Economics Technical Report

State Highway 82 / Entrance to Aspen
Environmental Reevaluation

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Colorado Department of Transportation, Region 3

and

Federal Highway Administration, Colorado Division

Prepared by:

HDR Engineering, Inc.

Contents

Tables

1.0 Affected Environment

This report provides a reevaluation of the economic environment analysis presented in the 1997 *State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Final Environmental Impact Statement* (FEIS) for the Preferred Alternative selected in the Record of Decision (ROD) issued in August 1998.

Topics covered include: economic base, commercial growth trends, employment, income, and housing as they specifically relate to the Preferred Alternative selected in the 1998 ROD. While the physical transportation corridor is entirely within Pitkin County, these topics are components of the entire region and regional relationships that cannot be confined to a narrow physical boundary. For example, the study area for employment includes Garfield and Eagle Counties because commuters from those counties use State Highway 82.

1.1 Methodology

This technical report reevaluating the Entrance to Aspen EIS Section IV B (Economic Environment) includes information assembled from many sources, which are listed in the reference section. The references include current plans, policy documents, data from local government-sponsored studies, and information provided by agencies. Data in the FEIS were analyzed as they relate to the Preferred Alternative selected in the 1998 ROD. More recent and/or current data on the same topics, noted above, were assembled and compared to the FEIS data. Differences in the data and new trends were identified and reported.

1.2 Regulatory Overview

The topics covered in this technical report are those necessary to meet the requirements of federal regulations pertaining to federally funded (in whole or in part) transportation projects that minimize and mitigate adverse impacts. Appendix A contains the federal regulations, executive orders, and state regulations upon which the 1997 FEIS was developed in regard to the economic environment. If the regulations were changed, the table in Appendix A reports how the regulations were changed (if they were), and includes any new regulations that pertain to economic base, commercial growth trends, employment, income, and housing.

Many revisions have been made to City of Aspen Title 26 Land Use Regulations since the issuance of the 1997 FEIS. Most of these are related to implementation of the *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan.* By adopting the *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan*, the City of Aspen and Pitkin County jointly approved Aspen's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in accordance with CRS 31-12-105 et. seq:

> The UGB identifies the land surrounding Aspen as either appropriate for urban development (within the UGB) or inappropriate for urban development (outside the UGB). Land within the UGB is expected to become part of the City's urbanized area, at some point, while outside the UGB should only be annexed as a method of preserving the nonurban character of the lands surrounding Aspen (Aspen/Pitkin 2000a).

The 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan, Barriers to Infill Development (a report commissioned by the City of Aspen in 2000) (City of Aspen 2002) made recommendations and identified action items related to growth management within the UGB. The report was published in January 2002. To implement the Infill Program, thirteen ordinances were adopted; this list is provided in Appendix B. Other significant legislation and studies that are related to economic environment of the Entrance to Aspen are summarized below.

Ordinance No. 19 (Series of 2006) was adopted, passed and approved on April 25, 2006. This emergency ordinance imposes a 6-month temporary moratorium on the acceptance of any new land use application seeking a development order and on the issuance of certain building permits for property located in the following zone districts: R/MF, R.MFA, CC, C-1, S/C/I, NC, MU, L, CL, LO, and LP, except for essential public facilities. 1 Like Ordinance No. 12 (Series of 2006), this legislation is based on the rate and character of development activity, and further states that "recent land use applications seeking development orders in various City Zone Districts do not appear to be consistent with the goals and vision as expressed by the 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan" and are having negative effects on the community (Aspen/Pitkin 2006b).

Report and Recommendations of the Economic Sustainability Committee, September 2002—This report was the joint project of the Aspen Chamber Resort Association, the City of Aspen, and the Aspen Institute Community Forum to focus on sustaining the Aspen Resort economy, and on the short- and long-term items that would have a positive effect on the community. It was instrumental in identifying a number of the issues that have been addressed by Aspen's recent "infill program." In particular, it notes lodging deficiencies, the need for growth management and zoning for lodging, the effects of the low availability of affordable housing, and the effects of retail focused on elite tourists. The report supports the Entrance to Aspen Record of Decision (Aspen Chamber Resort Association et al. 2002).

Demographic Forecasts, An Interim Report 2005–2030, Fall 2005—The Growth Scenarios Project grew out of the work of the Watershed Collaborative to better understand how the region will grow in coming decades. It was formed by local planning staff to review and update or revise the population forecasts for Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties and to consider the implications of the county forecasts for the sub-areas within the region. This study provides current data and presents opinions about the reasons for trends (Watershed Collaborative 2005).

Pitkin County, Colorado Affordable Housing Regulation Support Study, November 2004—The study was commissioned by Pitkin County to document the demand for affordable housing created by residential and nonresidential development in the county (Clarion Associates et al. 2004). It was used by the Board

[1] Ordinance No. 19 (Series of 2006) Imposing a six month temporary moratorium on the acceptance of any new land use application seeking a development order and on the Residential Multi-Family (R/MF), Residential/ Multi-Family (R/MFA) Commercial Core (CC), Commercial (C-1), Service/Commercial/Industrial (S/C/I/), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Mixed Use (MU), Lodge (L), Commercial Lodge (CL), Lodge Overlay (LO), Lodge Preservation Overlay (LP) Zone districts of the City of Aspen, (Excepting there from land use applications for essential public facilities; and, declaring an emergency, passed April 25, 2006.

of County Commissioners to draft Ordinance No. 023-2005 (Pitkin County Board of Commissioners 2005).

Ordinance No. 023-2005—Amendment to the Pitkin County Land Use Code adopting a revised Employee Housing Impact Fee Schedule and repealing existing provisions of the Land Use Code relating to affordable or employee housing mitigation or impact fees (Pitkin County Board of Commissioners 2005). In response to concerns about the economic and social effects of second homes on housing affordability in Pitkin County, the Board of County Commissioners of Pitkin County adopted an ordinance revising the Employee Housing Impact Fee schedule and repealing existing provisions of the Land Use Code relating to affordable or employee housing mitigation or impact fees (May 25, 2005). *Pitkin County, Colorado Affordable Housing Regulation Support Study* (Clarion Associates et al. 2004), as well as numerous studies and reports prepared by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments were used to develop the legislation.

1.3 Description of the Existing Condition

Two components of the Preferred Alternative have been constructed since the publication of the FEIS and ROD: (1) Owl Creek Road and West Buttermilk Road have been relocated to create a new, signalized intersection with State Highway 82 near the Buttermilk Ski Area; and (2) the roundabout at the Maroon Creek Road intersection has been completed.

In addition, the Maroon Creek Bridge Replacement Project is currently under construction, scheduled for completion by spring of 2008. This project is being constructed as a bridge replacement without any increase in roadway capacity. However, it will accommodate the Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative in the future by removing the center median and re-striping for two general-purpose lanes and two exclusive bus lanes (see the Introduction to the Technical Report Volume for more detail).

The intersection of Truscott Drive and State Highway 82 was completed in 2001. While this intersection is not part of the Entrance to Aspen Project, its configuration accommodates the alignment for the east approach to the Maroon Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

A transportation easement across the Marolt-Thomas Open Space was conveyed from the City of Aspen to CDOT in August of 2002, as part of land exchange and mitigation agreements between CDOT and the City of Aspen and Pitkin County. (Refer to Appendix A and B in the 1998 Record of Decision for details of the open space conveyance agreements and mitigation commitments.)

