

## Chapter A. Inventory of Existing Conditions

---

### Introduction

**Aspen/Pitkin County Airport (ASE) is located in Pitkin County Colorado, near Aspen. With local attractions such as the Maroon Bells, Independence Pass, 4 ski areas and the Aspen Institute, this central Colorado Rocky Mountain community is a center for resort and business activity. ASE is a busy commercial service airport as well as a center for general aviation aircraft activity. In this dual role, the airport is one of the most important transportation infrastructure components supporting the area's economy. ASE is situated within sight of all 4 ski mountains. No other commercial service airport in North America is located closer to a major ski area than is Aspen/Pitkin County Airport.**

Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is located adjacent to Colorado Highway 82 in west-central Colorado 42 miles southeast of Glenwood Springs. The area surrounding the airport is the heart of the Colorado's Rocky Mountain resort area. As the crow flies, Vail is located approximately 35 miles to the northeast of the airport (102 miles and approximately 2 hours by automobile), Crested Butte is approximately 20 miles to the southwest (173 miles and over three hours by automobile), and Steamboat Springs is approximately 75 miles to the north (155 miles and approximately three hours by automobile). The airport provides a safe operating environment for all classes of aircraft, including small general aviation aircraft, corporate business jets, and commercial service passenger aircraft. The airport's relative location within the region is illustrated in the following figure, *AIRPORT LOCATION MAP*.

Although airport planning documents related to environmental impact assessments and the layout of airport facilities have been keep up to date, an overall "Master Planning" assessment of needed future airport facilities has not been comprehensively completed for many years. Local, regional, and national aviation issues have evolved significantly during these years. This evolution indicates that long-term planning considerations for the airport must be evaluated and that a comprehensive long-term plan for the airport.

must be put in place. This Airport Master Plan is intended to provide that comprehensive evaluation and result in a well-conceived long-term development plan the airport.

## **Airport Ownership and Role**

Under the supervision of the Aviation Director and the County Manger's Office, Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is owned by Pitkin County and operated by the Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The airport is classified as a primary commercial service airport by the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). As shown in the previous figure, entitled *AIRPORT LOCATION MAP*, Basalt, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs are located north and west of Aspen with Independence Pass located to the east of the City of Aspen. The following figure, entitled *AIRPORT VICINITY MAP*, provides a graphic depiction of the airport and its more immediate surroundings. The Airport is situated on the west side of Highway 82 at the northern limits of the Aspen Area Urban Growth Area and is located 3 miles northwest of the Aspen's Central Business District.

## **Airport Facilities Inventory**

### **Airside Facilities**

Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is operated with one runway, along with a partial parallel taxiway and connecting taxiways that provide aircraft access to the terminal and other facilities on the airport. The following illustration, entitled *EXISTING AIRPORT LAYOUT*, provides a graphic presentation of the existing airport facilities. The Airport Reference Point (ARP) for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is located at Latitude 39° 13' 23.376" N and Longitude 106° 52' 07.842" W. ASE has an elevation of 7,820 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).

**Runway.** The runway at the airport has a designation of 15/33. It is 7,006 feet in length and 100 feet in width. The runway is constructed of asphaltic concrete (AC) and has a gross weight bearing capacity of 80,000 pounds single wheel, and 100,000 pounds dual wheel main landing gear configuration. The airport has an aircraft gross operating weight limitation that limits dual wheel and dual-tandem wheel aircraft to 100,000 pounds. The runway is equipped with Medium Intensity Runway Lights (MIRL). Runway 15 is equipped with Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) lights and a Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Sequenced Flashing Lights (MALSF).

**Taxiways.** In addition to the runway, the airside facilities at Aspen/Pitkin County Airport consist of a taxiway system that provides access between the runway surfaces and the landside aviation use areas.

A partial parallel taxiway (Taxiway “A”) extends from the south end of the runway, approximately 5,400 feet to the north. Taxiway “A” is 50 feet wide, is constructed of asphalt, and has six exit taxiways that connect to the runway. On the east side of Taxiway “A” the taxiway system connects to the terminal apron and general aviation area aprons. For night use, the taxiway system is equipped with a pavement-edge reflector system. To achieve FAA standards related to object clearing criteria, improvement projects that will be completed over the next several years will relocate the partial parallel taxiway from its existing location (221 feet between runway centerline and taxiway centerline) to a location further to the east (320 feet separating the runway and taxiway centerlines).

### Landside Facilities

Landside development at the airport is basically a linear layout, running north to south along the east side of Taxiway “A.” These facilities include a commercial passenger terminal area, aircraft parking aprons, Fixed Base Operator (FBO) facilities, general aviation facilities, fuel storage facilities, and access roadways.

**Passenger Terminal Building.** The one story passenger terminal building (built in 1976, with a significant expansion project in 1987) is located on the east side of the runway, on the south end of the airport. The building has approximately 38,000 square feet, including a common departure lounge. This common departure lounge supports the ground loading of commercial passengers to the adjacent terminal apron aircraft parking positions (there are no enclosed passenger loading bridges). Terminal building airline tenants include: Air Wisconsin, operating as United Express; Mesa Air, operating as America West Express and Mesaba Airlines operating as Northwest Air Link. Existing terminal building use areas include airline ticket counters, baggage handling areas, passenger waiting areas, rental car counters, snack bar/restaurant area, and airport/airline administration offices. A graphic depiction of the terminal building’s existing layout is provided in the following illustration, entitled *PASSENGER TERMINAL BUILDING FLOOR PLAN*.

**Aprons.** There are two (2) main aircraft parking aprons at Aspen/Pitkin County Airport. The terminal apron is located east of Taxiway “A” and adjacent to the west side of the passenger terminal building. This apron consists of approximately 315,000 square feet of aircraft parking and movement space. The second apron, connected to and north of the terminal apron, serves as the primary general aviation apron. The primary general aviation apron provides roughly 500,000 square feet of aircraft parking and movement space.

**Hangars and Aircraft Storage.** The airport has a full-service Fixed Based Operator (FBO), Aspen Base Operation (ABO). The FBO facilities are located on the east side of the runway, at the north end of the primary general aviation apron. These facilities consist of three (3) hangars, which are comprised of approximately 30,000 square feet and a general aviation terminal of 6,000 square feet. The southern portion of the general aviation apron is laid out to accommodate medium to large “corporate” type turboprop and jet aircraft. The northern portion of the GA apron is intended primarily for smaller single and twin-engine prop aircraft. The general aviation aircraft storage facilities consists of two (2) parallel Patio Shelters, one double-sided unit with thirty-six (36) aircraft bays and one single-sided unit with twelve (12) bays. There are thirty-six (36) apron tiedown positions for based aircraft located on the far north end of the general aviation area, north of the Tower and west of the Patio Shelters.

