34%	67
I don't know enough to have an opinion							1.95%	8
This does not matter to me							2.44%	10
<b>Totals</b>							<b>100%</b>	<b>410</b>

**67.) Most of the AABC is one to two stories in height. Are you willing to accept one additional story at the AABC? (Select one)**

							<b>Responses</b>	
							<b>(percent)</b>	<b>(count)</b>
Yes							83.63%	332
No							12.85%	51
I don't know enough to have an opinion							2.02%	8
This does not matter to me							1.51%	6
<b>Totals</b>							<b>100%</b>	<b>397</b>

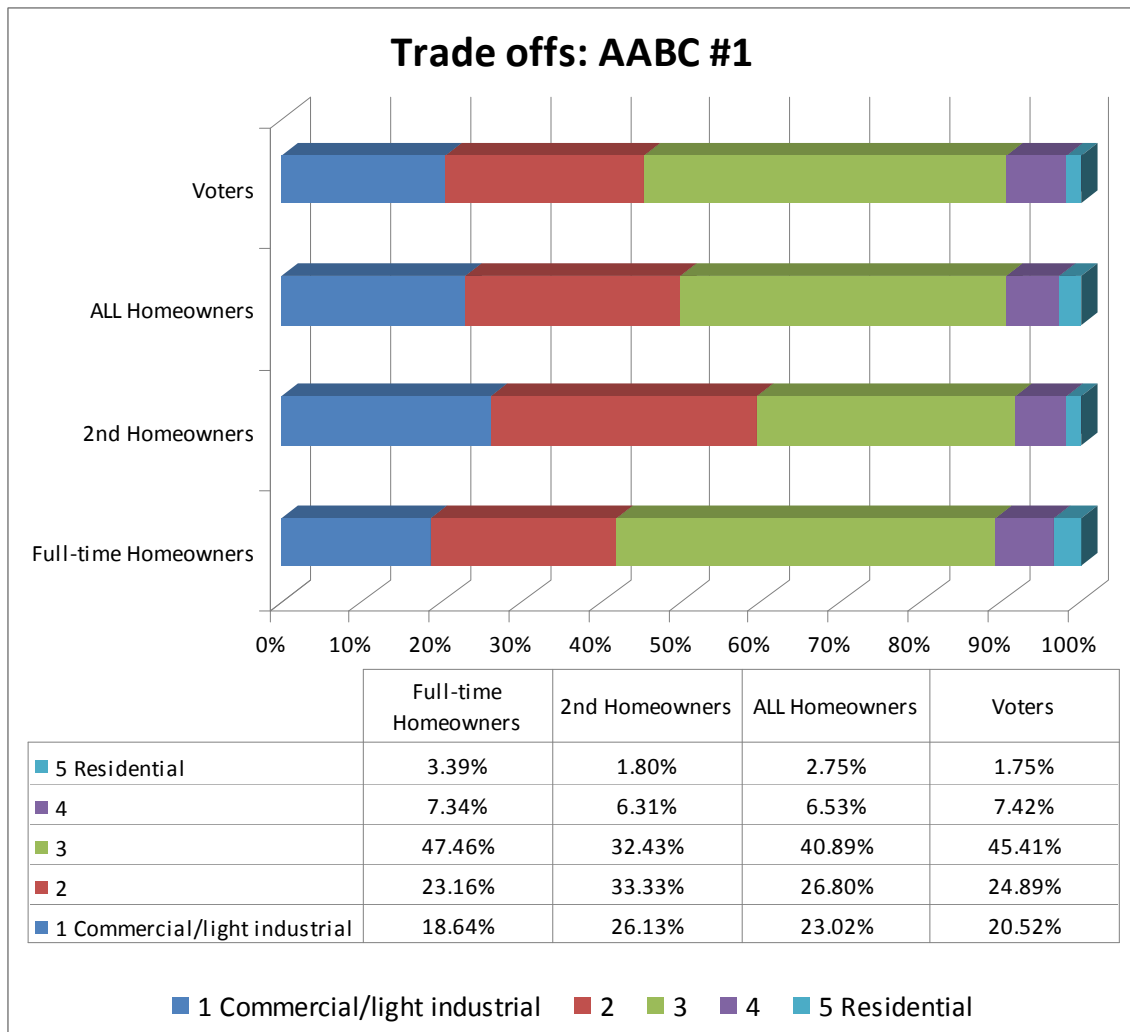
**68.) The public can currently access government services for both the City of Aspen and Pitkin County in Downtown Aspen. In terms of the location of government services, which statement do you agree with the most? (Select one)**

