

CASTLE CREEK CAUCUS MASTER PLAN

Appendix A – Existing Conditions Report

INTRODUCTION

The Castle Creek Caucus (Caucus) was originally established as part of the Maroon-Castle Creek Caucus in 1990 via BOCC Resolution #90-99 in order to provide a local forum for residents of the two Valleys. In May of 2015, the BOCC passed Resolution No. 037-2015, which recognized the Maroon Creek Caucus as separate entity and awarding the newly-recognized caucus all functions set forth in Article IV of the Pitkin County Home Rule Charter. Resolution No. 037-2015 also states, "The recognition of a Maroon Creek Caucus and the designation of the caucus area supersedes the recognition and designation of the previously existing Maroon/Castle Creek Caucus such that the previously existing caucus will become two smaller, separate caucus areas existing side by side." As a result, the Castle Creek Caucus is now also considered an independently recognized caucus with all functions granted in Article IV of the Pitkin County Charter.

The Caucus typically functions as a recommending body that provides comments to the County on all matters, particularly land use and planning related matters, directly affecting the caucus area. The Castle Creek Caucus Area (Caucus Area) boundary generally includes the watershed from Richmond Ridge on the east to the ridge above Castle Creek on the west; to the City of Aspen boundary line on the north, to the Pitkin County/Gunnison County boundary on the south. ~~The Maroon/Castle Master plan will cover the current caucus area (outside of the urban growth boundary) and the area to the south all the way to the Pitkin County line.~~ (See Exhibit "A" Figure 1).

This appendix includes existing conditions data and information which supports and informs the policies and implementation measures contained in the 2018 Castle Creek Caucus Master Plan to which this document is appended. The information contained herein is intended to provide a snapshot of the existing conditions within the Caucus Area for each of the policy topics covered in the Master Plan. These policy topics are listed as follows:

- Existing Land Use;
- Zoning;
- Residential Development (addressed under Existing Land Use and Zoning topics);
- Commercial Development (addressed under Existing Land Use and Zoning topics);
- Growth;
- Water Use, Quality and Quantity;
- Air Quality;
- Roads;
- Transit;
- Natural Environment;
- Open Space/Trails/Recreation/Tourism;
- Agriculture;
- Scenic Quality;

- Affordable Housing;
- Historic Resources;
- Mineral Exploration/Extraction

A series of “Statements” were adopted in April 1992 by the Maroon/Castle Creek Caucus to provide direction for future development in the lower portion of the Maroon and Castle Creek Valleys; roughly including the area from the Hospital down to Highway 82 on Castle Creek Road and the Highlands Ski Area down to the Highway on Maroon Creek Road. The statements addressed transportation, community, housing, environment/recreation/open space, and character as they relate to future growth.

Since 1992, the City of Aspen has annexed several properties in this area, including Moore/Five Trees, Highlands Village and Iselin and the Aspen Valley Hospital. All of the area covered by the 1992 Statements has now either been annexed by the City of Aspen and/or is included within the Urban Growth Boundary area established as part of the 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan update. Consequently, this area will not be included as part of the Castle/Maroon Master Plan.

EXISTING LAND USE

While the ~~Maroon and~~ Castle Creek Valleys supports a residential community, ~~they-it~~ also functions as ~~a~~ portals to mining and ranching history, and to recreation ranging from cycling on County roads, to hiking, horseback riding, snow-mobiling, ~~nordic~~ Nordic skiing, backcountry skiing and mountaineering on United States Forest Service (USFS) lands. The area also contains high-quality wetlands and riparian habitat and a healthy beaver population. The ~~valleys~~ Castle Creek Valley provides an excellent opportunity for environmental education, focusing on preservation and stewardship of the area’s natural resources.

Maroon Creek:

~~Above the Highlands Ski area, the majority of development is located on the valley floor and consists of single family residences on parcels and lots ranging from two to twelve acres, but primarily in the five to six acre range. In addition to several metes and bounds parcels that are vacant or developed with single family homes, Maroon Creek consists of the following land uses:~~

Subdivisions

- ~~The Maroon Creek Ranch Subdivision consists of eight lots in the five acre range, five of which are developed.~~
- ~~Skyview Subdivision consists of 5 lots in the two acre range, none of which are developed.~~

Affordable Housing

- ~~There are a few dispersed caretaker dwelling units associated with residences up Maroon Creek.~~

Commercial

- ~~The T Lazy 7 guest ranch offers lodging, commercial snowmobiling & horse back riding, and “event” facilities. With the exception of commercial recreational outfitter/guide type~~

uses, it is the only commercial use on Maroon Creek above the Highlands ski area, and is situated on approximately 230 acres of land.

Agriculture

- ~~The Roaring Fork Land & Cattle Company owns 186 acres of land that is currently used as pasture.~~

Public Lands

~~With the exception of a few privately owned inholdings, the remainder of the Maroon Creek Valley is federally owned public land within the Maroon/Snowmass Wilderness area. Access to public lands is available via the Maroon Bells recreation area and East and West Maroon Creek trailheads.~~

~~Castle Creek: As shown on the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 2), the Castle Creek Valley Caucus Area consists primarily of detached single-family rural residential development, which is located along Castle Creek Road; in the Little Annie/Midnite-Midnight Mine/Richmond Ridge area, in the Conundrum Valley and to a very limited extent, up Express Creek. There are mining claims scattered throughout the Valley Caucus Area. There are also a few commercial and institutional uses within the Caucus Area including, the Prince of Peace Church, the Aspen Music School/Country Day School campus, the Pine Creek Cook House, Toklat (now known as the Catto Center at Toklat) and the Ashcroft Ski Touring Center.~~

Residential development is located on lots generally ranging in size from two to forty acres, though larger acreages exist. Most of the subdivided land cannot be further subdivided due to zoning or restrictive covenants.

The following paragraphs provide a general summary of existing uses:

Subdivisions

- Hardy (4-3 lots, ranging in size from 24-40-57 acres, 121-122 ac. total)
- Castle Creek Valley Ranch (16 lots, ranging in size from 3-37 acres; 4 affordable housing lots; 342 ac. Total, including 142 acres of open space. Common areas and roads)
- Feinsinger (2 lots, 18-17 & 45-41 ac. respectively, 63-59 ac. total)
- Castle Creek Banks (2-3 lots, 30-24 & 20-31, and 3 ac. respectively, 50-58 ac total)
- Castle Creek Ranch (3 lots, 2 at 2 ac. Each and one at 4.7 ac., 9 ac. total),
- HES 113 (2 lots, 10 & 13-15 ac. Respectively, 25 ac. total)
- Lime Village (6 lots, approx 2 ac. Each, 13 ac. total)
- Navratilova (2 lots 100 & 20-21 ac. Respectively, 121 ac. total)
- Castle Creek Four (4 lots, 10 ac. Each, 39 ac. total)
- Twin Ridge (13 lots, approximately .2 ac. Each, 2 open space parcels, 5.6 ac. total)
- Twin Ridge Townhomes (12 lots plus one common area parcel, .02 ac. Each, .83 ac. total)
- Meadowood (67 residential lots from .5 to 1.5 ac., two open-space parcels, 83 ac. total)
- Sawmill (3 lots, .5, 1.2 and 1.7 ac. respectively, one of these lots includes a portion of the commuter trail that crosses the Castle Creek and connects the Marolt Open Space with downtown Aspen, 3.87 ac. total)
- HES 305 (2 lots, 20 and 21 ac. respectively, 41 ac. total)

- Peter Vought (2 lots, 1.4 and 1.8 ac. respectively, 3.2 ac. total)
- MAA (3 lots which form the Aspen Music School/Aspen Country Day School campus plus one separately-owned residential lot, 52.8 ac. total)

Affordable Housing

In addition to scattered caretaker dwelling units, affordable housing consists of ~~four~~ three PMH (permanent moderate housing) lots at Castle Creek Valley Ranch (CCVR), Twin Ridge, and ~~approved but not yet built~~ housing associated with Ashcroft/Pine Creek Cookhouse.