**Fuel Storage Facility.** Currently, aviation fuels are stored in four (4) above-ground tanks, north of the Aspen Base Operation (ABO) Maintenance Hangar. There are three (3) tanks of Jet-A, with a capacity of 24,000 gallons each; and, one (1) tank for 100LL AVGAS with a capacity of 12,000 gallons. Miscellaneous above-ground tank storage of other fuels and chemicals include unleaded, diesel fuel, glycol storage.

**Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Facility.** The ARFF facility is located east side of the runway and parallel taxiway, north of the terminal area on the main general aviation ramp, approximately mid-field. The building comprises approximately 7,500 square feet. The airport maintains an Index B ARFF facility, which is required by airports that accommodate five daily departures by aircraft greater than 90 feet and less than 126 feet in length (e.g., the BAe-146). Index B requires an airport to provide an ARFF Vehicle capable of carrying at least 500 pounds of dry chemical and 1,500 gallons of water as fire extinguishing agents. Pitkin County Airport owns and operates a 1993 Oshkosh TB1500 ARFF Truck to satisfy this federal requirement.

**Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT).** The air traffic control tower is located on the east side of the runway at the northern end of the airport between the ABO Storage Hangar and the Patio Shelters. The ATCT is a FAA operated facility and air traffic control services are provided fifteen hours per day, seven days a week, from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Associated with the operation of the tower is the Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR-9) which is operated from the tower cab and provides instrument approach and departure services for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport, Eagle County Regional Airport and Garfield County Regional Airport, during the hours the Aspen tower is in operation.

**Glycol Containment System.** The Air Carrier Apron includes a glycol containment system installed to collect deicing fluids sprayed on aircraft during deicing operations. Air Carrier aircraft are deiced with a propylene glycol solution on the ramp adjacent to the terminal building during periods when weather causes the potential for ice to form

on the aircraft, thus becoming a hazard. The containment system equipment consists of one 20,000 gallon receiving/storage tank and one 3,000 gallon oil/water separator tank. The equipment receives runoff from the apron via the existing storm water drainage system which collects runoff through ramp drains located between the east edge of the apron and the terminal building. The system has a valve which allows the runoff to bypass the containment facility in seasons when aircraft are not deiced, in which case the runoff is directed to the normal storm water outfall.

### Existing Ground Access and Parking Facilities

**Ground Access.** From a regional perspective, ground access to the airport is provided by State Highway 82, which is located adjacent to the east side of airport. The airport has two entrances from State Highway 82, one located directly east of the passenger terminal building and one located northwest of the general aviation terminal. Access to the west side of the airport is via Owl Creek Road entering south of airport property.

Colorado 82 is undergoing an intense capital improvement program that started in the summer of 1998. This seven-phase roadway improvement program is in its final construction phase. Just completed is the construction phase improving Colorado 82 from the Airport Business Center to Buttermilk, the ski area south of the airport. Overall, the Colorado 82 project will improve the entire course of the highway from the Holland Hills area, south of Basalt, to the Entrance to Aspen. This project is of critical importance to the airport, enhancing roadway safety and capacity, while also serving as the only year-round ground access highway to the airport and to the City of Aspen.

The final phase of this project, the Snowmass Canyon Project, extends from Snowmass Creek Road to Gerbaz Lane is underway and is expected to be completed in 2004.

**Parking Facilities.** There are several automobile parking areas associated with the airport facilities on the east side of airport property. A long-term passenger parking area is located north of the passenger terminal building. East of the terminal building there is an 88-space short-term parking lot and a 59-space rental car ready lot. South of the terminal there is a 280-space parking area.

In addition, the rental car maintenance/storage facility south of the terminal can accommodate as many as 500 automobiles. There are also existing parking facilities at the ARFF/SRE building and at the FBO/General Aviation Terminal building.

### Utilities Inventory

Provided below is a description of the utility system serving the Aspen/Pitkin County

Airport. This is generalized information that has been compiled from third party sources. Approximate locations for the utilities described below are graphically depicted in the following illustrations entitled *EXISTING UTILITY LOCATIONS – NORTH* and *EXISTING UTILITY LOCATIONS – SOUTH*.

**Water Service, City of Aspen.** An 18-inch service line provides potable water to the airport and surrounding area. From Owl Creek Road to BMC West, the service line is located in the road Right-of-Way (ROW) on west side of Highway 82. At BMC West, the line crosses under Highway 82 to provide service to Aspen Airport Business Center (AABC) area. At the AABC gas station, the line crosses back under Highway 82 and runs from the airport's main entry, to a point just east of the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT), where the service line terminates. For future use when needed, a currently unused water service line extends north from the ATCT area.

**Well Water.** An existing well casing is located near the intersection of Old Owl Creek Road and Highway 82. This well is being incorporated into the West Buttermilk Homeowners Association well system to provide water to their subdivision and the lower Owl Creek Road area. Any airport related improvements in the vicinity of this well will incorporate necessary protection strategies.

**Irrigation Ditches.** An irrigation channel (some of which is underground in a 24-inch +/- pipe) lies along a portion of Owl Creek Road near the Airport fence on the west side of the airport. This irrigation ditch provides seasonal run-off water to the Airport Ranch area of the airport. The pastures and meadows of the ranch are flood irrigated from this ditch.

**Storm Water Drainage.** The airport property in general has a consistent gradual slope, following the grade of the Roaring Fork River Valley, north toward the Town of Basalt. Storm water is directed east from airport buildings, roads, and parking areas to a drainage swale along the west side of the Airport Frontage Road. The swale is a combination of open ditches and culverts under roadways. Storm water run off collected on the east side of the airport, eventually flows into the open meadow north of the FBO apron. Water that does not percolate into this open meadow flows into the Owl Creek drainage.

**Sanitary Sewer.** With the exception of the ATCT, all buildings on the airport are serviced by (or can access) the sanitary sewer system that serves the general area including the AABC, the airport and surrounding commercial area. The ATCT has an existing below ground septic system.

**Gas.** The main gas line runs below grade along the west side of Highway 82 in the ROW from the new Owl Creek Road intersection to the northern most extent of the eastside airport development area. The gas line then runs west approximately 250 feet, turns north and extends along the airport perimeter fence then turns diagonally northwest toward the Shale Bluffs area.

**Telephone.** The main telephone service for the airport runs below grade along the full length of the airport property in the ROW on the west side of Highway 82.

**Fiber Optics.** Fiber optic service to the airport has recently been provided by ATT. The fiber optic back bone follows the route shown on Figures A5 and A6.

