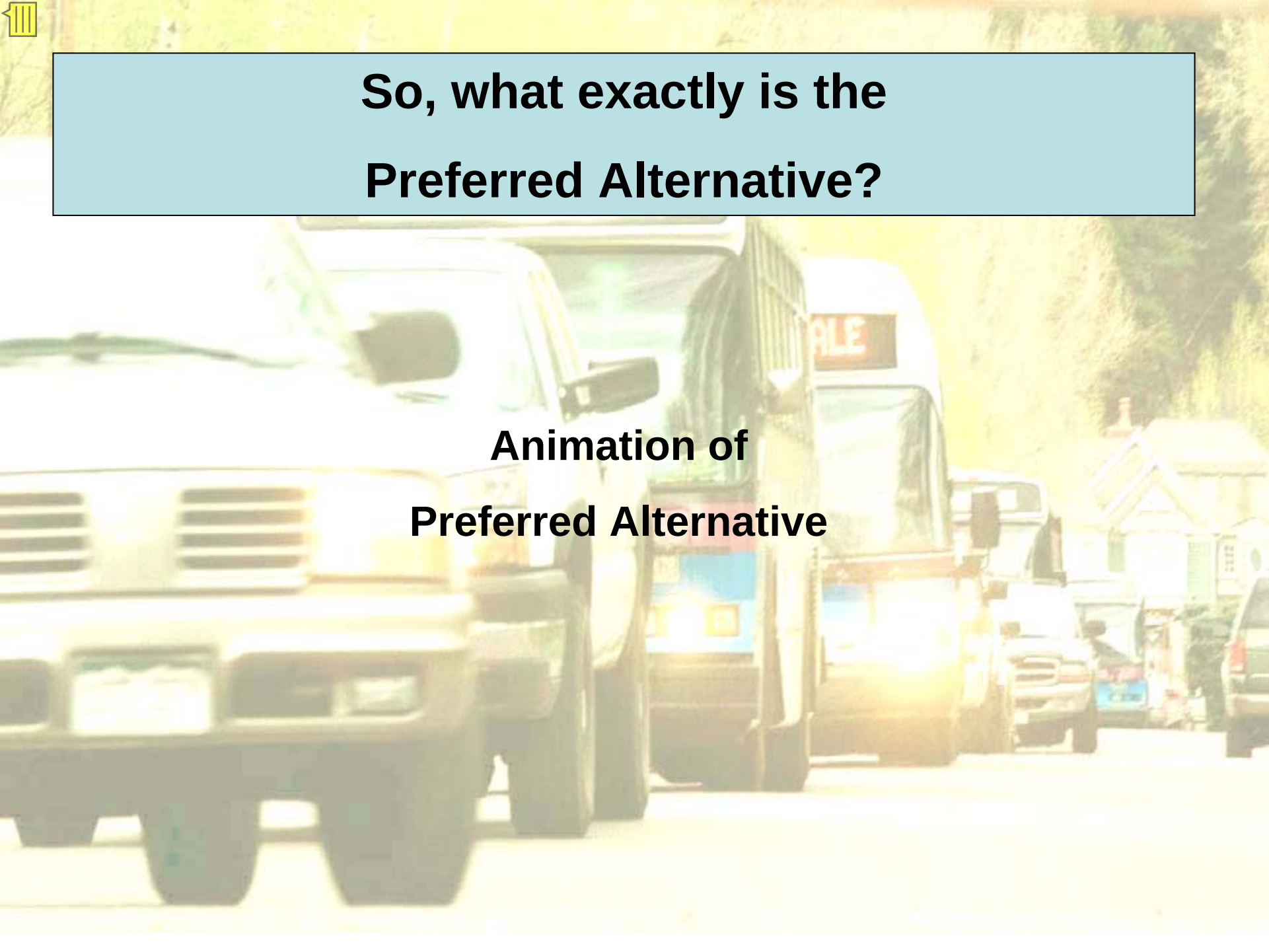
The Entrance to Aspen:

Where do we go from here?

So, what exactly is the Preferred Alternative?



Animation of

Preferred Alternative

Is the Preferred Alternative Our Only Choice?