Rural & Remote Cabins

In the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge area, which is zoned ~~for rural/remote zone district uses~~ Rural/Remote, ~~six~~ seven cabins have been built on mining claims since 1994, when the Rural/Remote zone district was established (~~S~~ several other cabins existed prior to the rezoning.) One cabin was built up Cooper Creek. -A total of three An additional five cabins have been approved since 1994 in the Rural/Remote areas up Castle Creek, but not built.

Commercial Uses

There is limited commercial development within the Caucus Area. Development that exists is tourist-related and includes the Pine Creek Cookhouse and the Ashcroft Ski Touring Company. The caucus area also includes small portions of both the Aspen Mountain and Highlands ski areas. These uses all operate under existing, approved master plans. The Pine Creek Cookhouse is allowed pursuant to the SKI-REC Master Plan for the Ashcroft Ski Area.

The Toklat cabin, which is located within the AR-10 zone district, was purchased by the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES) in 2004 and is currently known as the Catto Center at Toklat. According to the ACES website, the facility “serves as a gathering place for cultural and ecological discourse.” This would seem to qualify As a non-profit institutional use, which is a prohibited use in the District this use is considered to be non-conforming in the AR-10 zone district. However, since the facility was previously used for a similar, if not more intensive use, it is considered non-conforming that is “grand fathered in.”

The following commercial recreational uses also exist within the Caucus Area subject to USFS permits:

- Braun huts
- Bike tours
- Jeep tours
- Hut/mountain guides
- Environmental and historical education

While existing commercial uses are generally supported by residents in the valleys, there is a general consensus that any new commercial activities (other than Forest-based commercial recreational) are more appropriately located within the urban growth boundary areas in the County.

Public Access

Public access to federal lands includes the Cathedral & American Lake trailheads, and Midnight Mine, Little Annie, Express Creek, Montezuma, Cooper Creek and Pearl Pass Roads which provide access for huts, winter skiing & snowmobiling; summer biking, ~~jeeping~~off-roading, dirt biking and hiking.

Transferable Development Rights ~~in Both Maroon and Castle Creeks~~

Certificates have been issued for ~~62-83~~ transferable development rights ~~from 57 parcels, one USFS site and one defunct mining claim within in~~ the ~~Maroon and~~ Castle Creek area. As a result, approximately ~~1,340~~1,037 acres of ~~rural/remote-zoned~~ land ~~within the Caucus Area in the rural/remote zone district~~ have been deed restricted against development. ~~Conversely, 15 parcels within the Caucus Area have been approved as TDR receiver sites. In total, 26 TDR's have been extinguished on these 15 parcels. On all but one of the receiver sites, the TDR's were used to allow additional floor area on a residence. On the remaining parcel, one TDR was used to create an initial development right and a second TDR was used for additional floor area. The parcels that have been approved as sending and receiving sites are depicted on the TDR Inventory Map (Figure 3).~~

ZONING

Existing Conditions Analysis

Zone Descriptions

The ~~planning area~~Caucus Area ~~contains~~ has a mix of zoning types including ~~AH, AFR-10AR-10, AFR-2AR-2, P-I, R-15, R-30, RR, and AF-SK4SKI-REC.~~ ~~Following is~~ Table 1 below provides a summary of the intentions of each zone district. ~~Figure 4 is a map showing the existing zoning pattern within the Caucus Area. Please refer to Exhibit "A" for a zoning map of the planning area.~~

Table 1
Summary of Zone Districts Intent

Zone District	Intent
AH (Twin Ridge and Castle Creek Valley Ranch) -DU	The AH (Affordable Housing) zone district is intended to provide land for the production of Category affordable housing.
AFR-10AR-10 1 Dwelling Unit per 10 acres of land	The intent of the AFR-10AR-10 (Agricultural/Forestry/Residential) zone district is "to accommodate small scale agricultural activities and large-lot residential development that maintains the rural character and appearance of the land. Because few agricultural activities can be accomplished on a lot of ten (10) acres, the majority of such land will be used for residential uses. Residential development should be clustered and/or grouped at the edges of valleys or wooded areas in order to minimize the visual disruption of the natural landforms and to avoid the appearance of unrelated homes spread randomly across the land." "to maintain the rural character of lands proximate to development centers and State highways by preserving agricultural

	<i>operations, wildlife habitat and scenic quality while permitting low density, single family dwelling units and customary accessory uses."</i>
AFR-2AR-2 (Skyview Subdivision only) - maximum of one dwelling unit per 2 acres of land	The intent of the AFR-2AR-2 (Agricultural/Forestry/Residential) zone district is; <i>"to provide for a moderate density, transition zone between moderate and low density residential land uses. This zone district primarily contains existing housing concentrations with densities exceeding those in surrounding areas. It is not intended to be used to accommodate new development in the Rural Area of the County."</i> <i>"to provide for a moderate density, residential/agricultural transition zone for lands along the valley floor located between the County's development centers and its rural, open land area. The district also contains existing housing concentrations with densities exceeding those in surrounding areas."</i>
P-I - (Aspen Music School/Aspen Country Day School Camps) - Development density set by master plan	The intent of the P-I (Public and Institutional) zone district is to provide for the development of public and institutional uses, facilities and services for governmental, civic, educational, humanitarian, health care and other non-profit public purposes consistent with the Pitkin County Comprehensive Plan and to provide for related uses that are customarily incidental or accessory to public and institutional uses. The district is also intended to provide for other non-profit facilities and uses that require sites with multiple buildings, unique facilities, or facilities that are not easily categorized into an existing use category.
R-15 - 1 dwelling unit per 15,000 sf of land	The R-15 (Moderate Density Residential) zone district is intended to provide areas for moderate density, single-family, residential dwelling units with customary accessory uses.
R-30 - 1 dwelling unit per 30,000 sf of land	The R-30 (Suburban Density Residential) zone district is intended to provide areas for suburban density, single-family and duplex residential dwelling units with customary accessory uses. Recreational and institutional uses customarily found near residential areas are also contemplated. R-30 zoning should only be applied to lands designated for this density on the Pitkin County Comprehensive Plan, or to rezone already-developed areas into conformity with actual development patterns and densities.
RR - 1 dwelling unit per 35 acres of land	The intent of the R/R (Rural/Remote) Zone-zone District district is <i>"to: (i) conserve and protect the natural environment and its resources, while allowing for limited recreational uses and limited residential development, (ii) preserve the small scale, low-density backcountry character and lifestyle, (iii) retain undeveloped areas, and (iv) allow for the transfer of development rights to areas that are more appropriate for development. This district accommodates only small new structures and very limited types of development."</i> <i>"to conserve and protect the natural environment and its resources; to preserve the unique low scale, low density backcountry character and lifestyle; to minimize environmental degradation; to retain undeveloped areas; and to allow for limited recreational uses and limited residential development while still preserving the character of rural/remote lands and to allow for the transfer of development rights to areas that are more appropriate for development."</i>
AF-SKI SKI-REC (Ashcroft, Aspen Mountain, Highlands) - Development	The intent of the AF-SKISKI-REC (Agricultural/Forestry-Ski-Recreation) zone district is <i>"intended for lands that are used for downhill and cross-country skiing and other uses permitted by a Federal or other public agency, such as</i>

<u>density set by master plan</u>	<u>grazing, hunting, and passive and other recreational uses. The district also accommodates affordable housing. "to provide locations for ski areas and the orderly and efficient planning and review of ski areas."</u> Development activity within the <u>AF-SKI-SKI-REC</u> zone district is subject to a master plan.
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Buildout Analysis

Buildout analysis for the Caucus Area is summarized in Table 2 below. The analysis indicates that parcels zoned AFR-10 RR in both the Maroon and Castle Creek valleys provide the greatest potential for additional residential growth, in that since this zoned zone district area is only built to 40.37% of its potential under the AFR-10 zoning. The number of homes within the RR zone district would nearly double in the event that all of the undeveloped RR-zoned properties in both valleys within the caucus area were subdivided and built to their full potential. However, it's unlikely that this potential will ever be realized, based on physical and access constraints inherent in the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge area where the zoning primarily exists. under AFR-10 zoning, and all of the lots in approved subdivisions were built-out, there would be roughly twice the number of homes built than there are today.