1.3.1 Economic Base

In 1997, the economy of the Aspen area was reported to be “primarily based on tourism and related commerce” (FEIS page I-20). Further, tourism includes “winter downhill skiing, summer fishing, rafting, hiking, sightseeing, and bicycling, along with conference center activity and cultural programs.” The *Economic Benchmark Report* confirms that “there can be no doubt that tourism is a ‘base’ industry in Aspen” (Rural Planning Institute 2001, page 40). The report includes “outdoor recreation, lodging, cultural events, eating and drinking, luxury retail, and homes.” In addition, a large segment of the construction trade is devoted to tourism (Rural Planning Institute, City of Aspen, 2001, page 41). The *City of Aspen Economic Benchmark Report* goes on to say that "Pitkin County, and Aspen in particular, are the single most powerful drivers in the regional economy because of the intensity and caliber of wealth their tourist trade generates" (Rural Planning Institute 2001, page 7).

Except for "homes," these activities, as documented in 1997, show that retail trade and services (hotels, restaurants, bars, and skiing) accounted for 57 percent of the total county employment in 1987 and 62 percent in 1993. These same activities accounted for only 42 percent in the 2000 U.S. Census as shown in Table 1-1 (Sonoran Institute 2005b, page 5).

Table 1-1
Pitkin County Employment in Tourism and Related Commerce 2000

Employment by sector	Number of employees 2000[a]	Percent of total employees
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	579	6%
Accommodation and food services	2,070	21%
Retail trade	992	10%
Other services (except public administration)	537	5%
Total	4,178	42%

Source:
[a] Sonoran Institute 2005b

Downhill and cross country skiing remain primary attractions for residents of and visitors to Aspen. Table 1-2 shows data for 1995–1996 as reported in the 1997 FEIS and 2005–2006, which is current data. The 1997 FEIS shows that the 1995–1996 skiing season for Pitkin County ski resorts was the lowest since 1992-1993 by 185,000 skiers. The 2005–2006 season was 5.7 percent higher than 2004-2005 season and was the busiest season since the record winter of 1997-1998, and the fourth consecutive season with growth (Eagye 2006).

Table 1-2
Pitkin County Ski Resort Data –
1995–1996 and 2005–2006

Ski Area	Skier Visits			
	1995–1996[a]	2005–2006[b]	Difference	Percent Change
Aspen Highlands	153,800	193,244	39,444	26%
Aspen Mountain	322,300	324,468	2,168	1%
Buttermilk	176,000	159,081	-16,919	-10%
Snowmass	690,000	768,010	78,010	11%
Total for season	1,342,100	1,444,803	102,703	8%

[a] As reported in the 1997 FEIS Table IV-12.
[b] Eagye 2006.

Several economic trends related to skiing, as outlined in the *Report and Recommendations of the Economic Sustainability Committee* (Aspen Chamber Resort Association et al. 2002) may explain the decreases and increases in skier visits:

- Maturation of the ski industry and its participants. Aspen's resorts are competing with newer resort areas and skiers expect a consistently high quality experience in accommodations and infrastructure.
- Shift from ski to real estate-driven business community. The exploding real estate market, where billionaires bought out millionaires, also shifted from full-time residents to part timers, and interval owners. This activity has shifted much of the community's business focus from skiing to property management, construction, real estate sales, and associated legal services and planning.
- General shift to upper end consumer. While more wealthy people invested in real estate in Aspen, tourist visits dropped. Quality of service improved (snow grooming, restaurants, accommodations) to meet client demands, but the overall result was that two levels of accommodations developed: upper end, and obsolete middle and lower levels.

In regard to these trends, the Economic Sustainability Committee identified an important issue (Aspen Chamber Resort Association et al. 2002, page 5):

> Aspen has a deteriorating lodging and tourist facilities inventory…Not only has the number of available rooms decreased greatly, but also remaining facilities are not…offering appropriate value for their pricing…Lodging owners and potential developers do not perceive a sufficient return on investment to improve existing facilities and develop new ones.

1.3.2 Commercial Growth Trends

Several economic trends related to Aspen's commerce are outlined in the *Report and Recommendations of the Economic Sustainability Committee* (Aspen Chamber Resort Association et al. 2002, pages 3–4):

- Shift in retail climate. High-end boutiques, more service businesses, fewer mom/pop stores, and less shopping for locals. Rents rose making the retail business climate marginal.
- General shift of residency for the "working class," and Aspen "locals" choosing to shop down valley.[2] With more affordable real estate down valley, the number of local purchasers seems to have declined. The market adjusted and expanded its focus on higher-end consumers, with snow tires, groceries, lumber and "Wal-Mart runs" being made down valley.

It is clear that the availability of affordable housing influences the distribution of population growth among the counties and communities in the region. In communities where affordable housing for the

[2] "Down valley" includes towns such as Woody Creek, Basalt, El Jebel, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs, and the unincorporated areas of Eagle and Garfield Counties. These areas are within commuting distance of Snowmass and Aspen resorts.

labor force is scarce, new residents are more likely to be accommodated in unincorporated places (Watershed Collaborative 2005). Because of the trend noted above regarding the shift of local services and shopping to down valley areas, much of the earnings generated by Pitkin County jobs leak out of the county with commuting workers. The *Economic Benchmark Report* (Rural Planning Institute 2001, page 8) estimates that as much as $100 million in expenditures goes to down valley retailers. The report goes on to say that Aspen's dependence on the regional economy to supply local services and retail indicates:

> … A dichotomy in Aspen's economy because there are few indirect base and local resident serving industries. This has two effects. First, the absence of local resident services may be encouraging locals to commute out to acquire day-to-day products and services. Second, many of the indirect base industries are associated with professional jobs such as attorneys, architects, etc. … A problem may occur if people begin to follow these jobs down valley" (Rural Planning Institute 2001, page 40).

Although Aspen maintains one of the largest retail economies of any of the mountain resorts, it experienced three years in a row (2001–2003) of declining sales. In response, the Aspen City Council retained BBC Research and Consulting to study retail conditions and trends and work with the community to discuss a course of action. Building on previous studies and reports, the *Aspen Retail Analysis Report* (BBC Research & Consulting 2003) summarizes an investigation of downtown Aspen's retail environment, supports observations and conclusions regarding Aspen's retailing conditions such as reduced downtown vitality, loss of unique stores, too many high-end stores, loss of nightlife, difficult conditions for start-ups, high vacancy, and high rent. The report includes a series of recommendations for improving downtown business conditions and stimulating economic revitalization.

The *Aspen Retail Analysis Report* also identified broader national and regional trends that affect Aspen and Pitkin County. These include:

- The national economic downturn since 2000
- Aggressive competitor resorts that have made more investments in downtown projects
- An aging market—the current Aspen visitor tends to stay in lodging or second homes that provide the social needs without going downtown
- Bars and entertainment venues rely on younger visitors
- Nationally, retailing is changing and evolving and Aspen must also respond to these changes

Aspen is moving toward a more diversified economy that relies on real estate activity, construction and a growing retired or semi-retired community to support the local economy. "…[T]raditional core resort towns, such as Aspen are not as well positioned to respond to this changes local economy because of their up-valley location and physical constraints to redevelopment" (BBC Research & Consulting 2003, pages 6–9).

Planning staff in Pitkin County and Aspen, and the Pitkin County Assessor's office provided data showing that the rate of development in the commercial sector has slowed in the past 15 years. For example, in unincorporated Pitkin County, the number of square feet of new commercial buildings in the last 15 years is barely double of what it was for the period between 1975 and 1986. Aspen, however, is presently experiencing growth in commercial development with the adoption of new land use codes, described above, that have incentives for lodge construction and infill (Ready 2006).

Not included in the Table 1-3, but significant in the discussion of commercial development that is responsive to the trends described in the *Aspen Retail Analysis Report*, the new base village at Snowmass is under development with construction that began summer 2005. The base village will feature a 25,000-square-foot children's center, 64,000 square feet of new shops and restaurants, a 15,000-square-foot conference space, a community aquatic center, a 246-unit Westin conference hotel, The Little Nell Suites at Snowmass, 359 condominiums and 11 new restaurants and bars (Aspen Central Reservations 2006).

Table 1-3 compares the commercial development totals in the City of Aspen, the Town of Snowmass Village, and unincorporated Pitkin County.