"NO" – it is the choice on the table

- the PA was issued by CDOT and the FHWA in 1998
- in 2006, CDOT/FHWA required a Reevaluation of the PA
- Reevaluation purpose: decisions made in 90's remain VALID?

CDOT/FHWA Found the Preferred Alternative STILL valid

At the same time the Reevaluation found that:

- Doubling of RFTA service since ’93 kept average daily traffic about same
- With no changes to highway/transit, 2030 forecast shows demand far exceeding capacity & periods of congestion extended
- Any substantial jump in transit ridership needs increase in capacity – such as exclusive bus lanes

The Re - evaluation found that. . .

- Since 1993, average daily traffic has stayed about the same, but PEAK HOUR traffic is worse – longer congestion and longer queues

- Accidents between S-curves and Buttermilk increased substantially

- 50% were rear-end collisions – symptom of heavy congestion

The Re – evaluation found

if nothing is done . . .

By 2030, traffic demand at Cemetery Lane:

- ✓ **44,000 vehicles per day (summer) – 2005 was 28,600**
- ✓ **37,000 (winter) – 2005 was 24,900**
- ✓ **summer peak hour at 3800 vehicles per hour (2005 average PM peak hour volume was 2440)**

- **This would far exceed roadway capacity & available parking**

- **Period of the Day operating under LOS F is extended (F=worst conditions with heavily congested flow and traffic demand exceeding capacity)**

- **Increases in projected down-valley traffic volumes would extend congestion and failing LOS down-valley along the entire corridor**

Choosing another alternative?

- City Council / BOCC requests CDOT to re-open the EIS process
- Revisit the Project Objectives
- Approximately 2 years/ $2 million in local funds
- Create a NEW Record of Decision

Why is the Preferred Alternative "preferred?"

Because it best met the Project Objectives and fulfilled the project's Purpose and Need:

- provide capacity for forecasted *person* trips, but limit *vehicle* trips
- reduce accident rate on "S" curves,
- provide alternate route for emergency vehicles
- minimize negative impacts on the environment, open space, and historic & recreational resources
- reflect character and scale of Aspen
- aesthetically acceptable solution
- financially realistic
- allow for future transit options and upgrades

What are these

"Project Objectives?"

- The foundation on which past decisions were made and other solutions were measured against

- In 1995, the City of Aspen City Council, Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners, Snowmass Village Town Council, CDOT & FHWA representatives – with input from citizens and a technical advisory committee established 10 project objectives

Project Objectives

Community Based Planning. Provide a process which is responsive to local community based planning efforts, including the Aspen to Snowmass Transportation Project and the Aspen Area Community Plan, with special attention focused on limiting vehicle trips into Aspen to create a less congested downtown core.

Transportation Capacity. Provide needed transportation capacity for the forecasted person trips in the year 2015. In doing this, this project will identify a combination of travel modes, alignments and transportation management actions to seek to achieve the stated community goal of limiting the number of vehicles in the year 2015 to levels at or below those of 1994.

Safety. Reduce the high accident rate on State Highway 82 and the existing S-curves at SH82/7th Street/Main Street, and provide safety improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. Provide safe access for all intersections for all movements.

Project Objectives

Environmentally Sound Alternative. Develop an alternative which minimizes and mitigates adverse impacts. A process will be used which follows the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and all pertinent legislation.

Community Acceptability. Develop an alternative which fits the character of the community and is aesthetically acceptable to the public.

Financial Limitations. Develop an alternative that is financially realistic with respect to current and expected funding levels and programs, while being responsive to both the community's character and prudent expenditures of public funds.

Clean Air Act Requirements.** Since the Aspen area was a PM10 non-attainment area, the Preferred Alternative had to meet the requirements of the CAAA by demonstrating project conformity. (** Since these objectives were written, Aspen has become an attainment area for PM10.)

Project

Objectives

Emergency Access. Respond to the need for an alternate route for emergency response to incidents inside and outside of Aspen.

Livable Communities. Provide a system which reflects the small town character and scale of the Aspen community, and which enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors. The system shall provide more accessible transportation which increases the mobility of the community and therefore provides for a more livable community.

Phasing. Provide an alternative which allows for future transit options and upgrades.

What are some of the VALUES that shape solution choices?