**Electric.** Main electric service for the airport runs below grade along the full length of the airport property in the ROW on the west side of Highway 82 ROW. Major upgrades to the electric service on the north end of airport property have recently been completed to support the development in the Patio Shelter area. A small section of overhead electric lines still exist from the old Owl Creek Road/Highway 82 intersection to the Buttermilk ski area. The Airport Ranch area is serviced by an overhead line as well.

## **Airspace System and NAVAIDS**

Aspen/Pitkin County Airport, as with all airports, functions within the local, regional, and national system of airports and airspace. The following illustration, entitled *AIRSPACE/NAVAIDS SUMMARY*, and narrative provide a brief description of Pitkin County Aspen/Pitkin County Airport's role as an element within these systems.

### **Air Traffic Service Areas and Aviation Communications**

FAA air traffic controllers, stationed in Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCC), provide positive air traffic control within defined geographic jurisdictions. There are some twenty-two geographic ARTCC jurisdictions established within the continental United States. Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is contained within the Denver ARTCC jurisdiction. The Denver ARTCC includes the airspace in all of Colorado and portions of Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Aviation communication facilities associated with the airport include the FAA Air Traffic Control Tower (frequencies: 118.85, CTAF; 121.9, Ground Control; and 123.8, Approach Control) and an Aeronautical Advisory Station (UNICOM) on frequency 122.95. In addition, the airport has an Automated Terminal Information System (ATIS) that can be accessed on frequency 120.4. Denver Center ARTCC is accessed on frequency 134.5, and the Denver Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) can be contacted on frequency 122.2.

## Airspace

Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is a controlled airport with an FAA-operated Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) located on the north end of the field. The facility is open from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM. The immediate area surrounding the airport is Class D airspace (Class D Airspace is that airspace from the surface to 2,500 feet above the airport elevation surrounding those airports that have an operational ATCT).

The Class D airspace extends from the airport elevation (7,820 feet MSL) to 10,300 feet MSL. The airspace is circular in shape and extends 5 nm from the center of the airport. There is also a portion of Class E airspace associated with the airport that is designated as a surface area designed to provide standard instrument approach procedures without imposing a communications requirement on VFR aircraft operating in the area.

## Surrounding Terrain Description

The airfield property is on a stretch of land in the Roaring Fork River Valley that slopes downward to the north from approximately 7,825 feet mean sea level (MSL) to 7,725 feet MSL. Rising mountainous terrain and mountains surround the airfield to the north, east, south, and west. The Roaring Fork river valley extends from the southeast to the northwest and offers the only relief from critical terrain in the area.

The terrain to the north-northeast and east rises from approximately 7,800 feet MSL to peak elevations over 10,000 feet within 10 miles from the airfield. The terrain to the south rises from approximately 7,800 feet MSL and to peak elevations over 12,000 feet MSL within 10 miles of the airfield. The terrain to the west rises from 7,800 feet MSL to peak elevations over 14,000 feet MSL approximately 10 miles from the airport. The Roaring Fork River Valley extends to the northwest and southeast. The valley floor varies in width from 1 to 3 miles wide. The valley floor is approximately 7,600 feet MSL and is surrounded by mountains on either side.

## Navigational Aids

A variety of navigational facilities are currently available to pilots around Aspen/Pitkin County Airport, whether located at the field or at other locations in the region. Many of these navigational aids are available to enroute air traffic as well. In addition, there is a compliment of navigational aids (NAVAIDS) that allow a variety of instrument approaches to the airport.

ASE is served by visual and instrument NAVAIDS, including the Red Table (DBL) VOR/DME, I-PKN Localizer, Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with

Sequenced Flashing Lights, (MALSF), Precision Approach Path Indicator Lights (PAPIs), a rotating beacon, and a lighted wind cone.

The PAPIs provide descent guidance for the visual segment of approaches on Runway 15. They are configured for a 3-degree glide path angle. The PAPIs are unusable beyond 4 nautical miles (NM) from the threshold and 7 degrees right of runway centerline. This is due to hazardous terrain in the vicinity of the airport.

The Red Table VOR/DME provides the non-precision guidance for the VOR/DME instrument approach at ASE as well as en route guidance. The I-PKN localizer provides back course guidance and defines a path for aircraft to fly the missed approach and departure procedures.

The Runway End Identifier Lights (REILs) for the Runway 15 approach have recently been replaced by the MALSF approach lighting system, mentioned in a preceding paragraph. The MALSF is an approach lighting system that stretches from the threshold of Runway 15 north, 1,400 feet along the extended centerline of Runway 15 and provides enhanced visual guidance to aircraft making a landing approach to Aspen/Pitkin County Airport during periods of low visibility airport operating conditions.

It is important to note that ASE does not have an Instrument Landing System (ILS). This is primarily due to the fact that an ILS cannot be configured for approaches to either end of the runway because of the steep mountain terrain. The 1998 Airport Layout Plan indicates the need for precision approach capabilities and recommends the acquisition of a Differential Global Positioning Satellite (DGPS) facility for precision approaches at ASE

A promising new development to lower the weather approach minima to ASE may be a recently-developed new antenna array for a conventional Localizer Approach to the airport. A Localizer is an electronic navigation aid that transmits a radio signal to an airborne aircraft to providing horizontal guidance (supplying fly to the left, or fly to the right - type information) to join with and remain on a flight path that lines up with the extended centerline of a given runway. A localizer antenna array was installed at the airport in 2002.

Additional navigational aids within the vicinity of Aspen/Pitkin County Airport include four(4) VHF Omnidirectional Range/Distance Measuring Equipment (VOR/DME) and one VHF Omnidirectional Range with Tactical Air Navigation (VORTAC). The VOR/DME include: Red Table (DBL), frequency 113.00, located thirteen(13) nautical miles (NM) north of the airport; Snow (SXW), frequency 109.20, located twenty-five miles north, northwest; Blue Mesa (HBU), frequency 114.9, located forty-seven miles (47) south; and, Rifle (RIL), frequency 110.6, located forty-four (44) west, northwest of the airport. The

VORTAC, Kremmling (RLG), frequency 113.80, is located fifty-one (51) nautical miles northeast of the airport.

### Published Procedures

There are several published public visual and instrument arrival and departure procedures at ASE, including the VOR/DME or GPS-C approach, the Roaring Fork Visual Rwy 15, the Aspen Two Departure, and the LINDZ Four Departure.

The VOR/DME or GPS approach at ASE is classified as a non-precision circling approach using guidance from the Red Table VOR/DME for the final approach segment of the procedure and the I-PKN Localizer for missed approach guidance.