					<b>Responses</b>		
					<b>(percent)</b>	<b>(count)</b>	
Pitkin County government services should remain in the downtown as they have been historically.						48.13%	193
Pitkin County government services should be located outside of Aspen in the AABC area to serve the county wide population.						47.63%	191
I don't know enough to have an opinion.						4.24%	17
					<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>401</b>

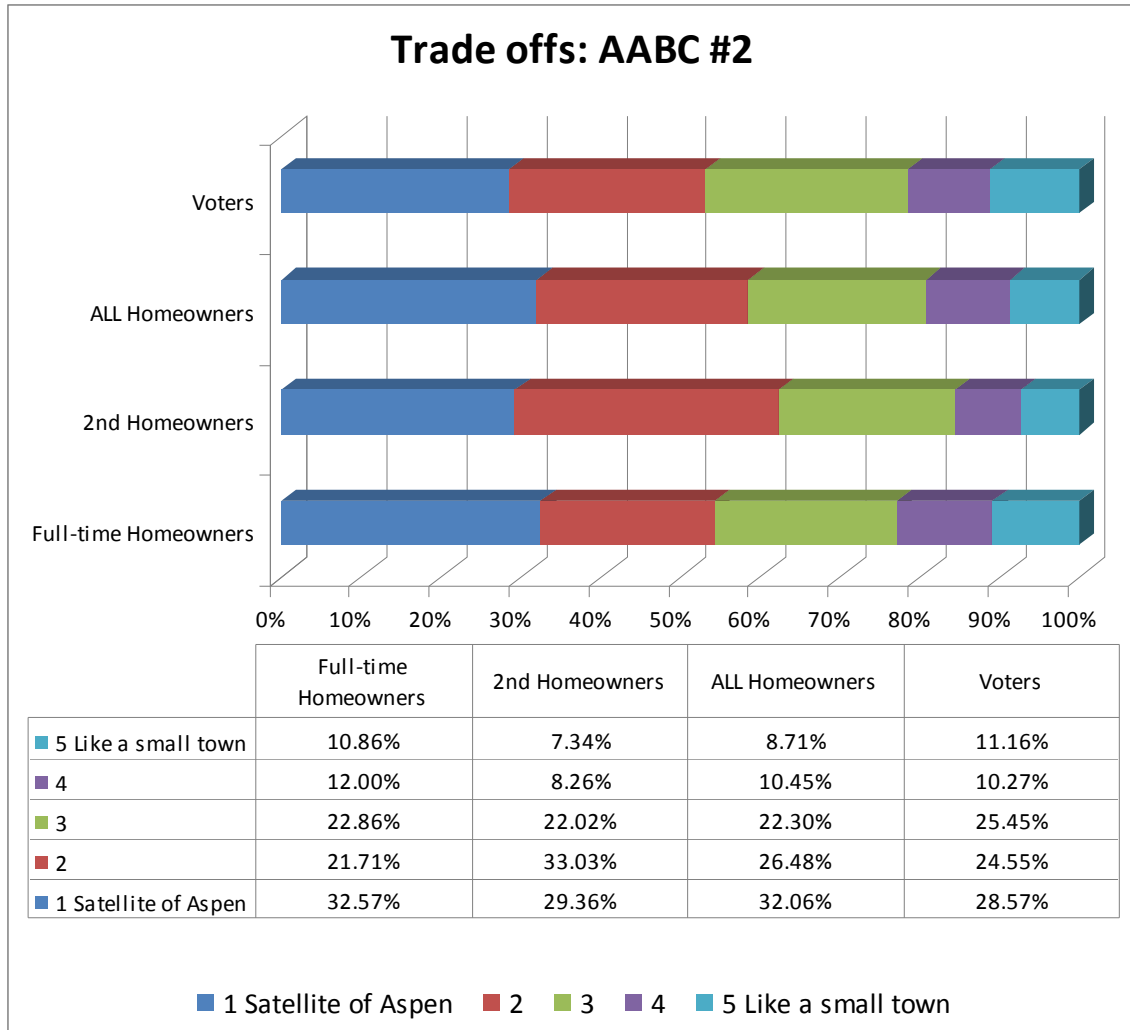
## Exhibit C

### Community Survey Results Regarding the AABC Area

Question #58 asked if the Aspen Airport Business Center should be primarily Commercial/Light Industrial or primarily Residential, or somewhere in between...



Question #59 asked if the Aspen Airport Business Center should be primarily a “satellite of Aspen” or primarily “like a small town” or somewhere in between ...



# Notes From November 13, 2008 AABC Meeting

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## Visioning Exercise for the Aspen Airport Business Center

- Better sidewalks
- More village like, better look with cobblestone
- Protect and create green space
- Safe connection for kids to bike path
- Commercial vitality, local serving businesses
- Sustainable residential, business, commercial economy
- Take lead on creating environmentally sustainable practices
- Efficient shuttle to surrounding areas
- Do not want to become overloaded with spillover from Aspen
- People who live here can work here
- Car free community
- Maintain connections with surrounding communities
- People who live here can work here and shop here
- Wider streets and sidewalks
- Recreational facilities
- Separate road access for business and residents
- Integrating uses
- As many cars below grade as possible
