

# Summary of Comments

## Entrance to Aspen Neighborhood Meetings

### March 14, 2007 Eagle County Community Center

How will exclusive bus lanes improve flow and congestion (with removal of HOV lanes)?

Why not carpools in bus lanes?

Will increased bus ridership contribute to park n ride problems downvalley (Basalt)?

HOV lane enforcement is harder than bus lane enforcement.

Have we experimented with eliminating Cemetery Lane and Truscott signals?

Why not just build an underground parking lot at Wagner Park?

If 4-laned, what would we do for parking all of those cars?

Aspen can't absorb unlimited number of cars.

No new historic resources discovered in the reevaluation

How are traffic levels the same since 1993?

Color bus lanes on animation – Aspenize it

Need to do something now!

What happens if nothing is done?

Cost for LRT and highway costs have doubled over 8 year period to now.

The Preferred Alternative does nothing for cars

1993 traffic cap – impacts entire valley, not just Aspen

Look for regional solution more

Transit is key in solution

Need to solve ETA for Bus Rapid Transit plan success

Is there any clear consensus yet?

Bring business and employees into discussion

Look at TOD (unknown) more

### March 15 - Cemetery Lane Neighborhood

The Truscott traffic signal causes traffic backups. When was the light installed? Has it been studied?

*Randy replied with information on installation and recent timing changes.*

What about short-term, low cost options?

*Randy replied with information about the bus lane, access restrictions, Truscott signal, West side bus route.*

The Preferred Alternative wasn't preferred at the Voices on the Entrance meetings. The split shot is a great idea. The May 8 ballot measure limits our choices. Why build a bus lane for 12 buses per hour?

The Castle Creek Bridge is two lanes and town will be cut off if and when there is an accident. We need an extra bridge. A toll should be placed on the bridge with an easy-pass system.

The proposed bus lanes should be used as HOV lanes.

*Randy replied that this alternative was screened out during the EIS due to decreased capacity when compared to transit.*

Do traffic projections factor in the build out of Snowmass Village? Research must be done on a Aspen to Snowmass gondola system.

*Randy replied with information about the 1999 Links Task Force. A TOSV-COA gondola trip was found to take 45 minutes.*

The Preferred Alternative (straight shot) will only bring more traffic into town.

*Randy replied the PA does not create additional SOV capacity.*

The point must be made more clear that the Preferred Alternative does not add additional SOV capacity.

Staff should provide a professional opinion on which alternative is the best. That is their job.

The Castle Creek Bridge should be changed to four lanes. Hwy 82 should not be moved closer to the Museum.

The best way to ruin a small town is to build a highway. A straight shot will create Colfax Avenue in Aspen. Transit should be free. Stoplights create traffic. Why should Aspen residents sacrifice so commuters can save seconds? If they want Aspen money, that's the price to be paid. S-Curves provide traffic calming. Bus lanes and HOV lanes are a joke. A gondola is needed.

Wasn't there a vote on for a 1/2-cent sales tax? Can those funds be used for the proposed bus lanes?

*Randy replied with information about the 1/2-cent tax and the EOTC budget.*

How much would it cost for bus lanes? Who would pay?

*Randy replied that \$7.9 million in funding could be paid from the 1/2-cent fund.*

Will the Maroon Creek Bridge be two lanes if the May 8 question fails?

*Barry replied yes.*

Service people take care of Aspen and we are losing them. Proposed bus lanes should be HOV lanes. The City should consider more parking garages.

Will making the bridge four lanes impede pedestrians?

*Randy replied that shoulders will be available for pedestrians.*

What's the solution to RFTA driver/housing shortages? How can we operate more buses without drivers?

*Randy replied that getting buses out of mixed traffic results in fewer drivers needed. TOD developments and other options are being explored.*

The Preferred Alternative (Straight Shot) won't work because cars will have to slow down, creating more congestion. Better roads create more traffic. Bad traffic regulates congestion. Tolls could be used to regulate the number of cars.

The funding discussion portion of the ETA presentation is misleading. Funding was found for the Maroon Creek Bridge.

*Randy replied that the bridge was paid for with bridge funding which is separate from other sources.*

West Side service will be great. The bike system should be improved to become a transportation system rather than just a recreational amenity.

The bus lane is a big incentive for public transit. We should vote yes.

Nothing can happen quickly? What can we do in the short term?

*Steve replied with information about proposed bus lanes.*

Bus lanes are a good idea. Can they go all the way to Brush Creek and be coupled with free bus service?

*Randy replied that free bus service was provided to/from Brush Creek this summer and was underutilized because buses were not frequent and were stuck in mixed traffic.*

Can the current HOV lanes be converted to bus lanes?

*Possibly.*

Tolls would make workers stop coming to Aspen.

### **March 21 – West of Cemetery Lane**

The Preferred Alternative was studied by the best transportation professionals. For laymen to reopen the ROD is beating a dead horse.

Is there a deadline on the Re-Evaluation?

*Randy replied that the deadline is three years.*

Have we voted on the split shot idea?

*Barry replied no.*

European cities have implemented split shots combined with rail. They have been very successful.

The split shot is a good option. Two couplets would make interesting views for drivers.

Why is there a tunnel in the Preferred Alternative?

*Mitzi answered that the tunnel provides a land bridge and accommodates grade change.*

Construction traffic is the most annoying. Quoted construction traffic figures cannot be correct.

Does the Preferred Alternative allow carpools to use bus lane?