- Open Space use
- Historic resources
- Transit-oriented solutions
- Auto-oriented solutions
- Environment
- Small town character and scale

Entrance to Aspen

What have we heard?

So what's "percolating" out there?

- **Open Houses**
- **Voices on the Entrance meetings**
- **Public comments before the Aspen City Council & the Elected Officials Transportation Committee (EOTC)**
- **Things we've read in the paper**
- **Phone calls & emails**
- **Conversations heard and overheard**

Entrance to Aspen

Solutions That Come Up

Alignment/Solution	Mode/Method
Existing	No changes to lane number 3 lanes (bus contra or just contra) 4 lanes (bus dedicated or not)
Preferred Alternative (modified direct with cut-and-cover tunnel)	4 lanes (2 cars / 2 buses) 4 lanes (4 cars plus rail) 2 lanes plus rail
Split Shot	4 lanes (2 cars / 2 buses) 4 lanes (HOV or unrestricted) 4 lanes plus rail

Entrance to Aspen

Solutions That Come Up

Alignment/Solution	Mode/Method
Rail Only added	Current S curve road, plus rail across Marolt
Tolls	Beginning at Buttermilk Congestion pricing Occupancy pricing With “resident” pass
Intercept lots: w/buses w/rail w/tolls	Brush Creek Airport Buttermilk

Entrance to Aspen

Solutions That Come Up

Alignment/Solution	Mode/Method
Remove lights	Roundabouts Underpasses
Transportation Demand Management	Staggered work hours Car shares Better environment for bicycles Parking rates/restrictions
New Castle Creek Bridge	With Preferred alignment With Split shot With 3 or 4 lanes in existing alignment (new bridge to accommodate increased lanes, south of existing one)

What will it take to implement the Preferred Alternative?

- State and Federal approvals are in place for the Preferred Alternative (PA) using either the Light Rail or the Bus Lane option

- City voters have approved use of the Marolt-Thomas Open Space for the PA Light Rail option – a PA Bus Lane option would require another vote

- Funding: ~ $46 million for highway and exclusive bus lanes
  ~ $150 million for LRT from Brush Creek Rd.

- Integration with valley-wide Bus Rapid Transit system

- Aspen City Council would have to authorize action for any solution to go forward.

What will it take to implement ANY other solution?

- Aspen City Council / BOCC request CDOT to re-open the EIS process
- Review the Project Objectives
- Supplemental EIS is completed (~ 2 years / ~ $2 million)
- NEW Record of Decision is issued
- Any Open Space approvals if alignment requires it
- Funding for implementation identified and approved if necessary

How to fund Construction and O&M expenses?

Not likely from the State/Federal Governments – it looks like its up to us

- G.O. debt (property taxes for capital construction)
- Revenue Bond debt (revenues from some source)
- Sales/Use taxes
- User fees (parking for example – maybe also be the source for Revenue Bonds)
- Property Taxes
- Congestion charges (tolls, vehicle occupancy charges, etc.)
- Hotel/Motel Occupancy taxes
- Auto registration fees
- What else??

Entrance to Aspen

NEXT STEPS

- **Public Input Opportunities:**
  - ✓ **Meetings-in-a-Box**
  - ✓ **Small Group Presentations (like this one)**
  - ✓ **Wheeler Opera House Keypad Voting Sessions: Tuesday, April 10th at Noon and 5:30 PM**
- **May 8, 2007 Ballot Question on Open Space Use for Buttermilk-to-Roundabout Construction ONLY (two dedicated bus lanes in addition to the existing two general traffic lanes) in conjunction with the new Maroon Creek Bridge**
- **City Council Review of Public Input . . .**

Entrance to Aspen

Web links

http://www.sh82.com/

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) State Highway 82 web site. This web site will provide updated information on construction projects, including:

Maroon Creek Bridge Website and Entrance to Aspen Information

http://www.aspenpitkin.com/

From the main page of the city/county website, you can "click" onto links to a primer on the entrance, and the notes from the *Voice on the Entrance* meetings.

Entrance to Aspen

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SIGN UP FOR THE CITY'S E-NEWSLETTER AND STAY INFORMED ON WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE CITY OF ASPEN

Get the latest on new and ongoing projects and first hand news on affordable housing, transportation, community development, emergency notices, the Entrance to Aspen and much more.