Table 2
Buildout Analysis Summary

Zone District	Private Land ¹			Land subject to Conservation Agreements ²		Maximum Buildout Allowed by Zoning (Dwelling Units)	# Dwelling Units Removed from development potential due to Conservation or subdivision restrictions ³	Buildout Potential after accounting for reduction from Conservation and subdivisions restrictions	# Existing Dwelling Units	Maximum Remaining Buildout Potential (Dwelling Units)	Likely ³ Remaining Buildout Potential (Dwelling Units)	% Built Out based on maximum potential (Units)	Avg. House Size (sq. ft. based on heated area)
	Parcels	Acres	%	Acres	%								
Caucus Acreage: 44,074	464	3,988	9%	1,437	36%	509	186	323	236	89	53	73%	3,435
AR-10	113	1,434	36%	156	11%	143	24	119	87	32	19	73%	5,070
AH	31	8	0%	2	23%	31	-	31	31	-	-	100%	1,563
RR ⁴	191	2,360	59%	1,261	53%	194	103	91	34	57	34	37%	1,731
AR-2	1	29	1%	-	0%	14	14	-	-	-	-	100%	5,095
R-15	15	14	0%	-	0%	43	29	14	14	-	-	100%	5,154
R-30	71	58	1%	3	5%	84	16	68	68	-	-	100%	4,539
P-1	2	39	1%	-	0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SKI-REC	40	46	1%	15	34%	NA	NA	NA	2	-	-	100%	2,552

¹ Includes privately-held parcels, parcels in conservation easement, Pitkin County-owned parcels and property owned by public entities for civic uses. Also, see note 5 regarding mining claims.
² Includes conservation easements, transferable development rights (TDR) sending sites and Pitkin County-owned open space. Acreage for Legal Tenders is counted only once though both conservation easement and TDR transfer related to economic conditions and growth management. Individual caucuses may wish to work with Community Development Department to revise likely build out based on local knowledge of properties.
³ Likely scenario assumes that approximately 60% of maximum buildout potential is likely to be built due to physical restraints such as slope, avalanche paths, and riparian zones as well as historical development patterns.
⁴ The Castle & Maroon Creek Planning area (including both the Castle and Maroon Creek Valleys) is roughly 69% built-out. Buildout potential has been reduced by 12% between 2003 and 2014.
⁵ The number of parcels excludes 77 mining claim fragments containing less than .75 acres. In addition to their small size and odd configuration, none of these fragments are listed as having an owner in the Assessor's parcel database.
⁶ Where parcels are divided by a zone district boundary build-out numbers for the entire parcel are based on the more restrictive zone district, unless a substantial majority of the parcel is within the other district.
⁷ Number for AR-10 includes 15 units based on acreage of conservation easements and 9 units associated with subdivision common area/open space.

The second largest potential for growth exists in the AR-10 zone district. The maximum remaining buildout potential for the AR-10 district is 32 dwelling units. However, this is an

unlikely scenario given two factors: 1) Due to physical constraints, (steep slopes, floodplain, access, etc.), it's is unlikely that zoned density could physically be accomplished on many parcels; 2) To compete successfully in Pitkin County's Growth management system, density of projects is typically 50% of that allowed under current zoning.

The areas zoned AH, AR-2, R-15 and R-30 are all fully developed. These zone districts are located primarily in the northern portion of the caucus area, within the Aspen UGB. In addition, there is minimal potential for additional development within the existing subdivisions in the caucus area since nearly all the subdivided lots have already been built on. Only three subdivision lots are identified as being vacant in the Assessors records and one of those currently has a house under construction. Another seven subdivision lots show up with total improvement values (land plus structures) less than \$75,000. This is sufficiently low as to suggest that these lots are either undeveloped or significantly underdeveloped.

There is no potential for additional subdivision of land in the small area known as the Skyview Subdivision, zoned AFR-2AR-2. As the subdivision is currently undeveloped however, a total of five new residences may be built on these lots. All five lots have been developed with single family residences.

Uses in the AF-SKISKI-REC district are dictated by the Aspen Mountain, Highlands and Ashcroft Ski Area Master Plans. As residential uses in this area are limited to affordable housing associated with the ski areas, the area-zone district was given zero potential for additional residential buildout in Table 2. Similarly, the P-I zone district is limited to the Aspen Music School/Country Day School campus which is governed by the P-I master plan for the campus. The master plan does not contemplate residential uses on the site.

AR-10 Zoning Analysis Summary

The character of these valleys is comprised of a combination of rural residential use, limited tourist commercial use, limited agricultural use, and recreational uses of public lands and the institutional use of the Aspen Music School/Aspen Country Day School campus. Under current zoning, the bulk of potential-the second greatest development potential lies within the AFR-10AR-10 zone district, most of this potential exists on a limited number of parcels that-which have larger acreages and relatively little existing development. Other recent master plans in the County have reviewed the AFR-10AR-10 zone district to see if it continues to achieve the goal of maintaining the rural, low density character that distinguishes the rural valleys from the more urban portions of the County; or whether there are areas in which the AFR-10AR-10 zoning should be replaced with larger lot zoning to better achieve rural goals. If the AFR-10AR-10 zoning remains unchanged in both the Maroon and Castle Creek valleys, there is a threat of a moderate increase in density in the event that the larger undeveloped parcels subdivide to the full extent possible. While an increase in density is possible on the larger parcels, it is less likely on most of the remaining parcels in the AFR-10AR-10 district, which are mostly either built-out or have already undergone subdivision.

Citizens in the area believe that increased density is not so much an issue as is the visual impact of large homes which-that may be built on undeveloped land and seen from public roads. Increased

density may be acceptable (to the limited extent that it may occur in these valleys) if homes are either moderately sized or located so that they can't be seen. Consequently, a change in zoning may not be necessary to accomplish the County and Caucus goal of preserving the rural character of these valleys. In 2006, the County added "Rural Character Guidelines for Building Location" to the Scenic View Protection section of the Land Use Code. These guidelines are only applicable in the rural area. However, the rural area contains most, if not all, of the developable land within the Caucus Area since there are no undeveloped parcels within the Aspen UGB portion of the Caucus Area that are large enough to be subdivided. Rather, the County may wish to address the specific siting of homes by revising current scenic and PUD (planned unit development) regulations, creating residential siting guidelines and regulations and by enforcing limitations on home sizes as another method for limiting visual impacts within the Caucus Area.

While the AFR-10AR-10 zone district currently supports mostly residential development in the Planning area, several commercial uses also exist within the zone district. Residents believe that the district should be modified to preclude any *new* commercial development. (See discussion under the *Commercial Development* section of this Plan).

R-ZoningRR Zoning Summary

The Rural/Remote zone district currently allows any legally-established property to either build a cabin or sell the development right off-site as a transferable development right, also known as a "TDR." There are mining claims in the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge area that are big enough to prospect on, but not big enough to realistically build a cabin on, particularly given the need to have space for a water source (storage at a minimum) and sewage disposal. As these properties are not large enough to accommodate residential development, the County included a provision in the Code which provides a process for considering a TDR request for parcels containing less than one acre. The applicant must demonstrate that the parcel has legal access, can accommodate a building footprint of at least 1,000 square feet, and can meet the well and septic system separation requirements. ~~may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to allow them to transfer a development right off-site.~~

There are currently parcels in the AFR-10AR-10 zone district that gain access off of ~~the~~ Express Creek Road. These parcels share many of the characteristics found in the rural/remote zone district in terms of accessibility and terrain. The County ~~may wish to consider reviewing and revising the current boundary of the rural/Rural/remote-Remote zone district to include the parcels further up Express Creek Road in 2005. There are only three AR-10-zoned parcels remaining that are accessed off Express Creek Road. One of these is developed, while the other two appear to be vacant.~~ that are more appropriately regulated under the rural remote zoning in terms of use, bulk and area requirements.

