

# 2008 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey: Executive Summary Report, February 2009

## Purpose and Methodology

### Purpose

The purpose of the 2008 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey is to collect input from the community to be used in the new 2009 Aspen Area Community Plan. Vision statements and goals from the 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan were tested along with questions to identify new values and issues.

Specific areas identified for community input:

- Land use
- Growth
- Most important issues
- Community development trade-offs
- Regulation
- Values
- Assessment/Performance
- Vision for the future

### Methodology

In 2008, The City of Aspen contracted with Design Workshop Inc. to complete the Aspen Area Community Plan Public Process. Part of the Design Workshop team approach to gathering public input included utilizing the services of Venturoni Surveys & Research, Inc. (VSR) to perform a scientific survey of Aspen area residents and second homeowners. The Pitkin County voter registration list was used to sample local residents (both homeowners and renters). The Pitkin County Assessor list was used to sample homeowners (both full-time residents and second homeowners). Random sampling techniques were employed to select the samples. Letters were sent to potential respondents directing them to go to the internet to fill out the survey. All respondents were assigned identification numbers (IDN) to assure that no duplicate responses were counted. After two weeks, if the potential respondent had not filled out the internet survey, they were sent a reminder letter, paper copy of the survey and postage paid return envelope.

### 2008 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey

Samples:	Sample Frame	Mailed	Delivered	Returned	%	*Standard Error
County Assessor	6,294	1,511	1,479	300	20.3%	5.53%
Voter Registration	8,591	1,711	1,440	234	16.3%	6.33%
Total		3,222	2,919	534	18.3%	

\* 95% Confidence Level

The chart above details the size of the original sample frame, the number of surveys that were mailed, the number of surveys delivered (surveys not delivered were returned by the post office as "undeliverable"), the number of surveys completed and returned, % response, and the resulting margins of error for each sample frame.

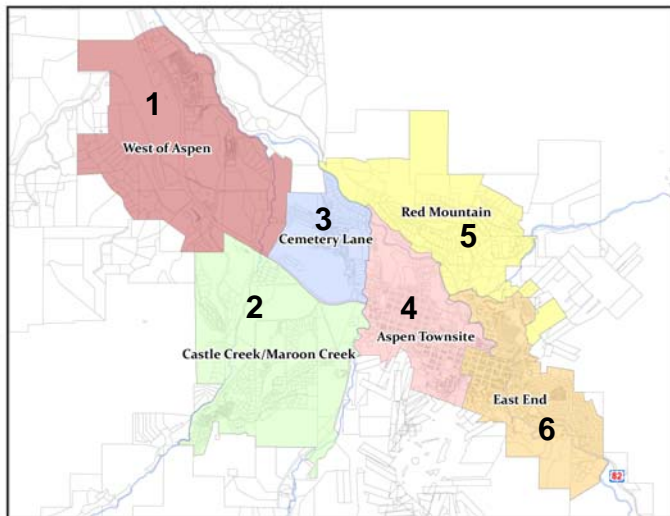
As the table on the right indicates, 258 people, or 48% of respondents chose to respond to the survey on the internet and 276, or 52% chose the paper alternative. The internet/mail surveys were conducted in November and December 2008.

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

## Highlights of Survey Results

### #5. Survey Results by neighborhood:

The Aspen area includes the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Aspen and the areas of Pitkin County within the Urban Growth Boundary. Survey respondents were given a map (see below) and definitions of the geographic study areas identified for the survey.



#### Definitions of the Study Areas:

**Area 1 - West of Aspen.** Includes Airport, the Airport Business Center, Buttermilk, Burlingame, and portions of Maroon Creek Club. Includes areas in City of Aspen and Pitkin County.

**Area 2 - Castle Creek/Maroon Creek.** Includes all areas along Maroon and Castle Creek roads, including Highlands, Moore, Meadowood, portions of Maroon Creek Club, and the hospital area. Includes areas in City of Aspen and Pitkin County.

**Area 3 - Cemetery Lane.** Includes the golf course, Truscott, and Cemetery Lane areas. Area 3 is entirely in the City of Aspen.