This is part of an ongoing effort to both engage and inform the citizens of Aspen about what is happening inside City Hall.

To sign up go to www.aspenpitkin.com and click on **SIGN UP FOR CITY E-NEWSLETTER.**

Entrance to Aspen

Ready for questions?

or

Do you want to learn more about those "alternatives" that people are talking about the most?

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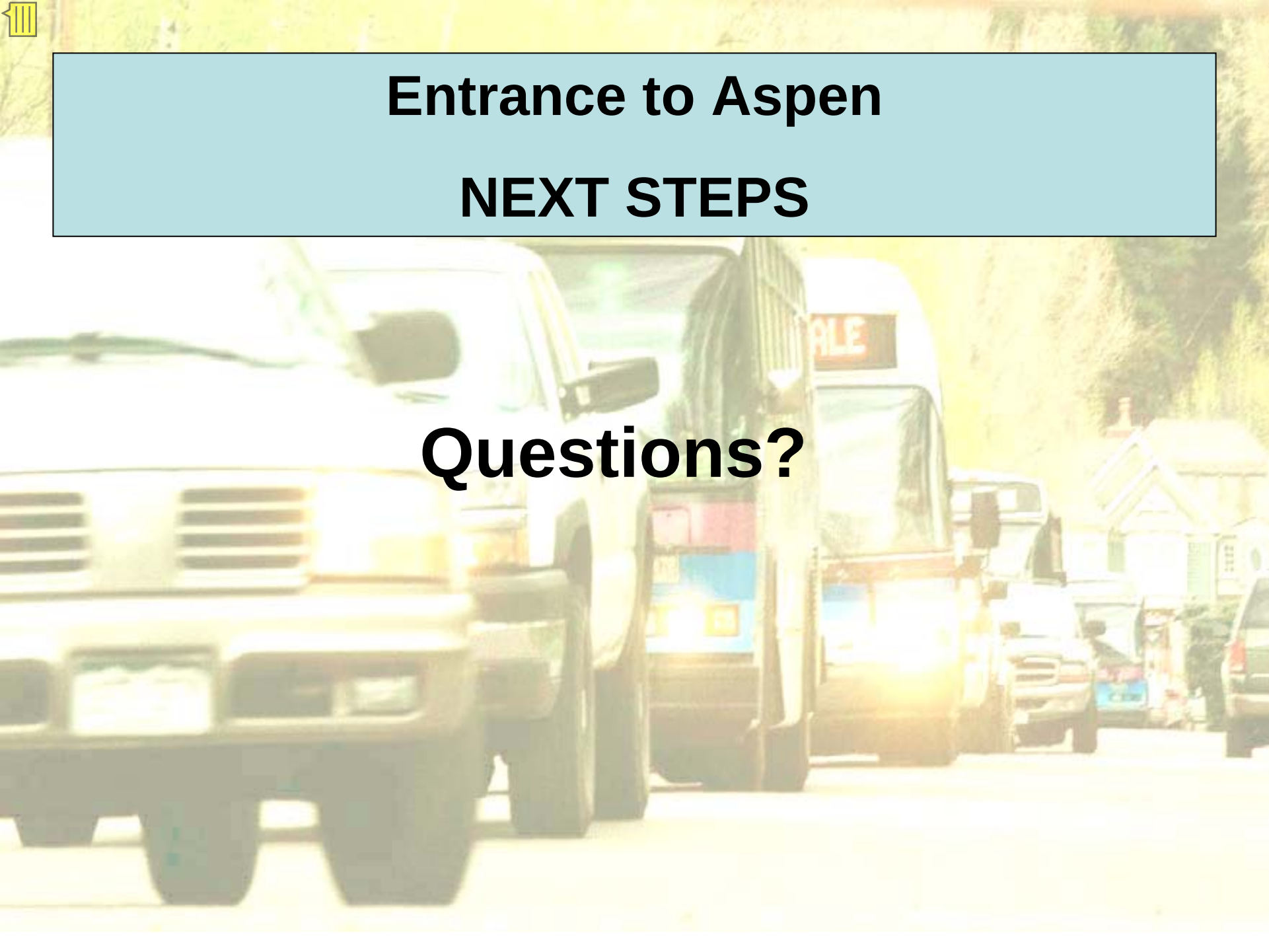
NEXT STEPS



Questions?