- Maintain three story height restriction for buildings
- Mix of free market and deed restricted housing
- Develop master plan that is flexible
- Stay affordable for business so community will be a good place for startups

## Parking (within AABC)

- Incentivize the development of underground parking
- Need to be mindful of construction workers with parking solutions
- Centralized employee parking
- Creating more parking will only bring in more cars
- By developing more parking the AABC will be more important to Aspen
- Parking is past capacity on 400 Road
- Only allow parking for residents and businesses
- Sticker system
- CDOT should be involved with creating underground parking

- New developments should include parking
- People use AABC for free airport parking
- Enforce parking regulations
- Tear down RFTA and use for parking

#### Parking (surrounding areas)

- Overflow parking in intercept lot with shuttle

#### Circulation

- Extend 400 rd to bus barn and animal shelter
- Bring over European transportation planner
- Trail to Burlingame
- Enforce signage
- Double left out to 82
- Secondary roadway in order to decentralize primary roadway
- No more traffic lights on 82
- Problem is only during rush hour
- Rush hour lasts all day

## Notes from December 4, 2008 North 40 AABC/Airport/Buttermilk Community Meeting

Presentations regarding current needs and plans for the immediate future were made by representatives from the Airport, Aspen Skiing Co., RFTA, Inn at Aspen and the Animal Shelter. The intent was to put planning for the AABC in the broader context of needs and plans for the immediately surrounding area; and to start to define how the area and issues are (or should be) interconnected.