Table 1-3
Commercial Expansion in Pitkin County – 1990 and 2005

	Aspen		**Snowmass Village**		**Unincorporated Pitkin County**		**Total**	
	1990[a]	**2005**	**1990[a]**	**2005**	**1990[a]**	**2005**	**1990[a]**	**2005**
Commercial square footage	1,451,466	3,056,084[b]	339,284	668,659[b]	461,891	558,669[b]	2,252,641	4,283,412[b]
New construction	407,275	670,121[b, c]	155,565	59,135[b, c]	269,544	346,038[b, c]	832,384	1,075,294[b, c]
Annual average new square footage	33,940	40,675	12,964	3,942	22,462	23,069	69,366	71,686

[a] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-13. Commercial square footage is for 1986; new construction is for 1975–1986.

[b] Fite 2006. The current square feet data do not include anything for the new base village (47,725 square feet) that is just being started in Snowmass Village, or the numerous new projects that have been approved or are in the pipeline for approvals in Aspen.

[C] Fite 2006. New construction 1990 through 2005.

Table 1-4 compares retail sales for 1996 and 2005 for the counties in the region. The 1997 FEIS reported that from 1991 to 1996 retail sales growth rates were highest for Eagle County, but that where retail sales per capita were analyzed, Pitkin County was highest, which revealed the economic discrepancy between Pitkin County and the others. Reflecting the reported down-valley movement of employers, employees, and their purchasing power, Garfield County shows the highest percentage of change from 1996 to 2005 in retail sales, and the highest percentage of change in per capita retail sales. Once again, however, as seen in Table 1-5, Pitkin County has the highest per capita retail sales.

Table 1-4
Retail Sales for 1996 and 2005

County	1996 ($1,000)	2005 ($1,000)	Percentage change
Eagle	1,013,193	1,817,783	44%
Garfield	753,874	1,649,589	54%
Pitkin	708,862	979,221	28%
Colorado	72,102,659	122,907,090	41%

Sources:
1996: as reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-14
2005: Colorado Department of Revenue 2005

Table 1-5
Retail Sales per Capita 1995 and 2005

County	Per capita retail sales 1995[a]	Per capita retail sales 2005[b]	Percentage change
Eagle	$33,285	$50,288[b]	34%
Garfield	$20,409	$48,800[b]	58%
Pitkin	$48,057	$62,382[b]	23%
Colorado	$18,504	$26,711[c]	31%

Sources:
[a] 1996 data as reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-15
[b] 2005 data: Population numbers for calculation taken from Watershed Collaborative 2005.
[c] 2004 data: Colorado Office of Economic Development 2004

1.3.3 Employment

As described in the *Economic Benchmark Report* (Rural Planning Institute 2001), although little else has changed in the labor force in the 1990–2000 decade, the trend has continued for more of the workforce to commute into the city from other communities and counties, and is expected to continue to grow. This is the result of increased employment generation that has not been matched by availability of affordable housing for workers. Indicators of this trend are Aspen's relatively flat population growth—2 percent per year—contrasted with Garfield and Eagle Counties' population boom. Table 1-6 shows labor force changes from 1993 to 2005. Table 1-7 shows the resident labor force in 1990 and 2000 and compares the "outside" labor force requirements for 1990 and 2000, and Table 1-8 compares the sources of the regional labor force in 1990 and 2000.

Table 1-6
Area Jobs/Resident Labor Force Comparisons by County for 1990 and 2005

County	Total Jobs [a]		Resident Labor Force		Percent Change 1993–2005	
	1992/93[b]	2005[c]	1992/93[b]	2005[c]	Jobs	Labor force
Eagle	22,432	39,530	14,483	27,640	43%	48%
Garfield	18,743	28,260	17,448	27,311	34%	36%
Pitkin	17,553	20,109	8,227	10,979	13%	25%
Colorado	2,166,239	2,249,200[d]	1,904,000	2,549,677[d]	4%	25%

[a] Assumes 1.0 job per person, however, many employees hold more than one job.
Source:
[b] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-16
[c] Watershed Collaborative 2005
[d] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2006a, 2006b

Table 1-7 also shows the difference between the 2000 forecasts made in the 1997 FEIS and the Colorado State Demographer's data for 2000, and continues the analysis of outside labor force required by presenting the percentage of the jobs filled by workers from outside the counties. Note that Garfield County is a labor supplier.

Table 1-7
Outside Labor Force Required by County for 1990, 1992/93 and 2000

County	Total Jobs				Resident Labor Force				Outside LaborForce Required: Jobs Minus Resident Labor Force[a]				Percentage Outside Labor Force Required			
	1990[g]	1992/ 1993[b]	2000[c]	2000 [d, e, f]	1990[g]	1992/ 1993[b]	2000[c]	2000 [d, e, f]	1990[g]	1992/ 1993[b]	2000[c]	2000 [d, e, f]	1990[g]	1992/ 1993[b]	2000[c]	2000 (calculated) [d, e, f]
Eagle	20,669	22,432	22,500	34,172[d,]	13,650	14,483	17,900	21,299[d]	4,602	7,949	4,600	12,873	25.2%	35.4%	20.4%	37.7%
Garfield	18,311	18,743	18,900	24,482[e]	15,725	17,448	18,760	24,192[e]	609	1,295	140	290	3.73%	6.9%	0.0%	1.2%
Pitkin	17,804	17,553	18,100	19,607[f]	9,117	8,227	11,810	9,054[f]	6,462	9,326	6,290	10,553	41.5%	53.1%	37.4%	53.8%

[a] Assumes 1.0 job per person, however, many employees hold more than one job.

Sources:

[b] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-18

[c] calculated from data reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-16

[d] State Demographer (DOLA 2006d)

[e] State Demographer (DOLA 2006c)

[f] State Demographer (DOLA 2006b)

[g] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-18

[g] calculated from data reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-17

Table 1-8 clarifies the effect of the commuting patterns among the counties by comparing the percentages of commuters versus non-commuters in 1990 and 2000. Resident labor force data for 2000 is based on the 2000 Census cited in *Local and regional Travel Patterns Study*, which examines "how, why, when, and where people travel in the roaring Fork and Colorado River Valleys" (RRC Associates, et al. 2004).

Table 1-8
Commuter Analysis 1990 and 2000

County	Resident Labor Force		Percentage that Worked in County of Residence		Percentage that Worked Outside County of Residence	
	1990[b]	2000	1990[b]	2000	1990[b]	2000
Eagle	13,650	17,900[f]	82.59%	85%[d]	17.41%	14%[d]
Garfield	15,725	22,540[c]	78.62%	74%[e]	21.38%	26%[e]
Pitkin	9,117	9,443[c]	91.48%	91%[a]	8.52%	8%[a]

Source:
[a] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute 2005b)
[b] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-19
[c] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by RRC Associates et al.,2004, Table 2.5.3, page 34)
[d] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute, 2005c)
[e] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute 2005d)
[b] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-16. (RRC Associates et al. 2004 does not analyze all of Eagle County.)

Forecasts of commuting workers are affected by growth in jobs relative to growth in local population—a county's future workers must be found in the forecast workforce of neighboring counties. Table 1-9 compares 2000 worker distribution with forecast needs in 2025. Pitkin and Eagle Counties expect strong jobs growth based on wealthy baby-boomer travel, second homes, and retirements. Particularly in Pitkin County, these jobs are expected to include maintenance, real estate transactions, public safety, and local services (Rural Planning Institute 2001). Because property values are soaring in these counties, however, they are less able to accommodate the worker population needed without large subsidies.