The Roaring Fork Visual Runway 15 approach is a procedure designed for all aircraft operating in the area under VFR. The approach is designed to keep aircraft from flying over critical terrain and populated areas while making an approach to the airport. Special Instrument Approach Procedures are defined as a series of predetermined maneuvers for the orderly transfer of an aircraft under instrument flight conditions from the beginning of the initial approach to a landing or to a point where a landing may be made visually approved by the FAA for a specific operator. These procedures are not published for public use and do not appear in U.S. Terminal Procedures Charts.

In many cases the specific aircraft is equipped with avionics that allow an approach to lower minimums than the published public approach or allow for an instrument approach where no public use approach is available.

Special Instrument Approaches are approved for individual operators. There have been several Special Use Instrument Approaches developed for use at ASE. Several Special Use Instrument Approaches have been identified for the airport: one for a former operator at ASE, Continental Express, and one for United Express (Air Wisconsin).

The special use instrument approach procedure used by United Express is a GPS-Runway 15. This approach resembles an IFR version of the Roaring Fork Visual from the northwest and supports the Required Navigational Performance concept that aircraft can fly VRF routes in IFR conditions. The approach minimums for straight-in arrivals are 854 feet lower than the published instrument approach. A very limited number of operators have been granted the individual permission required from the FAA to fly this type of Special Use Instrument Approach into Aspen/Pitkin County Airport. In addition, the recently installed localizer at the airport can be utilized for a special use instrument approach.

Presently, there are two (2) published circle to land instrument landing approach procedures and two straight in “special” approach at Aspen/Pitkin County Airport. These are listed in the following table, entitled *INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURES*.

Table A1  
**INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURES**  
*Aspen/Pitkin County Airport Master Plan*

Approach	Designated Runway(s)	Ceiling Minimum (AGL)	Visibility Minimums <sup>(1)</sup>
VOR/DME	Circle to Land	2,385 Feet	2 Miles
GPS-C	Circle to Land	2,245 Feet	2 Miles
GPS SPECIAL	15	1,531 Feet	3 Miles
LOC SPECIAL	15	1,043 Feet	3 Miles

**Source:** U.S. Terminal Procedures, Southwest (SW), Vol. 1 of 2, 21 February 2002 and airport management.

<sup>(1)</sup> Depending on category of aircraft.

<sup>(2)</sup> “Special” approach procedure is not authorized for public use.

## Operating Constraints

There are several operating constraints at ASE primarily dealing with the critical terrain surrounding the airport. A major constraint is that the terrain prevents the installation of an Instrument Landing System for precision approach capabilities.

The rising terrain to the south prevents arrivals and departures in that direction (departing Runway 15, arriving Runway 33). Therefore, the airspace is operated primarily in a “Head to Head” or “Contra-Flow” manner—meaning that arrivals are from the north and departures are to the north. This limits the useful available airspace and provides constraints during high-traffic events.

The existing VOR/DME or GPS-C approach is based on circling criteria limiting minimum descent altitude. In addition, this procedure requires aircraft to descend in the various segments of the approach up to 514 feet/NM. This “dive and drive” method can be difficult to navigate for pilots, especially in a mountain environment. It is reasonable to assume that with new approach guidance technology currently coming online, this approach can be improved.

Due to the mountainous terrain in the vicinity of the airport, which limits radar coverage from Denver Center, the airport experiences restricted arrival and departure rates during instrument flight rules. This issue is further investigated in the Capacity Analysis and Facility Requirements chapters of this document.

An additional operating constraint at Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is its long standing operational curfew. The curfew takes on two forms: (1) the nightly closing of the airport, and (2) the Stage 2 ban on nighttime operations at ASE. The nightly closing of the airport has two components, arrivals and departures. The airport is open for aircraft departures until 10:30 PM local time and for aircraft arrivals until 11:00 PM. The airport then remains closed to all arriving and departing aircraft until 7:00 AM the following morning. The only permitted aircraft activity at the airport during the closed period is for emergency and medical flights, which are permitted by County Ordinance.

Also by County Ordinance, Stage 2 and Stage 3 Aircraft are permitted to operate at Aspen/Pitkin County Airport from 7:00 AM local time, to 30 minutes after sunset. From 30 minutes past official sunset till the 11:00 PM, only Stage 3 aircraft are permitted to operate.

## **Airport Environs**

Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is for the most part located in an unincorporated area of Pitkin County, just north of the Aspen city limits. Because the operation of an airport influences surrounding land use and surrounding land use has an influence on the operation of an airport, it is critical in any airport planning study to gain an understanding of existing and proposed land use types in the area near the airport. The following text and illustrations describe existing land use, existing zoning, and future land use in the airport environs.

### **Existing Land Use**

The following figure entitled *GENERALIZED EXISTING LAND USE* provides a graphic depiction of land uses within the area surrounding the airport. This information was taken from the Pitkin County Assessor's office GIS database and field verified to the extent possible.

Review of the existing land use types in the vicinity of the airport reveal that the predominant land uses are government/institution (primarily the Airport itself), open space/recreation, agriculture and residential. The vast majority of the residential development is very low density.

Generally, compatible land uses in close proximity to an airport do not include residential, schools, hospitals and places of public assembly as these uses are more sensitive to noise. Another factor to consider with respect to land use compatibility is the potential for interference with navigation such as large objects in the flight path or safety zones and lighting that may reduce visibility, confuse or disorient pilots. The existing land use pattern in the area surrounding the airport is generally compatible with airport operations. Much of the area surrounding the Airport is developed with golf courses, ski areas and large-lot residential estates. Large areas to the east and northeast remain in agricultural and low-density residential use.

To the east of the Airport is the Aspen Airport Business Center (AABC), a mixed-use commercial/light industrial/residential complex. This development includes the North 40 residential subdivision, which is located directly east of the Airport's Main Terminal and long-term parking areas. The subdivision includes approximately 72 affordable housing units as well as a remote classroom building for Colorado Mountain College. Due to its location near the main terminal and general aviation areas, residents in this subdivision experience noise and other impacts associated with operation on the surface of the airport, including noise and vibrations created by aircraft start-up, ground maneuvering, maintenance, and engine run-up for take off or landing.

To the north, there are several residentially developed areas including the Brush Creek Village Subdivision and Woody Creek. Another small residential development in this area is the W/J Subdivision. This is a small area of affordable housing units.

The land to the west and southwest of the Airport is predominantly large-lot residential uses. To the south are the Buttermilk Ski Area, Maroon Creek Club and Aspen Municipal Golf Courses and the City of Aspen itself. The City of Aspen contains the bulk of the moderate and high-density residential development in the vicinity of the airport including the Burlingame Seasonal Housing/MAA Affordable Housing Project and Maroon Creek Club Employee Housing Project. These affordable housing developments are located to the southeast of the Airport property.