### Brief Summary:

#### Aspen Skiing Company – David Corbin

##### Possible improvements anticipated:

- Replacement/enhancement of public parking
- Improvements to Powder Panda Ski School
- Improvements to operations, including vehicle maintenance, skier services
- Accommodation of ski rental needs?
- Some possible supplemental development

##### Hope to see the following issues addressed in the Plan:

- Integrated transportation solutions for the whole area
- More affordable workforce housing

#### Inn at Aspen – Stan Clausen

##### Possible improvements anticipated:

- Replacement of existing “Inn” with improved, larger condominiums units, hotel rooms, conference and spa facilities;
- Some affordable housing on-site, and some off-site, possibly in the Business Center

##### Hope to see the following issues addressed in the Plan:

- Integrated transportation solution with a component at Base of Buttermilk, with parking garage, special event and skier buses, park-and-ride; facilitating a car-free guest
- Recognition of the Inn at Aspen & Buttermilk Base as the Gateway to Aspen; the first resort amenity you see as you come into Aspen
- Affordable Housing

#### Airport – Tim Malloy

##### Possible improvements anticipated:

- Runway extension
- Improvements to Traffic Control Tower
- Terminal and parking redevelopment
- Transportation Facilities – facilitating mass transit and parking?

##### Hope to see the following issues addressed in the Plan:

- Transit and trails solutions that serve regional needs and provide greater connectivity; reducing reliance upon and impacts from the car

- Measures to improve quality of life for residents of the area, including a comprehensive approach for addressing both highway and airport noise; Potential opportunities for trails & active recreation and other amenities;
- Move towards a self-sustaining community; providing a broader range of goods & services for residents, creating a more fitting entry to the Aspen area; weaving together the residential, business, recreation and community facility uses to benefit everyone in area while continuing to serve the broader region. (Some needs possibly accomplished on Airport parcel)

#### Animal Shelter – Seth Sachson

Hope to see the following issues addressed in the Plan:

- Sage Way Rd. extended to Animal Shelter
- Dogwalker trail through North 40 improved to access the Roaring Fork River
- Vacant land at the snow dump turned into a dog park
- Better signage at the ABC
- Entrance to AABC more user friendly
- Emphasis placed on the AABC asset of access to river and rio grande trail

#### Pitkin County/Public Works –Brian Pettit

Possible improvements anticipated:

- County offices, facilities (possibly in AABC/public works vicinity;)
- Affordable Housing

Hope to see the following issues addressed in the Plan:

- Better Access to the Rio Grande Trail
- Better access to Highway 82
- Re-alignment of intersections to address stacking and safety concerns
- Mass transit solutions (possibly looking at Airport as a transit hub?)
- Parking
- Pedestrian facilities
- Consideration of maintenance requirements of sidewalks or other improvements that may be implemented in the area;

#### RFTA – Jason White

Improvements anticipated:

- Plans solidified for spending recently approved tax dollars for Bus Rapid Transit improvements
- Additional bus stations; creation of hubs; and improvements to existing bus stops (including safety of getting to and from); estimated timeline for station improvements = 2011
- Expansion of bus barn to include more bus storage
- Coordinated/shared space with Pitkin County for maintenance and storage of vehicles and large equipment?

SELECT NOTES FROM THE JANUARY 20, 2009 COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING AT THE HICKORY HOUSE

RE: Aspen Community Vision Plan & AABC, North 40, Buttermilk, Airport Sub Area Plan