Table 1-9
Estimated and Projected Jobs / Resident Labor Force by County for 2000 and 2025

County	Jobs[a]		Resident Labor Force[a]		Outside Labor Force Commuting In[d]	
	2000	2025	2000[b]	2025	2000[d]	2025[d]
Eagle	22,500[b]	72,500[d]	17,900[b]	39,057[d]	800	24,214
Garfield	18,900[b]	43,000[d]	18,760[b]	62,506[d]	-6,000	-30,877
Pitkin	18,100[b]	33,400[d]	11,810[b]	12,871[d]	6,603	17,358
Colorado	2,304,300	3,879,800[f]	2,547,300[e]	3,870,100[f]	n/a	n/a

[a] Assumes 1.0 job per person, however, rates of multiple job holding in 2025 are Eagle 17%, Garfield 15%, and Pitkin 14% (Watershed Collaborative 2005)

Sources:

[b] As forecast in 1997 FEIS Table IV-17

[d] Watershed Collaborative 2005

[e] U. S. Department of Labor, Table 3. Civilian labor force and unemployment by state and selected areas, seasonally adjusted (U.S. Department of Labor 2006)

[f] Economic Base Forecasts for Colorado Jobs, Labor Force and Population, Table 1 Colorado Labor Supply and Demand (DOLA 2006a)

Projections used in *Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study (*RRC Associates, et al 2004*)* suggest that jobs in Pitkin County will grow significantly faster than the population between 2000 and 2025 resulting in 19,225 persons working in Pitkin County versus 10,332 persons living there (page 71). Eagle County's job growth (an additional 33,951 jobs) is also expected to be greater than its population growth (a 27,032 person increase) (page 72). In contrast, the study shows that in Garfield County is expected to continue housing the region's workforce. Its population is expected to grow faster (by 98 percent and 43,131 people) than jobs (by 61 percent with 14,945 employees) over the same period (page 72). These projected trends suggest that up-valley commuting on Highway 82 is likely to continue to increase. By 2015, Garfield County is forecast to supply 90 percent of the workers commuting to Pitkin County and 63 percent of the workers commuting to Eagle County (Watershed Collaborative 2005, page 2–5). Table 1-10 presents regional jobs, resident labor force, and the amount of the labor force that commutes in or out of the counties.

Table 1-10
Comparison of Projected Jobs / Resident Labor Force by County for 2015

County	Jobs[a]		Resident Labor Force[a]		Outside Labor Force Commuting In[d]	
	2015 FEIS Forecast[c]	2015 Current Forecasts[b]	2015 FEIS Forecast[c]	2015 Current Forecasts[b]	2015 Based on FEIS Forecast	2015 Current Forecasts[b]
Eagle	26,350	55,600	22,660	33,682	3,690	13,352
Garfield	20,550	37,000	22,780	47,474	-2,230	-20,143
Pitkin	19,850	27,000	14,310	11,523	5,540	13,035

[a] Assumes 1.0 job per person, however, rates of multiple job holding in 2025 are Eagle 17%, Garfield 15%, and Pitkin 14%

Sources:

[b] Watershed Collaborative 2005

[c] As forecast in 1997 FEIS Table IV-17

1.3.4 Income

The 1997 FEIS found that, of the three counties studied in the State Highway 82 region, Garfield County is lowest in median incomes in all categories, and the only county that is lower than the State of Colorado's median income. In spite of Garfield County's high rate of growth and its role as home to many of the region's workers, median incomes in the county remain lower than in the other counties and Colorado. Table 1-11 compares the median income of Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties with the state for 1990 and 2000.

Table 1-11
Median Household Income by County 1990 and 2000

County	Household (current $)		Family (current $)		Percentage of Families Below Poverty Level	
	1990[a]	2000	1990[a]	2000	1990[a]	2000
Eagle	36,931	62,682[c]	41,183	68,226[c]	4.9%	4%[c]
Garfield	29,176	47,016[c]	32,377	53,840[c]	7.3%	5%[c]
Pitkin	39,991	59,375[c]	52,976	75,048[c]	2.9%	3%[c]
Colorado	30,140	47,203[b]	35,930	66,624[b]	8.6%	6%[b]

Source:

[a] As reported in 1997 FEIS, Table IV-20

[b] U.S. Census Bureau, Median Income for 4-Person Families, by State

[c] 2000 U.S. Census Summary File 3 Eagle, Pitkin, Garfield Counties (DOLA 2006h)

Although overall income levels have risen throughout the decade, the disparity among the counties identified in the 1997 FEIS has changed. Where, in 1990, all adjusted per capita incomes except those in

Pitkin County were less than they were in 1980, in 2000, only Pitkin County's adjusted per capita incomes were lower than in 1990, almost matching the drop for Colorado (Table 1-12).

Table 1-12

Per Capita Income by County 1989 and 2000

County	1989[a] (current $)	1989 Adjusted for inflation to 2000[b] (current $)	2004[c] (current $)	Percent change from 1989 (Adjusted)
Eagle	18,600	26,107	41,773	60%
Garfield	15,000	21,054	29,064	38%
Pitkin	29,700	41,686	75,454	81%
Colorado	17,700	24,843	36,113	45%

[a] As reported in 1997 FEIS

[b] Inflation Calculator (Friedman 2006)

[c] Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Economic Accounts, CA1-Per capita personal income (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2006)

1.3.5 Housing

Population growth in Pitkin and Eagle Counties is expected to be driven mainly by the second home, resort, and tourism industries, and Garfield County's by energy development. All of the counties, however, will be challenged to house the workforce in affordable housing in an area where property value expectations are particularly high. It is important to restate that the availability of affordable housing will influence the distribution of population growth among the counties and communities in the region. In communities where affordable housing for the labor force is scarce, new residents are more likely to be accommodated in unincorporated places (Watershed Collaborative 2005).

Household characteristics

In 1990, the predominant type of household in Pitkin County was the non-family household composed of people not related through marriage. The 2000 census reports that this household type is still high at 53.2 percent of households. Table 1-13 compares the counties' households.

Table 1-13
Household Characteristics by County 1990 and 2000

County	Total Households		Percentage Family		Percentage Non-family	
	1990[a]	2000	1990[b]	2000	1990[b]	2000
Eagle	8,354	15,148[b]	61%	56%[b]	39%	40%[b]
Garfield	11,266	16,229[c]	71%	65%[c]	29%	30%[c]
Pitkin	5,877	6,807[d]	46%	44%[d]	54%	53%[d]
Colorado	1,282,487	--	66%	--	34%	--

[a] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-22
[b] State Demographer (DOLA 2006d)
[c] State Demographer (DOLA 2006c)
[d] State Demographer (DOLA 2006b)

Affordability and residency

The *Report and Recommendations of the Economic Sustainability Committee* (Aspen Chamber Resort Association et al. 2002) reviewed the trends that cause the leakage of retail sales to down-valley communities. Their studies validated the *Aspen Area Community Plan* (1993), which reported that housing stock available for permanent residents was decreasing—that housing occupancy has transitioned from local residents to second homeowners as the population has aged and older residents have acquired property. The *Report and Recommendations of the Economic Sustainability Committee* notes that for local workers, these trends have exacerbated the problem of housing availability and affordability, affected community diversity, local transportation, and markets for affordable consumer goods (page 7). Data in the 2000 Census shows the result of these trends:

- The 1990 and 2000 Census show that the percentage of seasonal- and occasional-use homes in Pitkin County increased from 27 percent to 31 percent, and equaled 2,728 units[3].
- The number of owner-occupied units (including those used as second homes) increased between 1990 and 2000 by almost 31 percent, while renter-occupied units decreased by 0.5 percent.
- In 1991, the FEIS reported that only 71 percent of housing units were for permanent residents. The 2000 Census shows that of the 10,096 housing units, 3,289 units (33 percent) were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Thus, although the total number of housing units increased by 2.6 percent between 1990 and 2000, the number of units for permanent residents dropped by 4 percent.

[3] US Census, 1990, 2000 as presented in Park County 2005 Demographic & Economic Profile, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, page 21.