## Existing Zoning

The following figure entitled *GENERALIZED EXISTING ZONING* provides an illustration of the land use and zoning pattern in the area surrounding the airport. The area illustrated encompasses portions of both the City of Aspen and Pitkin County with the map depicting the zoning for both jurisdictions. The zoning regulations for both the City and the County have aggressive growth controls including a growth management program that establishes an annual limit on the number of development rights issued for new residential dwelling units and commercial square footage. Both jurisdictions also have a long history of staunchly defending their zoning regulations. These factors have

been reasonably effective in slowing the spread of sprawl development along the Highway 82 corridor where the airport is located. The current planning and zoning policies and processes, when combined with the physical limitations, ownership patterns and existing land uses in the area surrounding the airport; provide a significant level of influence and predictability regarding future development.

**Pitkin County Zoning.** The vast majority of the land surrounding the Airport is under the jurisdiction of Pitkin County and is zoned RS-20 or AFR-10. The RS-20 zone district requires a 20-acre minimum lot, while the AFR-10 allows lots of 10 acres or more. The County zone districts found in the study area are listed as follows:

- RS-20 – Rural Residential (20 acre minimum lot size)
- AFR-10 – Agricultural/Forestry/Residential (10 acre minimum lot size)
- AFR-2 PUD – Agricultural/Forestry/Residential (2 acre minimum lot size)
- AF-Ski – Agricultural/Forestry/Ski
- PUB – Public
- B-2 – Business (AABC)
- I – Industrial (AABC)

The Airport itself is covered by four zoning designations, including three County and one City of Aspen designation. The portion of the Airport property located within the City of Aspen is zoned Conservation (C). This is identified as Parks/Open Space on Figure A9. The three Pitkin County zoning designations are: Public, AFR-10 and RS-20. Figure A9 combines the two residential zones (AFR-10 and RS-20) and depicts Residential and Public zoning for the portion of the Airport located in Pitkin County's jurisdiction. The Public designation covers the Airport's main facilities as well as the RFTA bus maintenance facility and the City of Aspen's snow storage site, the later two facilities being located on the east side of Highway 82. The zoning depicted for the Airport is technically accurate, since these are the designations shown on the officially adopted zoning maps. However, according to the Pitkin County Community Development Director, some of the land on the Owl Creek side of the Airport should probably be rezoned to Affordable Housing (AH) in accordance with the Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP). The ultimate zoning of this property and all of the Airport property was considered during the Master Plan process.

The AF-Ski zone district is located to the southwest of the Airport and encompasses the Buttermilk Ski Area. New development within the AF-Ski zone district is subject to the policies and limitations contained in the Master Plan for the Ski Area. Amendments to the Master Plan are subject to a land use review process with public hearings. The current Buttermilk Master Plan was adopted in 1986 and there has been no major update

since that time though there have been a few minor amendments to accommodate changes in parking and the addition of one structure. There have also been a number of master plan updates submitted in draft form for discussion in recent years. The most recent version showed significant improvements in the Base Village area including new structures providing additional office space and skier services space as well as a small number of affordable housing units. At this point, the master plan update process is on hold and little can be said about what may occur in the Base Village in the future.

Another parcel linked to the Buttermilk Ski Area, and in close proximity to the Airport, is the Stapleton Property. This is the large area located just north of the Buttermilk Ski Area parking lot. In the past, the Aspen Skiing Company had leased a portion of this property for overflow parking. The relocation of Owl Creek Road divided the property and the portion of the property south of the realigned Owl Creek Road has been developed for parking use. There have also been discussions of building affordable housing, intercept parking and other transit facilities on this parcel. In fact, the County and the Colorado Department of Transportation have been attempting to condemn the property for use as an intercept parking lot when this Master Plan was being prepared. The most recent information was that the condemnation petition had been approved by the District Court, but that the Court of Appeals had reversed the trial court, on a finding that neither the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) or the County could condemn property for transit or open space/recreation parking. At the preparation of this document, the County and CDOT had filed a request for review of the Appeals Court decision by the State Supreme Court and were awaiting word as to whether the Supreme Court would consider the case. Under the current zoning (AF-2), the property could theoretically be developed with up to nine residential dwelling units. Given the proximity of this property to the airport runway, its future use could have significant impacts on operations at the Airport and visa versa.

There is little potential for any significant new development that would impact airport operations in the areas zoned B-2 or I since these areas are confined to the Aspen Airport Business Center (AABC) and virtually all of this area has already been developed. Redevelopment could occur within the AABC though such redevelopment would most likely be of a similar character as currently exists, at least as relates to concerns regarding impacts to or from Airport operations.

While there are substantial areas of vacant or agricultural lands located within the AFR-10 and RS-20 zone districts, the potential for substantial new development within the study area (under current zoning) is not significant due to several factors. The terrain in some of the areas is very steep or contained within the Roaring Fork River Valley. In addition, significant portions of these areas are already developed to their maximum allowed density and further development would require rezoning. The County would be unlikely to approve a rezoning to allow greater density in an area that would be subject to the

activity and impacts of airport operations. In fact, the County Land Use Code (Section 3-100) includes several criteria for analyzing the compatibility of proposed projects in the vicinity of the Airport and to prevent the development of incompatible land uses in the vicinity of the Airport. Also, the County maintains an aggressive growth management program that limits the number of development rights that can be issued in a single year. The process for issuing these rights is rigorous and takes into account proximity to the Airport and the potential for impacts from airport operations. While development rights can be obtained through various exemptions from the growth management program, including a transfer of development rights (TDR) provision, these exemptions are subject to review by the County and issues associated with potential conflicts with the Airport and its continued safe operation would be considered in this process.

The lands zoned AFR-2 PUD in the southeast corner of the study area present the greatest potential for significant residential development. The adjacent lands have been purchased by the City of Aspen and are being considered for an affordable housing development commonly referred to as the Burlingame Project. The City is contemplating between 225 and 330 residential units. The City is currently thinking that the housing units would be a mix of single-family and multi-family units including some rental units. The project is in the discussion stage at this point and, if approved, would be several years out. While this land is relatively close to the Airport and its development should carefully consider the issues associated with the Airport operations, Deer Hill provides a significant buffer from the Airport.