Now *MY* Questions

So What Do YOU Think?

- What do you think about the Preferred Alternative?
- What do YOU prefer as a solution? Why that?
- How would you propose to finance your preferred solution? Why that?
- What information do you need to make a decision, if you haven't already?
- What will it take for the community to make a decision that "sticks" with the next election (the 27th election over the past 38 years). . . and avoid that election merely being a prelude to a 28th, 29th and 30th election?

Further Discussion

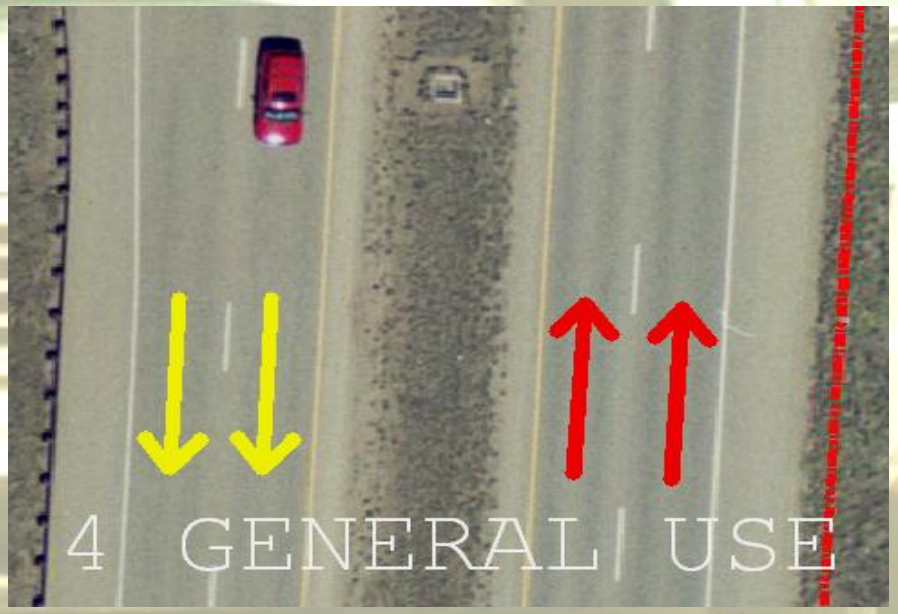
of the Solutions

that seem to be the

“most talked about”

Solutions that are most discussed:

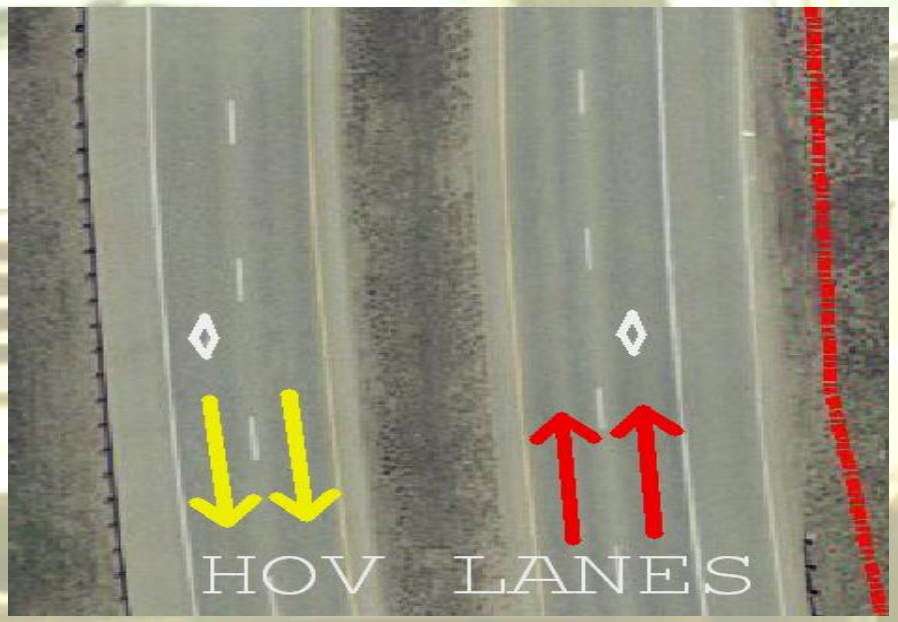
Straight Shot (4 lanes) Unrestricted



- may provide capacity for person-trips
- does provide alternate emergency route
- reduces accident rate on S-Curve
- doesn't limit vehicle trips
- doesn't encourage transit
- may not reflect small town character
- does cross open space
- more tires on pavement, means more PM-10