- Owner-occupied houses valued at over $1 million are not uncommon in this region, but are most prevalent in Pitkin County: 7.8 percent in Eagle County, 0.8 percent in Garfield County, and 42.6 percent in Pitkin County.

Table 1-14 compares the cost of housing in 1990 with 2000. Table 1-15 compares the median price of owner-occupied housing in 1990 and 2000.

Table 1-14
Value of Owner-occupied Housing Percentage by County 1990 and 2000

County	Less than $99,000		$100,000 to $200,000		More than $200,000	
	1990[a]	2000	1990[b]	2000	1990[b]	2000
Eagle	28%	1.8%[b]	48%	6.9%[b]	24%	91.3%[b]
Garfield	60%	6.1%[c]	34%	43.6%[c]	6%	50.3%[c]
Pitkin	6%	3.4%[d]	17%	8.5%[d]	77%	88.1%[d]
Colorado	70%	--	25%	--	5%	--

[b] As reported in 1997 FEIS!V-23a
[b] State Demographer (DOLA 2006d)
[c] State Demographer (DOLA 2006c)
[d] State Demographer (DOLA 2006b)

Table 1-15
Median Price of Owner-occupied Housing by County 1990 and 2000

County	1990[a]	Adjusted 1990[f]	2000	Percent Change
Eagle	135,900	178,129	369,100[c]	52%
Garfield	90,400	120,158	200,700[d]	40%
Pitkin	452,800	658,762	750,000[e]	12%
Colorado	82,700	110,759[f]	166,600[b]	34%

[a] As reported in 1997 FEIS Table IV-23b
[b] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute 2003)
[c] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute 2005c)
[d] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute 2005d)
[e] 2000 U.S. Census (as cited by Sonoran Institute 2005b)
[f] Inflation Calculator, www.westegg.com/Inflation, accessed July 9, 2006

Affordable housing need

The attention drawn to the lack of affordable housing in the decade prior to the publication of the 1997 FEIS has continued. The decision by the City of Aspen and Pitkin County to provide rent-controlled and price-controlled housing for employees (1979) led to the development of the Aspen/Pitkin Housing Authority (APCHA). Under the APCHA, employee housing units may be legally occupied only by residents of the county who live in them full-time and meet income guidelines. In 1994, 1,225 deed-restricted units were available, and another 335 were due for completion by 1997. The 1993 *Aspen Area Community Plan* (referenced in Aspen/Pitkin 2000b) identified a housing shortfall of approximately 450 new deed-restricted employee units and established a desired population limit on the Aspen metro Area of 30,000 people by the year 2015.

To address this shortage, the city and the county initiated developments, an accessory dwelling unit program, and adopted zoning districts with incentives encouraging the private sector to provide affordable housing. Pitkin County has $6 million in bonding authorization for affordable housing, and Aspen dedicated tax revenues for affordable housing from a local 1.0 percent Real Estate Transfer Tax and a 0.45 percent sales tax. Over the last 30 years, approximately 2,600 housing units (rentals and sales) have been developed in Pitkin County, providing homes for many employees (Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority 2006).

Pitkin County commissioned the *Affordable Housing Support Study* in 2004 (Clarion Associates et al. 2004). This study shows that as employment in Pitkin County grew from 1994 to 2004, wages remained stagnant, and affordable housing for the majority of locally-employed people has decreased. The result, as shown in other studies cited here, is that Pitkin County workers are moving out of the county for housing (page 2). The study assumed a target of housing 60 percent of Pitkin County's workforce living in the county when projecting a shortage of affordable housing. With that assumption (and accounting for the number of workers per household and the number of jobs per worker), the current (2004) affordable housing inventory is 4,481 units (public and market) in the county and a shortage of 1,611 units. In 2014, accounting for existing and planned development by the public and private sectors, the shortage is expected to be 913 units (page 3).

The *Affordable Housing Support Study* (Clarion Associates et al. 2004) also provides data from the Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Office for affordable housing units in Pitkin County and Aspen. It shows that approximately 563 affordable rental units were added within Aspen between 1997 and 2004, including 157 dormitory units. Table 1-16 summarizes these inventories. In response to concerns about the economic and social effects of second homes on housing affordability in Pitkin County, the Board of County Commissioners of Pitkin County adopted an ordinance revising the *Employee Housing Impact Fee* schedule and repealing existing provisions of the Land Use Code relating to affordable or employee housing mitigation or impact fees (May 25, 2005).

Table 1-16
Affordable Housing Inventory Summary (2004)

Location	Total Units	Rental Units[a]	Percent of Total Units	Owner Units	Percent of Total Units
Aspen	1,791	1,982	60%	709	40%
Pitkin County (not in Aspen)	580	17	3%	563	97%
Total Pitkin County	2,371	1,099	46%	1,272	54%

[a] Includes all types and sizes of units plus dormitories

Source: City of Aspen Community Development Department and the Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority as cited in *Pitkin County, Colorado Affordable Housing Regulation Support Study* (Clarion Associates et al. 2004).

An additional 13 employee housing units, Pitkin County's Stillwater Affordable Housing Project, were completed in 2005 (Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority 2006d).

In Aspen, three projects with a total of 133 affordable housing units are under construction (Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority 2006e).

- The Burlingame Ranch Affordable Housing development will provide up to 236 units in Aspen. This development, which is located north of State Highway 82 between ABC and Maroon Creek Club, began its first phase of 84 multifamily units and 13 lots in 2005.
- Obermeyer Place is near Rio Grande Park. Twenty-two deed-restricted units are included in this project. The units will be completed in approximately July 2006.
- The Little Ajax project is located at the base of Shadow Mountain and is 100 percent affordable housing for sale. This 14-unit project will be completed in October 2006.

1.3.5 Commuting, housing and traffic volume

Demographic Forecasts: Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties 2005–2030, An Interim Report (Watershed Collaborative 2005) reports that the job forecast will continue to be strong until 2020, and then decline by 2030 (page 3). This trend is of concern because affordable housing for the workforce is more readily available outside of Aspen and Pitkin where service, construction, and tourism-related jobs are in good supply. Thus, a significant proportion of the labor force will continue to commute. Table 1-17 summarizes the current and projected commuting situation for Aspen.

Table 1-17
Aspen Labor Force Location Projection Summary[a]

	1992 and 2005 Condition		2015 Projected Build-out	
	1992[b]	2005[c]	FEIS Projection[b]	Updated Calculation[d]
Estimated total Aspen Area labor force	8,400	9,850	10,700	12,920
Estimated labor force living in the Aspen Area	3,780 (45%)	10,150 (50.5%)	6,420 (60%)	5,810 (60%)
Estimated commuting labor Force	4,620 (55%)	9,950 (49.5%)	4,280 (40%)	7,110 (40%)

[a] Assumes 1.0 job per person, however, rates of multiple job holding in 2025 are Eagle 17%, Garfield 15%, and Pitkin 14% (Watershed Collaborative 2005)

Sources:

[b] As reported in 1997 FEIS

[c] Estimated using the 1992 Aspen/Pitkin County labor force ratio. 2005 Aspen is based on Pitkin County employment data for 2005 found in *Demographic Forecasts*, *Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties 2005–2030, An Interim Repor*t (Watershed Collaborative 2005). Estimated total labor force = 49 percent of Pitkin County number

[d] Estimated using the 2015 Pitkin County labor force data found in *Demographic Forecasts, Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties 2005–2030, An Interim Report* (Watershed Collaborative 2005).

The *Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study* (RRC Associates et al, April 12, 2005) reported that in 2005 approximately 68 percent of workers in the Roaring Fork and Colorado River Valleys live in a community different from their work place (page 15). For Aspen, however, this data would not accurately characterize the employment/worker balance. In Aspen, close to 80 percent of Aspen's working residents are employed in the city, but they account for only 34 percent of Aspen's workforce. Thus, 66 percent of Aspen's employees commute into the city (page 16), and it is considered an employment center. Another important aspect of this statistic is that "about 49 percent of [employees] that live and work in Aspen and Snowmass Village reside in assisted or supported housing…[illustrating] the critical role of housing programs in Aspen/Snowmass especially to help local workers reside within their community of employment" (page 54). Further, this study finds that Pitkin County will "intensify its role as net supplier of jobs to the region." While commuters leaving the county for jobs will remain in the 8–9 percent range, workers from outside the county, particularly from Garfield County, are projected to rise from 46 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2025.