**City of Aspen Zoning.** The Aspen City boundary encompasses a small area at the south end of airport property. In addition, the area south of the airport is, for the most part, within the City of Aspen. Following is a list of the zone districts that are illustrated within the City of Aspen in the area near the airport:

- C – Conservation
- RR – Rural Residential
- OS – Open Space
- P PD – Park Planned Unit Development (Maroon Creek Club Golf Course and Aspen Municipal Golf Course)
- OS PD – Open Space Planned Unit Development (associated with Maroon Creek Club)
- R/MFA PD – Residential Multi-Family (Maroon Creek Club)
- AH PD – Affordable Housing Planned Unit Development (Maroon Creek Club)
- AH PUD – Affordable Housing Planned Unit Development
- WP PD – Wildlife Preservation (Maroon Creek Club)

Though there are numerous zone districts within the portion of the study area encompassed by the City, most of the land within these districts is either fully developed

or approved and in the process of developing. The principal project in this area is the Maroon Creek Club (MCC), which was approved in the early 1990's and is developing. This upscale golf course/residential project encompasses much of the area south of the Airport and beyond the Buttermilk Ski Area. In addition to the golf course and associated low-density residential lots, the project includes a large clubhouse facility surrounded by several pods of multi-family housing. Among these is the "Maroon Creek Club Employee Housing Project" which contains approximately 39 multi-family rental units. This portion of the project is located on the east side of Highway 82 directly across from the Buttermilk Ski Area base village. The bulk of the MCC land area is utilized by the golf course, which is zoned P PD and OS (open space). The City of Aspen Municipal Golf Course is also zoned P PD and is located in the very southeast corner of the study area.

There are two areas of (C) "conservation" zoning located on either side of the south end of the Airport. This zone district is intended to accommodate very low-density residential development and conserve open space. The conservation-zoned land on the west side of the Airport covers the steep hillsides below the West Buttermilk Subdivision. This property was part of the Burlingame Ranch and was included in the City when the ranch was annexed. The City has since purchased the property and a single building site has been approved on the upper bench. There are currently no plans to develop any other portion of the property due primarily to the steep slopes and proximity to the Airport. The areas designated as "conservation" (C) and "rural residential" (RR) on the east side of Highway 82 encompass the area of the Burlingame Project described above. This is the area representing the greatest potential for significant new development near the Airport. The conservation district requires a ten-acre minimum lot while the rural residential district allows lots as small as two acres in size.

**Other Development Issues.** In addition to the specific properties discussed above, several other land use ideas are being considered that should be described in this inventory.

*Cozy Point.* This site is located approximately 1.2 miles from the north end of the runway, on the west side of Highway 82. The Cozy Point Ranch was purchased by the City of Aspen with a combination of Open Space and Housing funds. Since its purchase, the property has been used as an equestrian facility and has been considered for affordable housing. The current City Council does not favor the idea of using the site for affordable housing and there are presently no plans for any development on the property. In fact, a conservation easement has been placed on the property, which limits its future development potential. The easement covers the entire property but allows the construction and maintenance of agricultural buildings and use of the east end of the property for special events parking for the next five years. No additional residential

development is allowed on the property under the terms of the Deed of Conservation Easement. This property is also located outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) delineated in the 2000 AACP (described below). The AACP discourages development, especially large scale or higher density development, outside of the UGB.

*Corner of Brush Creek Road and Hwy 82.* The south side of Brush Creek Road abuts several large privately owned vacant parcels that are zoned AFR-10. In the recent past this area had been discussed as a possible site for the development of a structure or structures to accommodate the Aspen County Day School. However, conditions have changed with respect to the School which has led to them abandoning interest in this idea. Such a project would require a “special use permit” from the County.

*W/J Affordable Housing.* This residential subdivision is located approximately 1.1 miles off the north end of the runway and just beyond the 60 DNL contour. The property is also located outside of the UGB. The property has been approved for approximately 60 affordable housing units many of which have been built. However, there is additional land area within the subdivision and over the past several years, a number of development alternatives for this land have been discussed with the County. As recently as 2002, the County had received an application for a project that included 40 more housing units, including 12 free-market units and 28 affordable housing units. However, after an unfavorable recommendation from the Planning Commission, this application was withdrawn. On September 1, 2003 a new land use application was submitted to the Pitkin County Community Development Department for additional development on this property. The current project proposes 5 new free-market lots and a deed restricted duplex containing 6 bedrooms. This unit is proposed as employee mitigation for the free-market units. The project also involves relocating three Resident Occupied lots, which were approved for another area of the property. At the time this Master Plan was being drafted the County was in the process of reviewing this most recent land use application.

*City of Aspen Parcel.* This property is located between the Stapleton Parcel and the existing Airport property boundary and was created as a result of the realignment of Owl Creek Road. The property is currently owned by the City of Aspen who has no plans for any development on the site other than the continued use of the pedestrian/bicycle trail, which traverses the site. The reality is that this site has little practical development potential due to its size, configuration and proximity to the Airport runway. The County is currently in the process of pursuing a friendly condemnation as part of a strategy to acquire the land from the City of Aspen. However, given this property’s proximity to the runway and the fact that portions of it are located within the 65 DNL noise contour, the future use of this property could have significant impact on airport operations.

## Future Land Use Planning

There are several documents that discuss future land use in the area influenced by the Airport. These include the *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan*, *The Down Valley Plan*, the *Highway 82 Corridor Plan* and the *Woody Creek Master Plan*. At the time this Master Plan was being drafted the County was in the process of drafting several master plans for various areas in the vicinity of the Airport including the Castle-Maroon Creek Caucus area and the Brush Creek area. By far the most important of these documents is the 2000 AACP.

**2000 Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP).** The 2000 AACP includes a “Future Land Use Composite” map that identifies the current thinking with respect to future land use and development in the Aspen Area. This map identifies an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) defining the area where development is intended to be concentrated. The land outside of the UGB will be discouraged from development via control of the extension of services and other measures. The UGB divides the Airport property, leaving roughly the north one third of the Airport outside of the boundary. The future land use designations correspond fairly closely with the current zoning boundaries. Thus, the plan provides additional legal and policy support for the current zoning in terms of how they are used together to evaluate development proposals.

Of special interest are the areas identified for future affordable housing sites. Several of these sites are located near the Airport or in areas that are over flown frequently by arriving/departing aircraft. A few of these sites have already been discussed in the preceding text of this Airport Environs Section (Burlingame, Buttermilk Ski Area, Truscott/Aspen Golf Course Site). However, there are two other sites of note. One of these is the Airport Ranch site, which is part of the Airport property and is located approximately ¼ mile west of the runway. Proposals were sought for the planning and design phase of an affordable housing project for this site, in 2001. At that time, the County was considering approximately 31 housing units. The units were to be a mix of townhomes, cabins and single-family structures. This project has been on hold pending funding issues and to allow the completion of this Airport Master Plan.