Public Land Zoning Summary

The vast majority of federally-owned land within the caucus area is zone RR. However, there is a fairly-significant area of federally-owned public land up both Maroon and Castle Creek that is currently which is zoned AFR-10AR-10. The intent of the AFR-10AR-10 zone district does not readily fit the uses contemplated on the Forest in the White River National Forest Management Plan, and since it allows for residential uses that would be inappropriate on the Forest. The

zoning for Development potential of the Forest property should be more accurately reflected with a zone district that allows for the non-residential uses typically pursued on the Forest. In 2006 the County created the RS-G (Resource-Government) zone district for just such situations. The intent statement for this district is described in the following excerpt from the Land Use Code:

“The intent of the RS-G district is to “control the future of lands currently owned by the federal, state and local governments and currently used for non-development purposes, and to avoid inappropriate development of such lands in the event they are sold, exchanged, or otherwise made available (i.e., by long-term lease) for use by an entity other than the federal, state, or local government. It is intended to allow a continuation of the types of uses permitted while in federal, state, or local government ownership and control, but not an intensification or replacement of those uses by other uses of the land. The zone district is intended to allow only very low intensity resource uses on such lands.”

The RS-G district is available outside of the urban growth boundaries. The transfer of development rights is not permitted on lands located within the RS-G zone district. To date no lands have been zoned to RS-G.

GROWTH

Existing Conditions Analysis

In Pitkin County, growth management deals with the rate of growth, the location of growth and the quality and quantity of growth. The *location* of growth is typically determined on a site-specific basis at the time of land use review.

Rate and quantity of growth are determined through zoning allowances, annual competition for a specific amount of square footage allowed via the Growth Management Quota system (GMQS), and through growth management exemptions.

In January 2000, new growth management regulations were adopted in Pitkin County. As a result, house size restrictions were adopted. Most of tThe Maroon and Caucus Area Valleys lies within the rural growth management portion of the County. Consequently, nNew homes within the rural portion of the Caucus Area are limited to an initial size cap exempt from growth management up to a size of 5,750 square feet, which may be exceeded subject to purchase of transferable development rights (TDR's) as a growth management exemption, or through annual competition for growth management allocations.

As house size is perceived as more of an issue than density in this area, the County may wish to consider lowering the amount of floor area that is currently available ~~County~~ county-wide and establishing an allotment specifically for the Maroon and Castle Creek valleys. To further pace growth in the rural area, tThe County may also wish to consider eliminating the use of TDR's to establish new development rights exempt from growth management in 2006. – This is another method that may be used to pace growth in the rural area. Any further changes to the TDR program will have to be made as part of a ~~a~~ countywide assessment of the ~~tdr~~ TDR program ~~countywide~~ to ensure that the program will continue to be effective subject to proposed modifications.

The growth management approvals that have been granted through the GMQS competition process are listed in the following table. There have been no GMQS competition allotments granted within the Caucus Area. ~~In the Maroon and Castle Creek Valleys, the following Growth Management approvals have been granted through the competition process for additional floor area (above and beyond the 5,750 square foot allowance):~~

Table 3
GMQS Competition Allotments
(Castle Creek Caucus Area)

Six lots in Castle Creek Valley Ranch successfully competed in 2001 & 2002 for a total of 31,815 square feet, averaging out at roughly 5,300 square feet per home.

~~A lot in the HES 113 Subdivision also competed successfully for 5,000 square feet of additional floor area in 2002.~~

	Location	How is SF to be used?	Parcel ID #	SF Amount	Approval #	Allotment Used?
2001						
CCVR Lot 8	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273526201003	6,000	BOCC 097-2001	4,553
CCVR Lot 11	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273526401002	5,500	BOCC 097-2001	
CCVR Lot 12	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273526401004	5,500	BOCC 097-2001	
CCVR Lot 13	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273535101001	3,815	BOCC 097-2001	
CCVR Lot 14	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273526201001	5,500	BOCC 097-2001	455 sf used in 2004
2002						
Rivers Family Trust	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273535401002	5,000	BOCC 081-2002	4,712 in 2002
CCVR Lot 7	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	273526201002	5,500	BOCC 081-2002	
2004						
Mathys	Castle Creek/Conundrum	Additional floor area	291102100023	1,750	BOCC 064-2004	
2005						
Lester/Cora May 1 & 2 USMS 6817	Castle Creek	Additional floor area	290918300017	4,250	BOCC 159-2005 PZ 01-2005	
2007						
Mathys	Castle Creek/Conundrum	Additional floor area	291102300020	4,250	BOCC 059-2007	
2010						
Ashcroft Ski Touring	Castle Creek	Tourist Accom. units	299906100002	5 XC ski cabins	BOCC 120-2011	
2012						

Castle Creek Investors	Castle Creek/Midnight Mine	New development right	273536200003	1,000 sf	BOCC 024-2013	
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In addition to the GMQS allotments listed above, Table 4 lists the following Growth Management exemption approvals that have been granted within the Caucus Area. In 2006 the County amended the Land Use Code to eliminate the use of TDR's for initial development rights in the rural area. As a result, most of the TDR exemptions that have been granted within the Caucus Area were used to allow additional floor area to an existing dwelling, for new development rights (pre-2006) and additional floor area in the Maroon and Castle Creek valleys. The parcels listed in the table below, referred to as "Receiver Sites," are also depicted on the TDR Inventory Map (Figure 3), along with the parcels from which TDR's have been transferred (Sending Sites):

Table 4
TDR Receiver Site Inventory

	Location	# TDRs approved	How are TDRs Used For-to-be used?	Date Extinguished ?	Parcel ID-#	TDR Certificate # (if extinguished)	Approval #
1999							
Enough claim	Little Annie	2	Aggregation of square footage within Rural/Remote	Apr, 2001	291101400007	IR-00-02-SW IR-00-03-SW	BOCC 17-2000
2006							
<i>T Lazy 7 Ranch (now Celestial Land Company)</i>	<i>Maroon Creek</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1-New development right 1-Additional floor area</i>		<i>273521400004</i>		<i>BOCC 13-2006 (replaces BOCC 36-2002)</i>
<i>Roaring Fork Land & Cattle Co.</i>	<i>Maroon Creek</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Additional floor area to 15,000-sf</i>	<i>3/3/2008</i>	<i>273515300005</i>	<i>IR-06-05-SW IR-07-05-SW IR-10-02-ES IR-00-20-SW</i>	<i>HO 37-2006</i>
2008							
Hardy	Castle Creek	3	Additional floor area for subgrade/garage on Lots 1A & 3	10/2/12 (Lot 1A)	273514402001 273514402002 273514402003	IR-08-08-C-SW	BOCC 118-2008 BOCC 149-2010
Hedstrom	Castle Creek	1	Additional floor area		290919102001		HO 06-2008

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Aspeny es	Castle Creek	3	Additional floor area to 13,250	8/5/09	290918301002	IR-41-07-SW IR-42-08-SW	HO 11-2008
PT Ranch/ Barn LLC	Castle Creek	3	Additional floor area to 13,250	6/1/09	273523403002	IR-32-05-SW IR-28-06-SW IR-40-07-SW	HO 13-2008
2009							
Launer B	Conundrum	2	Additional floor area		273535400006		HO-04-2009
Asp Properties	Castle Creek	3	Additional floor area to 15,000	11/13/13	290918301001	IR-20-07-SW IR-21-07-SW	HO 05-2010 (replaces HO 19-2007)
2012							
Stringer Trust	Castle Creek	1	Additional floor area	12/11/12	291102100003	IR-46-07-SW	HO 06-2012
2014							
Castle Creek Valley Ranch LLC	Castle Creek	1	Additional floor area	11/6/14	273526101002	IR-08-13-SW	N/A
Aspen Residence Family Trust	Castle Creek	2	1- Development right 1- Additional floor area	4/21/15	273513300005	IR-02-14-SW IR-56-07-SW	BOCC 150-2003, 073-2008, 004-2013 HO 07-2014
2016							
500 S Hayden	Castle Creek	2	Additional floor area	2/18/16	273526401002	IR-21-05-SW IR-03-15-C-SW	N/A
2017							
Miles Butera Irrevocable Trust	Castle Creek	1	Additional floor area		273523403001		HO 05-2017
Sharples	Castle Creek	1	Additional floor area	6/16/17	273526401001	IR-08-14-SW	N/A

- A mining claim in the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge area received approval for the use of two transferable development rights (TDRs) for a total of 2,400 square feet within the Rural/Remote zone district. (Note: the ability to aggregate square footage in the rural/remote zone district is no longer available.)
 - A parcel in the vicinity of the Toklat received approval for the use of 2 TDRs for up to 7,500 square feet of floor area.
- Use of two TDRs for up to 7,500 square feet was approved for a thirty five acre tract in the Maroon Creek Valley.