The conclusion presented in the 1997 FEIS was that "changes in future employee housing and commuting characteristics would not be significant enough to remove the need for the [proposed] transportation improvements" (page IV-39). This statement remains true. According to traffic analyses conducted for the reevaluation of the 1997 FEIS, existing State Highway 82 continues to operate at capacity, and congestion has extended further down valley. The effects of increased traffic demand on congestion within the State Highway 82 are apparent to the traveling public as a result of the extension of congestion down valley from Aspen and the longer duration of peak periods of congestion. (See Traffic Characteristics and Safety Technical Report, State Highway 82/Entrance to Aspen Environmental Reevaluation (FHWA and CDOT, February 2007) for detailed traffic information).New affordable housing developments are not expected to affect traffic beyond what is already expected and planned for, because they were already assumed in the traffic models.

2.0 Environmental Consequences

2.1 Methodology

Data in the 1997 FEIS were analyzed to assess how they now relate to the Preferred Alternative selected in the Record of Decision. More recent and/or current data on the same topics were collected, compared to the data presented in the 1997 FEIS, and evaluated for the effects in relation to the Preferred Alternative.

2.2 Compliance with Regulations

New in 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU [FHWA 2005]) was signed on August 10, 2005, by President Bush. It authorizes the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period from 2005 to 2009. This legislation addresses the challenges of the proposed project: improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment.

New in 2000, Executive Order (EO) 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (August 11, 2000) (U.S Department of Justice 2000), was implemented to improve access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, as a result of national origin, have limited English proficiency (LEP). As the population of persons with Hispanic origins (for example) continues to increase in the project area, eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language must be afforded meaningful opportunities to access federally funded programs and activities. Although a reevaluation does not require public circulation, it is a part of the project files, and as such it is a public document that may be required to follow EO 13166. If the reevaluation process for State Highway 82 results in a decision to prepare a document that is distributed to the public the agencies involved should be prepared to follow EO 13166.

The economic conditions that inspired the policies of the *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan* (Aspen/Pitkin 2000a) and subsequent implementation of many of its Action Items are primarily the result of the demand for second homes in Aspen and Pitkin County, the aging tourist infrastructure in Aspen, the relative scarcity of affordable housing, and national economic conditions. The regulations and programs described in Section 1 and listed in Appendices A and B would have little if any effect on the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

On the other hand, the implementation of the Preferred Alternative selected in the ROD would help support the policies of the *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan* (Aspen/Pitkin 2000a)*,* including Aspen's infill programs, by helping alleviate congestion and reduce accidents at the Entrance to Aspen, and by making commuting into the city easier for workers and residents. In the mix of tourism related infill improvements, the completion of the Entrance to Aspen project would fulfill desired modernization of facilities and easy access to sustainable shopping and recreation.

2.3 Preferred Alternative

The information presented below provides updates on current conditions in the project area related to potential economic impacts. The impacts as presented in the 1997 FEIS are still valid and no new or greater impacts to economic conditions have been identified in this reevaluation. Further, based on existing economic conditions in the study area, there is no evidence of any substantive, long-term adverse effect on economic conditions from the previous intersection or roundabout construction.

2.3.1 Economic Environment Impacts

Economic Base

As presented in the 1997 FEIS, implementation of the Entrance to Aspen project will improve the transportation corridor and support Aspen's sustainable economic programs. This is important because balance and efficiency, and recognizing the interdependence of regional economies, are pressing local issues. As described in the *Economic Benchmark Report* (Rural Planning Institute 2001, page 5), although Aspen has a wide variety of commercial amenities, most of them are related to the visitor industry, especially skiing and recreation, which remain primary attractions for residents and visitors. Skier visits, however, have fallen. The causes have been studied and related to several issues: maturation of the ski industry and its participants, the shift from ski to a real estate-driven business community, and a general shift to the high-end consumer. Low building and population growth rates and high real estate prices are forcing Aspen and Pitkin County service firms, their employees, employee housing, and their expenditures to move to other communities and adjacent counties. The policies of the *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan* (Aspen/Pitkin 2000a), including Aspen's infill programs, were developed to address these issues and others. The programs appear to be working as demonstrated by the strong 2005–2006 ski season, which was the busiest season since 1997–1998 (see Table 1-2).

One adverse project impact is that county tax revenues will be reduced because of the need to acquire private property for right-of-way, which reduces the property tax base.

Commercial Growth Trends

As presented in the 1997 FEIS (page V-20), implementation of the Entrance to Aspen project will improve the transportation corridor and improve access to retail businesses, thus increasing sales tax revenue. This statement remains true today. Because the majority of Aspen's consumer goods are delivered by trucks, an improved transportation corridor may lower consumer costs.

Commercial growth trends mirror the current trends in the base economy as demonstrated by a shift in the retail climate to high-end boutiques, more service business, less shopping for locals, and a general shift in the residency of the labor force that causes shopping patterns to shift down valley. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative, along with continued application of Aspen's infill policies, may help retail focused on local residents return to the city.

In addition, implementing the Preferred Alternative will improve other current trends noted in Aspen's retail environment: reduced downtown vitality, loss of unique stores, loss of nightlife, and high vacancy that has led to higher rents. Some of these can be attributed to national economic downturns, but others are the result the success of aggressive competitor resorts, and the attractiveness of second homes in Aspen to an aging market. The project will improve access to retail and resorts, and provide the labor force with better access to jobs. As described in the FEIS, businesses such as restaurants, hotel/resorts, and commercial services that are located within walking distance of the exclusive bus lanes/Light Rail Transit alignment may benefit from an increase in clients and/or patrons because of more convenient access (page V-20).

As described in the 1997 FEIS (page V-21), the project may have a negative impact on certain types of Main Street businesses where parking spaces are taken for the bus lanes/LRT tracks. Retailers that sell bulky products, businesses that need auto access, and lodges that typically use on-street parking for guests will be negatively affected. The placement of the LRT on the south side of Main Street will take up to 252 parking spaces. For interim exclusive bus lanes, only Main Street parking would be affected. Bus lanes would remove up to 169 parking spaces.

Employment

As presented in the 1997 FEIS (page V-20), implementation of the project will improve the transportation corridor and access to employment in Aspen. This is important because of the continuing trend for much of Aspen's workforce to commute into the city from other communities and counties. This trend is projected to intensify in part because of the scarcity of affordable housing. Pitkin County and Aspen in particular are job suppliers, and Pitkin County's population growth is not projected to keep pace with its job growth. In addition, implementation of the Preferred Alternative will create short-term construction jobs.

Income

No impacts to income were identified in the 1997 FEIS. With the exception of providing better access to jobs in Aspen, the implementation of the Preferred Alternative is unlikely to have any effect on incomes in Aspen or the region where demand for employees is expected to remain high.

Housing

No impacts to housing were identified in the 1997 FEIS. With the exception of providing better access to jobs in Aspen, the implementation of the Preferred Alternative is unlikely to have any effect on most housing in Aspen or the region. Locations for some future affordable/employee housing, however, may be selected because of proximity to the State Highway 82 corridor where exclusive bus lanes or LRT is available. For example, the Burlingame Ranch Affordable Housing development, which will provide up to 236 units, is located north of State Highway 82 between ABC and Maroon Creek Club (Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority 2006e). Homes, including affordable housing, along Main Street that are west of 7th Street, will experience additional traffic noise that was previously on Hallam Street and noise from exclusive bus lanes or LRT vehicles. East of 7th Street along Main Street, homes will experience the added noise of bus lanes or LRT vehicles. These impacts are the same as those identified in the FEIS, except for the additional 12-household affordable housing units (7th and Main Street), two condominium buildings totaling 12 deed-restricted residential units (on 8th Street and on Main Street), and two townhouses (7th Street) constructed since the 1998 ROD.