*Present:*

*Commissioners*            *Augello, Howard, Mallory, Rudnick*

*Staff*                            *Houben, Sassano*

1. Relocate most or all County offices to *West of Maroon Creek Bridge* area (Location to be determined, but possibly consider County-owned land? Stapleton lot at Buttermilk? BMC West in trade with City for in-town site vacated by County?) Open up space in town currently occupied by County for other uses *and* reduce the volume of cars coming into Town for County business, *and* eliminate some of the air quality issues associated with cars sitting in traffic on Highway 82.
2. The Aspen Urban Growth Boundary should be the limit for dense development.
3. Transportation into and out of Aspen is a critical issue to address. 32,000 cars coming and going have many significant impacts; Consider intercepting cars before they get to Aspen, at the Airport or another feasible location; This approach will only work if there is a sexy mass transit alternative into town. Efficient transit links and safe access across the Highway are critical to this area.
4. County offices, jail, courthouse, etc. should not be in the City. Locating in the West of Maroon area will take a lot of cars off the Highway; and better serve County customers who don't want or have a need to go into Aspen.
5. The County gets *dwarfed* by Aspen; Let's build a County community with a focus on *County*; Build a whole new center and identity for the County.
6. At least a portion of the County facilities should move to the West of Maroon area; some services like the Clerk and recorder may be better left in Town.
7. Continue the evolution of the AABC over time. As the Business center becomes more of a destination in and of itself, traffic and related pollution issues will be resolved, and the public will benefit as they will save time currently spent getting in and out of Aspen
8. Build housing and increase density in general in the AABC area;
9. Require every public building built to have ancillary affordable housing built, too.
10. Develop AABC as a vibrant, separate, distinct community with a new sense of place, complete with pre-school, day care, movie theatre, restaurants, etc.
11. Recognize that the cost of restoration at the AABC, including the upgrade to buildings, roads, parking, etc. will be significant. Who will pay for it?
12. Envision Buttermilk as more of resort-type development, and AABC as a more dense "community."
13. A new, vibrant community west of maroon creek bridge would be beneficial to the Aspen core in the following ways:
  - Aspen would be less congested (fewer cars and traffic;)

- Suffocating growth in Aspen would be alleviated, and the AABC would function as a relief valve; allowing for new energy in Aspen; possibly more locally serving commercial businesses in Town;
- At the same time, AABC grows but doesn't lose its vitality; It is a lively socialized area; its own community.

14. It's important to have clusters of density and preservation of open space (like the golf course and airport) to avoid a sprawl-like development pattern in this area.

15. This is realistically a 30-50 year vision.

## **Notes from February 26, 2009 North 40/AABC/Airport/Buttermilk Community Meeting**

**Agenda/Schedule:** Ellen reviewed the agenda for the day and the schedule for completing the plan.

Four meetings are anticipated to cover the future scenarios covering the Airport, Buttermilk, etc. Following this step, Ellen & Cindy will draft Plan text and a future land use map to bring back for review. The goal is to go before the P & Z in June to adopt the plan. More time may be needed, but we are not anticipating too much more. We still need continued participation, up to & including the P & Z meeting(s).

### **Summary/Results of “Dots” Exercise:**

At the last meeting, the dot exercise used to gauge support for alternative planning scenarios for the airport and AABC was not a statistically accurate method of obtaining results, but rather a way to get people involved with feedback. Recognizing that some elements of the alternatives shown may require funding that's not currently allocated, we may ultimately want to provide two recommendations for land use in the area: one that requires new funding sources, and one that does not.

#### **Dot Exercise Results for Uses At AABC**

General direction shows support for AABC to remain mixed use, with a similar balance to what exists today with some additional housing needed to add enough of a consumer base to support “full service” businesses (grocery stores etc) but that the housing mix should continue to be balanced with commercial/light industrial uses, as it is today.

Zoning: Keep the same uses, but maybe allow for some increase in height to accommodate more housing and possibly to allow for structure parking; also perhaps increase the FAR (to allow a grocery store). Allow for affordable housing zoning.

Redevelopment: Under vision C, it looked like there was some approval for a little bit of redevelopment in the form of façade facelifts, but mostly direction is to keep the same FAR (with the exception of changes required to allow for grocery). As to density, it looked like it was ok for some increases to housing to support neighborhood services.

Parking/Transportation: More on site, some offsite. Need upgrades for safe pedestrian access & to accommodate commercial/light industrial business access.

Under current zoning if completely redeveloped – AABC could accommodate 173 more residential units & 146,518 Square feet more comm'l use

Still some question as to where an additional story/level would that be acceptable in the ABC, given topography, visibility from highway and covenants;

### **Progress on AACP Update:**

Staff will be taking public feedback and draft text to the P &Z's in the next month, and working on refining the vision. The AABC is one chapter of 10 covered in the AACP. The AACP draft text is online at [www.aspencommunityvision.com](http://www.aspencommunityvision.com)

### **John Galambos Presentation:**

Lives in North 40, owns architectural firm in AABC. He wanted to share his idea of the AABC in a visual way.