Solutions that are most discussed:

Straight Shot (4 lanes) HOV



- same as straight shot with unrestricted lane use, except
- reduces somewhat vehicle trips and has less of a PM-10 impact
- small town character??
- impact on transit?

Solutions that most discussed:

1990's Split Shot (2-one way couplets) Bus lanes or not

- does use portion of Marolt-Thomas Open Space – modified direct alignment in 2-lane version for inbound traffic
- provides capacity for person trips, with dedicated bus lanes limits vehicle trips, without does not (PM-10 impact if unrestricted)
- should reduce current S-curve accident rate
- vehicles inbound from Cemetery Lane have to go out to roundabout before coming back into town
- no continuous swath of open space to connect Marolt to Golf Course
- some see two busy highways at Entrance, others see a pair of two-lane roads as reflecting small town scale more than one four-lane road

Solutions that are most discussed:

“NEW” Split Shot: 2 one-way couplets and Cemetery Lane roundabout

Solutions that are most discussed:

"New" Split Shot (2-one way couplets, with "new" S-curve) Bus lanes or not

- 4 lanes of traffic from Buttermilk to Cemetery Lane, and then from Cemetery Ln. into town on two separate alignments (avoiding most of the Marolt Open Space) – existing S curve for outbound traffic and a new alignment inbound

- Replace the traffic light at Cemetery Lane with a Round a Bout or a grade-change type intersection.

- uses only a new two-lane bridge over Castle Creek – only 2 lanes of traffic into the 7th Street neighborhood

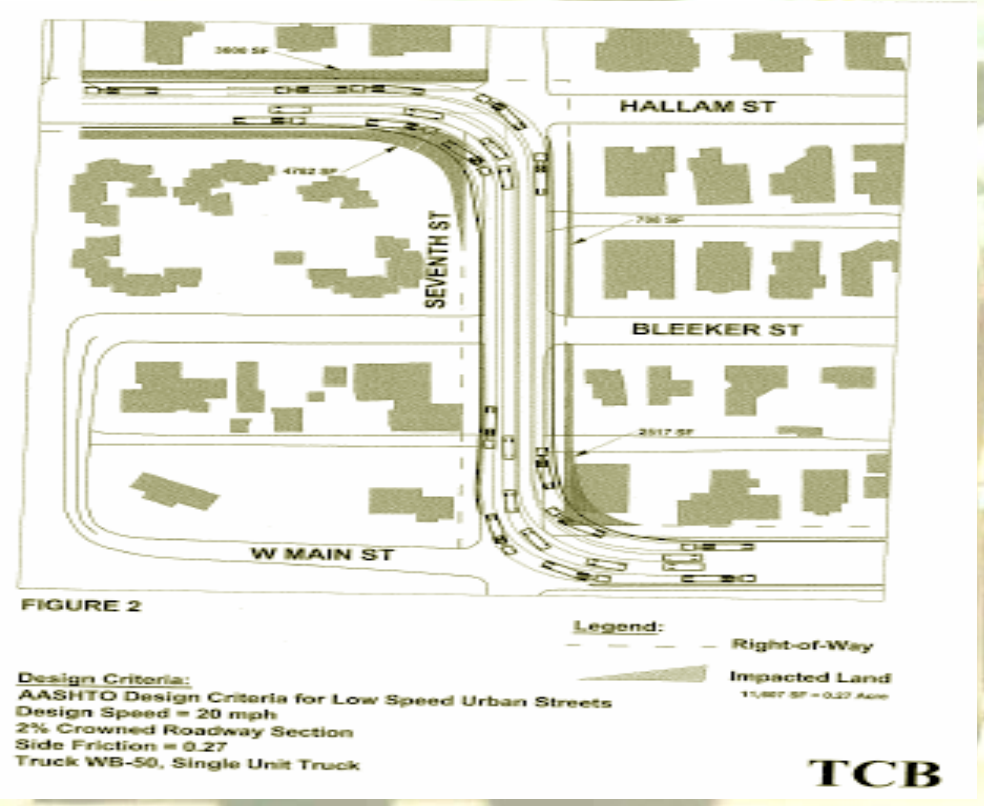
- eliminates the need for a traffic light at 7th and Main

- preserves the historic buildings at Marolt

- provides for light rail – radius of curvature and grade change to accommodate future light rail and provide a mass transit easement.