3.0 Mitigation Measures

The mitigation measures described in the 1997 FEIS have been implemented for components of the Preferred Alternative already constructed. These measures also would be implemented during construction of future components of the Preferred Alternative, and are adequate to protect the economic well-being of the community. No additional mitigation would be needed based on current conditions and regulations. Mitigation measures from the ROD are summarized in Section 4.0 below.

4.0 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation

Impacts are summarized below in Table 4-1 as identified in both the FEIS and this Reevaluation. Mitigation measures listed in the table are those from the 1998 ROD, unless additional measures are noted as being required due to findings of the Reevaluation.

Table 4-1
Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Topic	FEIS Impact	Reevaluation Impact	Mitigation Measures
Economic base	Acquisition of land for ROW would reduce county tax revenues, but would create construction jobs.	No change. The addition of the interim implementation of exclusive bus lanes would not change the impacts.	
Commercial growth trends	Removal of 252 parking places on Main Street, Monarch Street and Durant Avenue to accommodate LRT (south side placement on Main Street). Adverse impacts would occur to some businesses along the downtown alignment. Improved access for businesses located within walking distance of the LRT.	No change. For interim exclusive bus lanes, only Main Street parking would be affected, removing up to 169 spaces during any bus phase No change to impacts to businesses along downtown alignment.	Provision of intercept parking lots and park-and-ride facilities in down-valley locations.

Topic	FEIS Impact	Reevaluation Impact	Mitigation Measures
Employment	Improved access to resort employment opportunities. Increases in service employment anticipated	No change; same beneficial impacts would occur with either exclusive bus lanes or LRT.	
Income	Increases in retail sales, sales tax revenue anticipated.	No change; same beneficial impacts would occur with exclusive bus lanes or LRT.	
Housing	No impacts were identified.	No impacts were identified.	

5.0 Agency Coordination

The following entities were contacted for information during this study:

- City of Aspen, Planning Department and City Manager's Office
- Pitkin County Planning Department
- Pitkin County Assessor's Office

All agency and organizational contacts, as well as other data sources, are included in Section 6.0, References.

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7.0 List of Preparers

Terri A. Morrell, AICP, Senior Planner, HDR, Engineering, Inc.

Kristen Maines, Environmental Planner, HDR Engineering, Inc. (QC)

Appendix A. Federal and state regulations

Table A–1
Federal and state regulations followed in development of the 1997 FEIS Economic Environment section, changes in the regulations, and new regulations

Applicable regulation to Social Environment assessment	Description	Changes if any	Relationship to project
The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) **(Pub. L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended by Pub. L. 94-52, July 3, 1975, Pub. L. 94-83, August 9, 1975, and Pub. L. 97-258, § 4(b), Sept. 13, 1982)** *(DOE 1969)*	The purposes of this Act are to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment, protect the health and welfare of people, to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the region		All projects involving the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must follow NEPA regulations. Procedures and guidance are set by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).
1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) *(FHWA 1991)*	This landmark provided policy guidance and funding for highway, transit, and safety programs, and authorizes Federal transportation programs in these areas for fiscal years 1992–1997. Through ISTEA, FHWA provided a strategic investment framework, created programs, such as the Surface Transportation Program, that provided flexibility to state and local officials, and helped assure that transportation investments would meet the unique needs of their communities. ISTEA's authority expired in October 1997.	This program was reauthorized as Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (see below).	An important step in coordinating and funding local multimodal projects, and funds for Transportation Enhancement activities, such as landscaping and beautification, rehabilitation—important to this project.

Applicable regulation to Social Environment assessment	Description	Changes if any	Relationship to project
Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) *(FHWA 1998)*	The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century was enacted June 9, 1998. TEA-21 authorized the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the period 1998-2003. The TEA-21 Restoration Act, enacted July 22, 1998, provided technical corrections to the original law.	This program continued ISTEA in 1998 and was reauthorized as Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users **(**SAFETEA-LU) in 2005 (see below)	Continued ISTEA's innovative policies.
Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) *(FHWA 2005)*	SAFETEA-LU, signed on August 10, 2005, by President Bush, authorizes the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period from 2005 to2009	New in 2005.	This legislation addresses the challenges of the proposed project: improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment.
Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice *(EPA 1994)*	Requires that federal agencies ensure that there are no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations for their agency actions.		Evaluation of minority and low income populations must be addressed to ensure compliance.
Uniform Relocation & Real Property Acquisition Act, FHWA, 42 USC 4601 *(FHWA 1971)*	Requires agencies that must use private property to acquire it at fair market value and assist in any necessary relocation of residences or business.		The project corridor is adjacent to residences and businesses.
Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) FHWA49 USC 303 *(FHWA 1966)*	Forbids Dept. of Transportation agencies' use of public parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, or historic sites unless there is no "prudent and feasible" alternative and the agency employs "all possible planning to minimize harm."		Parks and historic sites exist near the project.

Applicable regulation to Social Environment assessment	Description	Changes if any	Relationship to project
Executive Order 13166 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (August 11, 2000) *(U. S. Department of Justice 2000)*	to improve access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency (LEP).	New in 2000	As the population of persons with Hispanic origins (for example) continues to increase in the project area, eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language must be afforded meaningful opportunities to access federally funded programs and activities.
Title 23 - Highways Section 109 – Standards (h) *(FHWA 1958)*	The purpose of this regulation is to assure that possible adverse economic, social, and environmental effects relating to any proposed project have been fully considered and that the final decisions are made in the best overall public interest.		This covers the important topics of air, noise, water pollution; man-made and natural resources, aesthetic values, community cohesion, public facilities and services; adverse employment effects, and tax and property values losses; displacement of people, businesses and farms; and disruption of desirable community and regional growth.

Appendix B. City of Aspen ordinances since 1997 that are relevant to Economic Environment Technical Report

Table B-1. Infill Program Implementation Ordinances

Ordinance	Title	Date
No. 51 (Series of 2003)	Approving amendments to the Resident Multi-Family Housing Replacement Program, Chapter 26.530. *(City of Aspen 2003a)*	January 2004
No. 53 (Series of 2003	Implementing a Revised Accessory Dwelling Units and Carriage House Program: 26.104.100— Definitions; 26.520—Accessory Dwelling Units and Carriage Houses. . *(City of Aspen 2003b)*	November 2003
No. 54 (Series of 2003)	Approving amendments to the [multiple] chapters and sections of the City of Aspen Land Use Code…implementing a Transferable Development Rights Program…. *(City of Aspen 2003c)*	November 2003
No. 27 (Series of 2004)	Approving amendments to Section 26.710.090—Residential Multi-Family (RMF) Zone District and Section 26.710.100—Residential Multi-Family A (RMFA) Zone District. *(City of Aspen 2004a)*	July 2004
No. 28a (Series of 2004)	Approving amendments to Section 26.104.100—Definitions and Section 26.710.140—Commercial Core (CC) Zone District. *(City of Aspen 2004b)*	August 2004
No. 28b (Series of 2004)	Approving amendments to Section 26.710.150—Commercial (C-1) Zone District. *(City of Aspen 2004c)*	August 2004
No. 5 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Section 26.412—Commercial Design Review, Section 26,575,030—Pedestrian Amenity, and Section 26,575.060—Utility/Trash/Recycle Service Area. *(City of Aspen 2005a)*	March 2005
No. 7 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Section 26.701.180—Mixed-Use (MU) Zone District. . *(City of Aspen 2005b)*	March 2005
No. 9 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Land Use Code Sections 26.710.190—Lodge (L) Zone District, 26.701.200—Commercial Lodge (CL) Zone District, 26.710.310—Lodge Overlay (LO) Zone District, 26.104.320—Lodge Preservation Overlay (LP) Zone District, and 26.104.100—Definition of "Hotel (AKA) Lodge". *(City of Aspen 2005c)*	May 2005
No. 12 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Section 26.710.710—Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zone District. *(City of Aspen 2005d)*	March 2005
No. 17 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Section 26.515—Off-Street Parking and Section 26.104.100—Definitions. *(City of Aspen 2005e)*	March 2005
No. 21 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Chapter 26.470—Growth Management Quota System. *(City of Aspen 2005f)*	May 2005
No. 22 (Series of 2005)	Approving amendments to Section 26.710.160—Service/Commercial/Industrial (SCI) Zone District. *(City of Aspen 2005g)*	May 2005