The second site is referred to as the Aspen Mass site. This property is located approximately 1.3 miles from the north end of the runway. The property is approximately 30 acres in size and is owned in partnership by the City of Aspen and Pitkin County. The City and County have discussed plans to develop the site for affordable housing. In fact, the Housing Office sponsored a competition for the planning and design of this project. The result of this competition was conceptual development plan for the property. The plan includes 120 dwelling units. However, this plan required the acquisition of land from an adjacent parcel. This acquisition has not occurred and, in the meantime, the County is reconsidering the project for a number of

reasons including the fact that the property is outside of the UGB. As a result, the project is on hold indefinitely.

**Down Valley Plan.** The Down Valley Plan was adopted in 1987 and is used very infrequently as a policy document by the County. However, it is still technically in effect and does include policy recommendations regarding future development in the area north or down valley of Brush Creek Road, including the Woody Creek Area. The “Future Land Use Map” in this document designates much of the area north of the Airport and in the vicinity of Woody Creek as either Rural Residential (RR) or Agricultural/Wildlife/Reserve (AWR). The Rural Residential designation was intended for low-density residential development consistent with existing zoning. It should be noted that the Down Valley Plan was adopted prior to the establishment of the Rural Residential zoning. The AWR designation was intended to “strongly discourage” development and to maintain the existing open agricultural lands for open space, wildlife habitat and agricultural uses.

**Highway 82 Corridor Plan.** The Highway 82 Corridor Plan includes very few policies pertinent to the future operation and development of the Airport. The primary importance of this plan relative to the Airport is that it includes recommendations regarding the physical appearance of facilities and developments along the Highway. Chief among these recommendations was the call for the development of a set of landscape guidelines. These guidelines were established and they include recommendations for site design, landscape plantings and outdoor lighting and should be referred to during the design stage of any planned improvements at the Airport.

**Woody Creek Master Plan.** This document was prepared by the Woody Creek Caucus with assistance from the Pitkin County Community Development Department. While this plan was adopted by the Planning Commission in October of 1991, and is considered an amendment to the Down Valley Plan, it should be noted that this plan was not endorsed by Board of County Commissioners. The Woody Creek Caucus subsequently submitted an amendment to this plan to the County for adoption but the amendment was never adopted and is considered unenforceable. Because of its location, fairly near the airport and under the most utilized departure flight path, Woody Creek is one of the areas most affected by aircraft generated noise. The Woody Creek Master Plan contains policies and recommendations pertinent to this issue.

In general the Woody Creek Master Plan seeks to preserve Woody Creek as a very low-density residential area. The Plan specifically prohibits high-density housing development. The Plan prohibits changes in zoning that would result in increased density or population over what can be expected under the current zoning. The Plan also modifies the Down Valley Plan by eliminating the “cluster residential” designation for the Pitkin Iron property and substituting the “rural residential” designation. This has

the effect of reducing the potential number of units on the Pitkin Iron site. The Plan also prohibits the use of Transferable Development Rights (TDR's) to increase density in the Woody Creek Area. In addition to these more general policy recommendations, the Woody Creek Master Plan includes the following specific policies related to the Aspen/Pitkin County Airport:

- 1) Support existing curfew differentiation, current operation hours, and previous noise abatement restrictions.
- 2) No expansion of ramp area or parking area for General Aviation aircraft or of commercial facilities to service General Aviation.
- 3) Support eliminating Stage 1 and Stage 2 aircraft (note that Stage 1 operations have subsequently been eliminated).

### **Financial Inventory**

The primary goal of this task is to gather materials that summarize the financial management of the airport. In addition, it is important to develop an understanding of the financial structure, constraints, requirements and opportunities for airport activities as related to the development of a capital improvement program. The documents that have been gathered and reviewed for this financial inventory will be used to formulate a reasonable and financially sound Capital Improvement Program with which to fund projects identified in the master planning process.

With this goal in mind, the airport's financial statements have been gathered for fiscal years 1997 through 2001. In addition, Federal and State capital improvement grant information has been compiled, including current funding policies and a historical review of previous grants received. The airport's 2002-2008 Capital Improvement Program on file with the FAA has also been received and reviewed.

The review of the financial documentation for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport indicates that the airport is operational self-supporting. The airport is operated as an enterprise fund, with its income and expenses held separately from other Pitkin County funds. During years that revenues exceed expenses contributions are made to the retained earnings account. Funds are drawn from the retained earnings account during years when expenses exceed revenues.

As identified in the income and expenses reports and budgeting documents for the airport, major sources of revenue for the airport include: airline rents, airline landing fees, FBO rent, fuel flowage fees, general aviation landing fees, rental cars, restaurant,

ground transportation fees, parking, and advertising. Major expenditures include: salaries, operation/maintenance, and debt service.

Table A2  
**REVENUE AND EXPENSE SUMMARY, 1997-2001**  
*Aspen/Pitkin County Airport Master Plan*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
1997	\$2,653,400.00	\$2,810,044.00
1998	\$3,013,739.00	\$2,973,811.00
1999	\$3,107,038.00	\$3,157,838.00
2000	\$3,115,404.00	\$3,551,435.00
2001	\$3,653,404.00	\$4,096,140.00

**Source:** Airport staff from audited airport financial records.

The improvements indicated in the current Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the airport include:

- Install Runway 15 Approach Light System (complete)
- Construction of Replacement Ramp South of Fire Fighting Facility
- Replace Lighting Runway 15/33 and End Identifier Lights on Runway 33
- Replace the Airport Perimeter Fence
- Relocate/Reconstruct Taxiway A Phase I
- Site Preparation for New Fire Fighting Building
- Relocate/Reconstruct Taxiway A Phase II
- Relocate Fire Fighting Facility
- Rehabilitate Runway 15/33 Including Object Free Area Improvements
- Relocate/Reconstruct Taxiway A Phase III
- Rehabilitate General Aviation Apron and Taxiway A Relocation Phase IV
- Relocate/Reconstruct Taxiway A Phase V

With the significant expenditures to implement the near-term requirements of the East Side Infrastructure Development (ESID) Program, ASE's current CIP on file with the FAA covers seven years and programs a total estimated expenditure of \$32,752,222, with the local share expected to be approximately \$3,275,222 and the federal share being approximately \$29,477,000.

## Issues Inventory

Identification of the current and future development issues which may impact the use of a public facility is an important step in the planning process. This is particularly true of an airport where infrastructure investment is great, where the issues are complex, and where the entire airport facility along with its environs, should be planned in unison to avoid incompatibility between the airport and its surroundings. The following narrative briefly identifies and discusses known present and future development issues facing Aspen/Pitkin County Airport. Some of these issues have been gleaned from the meetings conducted in Aspen early in the planning effort, some from specific information gathered during the inventory process, while others relate to general airport planning principles. A goal of this plan is to evaluate these, along with other issues that will arise and incorporate these concerns into the formulation of the development plan and program for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport.