Solutions that are most discussed:

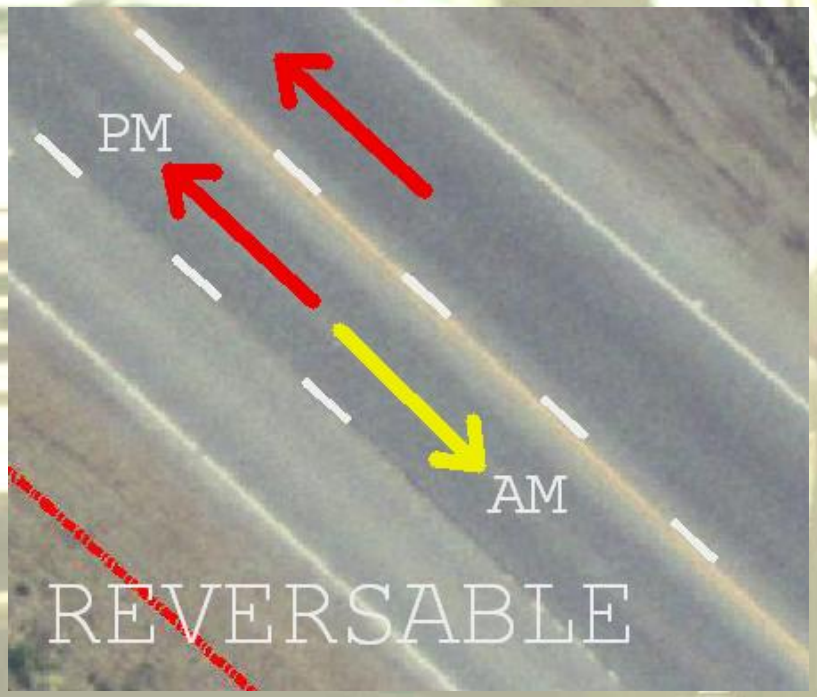
Stay in the Existing Alignment (3 or 4 lanes) Bus lanes or not

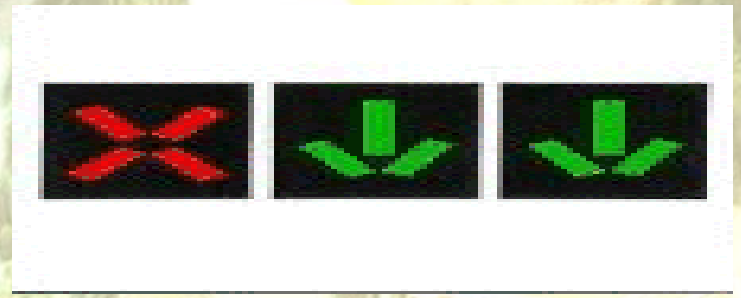


- avoids crossing the Open Space
- preserves character according to some
- requires some-to-extensive taking of property and new or extensively redone Castle Creek Bridge (may dictate a “new” bridge even for 3 lanes)
- does not provide for alternate emergency route across Castle Creek
- “least favored” alignment in mid-90’s survey

Solutions that are most discussed:

Stay in the Existing Alignment (3 lanes – reversible)
Bus lanes or not

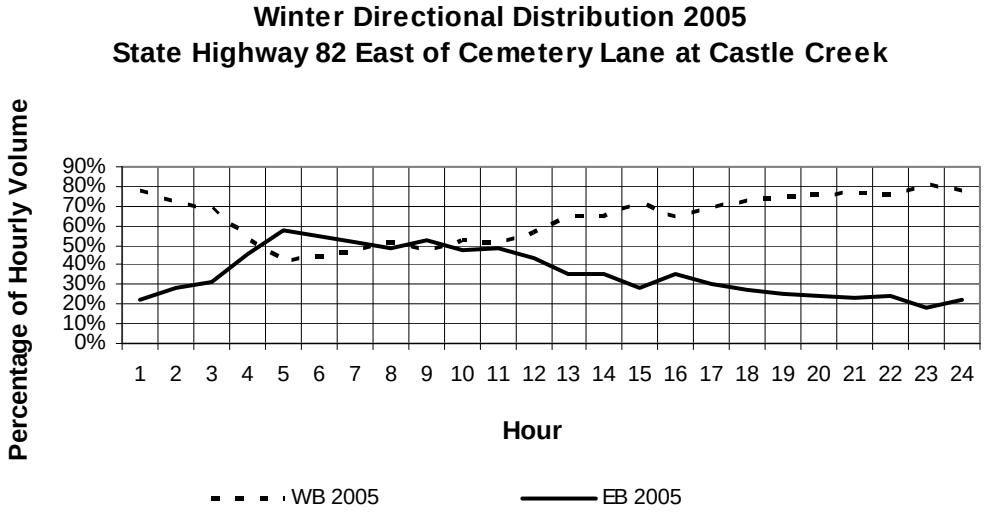




Solutions that are most discussed:

Stay in the Existing Alignment (3 lanes – reversible) Bus lanes or not

- functions best when a large majoring of flow is in one direction during commuting hours
- during the winter, from 7:00 AM to Noon, the mix is about 55% heading into town, and 45% heading west at Castle Creek



Solutions that are most discussed:

Manage growth, don't succumb to traffic

At the Voices on the Entrance meeting, proponents said:

- Job generation by high end users causes traffic generation
- Aspen is unique in that a city of this size would not ordinarily generate 23,000 vehicles per day – it is this economic intensity that drives this
- Without recognition of the impact of land use on traffic and mitigation of gentrification, we will exceed 4 lane highway capacity and exceed 2 lane highway and transit capacity
- Gentrification <u>does</u> provide a tax base that could be tapped for solution (e.g. Use Tax on building materials 1% = $1 million per year)
- Proponents have said it is rude that the people who drive the problem, the "gentry," don't suffer the consequences of their job generation
- they felt that a 4-lane with transit component <u>AND</u> land use management efforts <u>could</u> work (with: offsets for traffic generation, Use tax, mitigation of traffic impact for new projects)

Solutions that are most discussed:

Do Nothing

By 2030, traffic demand at Cemetery Lane:

- ✓ **44,000 vehicles per day (summer) – 2005 was 28,600**
- ✓ **37,000 (winter) – 2005 was 24,900**
- ✓ **summer peak hour at 3800 vehicles per hour (2005 average PM peak hour volume was 2440)**

- **This would far exceed roadway capacity & available parking**

- **Period of the Day operating under LOS F is extended (F=worst conditions with heavily congested flow and traffic demand exceeding capacity)**

- **Increases in projected down-valley traffic volumes would extend congestion and failing LOS down-valley along the entire corridor**

Measuring the Preferred Alternative

- Dedicated bus lanes = quicker, more attractive transit
- Limiting vehicle trips = managing PM-10
- Uses some open space, but returns some as well
- Cut-and-cover tunnel provides a “land bridge” and a continuous swath of open space from Marolt to Golf Course
- Cost is estimated at $46 million for Bus alternative, $126 million for Light Rail option
- Replaces 90 degree “S” curve with much smoother curves – marginal increase in vehicle capacity and helps reduce accidents
- Helps make a Bus Rapid Transit system more viable to riders
- Phasing opportunity from Bus to Light Rail

Small Town Character?

Aesthetic Acceptability?

Project Objective elements “in the eye of the beholder” . . . What about Open Space?

- PA crosses the Marolt-Thomas properties, taking 5.4 acres of space purchased in the 1970s – returns 2.5 acres to open space

- Passes by the paraglider landing area, the community garden and the museum

- CDOT gave the 31-acre Mills Ranch to the City/County for 8.6 acres of ROW from Buttermilk to the eastern bank of Castle Creek


Mills Property
Open Space
1999
Pitkin County Open Space and City of Aspen Open Space