1) Transportation and Parking: Feels it's important to focus on this first. Currently the signalized intersection gives one point in/out of the AABC. End up with backed up traffic to get into or out of AABC.

At minimum, a bleeder is needed for RFTA - need 200' to connect to go down valley.

We should be looking for alternative ways to better connect the frontage road to the Hwy. (consider intersections, buses, pit co public works and their collective use of the service rd)

2) Uses: Should Center around a live/work connection. AABC currently has concentrated areas of residential and then also mixed areas including, free market residential, affordable housing , business and institutions including CMC, Fire station, airport.

### **Ideas for transportation:**

Create an efficient shuttle loop for public transportation to and from the business center and Town with good headways (every 20 minutes?); Shuttle should be a local to include the AABC and Burlingame

Don't want to cross highway to get the bus. It's dangerous and a disincentive to use of the bus

Parking – need more

### **Ideas on Uses:**

Zoning and future land use map should distinguish between 2 types of businesses, really “car centric” or “dirty” and others

Car centric includes: Gas station, limo business, PitCo Automotive/auto repair/Vehicle (Cracks and Racks), and Planted Earth as examples

Should adjust zoning to focus on car centric business at each end of AABC and put more general/office/restaurants type businesses in the middle.

Also get pedestrian and car friendly throughout but move heavy use to either end to reduce impacts on the middle.

Relocated and adequate pedestrian access is needed

Parking – put parking on nodes to encourage the use of public transportation/trails etc

Emphasize that there should be no more density in this area without additional, improved public transportation, and improved pedestrian access to transportation;

Improve bike trail connections to and from the ABC

Connect the animal shelter to Rio Grande trail with a trail to accommodate dog walkers

Pitkin County owned land on the down valley side of the ABC is not a good location for housing, as it is too isolated from the housing and services at the center of the ABC

### **Zoning**

Shouldn't even build out to the floor area allowed under current zoning until access and traffic congestion issues are addressed first

Less parking should be allowed on the streets – consider sidewalks with parking on one side

### **General:**

Rents for businesses in AABC are less than downtown Aspen - with no speculating that's a good thing

### **John McBride Comments Re ABC:**

New grocery store 5,000 to 11,000 square feet – coming this summer

We should prioritize housing for business center workers

Commercial heart of the Business Center will stay the same

Need to study and address traffic flow

Trail/bikeway connection to Burlingame is very important, though design will be tough because of steep slopes

Automotive business will be moving to back to AABC

County should consider walk ways with angled parking on streets

There are currently 180 businesses and 170 residences in the ABC

They all need parking! Roads don't work well now

Business Center should be a self-sufficient – balanced area; Focus more on housing those who already work here

AABC focus should be work/live in the same area (Rents are less here than in Aspen)

Dreams are important, but now especially is a hard time to implement given state of the economy

AABC was originally set up as a commercial/light industrial area, and should keep commercial focus

AABC is like small community – should keep as small community with balanced pods

Rest of valley is out of balance

A signalized light is better as an access point for the ABC than a roundabout

Interesting to consider multi level parking on RFTA/Public Works sites

RFTA service is at maximum already;

Traffic study for whole area is necessary prior to any increased use in ABC area,

Who pays for AABC shuttle concept/circulator bus?

## **NEXT STEPS**

Will focus on proposed land use at the Airport and Buttermilk base area

*(Note to the P&Zs: You will notice that the approach to this section differs from the method used in the 2000 AACP, which mixed specific goals into the statement of philosophy. Staff prefers to open with a simple statement of Intent, followed by a section that is truly “philosophical,” which is then followed by sub-sections that address specific topics with somewhat more specificity, and then proceeding to very specific goals and action items. While this section may seem long, remember that we are combining perhaps the most critical chapter in the AACP – Managing Growth – with the chapter on Economic Sustainability.)*

## DRAFT VISION/INTENT

To ensure the sustainability of our genuine year-round community and a visitor-based economy by protecting and maintaining the essential elements that create a high quality of life.

## DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The architectural, social and cultural character of modern Aspen reflects a Victorian Era western mining town, a scenic Rocky Mountain landscape and the post-war foundations of skiing, summer recreation and unique cultural institutions. These are the foundations of the Aspen Area that draw people from across the country and around the world.

During the last 25 years, our visitor-based economy has become overshadowed by the real estate and construction industry. The Aspen Area has a dual economy today: It includes both a visitor-based economy and a development industry, and both will continue in the future. But it is our responsibility to ensure there is balance between the two, and that one does not undercut the other.

Today, we must recognize that the original pillars of our visitor-based economy remain the foundation of our high quality of life, and is the only economy that is sustainable over the long-term. Today, the responsibility of managing growth is to ensure that the development industry does not cause damage to the long-term health and stability of the visitor-based economy.

Our character is defined by the architectural, social, cultural, scenic, recreational and strong environmental ethics that originally attracted us and our visitors to enjoy a high quality of life. We will not permit this unique character to be continually eroded by the impacts of intense construction activity, or by a built environment that is out of context with the unique architectural heritage of a small town in the Rocky Mountains.

As we focus on the long-term sustainability of the visitor-based economy, we are aware of the extraordinary high level of loyalty shown by return visitors over the years, and we also recognize that the Aspen Area is aging. Today, we need to lay the foundation for the next generation of irreplaceable memories, we need to cultivate the ground so that same loyalty to Aspen will take hold again in the future.

Preserving the character of the built environment is central to our philosophy of managing growth, Aspen’s genuine architectural heritage remains among the most powerful visual

impressions we create. To compromise this character is a threat to long-term sustainability. Even our most important goals -- of providing affordable housing, of replenishing the lodging base, of a lively downtown with a healthy balance of unique shops and restaurants -- should remain subservient to a built environment that respects context and heritage.

Growth management is intended to create a healthy balance among a variety of uses. We also manage growth to ensure that it does not outpace the community's basic ability to provide necessary infrastructure that maintains a healthy level of basic public services and a high quality of life.

Our roads and water system are part of infrastructure, but so are public trails, affordable housing, lodging, a lively and interesting downtown, unique restaurants, recycling programs, renewable energy systems and ski repair shops. Our infrastructure includes everything that is necessary to maintain a high quality of life.

### The Residential Sector

While some potential remains for the development of new dwelling units on existing vacant lots, the primary source of new construction in the future will be in the area of residential redevelopment. The track record in the Urban Growth Boundary shows that residential redevelopment typically means the demolition of existing homes and replacement with expanded homes that are almost always as large as current code allows.

#### 1. Pace of Construction

History shows that the level of construction activity in the UGB follows the strength and weakness of the national economy, and recent booms have resulted in a level of construction activity that threatens the long-term sustainability of the visitor-based economy. Therefore, a program that manages the pace of construction activity is essential.

The purpose of pacing construction is to maintain a high quality of life for residents and a high quality experience for visitors by:

- preventing traffic congestion, noise, dust, disturbances and reduction in air quality;
- creating a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for pedestrians and bicyclists in a community that emphasizes alternate modes of transportation and an outdoor recreational lifestyle;
- preventing the disruption of the visual and aesthetic character of city and county neighborhoods and the downtown area through the presence of construction trailers, heavy truck parking, disruption of landscaping, construction fences, and port-o-johns.

#### 2. Mitigation

Although both the City of Aspen and Pitkin County require mitigation for new dwelling units and residential redevelopment, today's level and type of mitigation is not adequate. The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) program has provided some benefit in the form of rental units that are spread out in neighborhoods, but the ratio of ADUs that are occupied by employees is too low. The payment-in-lieu option does not adequately reflect the true cost of providing deed-restricted housing, placing too high a burden on public entities to find locations, design, review and build affordable housing.