WATER USE, QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Existing Conditions Analysis

Drainages

The headwaters of Castle ~~and Maroon~~ Creeks begins at Castle Peak (14,265 feet) ~~and the Maroon Peaks (14,014 feet and 14,156 feet) respectively.~~ Both ~~Castle C~~reeks flows northward toward Aspen and drains into the Roaring Fork River on the northeast edge of town. While ~~Maroon and Castle Creeks are is~~ the main drainages in the ~~are a~~valley, several smaller creeks, including ~~East and West Maroon, Willow, Conundrum and Express Creeks drain into Maroon and Castle Creek, respectively.~~ These drainages support high-quality wetlands and riparian habitat and are an integral piece of the recreational amenities provided in the ~~Maroon/Castle Creek~~ area. Castle Creek also functions as one of the sources for the City of Aspen's water ~~system supply~~ and for snowmaking ~~for the Aspen Skiing Company.~~

Water Services

City water is available ~~across the north end of the Caucus Area, including all the land within the Aspen UGB and everything as far south as the Music School/Country Day School campus (see Figure 5).~~ ~~to the Highlands Ski Area, but not beyond.~~ All other's properties are served by individual wells.

Sewage Disposal

Properties ~~at the north end of the Caucus Area, including along Maroon Creek Road the Meadowood and Twin Ridge subdivisions, and the area on the east side of Castle Creek across from the Marolt Open Space,~~ are served by Aspen Consolidated Sanitation District (~~ASCD~~ACSD). ~~The Music School/Country Day School campus is not within the ACSD boundary. as far as the Heatherbed Lodge. However, m~~Most properties within the ~~Maroon/Castle-Caucus planning~~ area are on individual septic systems. ~~Figure 5 shows the portion of the Caucus Area served by ACSD. The County is currently assessing the impacts of septic systems on water supply within the Roaring Fork Valley.~~

AIR QUALITY

Existing Conditions Analysis

The City of Aspen and Pitkin County both place a high value on preserving the best air quality possible. The City of Aspen has been monitoring air quality for over 25 years. This is primarily due to the fact that air quality in the upper Roaring Fork Valley was found to be in violation of the EPA's 24-hour standards for fine particulate air pollution (PM-10) as articulated in the Clean Air Act. Figure 6 is a map showing the PM-10 Non-attainment area which was established as a result of EPA standard violation back in the late 1980's. As seen on Figure 6, the northern portion of the Caucus Area is within the Non-attainment area. Due to regular monitoring and the enforcement of regulations adopted to address fine particulate air pollution, air quality in the Aspen area was re-designated as meeting the Clean Air Act standards in 2002. The Aspen Environmental Health Department provides current air quality monitoring data on its website: (<https://www.cityofaspen.com/298/Current-Air-Quality>).

A major component of fine particulate air pollution is caused by vehicular traffic. Estimates indicate that up to 83% of the upper valley PM-10 pollution comes from dirt kicked up by traffic driving on paved roads. The popularity of RFTA transit service and changes in road maintenance practices have helped achieve the significant reductions in PM-10 pollution.

ROADS

The ~~Maroon and Castle Creek~~ roads within the caucus area provide residential and recreational access and are ~~both~~ used extensively for cycling. ~~Maroon Creek Road above the T Lazy Seven Ranch and the upper portion of Castle Creek Road are is both~~ closed to automobile traffic in the winter and may be used for ~~nordic~~Nordic skiing by the public during this period. The Little Annie and ~~Midnite-Midnight~~ Mine Roads are also used for hiking, biking and skiing.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Castle Creek Road Service Level

The information in this section is based largely on the 2016 Pitkin County Road Maintenance and Management Plan. For more detailed information this document can be viewed on the Pitkin County Engineering/Road and Bridge Department's webpage. The first five miles of Castle Creek Road (below Conundrum) are considered a *high service area* road per the 2016 Pitkin County Road Maintenance and Asset Management Plan. The next six miles of Castle Creek Road above Conundrum are considered a *moderate service area* road. The remaining 2.1 miles, known as Upper Castle Creek Road is considered a *limited service area* road. The following text provides description for each of the service area categories as found in the Road Maintenance and Management Plan.

HIGH SERVICE AREA: The high service includes roads within or adjacent to the more densely developed population areas such as the Aspen Snowmass area and collector roads which are used for commuting to and from these population centers. Roads within the high service area will receive the greatest level of maintenance by the County. Ease of travel by vehicles will be the primary goal of these maintenance efforts. Non-vehicular uses will be accommodated within road rights-of-way in a safe and effective manner, based upon the policies stated above.

MODERATE SERVICE AREA: The moderate service area includes roads that allow access to medium-density residential developments and improved subdivisions and may be used as commuting alternatives to Hwy 82. Roads in this service area serve as the secondary road system. They typically carry less traffic than the high service area roads. Maintenance of roads in the moderate service area will attempt to provide comfortable safe travel. These roads will not receive the priority maintenance of the high service area roads, but will be maintained for safe passage as practicable.

LOW SERVICE AREA: The low service area includes roads that allow access to low-density residential, agricultural and public uses but are removed from high travel corridors and population centers. These roads typically access low-density developments or popular recreational destinations. Maintenance of the roads in the low service area will attempt to

provide access to specified areas, but not necessarily comfortable travel. These roads will not receive maintenance levels as high as those seen in the moderate area of service. Road users can expect the roads in this service area to be passable and adequately maintained at most times. However, the user must accept a reduced ease of travel on these roads because of the policies followed by the County. Snow plowing may not occur in as timely a fashion as seen in the moderate and high service areas. This reduced level of plowing may temporarily limit ease of passage. Motorized vehicles will share the driving surface with other modes of travel and must accommodate these additional uses.

LIMITED SERVICE AREA: These roads provide access to outlying and backcountry areas of the County and are usually located within the United States Forest or areas zoned Rural and Remote. Very low design speeds are necessitated by harsh alpine or topographic conditions. These roads can be a part of the Pitkin County/USFS Joint Road System. Roads with this designation access several of the recreational opportunities in the County and are often considered to be recreational opportunities themselves. Roads within the limited service area will receive the least amount of maintenance. Road users can expect a vigorous experience that requires an additional amount of attention and awareness when traveling. Roads may be restricted to certain forms of travel in some portions of the service area. No regular plowing of snow will be performed in the limited service area without prior consent by the County, requiring the user to be prepared to leave the vehicle at designated parking areas and continue travel with other means of transport (other over-the-snow modes of transportation are allowed; however, no snow removal is allowed). Roads may become closed without warning due to acts of nature such as high winds and landslides. All of these conditions will require the road user to plan for additional trip time and be prepared for conditions that are not expected in the low, moderate or high service areas.