On March 28, 2006, the Aspen City Council approved an emergency ordinance that amended 18 sections of Title 26—the land Use Code, "…in light of the potential rate and character of development activity and the negative impacts of such development activity on the health, peace, safety, and general well-being of the residents and visitors of Aspen…”[4] Highlights of this ordinance (City of Aspen 2006a) are below:

- To “address continued community growth concerns, a growth limit of one half of one percent (0.5 percent) has been implemented for free-market residential development.” The rate was reduced from 1 percent.
- The annual allotment of Free Market Residential units was reduced by more than half, and the number of units allowed in CC and C-1 zones was limited to six total units.
- The number of free-market residential units that may be created in a historic landmark commercial, lodge, or mixed-use development is limited.
- If property use is changed and in new mixed use projects, the number of affordable housing units required does change, and is required to be located at or above natural or finished grade.
- In an affordable housing development, 50 percent or more of each unit’s livable square footage must be located at or above natural or finished grade, whichever is higher. The deed restrictions for affordable units are further delineated by the *Affordable Housing Guidelines* established by the Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority[5]. The guidelines are amended annually to ensure the permanent affordability of the units (Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority, 2006).
- A provision for multi-growth allotments was added.
- Maximum residential sizes (2,000 square feet) was added to the Commercial Core, Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Neighborhood Commercial zone districts.

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[4] Ordinance No. 12 (Series of 2006) An emergency ordinance of the City Council of the City of Aspen, Colorado, approving amendments to Title 26—the Land Use Code of the City of Aspen Municipal Code, passed March 28, 2006 (City of Aspen 2006a).

[5] Two new legislations were passed in 2001, which expanded the powers relating to housing authorities—House Bill 1172 and House Bill 1174.

Appendix C. Plans and policies since 1997

From FEIS 1997

The FEIS states that it and the proposed project comply with the following plans and policies:

1983 Goals Task Force Report

State Highway 82 Corridor Master Plan (1985, Aspen/Pitkin Planning Office)

Roaring Fork Transit Agency Development Program 1986–1990

1987 Aspen/Pitkin County Growth, Population and Housing Report

Down Valley Comprehensive Plan (1987, Aspen/Pitkin Planning Office)

High Occupancy Vehicle Facility Feasibility and Conceptual Design Study, 1988

Colorado State Implementation Plan (IP) for Particulate Matter 10 Microns or Smaller in diameter (PM_{10}) Aspen Element (adopted November 1991 and revised September 1994)

Aspen Area Community Plan (February 2, 1993)

City of Aspen Transportation Implementation Plan

City of Aspen: Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs Assessment and Master Plan

The Pitkin County Public Works Department: Mission, Goals, Road Management and Maintenance Objectives and Alternative Transportation Investment Objectives

Since 1997, additional plans and studies have been developed. They include the following:

Interim Aspen Area Citizen Housing Plan, July 1998—this plan is Appendix B *2000 Aspen Area Community Plan*, of the intended to serve as a framework and guide to local officials, staff members and private property owner/developers in the identification, purchase and development of citizen hosing sites. This plan does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative (Aspen/Pitkin 1998).

2000 Aspen Area Community Plan (AACP), February 2000—this plan updated the 1993 AACP and added four new themes to help address changes in he community since the original Plan: Capturing the Impacts of Growth and Change; Containing Development to Limit Sprawl; Economic Sustainability; and Arts, Culture and Education. By adopting the 2000 AACP, the City of Aspen and Pitkin jointly approved Aspen's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). This plan advocates infill and increased density, but does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative (Aspen/Pitkin 2000a).

Aspen Area Community Plan Action Plan 2000–2005—this plan is Addendum A to the AACP. It outlines 99 Work Program Priorities for 2000–2005. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative, but does support it (Aspen/Pitkin 2000b).

City of Aspen Economic Benchmark Report (Rural Planning Institute, 2001)—the report was compiled to aid in the larger process of analyzing changes taking place both in the local and regional economies of the Roaring Fork Valley. Its intended use was to begin a dialogue leading to a comprehensive understanding of the economic principles that shape Aspen and Pitkin County. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative, but supports its need (Rural Planning Institute 2001).

Cemetery Lane Neighborhood Character Area Plan, November 2001—this plan is a further refinement of the 2000 AACP and a blueprint for future action in the Cemetery Lane Neighborhood. The plan charts an approach to enhancing the character of the area in a way that residents and the City can follow. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative (City of Aspen community Development Department 2001).

Infill Program Report, January 2002—this report is the work of the Infill Advisory Group established by the City Council in July 2000, to craft a strategy to restore a sense of vitality to the city's neighborhoods. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative, but does imply its need (City of Aspen Infill Advisory Committee 2002).

Annexation Plan City of Aspen, September 2005—the plan reflects the land use policy of the Aspen Area Community Plan with regard to adding urbanized land, and land appropriate for urbanization surrounding Aspen to the city's jurisdiction. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative (City of Aspen Community Development Department 2005b).

Demographic Forecasts, An Interim Report 2005–2030, Fall 2005—the Growth Scenarios Project grew out of the work of the Watershed Collaborative to better understand how the region ill grow in coming decades. It was formed by local planning staff to review and update or revise the population forecasts for Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties and to consider the implications of the county forecasts for the sub-areas within the region. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative (Watershed Collaborative 2005).

Draft Canary Action Plan, City of Aspen Canary Initiative, 2006—in response to global climate change, and the City's commitment to reduce this greenhouse gas emissions (government only) by 1 percent per year by joining the Chicago Climate Exchange, this plan identifies five primary components with specific greenhouse gas reduction targets and a sixth element—polity, research, and education—to enhance the success of the other five strategies. It does not affect implementation of the State Highway 82 Entrance to Aspen Preferred Alternative, but does support it by acknowledging the project's goal of maintaining State Highway 82 traffic volumes at 1992 level, developing a TDM program, and proposed transit improvements (City of Aspen Community Development Department 2006c).

- *Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study*, April 2005—this study updates a similar study done in 1998. The information helps gauge progress toward local and regional transportation goals and inform future investments in transportation infrastructure (RC Associates et al 2005).

- *2030 Intermountain Regional Transportation Plan*, 2004—CDOT has divided the state into 15 Transportation Planning Regions (TPR) based on geographic location, common transportation corridors, and socio-economic similarities (Felsburg 2004). Every five years, each TPR must update its Regional Transportation Plan to establish multi-modal transportation needs and priorities. The resultant plans are then integrated into the STIP (CDOT 2006a).

Plans underway

The Civic Master Plan, underway for the last five years, is nearing completion. It is a combination of long-range and current planning based on the guidance of the Aspen Area Community Plan, and the "8 Core Principles" adopted by the civic master Plan Advisory Group. More than a dozen specific sites have been examined to match appropriate uses with appropriate locations with the goal of improving the vitality of various neighborhoods within the "civic core." Findings and recommendations were expected in December 2005 with a subsequent public process and City review (City of Aspen 2005a).