- **ESID.** The Eastside Infrastructure Development (ESID) Plan for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is a development plan with specific land use approval to construct, modify and enhance the east side of the airport over the next several years. The need for ESID was demonstrated and contemplated in the 1998 Airport Layout Plan Update, which identified separation and set-back requirements of the Runway Object Free Area (ROFA) and necessitated a shift of many of the airport's landside facilities. The ESID Plan will be folded into the Master Plan and incorporated accordingly in the airport's overall development program.
- **Operational Reliability and Improved Instrument Approach Procedures.** As mentioned previously in this chapter, inclement weather, terrain constraints and instrumentation technology have all been contributing factors limiting the airport's present all-weather operational reliability. Development of specific procedures to bring about improved instrument approaches into Aspen/Pitkin County Airport will be considered in this planning document.
- **IFR Capacity and Acceptance Rate in Consideration of Radar Coverage.** IFR Capacity and aircraft acceptance rate during periods of high airport activity is an absolute expression of Aspen/Pitkin County Airport's relative difficulty in establishing acceptable instrument approach procedures. Such procedures would increase the airport's ability to accommodate aircraft operations acceptance rate during periods of inclement weather.
- **Aircraft Parking Apron Capacity during Periods of Peak Traffic.** This situation occurs during periods of peak aircraft activity such as holiday weekends (both

summer and winter) in VFR flying conditions when capacity of aircraft parking facilities is exceeded. This situation effectively places the airport in “gridlock.” Management tools have been developed in the past few years to reduce the most extreme occurrences of this situation, yet additional alternatives and solutions can be considered.

- **Capacity to Store General Aviation Aircraft (Apron and Hangar Space).** The ability of Aspen/Pitkin County Airport to meet the current and future needs for general aviation storage is driven by two factors, the first is the availability of adequate hangar and aircraft tie down facilities; and the second, the cost of the use of such facilities to aircraft owners. The demand for sheltered aircraft storage appears to be partially met with the construction of the Patio Shelters north of the Air Traffic Control Tower and the more limiting factor is the lack of aircraft tie down locations. A waiting list and expressions of interest indicate that a likely demand remains for additional fully enclosed aircraft storage facilities, predicated upon the above-mentioned two factors.
- **Adequate Development Area for Passenger Terminal Facilities.** Currently, the sum total of passenger terminal building area to handle all commercial airline passenger needs is a modest 38,000 square feet. With the addition of new requirements for passenger screening and aircraft security brought about by the new Transportation Security Administration (TSA), plus limited facilities for airline functions and baggage claim, terminal area development demands will be a significant issue for the Master Plan.
- **Use of West Side.** The aviation-related development of the west side of Aspen/Pitkin County Airport could provide additional space for the development of commercial and general aviation uses of the airport over the twenty-year planning horizon of this master planning effort. The discussion of west side development has been a controversial topic in the past for many reasons. Some of these reasons include the debate for Open Space, Affordable Housing, and need for Business Development within the Aspen Area.
- **Growth Management.** Growth Management will be a topic of significant discussion and will require appropriate resolution to blend community quality of life issues with the overarching development theme for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport.
- **Scenic Corridor and Environmental Quality Impacts.** By State Statute and community necessity, the impacts of the development plan for Aspen/Pitkin County Airport on the near pristine nature of area surrounding the airport must be factored and reconciled.

- **Runway Length.** The future length of Runway 15/33 at Aspen/Pitkin County Airport may be an aircraft operational issue for the aircraft fleet currently using the airport as well as for the future aircraft fleet forecast within the planning horizon of this Master Plan. Runway length may be an issue for both Commercial and General Aviation Aircraft.
- **Commercial Aircraft Types Suited to Operate at ASE.** Due to the limiting facility and terrain factors discussed in this chapter, only a very few commercial passenger aircraft are suited to operate from Aspen/Pitkin County Airport. Aircraft performance is much more than a mere consideration of a runway's length. Regardless of the dimensions of any future runway at ASE, there will likely remain only a small number of commercial passenger aircraft able to profitably and acceptably operate from the airport.
- **Wingspan and Weight Restrictions for Aircraft Operating at ASE.** As mentioned previously in this chapter, Aspen/Pitkin County Airport has both wingspan and weight limitation that are applied to all aircraft using the airport. Absent of a complete realignment of landside facilities, the existing wingspan limitation at ASE due to the ROFA requirements, must remain. However, based on the viability of new commercial passenger aircraft that may be able to use the airport during the planning horizon, the airport gross operating weight restriction may require modification.
- **Noise and Land Use Compatibility.** In an effort to minimize aircraft-generated noise intrusions in the environs of the airport, the County has initiated a Part 161 Study, which is a land use and cost/benefit study that was initially intended to evaluate the feasibility of a Stage 2 restriction at the airport. Such a study is required by federal statute, and must be agreed upon by the FAA, prior to implementing such a restriction. There are very stringent guidelines and requirements that must be met prior to implementing a Stage 2 restriction, and the County has been attempting to work through the process. Recent FAA decisions may have made the initial intent of the Part 161 Study impractical and a revised goal to voluntarily encourage the phase out Stage 2 aircraft activity at the airport, along with the implementation of voluntary noise reduction flight procedures is being examined.
- **Safe and Quality Development of Airport Facilities.** Pitkin County is committed to the quality development of the Airport. Furthermore, the community is dedicated to seeing that their airport is developed in the best possible manner. Best does not necessarily mean the biggest; it does not necessarily mean the most active or the densest development. In the Roaring Fork Valley best more

properly is intended to reflect the *right sizing* of any development to effectively meet the needs of the community and its visitors in a manner that is high in safety, quality and synergy.

- **Multimodal Transportation Access.** Aspen/Pitkin County Airport is also an important multimodal transportation nexus for the Roaring Fork Valley. By virtue of its strategic location, close to downtown, but just to the west of the Entrance to Aspen, the airport property is an excellent jumping off point for a multimodal transportation transfer station. The Entrance to Aspen Federal Record of Decision (ROD) contemplates up to 3,600 hundred automobile parking spaces, which would enable commuters to transfer from their vehicles to buses to complete their workday commute and reduce vehicle congestion in Downtown Aspen. Because of the minimal amount of airport property, it will be difficult or impossible to accommodate the commuter parking spaces identified in the Entrance to Aspen ROD. Further, a rail corridor has been preserved along the west side of Colorado Highway 82, fronting the airport property to provide for the further nexus between a commuter rail line from Down Valley into Downtown Aspen.