Pitkin County conducts annual traffic counts for key roads within the County and has been doing so for many years. The counts are done for both winter and summer peak times and for various segments of each road. The winter counts are typically done in November, December or March, in some years there is a November/December count and a March count. Summer counts are usually done in July or August, though this has varied somewhat over the years. The original Maroon-Castle Valleys Master Plan included a traffic count comparison for two segments of Castle Creek Road for the years 1998 and 2002. The two segments that were compared could be described as the urbanized segment (from just above the hospital to Conundrum Creek Road) and the rural segment (from just above the Conundrum Creek Road). Table 5 below provides an update of this data to include the counts along the same two segments for 2017. County traffic counts for Castle Creek Road are summarized in the following table:

Table 5
Castle Creek Road Traffic Counts Comparison

	# vehicles per day, winter	Average # vehicles per day, winter	# vehicles per day, summer	Average # vehicles per day, summer
Castle Creek Road above	212—677 (1999—2002)	384	313—987 (1998—2002)	697

Conundrum				
Castle Creek Road above hospital entrance	646—2004 (1998—2002)	1202	1233—3663 (1998—2002)	2632

	Vehicles Per Day (winter)			Average VPD (winters)		Vehicles Per Day (summer)			Average VPD (summers)	
	1998/99	2002	2017 ¹	1998 - 2002	2003 - 2017	1998	2002	2017	1998 - 2002 ³	2003 - 2017
Castle Creek Road above Conundrum	677 ²	234	340	366 ⁸	345 ⁶	987	313	675	697	655 ⁴
Castle Creek Road above hospital entrance	1332	646	1246	1202 ³	1226 ⁷	2917	1233	2481	2632	2248 ⁵

¹ Average of March and November counts from County Engineer's annual traffic count spreadsheet.

² No data available for 1998 so 1999 data was used

³ No data available for 2000

⁴ No data available for 2010, 2013 or 2015.

⁵ No data available for 2004, 2012, 2013, or 2015

⁶ No data available for 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2013 or 2014

⁷ No data available for 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013 or 2014

⁸ No data available for 1998 or 2000.

This data shows that traffic volumes went down significantly from 1998 to 2002 and has since rebounded, though in no case does the current traffic count exceed the counts taken in 1998. Traffic along the urbanized segment has rebounded to almost the same level as in 1998 while along the rural segment traffic is still only one-half to two-thirds what it was in 1998.

At the time the original Maroon-Castle Creek Valleys Master Plan was prepared, the 20 Year Maintenance Plan for the Castle Creek area included a scheduled overlay for Castle Creek Road (below Conundrum) in 2008 and an overlay for Upper Castle Creek Road (above Conundrum), in 2016. The County completed the overlay for Castle Creek Road in 2012. In addition, Pearl Pass Road is graded every 3-4 years.

The County Engineer recommends that As of July of 2018, the Castle Creek Bridge replacement project was in the design phase and construction was expected to begin in 2019. be replaced or rehabilitated within the next 10 years due to current weight restriction. The County recently replaced the Conundrum and Midnight Mine Road bridges in the 1990's. The Music School Bridge is owned by the County but is not on the replacement schedule. In 2018, a private party undertook a project to install a fiber optic line up Castle Creek road within the County right-of-way. This project was ongoing at the time this Master Plan was being prepared and was expected to be completed in late 2018 or early 2019.

Castle Creek Road is also identified as a "shared roadway" in the Pitkin County Road Maintenance and Management Plan. Shared roadways are roads that have been identified as having characteristics that would make them desirable for biking. Such roads are intended to be

designated by a sign to be placed at either end of the road, notifying travelers that the road is to be shared by bicycles and vehicles alike.

Unpaved Spur Roads

The following County Policy Guideline exists regarding unpaved roads:

"Where practical, the county seeks to retain existing unpaved roads as a reflection of our rural character"

Unpaved area spur roads off of Castle Creek Road include:

- ~~Music School Road – 0.28 miles~~
- Summer Road/Aspen Mountain Road – 4.5 miles
- Lower Midnight Mine Road – 0.78 miles
- Upper Midnight Mine Road – 4.25-51 miles (~~Primitive Access~~Limited Service)
- Lower Conundrum Creek Road – 1.12-91 miles (~~Primitive Access~~Low Service)
- Lower Little Annie Road – 1.53 miles
- Upper Little Annie Road – 2.953.16 miles (~~Primitive Limited Service~~Access)
- Taylor Pass/Express Creek – 4.22-54 miles (~~Primitive Access~~Limited Service)
- Richmond Hill Road – 1511.7-8 miles
- Pearl Pass – 6.1 miles (~~Primitive Access~~Limited Service)

Maintenance

There is no winter maintenance provided on Castle Creek Road above the 10.8 mile mark~~King Cabin~~; ~~or on~~ Midnight Mine Road above the Midnight Mine Inn.78 mile mark; ~~and or~~ on Little Annie Road above the 1.33 mile mark. ~~(at the Hurricane Road intersection.)~~ Private maintenance is provided above Lime Creek Village up Hurricane to the first residence past Lime Creek Village Subdivision. As directed in the Rural Remote zone district and in the Road Maintenance and Management Plan~~County Asset Management Plan~~, properties located in the R/R zone district have no wintertime automobile access and must be accessed by over-the-snow vehicles, by foot, or by ski. Winter service levels on upper Castle Creek ~~road~~Road are intended to accommodate ~~nordic~~Nordic skiing at Ashcroft and to comply with the road limitations established in the ~~rural~~Rural /remote~~Remote~~ zone district, which is located in the upper reaches of the valley.

~~In the past, several residents who live on Little Annie Road above the area which is plowed in the winter, recommend requested that the rural Rural remote~~Remote~~ / zone district and the Road Maintenance and Management Plan ~~Asset Management Plan~~ be amended to allow plowing (on Little Annie Road only), between the dates of May 1st. and November 1st. Specifying the date when plowing is allowed (rather than just referring to "winter" as the time when plowing is not allowed) will allow the road to be plowed plowing during the spring when the road is mostly free of snow but still has drifts. Under this condition, the road is difficult to travel by snowmobile as there is not enough snow, and difficult to travel by automobile because there is too much snow.~~

Parking

At the point where plowing ends on Little Annie Road, residents park their automobiles and ski, hike and/or snowmobile to their homes. While this particular area has been used for parking for several years, there is no formal agreement on the part of the property owners for use of this transition area for parking.

Safety

Complaints regarding roads in the ~~Castle Creek-Caucus Area~~ generally consist of problems with rock fall, the need for wider shoulders and passing lanes, and conflicts with bicycle traffic. There is a significant amount of bicycle traffic on both Maroon and Castle Creek Roads. Due to the narrow, winding nature of the rural roads, there is a substantial risk for auto/bicycle conflicts. While residents don't want significant changes made to the road width, safety improvements such as guardrails, signs and the addition of a shoulder (where feasible), and paved pull-outs are recommended.

Maroon Creek Road Service Level

~~Lower Maroon Creek Road below T Lazy 7 stretches for about 2.25 miles and is considered a high service area road. The remaining 6.52 miles, known as Upper Maroon Creek Road is considered a limited service area road.~~

~~County traffic counts for Maroon Creek Road are summarized in the following table:~~

	# vehicles per day, winter	Average # vehicles per day, winter	# vehicles per day, summer	Average # vehicles per day, summer
Maroon Creek Road above High School intersection	1101—3239 (1998-2002)	2348	2556—3731 (1999-2002)	2660
Maroon Creek Road above T Lazy 7	Closed in winter		346—718* (1998-2002)	451

~~* Limited vehicular traffic in summer on Maroon Creek Road from Forest Service gate to Maroon Lake. Buses run from Highlands.~~

~~Maroon Creek Road was overlaid in 2001 from Highlands to Maroon Lake. The next scheduled overlay in the County's 20 Year Maintenance Plan is for 2017. There is no winter maintenance of Maroon Creek Road above the T Lazy 7 Ranch.~~

~~Area roads include:~~

- ~~● Glen Eagle Drive—0.56 miles~~
- ~~● Lower Maroon Creek Road—2.25 miles~~
- ~~● Upper Maroon Creek Road—6.52 miles~~

The City of Aspen recently annexed Maroon Creek Road to the upper end of Iselin (across from Glen Dee Rd.)