**Area 4 - Aspen Townsite.** Includes West End, Shadow Mountain, Aspen Institute, Main Street, commercial core, and base of Aspen Mountain. Includes areas in City of Aspen and Pitkin County.

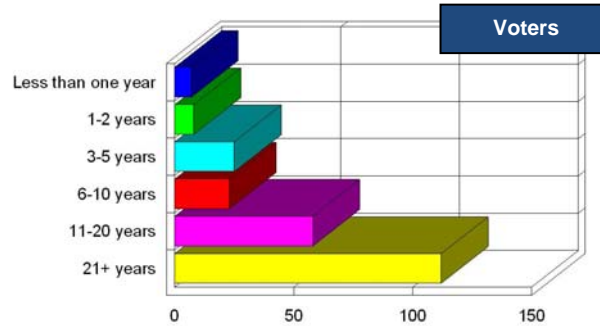
**Area 5 - Red Mountain.** Includes Red Mountain, Spruce Street, and Smuggler areas. Area 5 is entirely in the County.

**Area 6 - East End.** Includes Mountain Valley, Knollwood, Ardmore, East of Aspen, the Preserve, the Midland/Park area, and the East End of Aspen. Includes areas in City of Aspen and Pitkin County.

**All survey results are tabulated for the area as a whole and by individual survey study areas.**

## #7. How long have you lived and/or owned property in the Aspen area?

The chart on the right displays the answer to the question “How long have you lived and/or owned property in the Aspen Area” for the voter respondents. The most frequent response, 48%, answered 21+ years, 25% have lived in the area 11-20 years, 10% 6-10 years, and a total of 17% were in the categories of less than 6 years.



The full-time homeowner survey respondents displayed a similar pattern of longevity in the area with an even greater percentage in the 21+ years category (61%) and only 7% in the less than 6 years. 40% of second homeowners have owned property in the Aspen area for 21+ years.

These numbers are very unusual for resort towns in Colorado, which tend to show higher levels of transiency. The Aspen area has a more stable population of residents (and second homeowners) than other resort towns.

Please note that full tabulations of all of the survey questions cross-tabbed by length of residency are available in the survey results found in the web-based application. There is also an interactive slide that allows viewers to select specific questions and view the responses in a graphic representation.

## #9. What are the most important issues that will be facing the Aspen area in the next five years?

	ASSESSOR LIST			VOTER LIST
	Full time Homeowner <i>n=180</i>	2nd Homeowner <i>n=115</i>	ALL Homeowners <i>n=300</i>	
Traffic	69.4%	54.4%	64.0%	60.9%
Cost of living	47.8%	32.5%	41.8%	59.1%
Preservation of small town character	62.8%	66.7%	64.0%	55.2%
Affordable housing	43.3%	34.2%	39.7%	51.3%
Managing growth	46.1%	52.6%	48.2%	38.3%
Preservation of open space	36.7%	55.3%	43.4%	33.0%
Economic development	15.0%	14.0%	14.5%	27.4%
Public transportation	23.9%	31.6%	27.6%	27.0%
Construction impacts	39.4%	32.5%	35.7%	26.1%
Visual impact of development	28.9%	37.7%	32.7%	25.7%
Water quality	16.1%	13.2%	15.2%	18.7%
Air quality	22.8%	18.4%	20.9%	18.7%
Senior services	19.4%	4.4%	14.1%	14.8%
Other:	8.9%	7.0%	8.4%	12.2%
Historic preservation	10.6%	21.9%	14.8%	11.7%
Child care	5.6%	0.0%	3.4%	5.7%
Public safety	7.8%	4.4%	6.7%	5.2%

Numbers reflect frequency percentages

60-100%	
50-59%	
40-49%	

Area residents and full-time homeowners agree that “Traffic” is the most important issue facing the area in the next five years. Other items high on their lists include “Cost of Living”, “Preservation of small town character”, and “Affordable housing”.