*Randy answered no, but that buses would be removed from mixed traffic improving flow somewhat for carpoolers.*

Get rid of construction.

Commuters make the town run – they shouldn't be discriminated against.

The bus lane ballot issue should be opened to County voters who truly experience the problem.

If you think traffic is bad now, wait five years until Snowmass is constructed. We don't have time to keep studying. The Preferred Alternative is ready now.

Why are there unattractive barricades at Bleeker and Hallam?

*Lynn replied with information about the success of the barricades and the emergency access problems created by more aesthetic options.*

### **March 22 – Snowmass Village**

Voters have indicated a preference for a 4-lane unrestricted highway across the open space, it is insulting that it hasn't been build and has been stopped by dictatorial mayors.

### **March 28 – All City @ Rio Grande Building**

If the PA is implemented and bus lanes and underutilized, could lanes be opened to all traffic?

*Randy replied that this would require the EIS to be re-opened and an open space vote would be necessary.*

Why does Aspen need to vote on the May 8 issue? This issue pertains to the entire valley.

*Randy replied that a vote is needed due to the change in use to the open space.*

What does the light rail alternative look like?

*Randy replied that light rail would look like the community wants it to. Most modeling is based on rail cars that seat 150.*

Elaborate on the cut and cover tunnel.

*Randy explained that the tunnel is 400-feet long, 26-foot grade change, creates a trail connection and wildlife crossing.*

Can the May 8 bus lanes be used for HOV?

*Randy answered that the ballot is specific to buses only. The HOV option didn't survive initial screenings because it did not reduce vehicle trips as well as the PA.*

If access is improved, won't town just have more traffic?

*Randy replied that the PA does not provide additional access for single occupant vehicles.*

Will the PA be able to handle growth in traffic?

*Randy replied that removing buses from mixed traffic will increase bus ridership. Even a 5-10% increase in ridership will make a dramatic difference. RFTA can do more with fewer drivers if traffic is reduced.*

Voters should be asked to pick their favorite among several alternatives. Ballots should be less confusing.

PA just moves traffic signal to 7<sup>th</sup> and Main and that is not acceptable.

What's been done to keep traffic at 1993 levels?

*Randy replied: increase in RFTA service, paid parking, TDM, City/County employee flex hours.*

PA means a new traffic light at 7<sup>th</sup> and existing light at Truscott. You haven't solved anything with that. A roundabout at Cemetery Lane is a better solution. Does CDOT object to roundabouts?

*Randy answered that CDOT is not opposed to roundabouts. However, the Cemetery Lane roundabout would have an unbalanced third leg, allowing no gaps for entry from 3-7pm.*

How will information from these meetings be provided to elected officials?

*Randy indicated that information gleaned from public outreach will be provided to elected officials after April 10.*

Does a bus lane preclude LRT?

*Randy replied that bus lanes could be replaced by LRT and turned into a grassy median.*

Where did the 2% growth figure come from? If we deal with construction, we can decrease growth.

*Randy replied that the 2% growth rate is conservative compared to 5% projected statewide.*

What is Aspen's rate of growth?

*Mick Ireland answered that Aspen's growth rate is 1.7%, with a 4.5% rate for the valley.*

Is there an alternative that is more likely to receive Federal funding?

*Randy replied that no State or Federal funding is on the horizon for any alternative.*

If Aspen does PA – how long would it take to build?

*Randy replied that we don't know because votes and funding have to fall into place. Best guess is 2-3 construction seasons. May 8 bus lanes could be ready by winter of 2008.*

PA focuses on transit. Can bus lanes be separated from general traffic, with only bus lanes crossing Marolt?

*Randy answered that this was Alternative G in the EIS. The EIS process would need to be reopened.*

Citizens should tell Council and the BOCC to reopen the EIS process. Can the Truscott light be shut off during commute hours?

*Randy replied that changes to the Truscott signal would not require a new EIS.*

Wasn't there a plan to take traffic around Aspen instead of down Main Street?

*Randy answered that alternative alignments were part of the EIS.*

Does the PA preclude a future straight shot?

*Randy replied that a straight shot is not precluded, but a new EIS would be needed.*

How will the bridge be opened if 5/8 question fails?

*Randy answered that the bridge will be opened with two lanes if the bus lanes fail.*

Will the roundabout need to be expanded as part of the proposed bus lanes?

*Randy answered that no expansion is needed.*

Mass transit doesn't work. A bridge for lightweight cars and trucks should be built to connect Tiehack to Highlands. This plan would help reduce congestion and pollution. A toll could be charged. Take off the blinders and look at new solutions.

How much attention has been paid to softening the s-curves and doing something to the Castle Creek Bridge?

*Randy replied that extensive remodeling would be needed to make the bridge three lanes. Contra lanes would be challenging because Aspen traffic is not heavily skewed in one particular direction. A new EIS would be required.*

Haven't all of these options been studied before?

*Randy answered that 40 alternatives were studied as part of the EIS.*

## **March 29, 2007 -- Summary of Woody Creek Caucus**

There was concern expressed that the existing Maroon Creek Roundabout does not function well for vehicles, and is a concern with regard to emergency vehicles getting to and from AVH.

There seemed to be interest in the Split-Shot; they asked to look at this alternative in-depth, and did not request to look at other alternatives.

Concern was expressed about the length of time it would take to re-open the EIS. The person commenting added that even if it takes 2 years to re-open the EIS, the local public process could take longer, considering Aspen's track record.

Applause at end.