TRANSIT

Existing Conditions Analysis

Access to transit ~~within the Castle and Maroon Creek valleys~~Caucus Area is limited. Transit service is provided to ~~the Highlands Ski Area on Maroon Creek and the Music School on Castle Creek.~~ ~~In summer, a bus is available to the Maroon Bells. This service is tremendously successful and is very effective in limiting tourist traffic on Maroon Creek Road.~~ Transit to the Ashcroft area has been considered in the ~~past, but past but~~ is not currently warranted by the numbers of potential riders. The local taxi company does provide service to the area. Residents support the current level of service.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Wildlife

~~Existing Conditions Analysis.~~ The ~~Castle Maroon Planning~~Caucus Area contains numerous occurrences of ecological communities that are of significant importance at the state and global level including a wide assortment of wetland and riparian systems. This area contains habitat for federally-listed ~~threatened and e~~ndangered ~~and Threatened~~ species including peregrine falcons, boreal toads, and Canada lynx as well as a plethora of U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species. Detailed maps of the habitat types that exist in Pitkin County can be viewed on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife All Species Activity Mapping Data Web Services portal.

Fortunately, the vast majority of these important habitats are on public lands – predominantly White River National Forest – and much of that is within the Maroon Bells – Snowmass Wilderness Area. The ~~Castle Maroon Planning~~Caucus Area contains thousands of acres of mule deer, elk, mountain goat, and bighorn sheep summer range but again, most of this is on ~~Federal~~federal lands. While there are few true “migration corridors” within the area there are numerous migration patterns as defined by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. These include the Castle Creek and East Maroon Creek-Maroon Creek-Willow Creek routes.

It is important to note that ~~the~~ elk that summer in this part of the ~~elk range~~county historically wintered from the southwesterly facing slopes above lower Maroon and Castle Creeks down to what is now the Aspen School Campus, Meadowood, the west facing slopes of Shadow Mountain, the former Moore Ranch, and down toward the Aspen Golf Course-Burlingame area. As this habitat was lost to development ~~over time~~, the elk were forced to find alternative winter range. The only ~~severe~~ winter range left ~~in this planning~~within the Caucus aArea is the west facing slopes above Castle Creek extending from the undeveloped portions of the west side of Shadow Mountain up to about 9800 feet and as far up Castle Creek as Castle Creek Valley Ranch (see Figure 7 - Elk Habitat Map). This is ~~not~~ an optimal ~~situation, and situation.~~ ~~Valley valley~~ -should the ~~Valley valley~~ see a truly harsh winter these animals may be in dire straits.

Moose habitat within the Caucus Area has changed dramatically in recent years. Figures 8 and 9 show the extent of Moose Summer Range and Overall Range for the years 2013 and 2016. These maps show a dramatic expansion of moose habitat over a short period of time. The summer range and overall range have expanded from the county's southern boundary to just north of the confluence of Castle Creek and Conundrum Creek. While it's good to see moose reintroduction efforts succeed, it also increases the potential for wildlife-human conflicts. Of particular concern, are conflicts involving vehicles. With the increased population in Colorado, vehicle collisions with moose are becoming more common, and in some cases with devastating results. Increased education regarding moose behavior, and areas where animal populations are on the rise, could help reduce the potential for conflicts.

Another concern within in portions of the Castle Maroon Planning Caucus Area containing private lands are is for the health of the numerous wetlands and the riparian areas associated with of Maroon and Castle Creeks and their its tributaries. These riparian areas support four significant plant communities dominated by Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*), narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) or blue spruce (*Picea pungens*). At the lower elevations, dominated by private land, the riparian areas and many of the riparian wetlands are degraded and surrounded by residential development, the golf course, and the Aspen Highlands Ski Area. Roads and driveways, associated with the above residential development activities, parallel the riparian areas and cause siltation, erosion, and reduced ecological function.

Wildfire

Existing Conditions Analysis

As is common throughout the County county, the lower areas of, flatter, more open terrain within the portions of the Planning Caucus area Area typically have a low wildfire rating, while and the steeper forested slopes have a severe rating due to the vegetative cover and grade steep of slopes. Figure 10 shows the wildfire hazard for the northern one-third of the Caucus Area. The red and orange areas on this map represent severe hazard. Fortunately, most of the more densely developed portions of the Caucus Area are located within severe hazard areas. However, many of the mining claim parcels along Richmond Ridge are located within the moderate to severe hazard areas. Due to the proximity of private lands to the edge of public lands throughout most of the upper portions of these Castle Creek Valleys, the risk for structure-initiated wildfire on the Forest is an issue that must should be addressed.

OPEN SPACE/TRAILS/RECREATION/TOURISM

Existing Conditions Analysis

The Maroon and Castle Creek areas Valley provides road and trailhead access to public lands and wilderness areas and provide access to that contain a wide a large range of recreational activities. The Maroon and Castle Creek roads Road is are a public asset for the local and tourist economy. Public access to federal lands includes the Cathedral & American Lakes trailheads, East and West Maroon Creek trailheads; and Midnight Mine, Little Annie, Express Creek, Montezuma, Cooper

Creek and Pearl Pass Roads. ~~Both The roads trailheads and trailheads and roads within the Caucus Area~~ provide access for huts, mountaineering, winter skiing & snowmobiling, summer biking, camping, fishing, horseback riding, ~~jeeping off-roading~~, dirt biking and hiking. ~~Developed camping is available up Maroon Creek at the Silver Bell, Silver Bar and Silver Queen campgrounds. Private guided bicycle, jeep, skiing and snowmobile tours are available through the T-Lazy Seven Guest Ranch and/or other outfitter/guides in the area.~~

Due to overuse and some unfortunate behavior at the Conundrum Hot Springs, the USFS initiated a permit system for overnight use in 2018. However, day use of the hot springs continues to create parking and other issues stemming from overuse. Continued collaboration between the County and US Forest Service will be needed to address these issues and to ensure the highest quality experience possible for all who visit the area.

Summary of the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge Management Plan

In 1999, a management plan was developed for the Little Annie ~~and~~ Richmond Ridge and Pearl Pass areas by a group of interested citizens, the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Pitkin County staff. The ~~Plan-planning~~ effort was initiated because there were several recreational groups that were converging on the area ~~to recreate~~, and there was concern that the overall quality of the recreational experience was degrading because of overuse and/or conflicting uses. The goals of this group included efficient management of the available resources, resolving conflicts between user groups and residents, preserving the environment, and ensuring a quality experience for everyone. The plan addresses specific issues and creates action items dealing with recreation accessing public lands off of Midnight Mine Road, Little Annie Road, Express Creek ~~Road~~, and the Pearl Pass Area. Illegal parking, trespassing, and noise were identified as fairly common concerns. The Pitkin County Planning and Zoning Commission informally adopted the Plan on April 18, 2000.

To achieve goals of the Plan, implementation items were divided into a three-phased approach. The first phase implements an education strategy and efficient use of existing facilities. If the educational outreach in Phase 1 proved effective, there would be no need for additional phases. Phase 2 incorporates new regulations and a limited, self-enforcing permit system. If Phase 2 failed, then Phase 3 would be initiated. This phase includes new regulations and a mandatory, all-user pay permit system.

Implementation measures were modeled in part on a user system, which was developed and implemented by citizens in the Shrine Pass area ~~off of near~~ Vail Pass. The intent was to come up with a system that could be implemented and to a great extent, enforced by Citizens with assistance from the Forest and/or County. The Plan was not intended to result in a strategy that required more than very limited County or ~~Forest-USFS~~ staffing or budget.