Second homeowners rated “Preservation of small town character” as the most important, followed by “Preservation of open space”, then “Traffic”, and then “Managing growth”. It is interesting to note that both “Cost of living” and “Affordable housing” were of lower concern for second homeowners than the ratings of local residents.

**#29. If you were responsible for budgeting \$100 for the following list of community goals, how would you spend it?**

**2008 Aspen Area Community Plan Survey  
\$100**

	ASSESSOR LIST			VOTER LIST n=234
	Full time Homeowner n=180	2nd Homeowner n=115	ALL Homeowners n=300	
Parks, open space, trails	\$17.09	\$23.41	\$19.18	\$13.93
Historic preservation	\$5.36	\$8.39	\$6.48	\$3.82
Public transit service	\$11.71	\$13.46	\$12.46	\$10.66
Affordable housing	\$14.22	\$8.65	\$12.10	\$21.50
Strategies for managing and pacing growth	\$13.20	\$14.33	\$13.52	\$9.50
Arts and culture	\$7.36	\$13.17	\$9.71	\$7.72
Human services (child care, senior services, etc.)	\$10.87	\$4.52	\$8.33	\$10.98
Environmental initiatives	\$12.65	\$9.76	\$11.70	\$11.40
Economic development	\$8.68	\$4.54	\$7.30	\$8.81
Total	\$101.12	\$100.24	\$100.78	\$98.31

	1st Choice
	2nd Choice
	3rd Choice

This is always an interesting question. The 1<sup>st</sup> choice for voters is “Affordable housing” which is also the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice for full-time homeowners. There is a lot of agreement about the importance of “Parks, open space, trails” with homeowners (full-time and second homeowners) rating it as their 1<sup>st</sup> choice, and voters as their 2<sup>nd</sup> choice.

“Strategies for managing and pacing growth” has the support of both types of homeowners, but is of lesser concern for the voter respondents. “Environmental initiatives” received the third highest allocation from the voter respondents but the amount allocated by the full-time homeowners is even a little higher.

“Public transit service” receives a higher allocation from second homeowners but also displays similar support from resident respondents.

In general, allocations from the full-time homeowner and voters are pretty consistent, and represent the concerns of full-time residents. The renter subsample of the voter respondents allocated considerable amounts to “Affordable housing” to increase the allocation above that of the full-time homeowners.

## #30 – 52. Area Plan

**Question:** The following statements are taken directly from the 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan. Your responses will help guide the next revision of the plan. An answer of 1 means you think there is little community benefit and an answer of 5 means you think there is great community benefit:

Theme:	Statement:	ASSESSOR LIST			VOTER LIST
		Full time Homeowner n=180	2nd Homeowner n=115	ALL Homeowners n=300	
Economy	Provide incentives for small businesses that contribute to a more diverse, unique and interesting downtown.	73.7%	74.8%	73.4%	79.6%
Transportation	Quality air service is critical to our economy.	75.3%	81.1%	78.0%	76.9%
Economy	Provide incentives for existing, small to mid-sized lodges that may encourage a more diverse visitor population.	70.8%	58.6%	66.1%	74.4%
Sustaining the Aspen Idea	Arts, culture, and education are acknowledged as essential to Aspen's thriving year-round economy, its vibrant international profile, and its future as a unique place to live, work, and learn.	71.2%	85.6%	76.6%	72.2%
Open Space	Continue to purchase land for active recreation such as trails and sports fields.	61.9%	66.7%	63.0%	70.4%
Open Space	Continue to purchase open space for passive recreation and/or wildlife.	68.9%	70.5%	68.5%	68.5%
Sustaining the Aspen Idea	Provide assurances for adequate facilities that encourage continued vibrancy of arts and culture as part of our community.	59.7%	78.4%	67.6%	67.1%
Managing Growth	Control the pace of new construction and redevelopment impacts by limiting the allocation of building permits or a quota system of some kind.	63.5%	60.5%	61.7%	59.4%
Housing	New affordable housing should emphasize quality design and construction and be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood even if these goals increase public subsidies.	55.3%	49.1%	53.0%	56.9%
Managing Growth	Limit the ultimate population in the Aspen area in order to preserve the quality of life for residents and enjoyment for visitors.	50.3%	62.0%	54.2%	50.9%
Transportation	Continue to limit traffic on Highway 82 into Aspen to 1993 levels by continuing to fund public transit and trail projects.	48.1%	67.0%	54.1%	50.0%
Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)	The Urban Growth Boundary should encourage more dense development inside the boundary and less dense development outside it.	46.8%	30.8%	39.6%	49.8%
Transportation	Preserve the character, safety and traffic-limiting capacity of State Highway 82 into Aspen by maintaining it as a two-lane facility for automobiles, with extra capacity reserved for transit use only.	38.8%	46.8%	41.4%	42.5%
Historic Preservation	The community needs to reach a consensus on what buildings should be protected from the Post-War era, not just the Victorian era.	33.1%	47.8%	39.1%	35.1%