### 3. House Size

The built environment defines a community's character and identity. The size of homes in the UGB is out of context with the unique architectural heritage of a small town in the Rocky Mountains. If there is no reduction in allowable house sizes, the Aspen area will continue to degrade and diffuse the community's character and identity.

New limits on house size will preserve and maintain quality of life by:

- planning for a built environment that reflects the Aspen area's historic heritage,
- preserving scenic mountain views,
- limiting damage to the natural environment,
- limiting the public financial burden of additional infrastructure and annual local government operations,
- limiting unnecessary use of resources and unnecessary future energy use,
- limiting carbon footprints,
- limiting construction impacts,
- reducing traffic congestion and
- maintaining the safety and enjoyment of our outdoor lifestyle.

### 4. Affordable Housing

We continue to believe, as was stated in the 2000 AACP, that, "Our housing inventory 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." (*This is a placeholder, until the P&Zs adopt a draft affordable housing chapter.*)

#### The Lodging Sector

During the last 10-15 years, many small- to mid-sized lodges in Aspen have converted to other uses, resulting in the loss of many economy/moderate lodges. At the same time, the market has favored the development of deluxe lodges. We must replenish our lodging base to make our visitor-based economy sustainable in the long-term.

At the same time, our primary goal is for the development or redevelopment of lodging to respect the context of the built environment and the architectural heritage of the area.

While local government should not be in the business of developing or substantially subsidizing lodge development or redevelopment, we must focus on tools that will prevent the further loss of the small to mid-sized lodges that reflect Aspen's historic character.

New lodging development or redevelopment must encourage small room sizes and limited amenities as a method of re-balancing the lodging inventory, encouraging visitors to recognize the town and surrounding areas as their primary amenity, limiting job generation and its related adverse impacts and limiting the mass and scale that high-amenity lodges require.

Different types of lodging, from deluxe to moderate and economy, should not be separated into different location in the UGB. Lodging should integrate a mixture of different types of inventory.

### The Retail Sector

While many resort areas are dominated by the presence of chain stores and formula restaurants, downtown Aspen still maintains a wide range of retail stores and restaurants that are unique to the Aspen area. This uniqueness is an asset that must be encouraged and supported.

At the same time, the strong influence of high land costs and lease rates have limited the opportunities for a wide range of merchants to open a business here, and have contributed to an unmistakable shift towards exclusivity in the retail sector during the past 10-15 years. This shift has altered the character and identity of the downtown.

High-profile locations in the downtown have converted from restaurants to retail uses that are no longer frequented by local residents, while also reducing vitality in a visitor-based economy. The number of restaurants and bars has dropped 22% since 2000, as retail stores are more able to shoulder the burden of increasing rents.

The downtown is our “front porch” -- it is the place where we make our first impression on visitors. As reflected in past AACPs, local residents have grown dissatisfied with the sense of identity that is created by our retail sector. We are also concerned that business providing basic necessities could be the next to be replaced with different uses, as illustrated by the closing of Aspen Drug at the corner of Galena & Hyman.

While recognizing that government involvement in the commercial sector is a complex undertaking, we must identify methods and explore partnerships to restore and maintain a healthy and diverse balance of unique stores and restaurants – fostering a sense of vitality for both residents and visitors.

### Sustainability for Future Generations

The long-term sustainability of our visitor-based economy depends largely on our ability to remain an attractive destination for future generations.

The foundations of our high quality of life must be solidly in place, including skiing, summer recreation, scenic beauty, outdoor lifestyle, strong year-round community, compelling special events, a diverse lodging inventory, our genuine architectural heritage, a vital downtown and a wide range of arts & cultural offerings.

To remember Aspen’s history is to recognize of a heritage of innovation – Aspen is always at a crossroads that has never been encountered. We should once again have a clear intention to do new things first, to cultivate the ground so the next foundational institution can shape our identity into the future.

### The Future of the AABC

To be drafted based on P&Z discussion.