Little of the Plan has been implemented to date. A decision should be made as to whether the conflicts in this area have resolved themselves and/or whether the Plan should be revisited and revised to accomplish the Plan's stated goals.

AGRICULTURE

Existing Conditions Analysis

Agriculture ~~in within~~ the ~~Maroon and Castle Creek valley~~ Caucus Areas is limited to a few, large remaining parcels. Nonetheless, these parcels contain open pastures on the valley floors that help define the area. As such, they play a critical role in making ~~these valleys~~ appealing to residents and tourists who travel ~~Caucus Area Maroon and roads Castle Creek roads~~ to their homes ~~and/or recreational activities~~ or use the roads for recreation.

SCENIC QUALITY

Existing Conditions Analysis

One of the qualities that is intrinsic to the “rural character” of the ~~Maroon and Castle Creek valleys~~ Caucus Area is the quantity of open landscape containing irrigated pastures, meadows, mountain views, and remnants of historic buildings.

With the adoption of the 2006 Land Use Code, the County expanded the area subject to review under the Scenic View Protection standards of the Code (§ 7-20-120). The current extent of the area for which scenic review must be conducted includes all areas visible from Castle Creek Road (see Figure 11). The intent of the Scenic View Protection section of the Code is to maintain a natural ridgeline silhouette against the sky; to steer development away from ridgelines and skylines throughout the County, as viewed from public roadway corridors; and to ensure that new development is designed and located to complement the natural landscape and the natural features within the public viewplane in order to achieve an aesthetically pleasing, rural atmosphere.

~~From Keno Gulch above the music school on Castle Creek Road down to Highway 82 is mapped for scenic review by the County. The Aspen Mountain and Highlands Mountain ridgelines are mapped for ridgeline review. No other areas within the Planning area are currently subject to scenic review by the County.~~

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Existing Conditions Analysis

Given the lack of population density within the ~~Maroon and Castle Creek~~ Caucus Areas, there is a limited amount of affordable housing. In addition to Caretaker Dwelling Units (CDU's), there are a few other affordable housing options available.

There are ~~four~~ three permanent moderate housing lots at Castle Creek Valley Ranch. In addition, some units have been approved in association with the Ashcroft/Pine Creek Cookhouse, which is being ~~was~~ rebuilt following a devastating fire. The approvals include ~~There will be~~ a dorm to sleep 8; one 3-bedroom unit; ~~two~~ four 1-bedroom units; and one owner/manager RO unit. The two 1-bedroom units have been constructed on the Montezuma Mill Site and the owners are preparing to build two more 1-bedroom units near the King Cabin. Previously, ~~Currently~~ Ashcroft/Pine Creek Cookhouse housed their employees in the Schoolhouse and in some A-frame cabins on the Ryan Parcel. However, these structures have now been demolished, ~~which is scheduled to be demolished.~~ There are some A-frames and cabins on the Ryan parcel that are considered affordable, ~~however they are not deed restricted.~~ The Ashcroft owners are requesting the ability to pay the affordable housing impact fee instead of building the approved 3-bedroom unit. Additional cross-county ski huts have also been proposed and affordable housing mitigation would be required in association with this project.

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines note the following regarding citizen housing:

~~“Citizen housing outside of the urban growth boundaries is only acceptable where the densities are appropriate for the surrounding area, and where such development is containable. Caretaker or employee dwelling units may be acceptable uses in a rural environment.”~~

The policy guidelines are currently reflected in the land use patterns of the Maroon and Castle Creek valleys within the Caucus Area in that ~~e~~Existing affordable housing within the Caucus area is dispersed ~~to reflect and consistent with~~ the densities in the area.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Existing Conditions Analysis

The ~~following historic~~ resources with-in the Maroon and Castle Creek Valleys Caucus Area were identified in the 1999 Historic Building Inventory Record (Table 6). All but one of the cabins on the 330 Cathedral Lake Road site have been removed. ~~Some of T~~these properties have since been included ~~are not necessarily~~ on the Pitkin County Historic Inventory and may or may not be eligible for such a listing, ~~which T~~the County is in the process of developing established as part of the 2006 Land Use Code. Listing on the Inventory ~~is a~~ voluntary, historic resource designation program, though incentives are provided in the Land Use Code. Table 7 is an excerpt from the official Pitkin County Historic Inventory showing the listed properties within the Castle Creek Caucus Area. Figure 12 is a map showing the location of properties listed in Table 7.

Table 6
1999 Historic Building Inventory
(Castle Creek Caucus Area)

Location	Resource
2 Music School Road	Newman Mine bldgs, <u>uildings</u> at MAA campus and <u>&</u> Music School Bldgs <u>uildings</u> .

	1965; Fritz Benedict
202 Midnight Mine Road	Waterfall House (demolished); Newman Mine Mill
Castle Creek Valley Ranch	Coke ovens
5387 Castle Creek Road	Highland Bavarian Lodge
5835 Castle Creek Road:	King Cabin at King Ranch
10080 Castle Creek Road	Elk Mountain Lodge cabins (2)
11247 Castle Creek Road	Toklat
Castle Creek Road	Ashcroft Townsite – National Register
330 Cathedral Lake Road	Fitzpatrick & Royal cabins; 10 th Mountain tent platforms
3129 Maroon Creek Road	T Lazy 7
Maroon Creek Road	Stein Cabin—Fritz Benedict 1958

Table 7
Pitkin County Historic Register

<u>Property Description</u> <u>Approval Name</u>	<u>Approval Document</u>	<u>Parcel ID #</u>	<u>Incentive Granted</u>	<u>Covenant Recorded</u> <u>(reception #)</u>
<u>3700 Little Annie Road (?)</u> <u>Castle Creek Investors –</u> <u>Crazy Dan Cabin</u>	<u>BOCC 111-2001</u>	<u>273536400001</u>		
<u>Elk Mountain Lodge –</u> <u>Homestead & Treehorn</u> <u>Cabins</u>	<u>BOCC 034-2007</u>	<u>290919400006</u>	<u>Additional residence</u> <u>(built)</u>	<u>540285</u>
<u>Greenway – Little Annie</u> <u>Mine Site</u>	<u>BOCC 108-2008</u>	<u>291101100052</u>	<u>1 TDR, additional</u> <u>Rural/Remote cabin</u> <u>& subgrade space</u>	<u>554948</u>
<u>2 Music School Road</u> <u>(Castle Creek)</u> <u>Aspen Music School</u> <u>Campus – Admin Building</u> <u>& Business Building</u>	<u>BOCC 50-2008</u>	<u>273514401802</u>		
<u>Bunta/Manning Annex</u> <u>Cabin</u>	<u>BOCC 053-2011</u>	<u>291101100051</u>	<u>1 TDR & 500 sf</u> <u>subgrade space</u>	<u>598087</u>

MINERAL EXPLORATION/EXTRACTION

Existing Conditions Analysis

Mining has historically occurred in the ~~Maroon and~~ Castle Creek valleys, ~~particularly in the Castle Creek Valley.~~ The Little Annie/Richmond Ridge area, which was heavily prospected in the past, contains limited residential development today. Given the price of silver it is unlikely, but under 1872 mining laws, these mining claims may be used for prospecting and mining subject to local and federal regulations.

Figure 13 is a map showing the registered mining claims with the Caucus Area and in the surrounding region. This map illustrates the complicated and overlapping ownership pattern which is typical of mining claims. The claims typically have very convoluted chains of title and in many cases the owners are either unknown or highly fractionalized. In addition, mineral and surface rights have, in some cases, been separated and access is often difficult or unachievable. For these reasons development of the remaining undeveloped claims is unlikely to reach full buildout potential as discussed previously in this report.

PLANS AFFECTING MAROON & CASTLE CREEK VALLEYS

The Little Annie/Richmond Ridge Management Plan (2000)
Aspen Mountain Ski Area Master Plan (1998)
Aspen Highlands Ski Area Master Plan (1997)
White River National Forest Management Plan (2002)
Pitkin County Road Maintenance and Management Plan (2016)