Numbers reflect the percent of respondents who rated the priority a 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale. (Little Benefit to Great Benefit)

	70-100%
	60-69%
	50-59%

In general, support for most of the 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan concepts remains strong. Several statements received over 70% support from all survey respondent groups including “Provide incentives for small businesses that contribute to a more diverse, unique and interesting downtown”, “Quality air service is critical to our economy”, and “Arts, culture, and education are acknowledged as essential to Aspen's thriving year-round economy, its vibrant international profile, and its future as a unique place to live, work, and learn”.

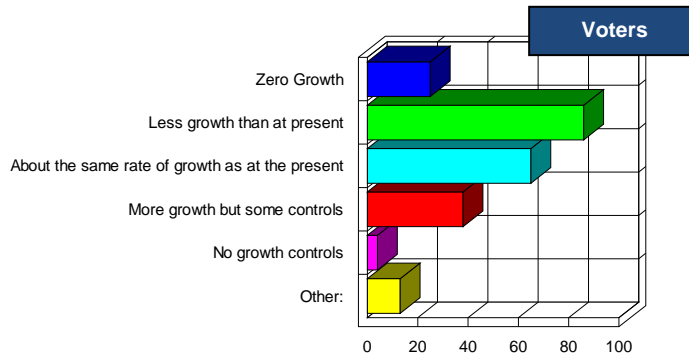
Ratings from the voters and full-time homeowners are very consistent.

In comparison, second homeowners display less support for affordable housing and the incentives for small to mid-sized lodges, and more support for arts & culture, transit, and limiting the population.

## #53. Growth

**Question:** From the choices below, please indicate which policy you would endorse.

This question measures the perception of growth. The chart on the right displays the response from the voter sample but the full-time homeowners and second homeowners responded in a consistent manner. The most frequent response to the growth question is “Less growth than at present”.



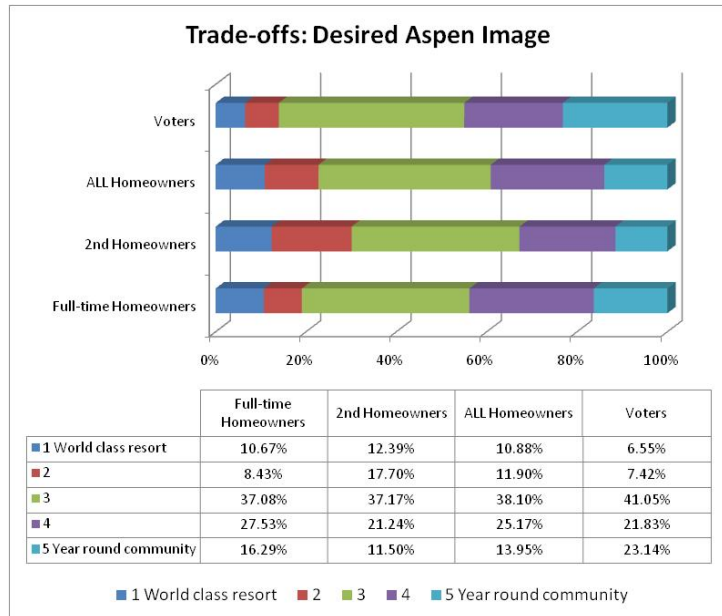
“Less growth than at present” drew a 38% response. “About the same rate of growth as at the present” was the second most frequent response at 28.5%. “More growth but some controls” was next at 16.7%. The extremes of “Zero Growth” and “No growth controls” drew only 11% and 2% respectively.

## #54- 59. Trade-offs

**Question:** Community development issues often involve trade-offs between different concepts. In these questions, a topic is listed with two different options. Please indicate what your position is on the spectrum between the different options.

There are 5 trade-off questions in the survey:

- **Desired Aspen Image**  
World class resort vs. Year round community (Results displayed in chart on right)
- **Parks & Open Space**  
Passive recreation vs. Active recreation
- **Affordable housing units**  
Quality vs. Subsidy level
- **Should the Aspen Airport Business center be:**  
Commercial/light industrial vs. Residential
- **Should the Aspen Airport Business center be:**  
Satellite of aspen vs. Like a small town



In the chart above, greater support for Aspen as a “Year round community” is displayed by all survey respondent groups. Please refer to the web page to view more results.

## #10-28 and #77-95. Values and Assessment Sections:

A list of characteristics of the Aspen area was given to survey respondents which they rated for importance (the values section). The same list was provided near the end of the survey for survey respondents to evaluate how well the Aspen area is doing in meeting their expectations for each of the characteristics (assessment or performance section).

By comparing the value and assessment ratings we can identify the things that community members are satisfied with and the things that need improvement. Positive scores on the chart that follows indicate items that are exceeding expectations. Conversely, the items with negative scores indicate that survey respondents would like to see improvements.

For example, Traffic received a value score of 84%, indicating that "Traffic" is highly important. Survey respondents assessed the performance for "Traffic" in the area at 3%, indicating very low approval of "Traffic". The difference between these scores is the (-80%) shown in the difference column. Energy efficiency also displays a large gap at (-43%), Sense of community (-31%) and Economic development at (-25%).

An Interactive scattergram that display these results can be viewed on the web page.

## 2008 Aspen Area Community Plan Scattergram

	Value	Assessment	Assessment - Value Difference
	Voter	Voter	Voter
	n=234	n=234	n=234
Recreation opportunities	81%	97%	16%
Education (K-12)	66%	81%	15%
Open space	72%	87%	14%
Local airport	60%	71%	11%
Public transportation	65%	76%	11%
Public safety	74%	83%	9%
Historic preservation	50%	57%	7%
Scenic/visual quality	89%	95%	6%
Child care	31%	29%	-1%
Cultural diversity	47%	42%	-5%
Health care	79%	69%	-10%
Environmental quality	89%	72%	-17%
Senior services	50%	32%	-18%
Affordable housing	62%	39%	-22%
Economic development	49%	23%	-25%
Sense of community	82%	50%	-31%
Energy efficiency	81%	37%	-43%
Traffic	84%	3%	-80%

**This Executive Summary is provided to give an overview of some of the survey findings. Please refer to the web page ([www.aspencommunityvision.com](http://www.aspencommunityvision.com) or [www.aspenpitkin.com](http://www.aspenpitkin.com)) to find the following:**

- Detailed survey results for each of the 97 survey questions by sample frame
- PowerPoint presentation of the survey results
- Color-coded spreadsheets
- Cross-tab results by:
  - Neighborhood
  - Length of residency
  - Housing status (Deed restricted housing vs free market housing)
- Over 50 pages of write-in comments
- Interactive slides
  - By sample frame
  - By neighborhood
  - By length of residency
  - By Housing status
  - Scattergram

1. [www.aspenpitkin.com](http://www.aspenpitkin.com)

2.  Aspen Area Community Plan

3.  COMMUNITY VISION for the ASPEN AREA  
Where We've Been  
Where We Are  
Where We're Going  
CLICK BELOW TO VIEW PROJECT PHASES  
State of the Aspen Area | Speaker Series | Aspen Economy White Paper | Random Survey | Small Group Meetings | **Survey Results** | Large Group Meetings | Planning & Zoning Review | City Council & BOCC Review