

City of Aspen Strategic Plan

Roadmap To 2027



CITY MANAGER NOTE

I'm pleased to share the City of Aspen's Strategic Plan: Roadmap to 2027. This plan brings together Aspen City Council's adopted goals, priority projects, and key internal work into a single document to share with the community.

The roadmap is designed to create a clear, shared understanding of what Council has prioritized, how the city will deliver on those priorities, how we are strengthening our internal operations to support the work, and how we will measure progress along the way.

While it doesn't capture everything the city does, it reflects what matters most to our community right now — and how we intend to turn those priorities into meaningful, lasting change. That work is grounded in our mission to provide innovative and efficient municipal services, steward our natural environment, and support a healthy, sustainable community for future generations.

These priorities belong to Aspen City Council, and this plan reflects their leadership in setting direction on behalf of the community. Turning priorities into reality, however, is a team effort. It requires daily planning, coordination, problem-solving, and follow-through across the entire organization.

This roadmap serves as both a commitment and an accountability tool. It clarifies what success looks like, helps align resources to our highest-impact work, and creates space to recognize real progress. We will carry out this work guided by the city's values of Service, Partnership, Stewardship, and Innovation.

I'm grateful to Council for defining the "what," and to our city staff for building the "how" with the dedication, professionalism, and passion that make success possible.

The signature is written in black ink and is a cursive, flowing style. It appears to read "Peter Strecker".

Peter Strecker
City Manager



Introduction

The city of Aspen **Strategic Plan** outlines Aspen City Council's top priorities for the community over the next two years and the city's plan to address them.

This plan expands on the adopted 2025-2027 council priority projects and goals and is grounded in foundational documents such as the biennial community survey, the legislative policy agenda, and other guiding frameworks. These reference materials are included in the appendix for context and transparency.

This plan highlights key areas that will guide the organization's near-term direction. It is not intended to include every important city project and program but serves as a roadmap for setting priorities and aligning resources. While some goals may extend beyond the two-year timeframe, the plan reflects the city's core priorities and long-term aspirations.

This document is intentionally concise, designed to be approachable for community members and a practical reference for city staff. This format ensures that Aspen's priorities, initiatives, and success measures are easily understood and trackable, creating space for both celebration of successes and accountability. For those interested in more details, complementary plans for most subject areas are available in the document appendix.

All work within this plan – and across city operations – is guided by the **following council-defined principles:**

1

Improvement of core service delivery through process improvement with the customer in mind.

2

Staff support and retention.

3

Outcome focus.



Organizational Mission & Values

This strategic plan defines the priorities of the city over the next two years. These priorities were developed and will be implemented in accordance with the mission and values of our organization.

City Mission:

To engage with positive civic dialogue, provide the highest quality innovation and efficient municipal services, steward the natural environment, and support a healthy and sustainable community for the benefit of future generations with respect for the work of our predecessors.

Values:



We serve with a spirit of excellence, humility, integrity, and respect.



Investing in a thriving future for all by balancing social, environmental, and financial responsibilities.



Our impact is greater together.



Pursuing creative outcomes grounded in Aspen's distinctive challenges and opportunities.

Strategic Objectives: Summary and Structure

The City of Aspen Strategic Plan centers on six objectives — key areas of community importance the city seeks to positively influence. Four objectives focus on advancing Council's priority projects and goals. Two of the objectives seek to embed Council's guiding principles into day-to-day work at the city.

Each objective includes three priority initiatives the city can directly shape, supported by success metrics that link tangible outcomes to both the initiatives and their overarching objectives. Together, these elements align the City Council's vision with day-to-day operations and organizational priorities.

The below four objectives focus on advancing City Council's priority projects and goals through 2027.



Critical Public Projects

The city will deliver high-impact capital projects that increase community vibrancy and accessibility for locals and visitors alike.



Resource and Infrastructure Resilience

The city will enhance the resilience of its infrastructure and natural systems to address climate change, wildfire risk, and other hazards — ensuring long-term safety, sustainability, and regional preparedness.



Early Childhood Education

The city will champion high-quality early childhood education to support working families, nurture the next generation of Aspenites, and invest in the community's future.



Traffic Flow & Congestion

The city will reduce congestion and improve mobility through strategic investments in multimodal transportation, infrastructure, and regional partnerships.

The below two objectives operationalize Council's principles to guide work in the City of Aspen.



Exceptional Experiences and Services

The city will deliver exceptional services and experiences by maintaining high-quality public spaces, simplifying regulatory processes, and fostering a welcoming and responsive engagement with city amenities and services.



Organizational Excellence

The city will advance internal high-performance and innovation by investing in its people, culture, and operations.

Each of the six strategic objectives is supported by priority initiatives and "What Success Looks Like" milestones. These are accompanied by contextual explanations that clarify the purpose and background of each objective and initiative. Each objective also includes measurable outcomes and links to supporting plans that offer additional detail beyond the scope of this plan.

Strategic Objective 1



Critical Public Projects



The city will advance three public projects of generational importance for the community. These efforts will address the affordable housing crisis, provide essential gathering spaces to strengthen community connections, and improve safe and efficient access to Aspen — all with a focus on lasting community benefit.

KEY OUTCOMES WE'RE TRACKING:

Is the community informed and engaged throughout each project?

Are projects being delivered on schedule and within budget?

Are projects creating inviting, accessible, and vibrant community spaces?

PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

1. Armory Hall

Aspen's community thrives when we have places to gather, connect, and share experiences. Over the next two years, the city will move forward with transforming Armory Hall into a vibrant community hub anchored by a food hall. Land use approvals are in place, and the focus is on the next steps of advancing the remodel, including design, permitting, and construction.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Complete design documents.
- b. Submit complete building permit.
- c. Obtain building permit and begin construction.
- d. Select building operator.



Armory Hall

2. Lumberyard Affordable Housing

As a response to the need for affordable housing in the Aspen area, the city's Lumberyard Affordable Housing development project will include 280-300 affordable housing units in three four-story buildings, along with communal landscapes, infrastructure, and transportation improvements. Land use approvals are in place, and the next two years are focused on achieving construction milestones from design completion to the start of vertical construction.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Approve design and submit for phased permit.
- b. Commence site preparation work.
- c. Retain a private development partner to oversee project.

3. Entrance to Aspen

Getting in and out of Aspen should be safe, efficient, environmentally responsible, and welcoming for all. Over the next two years, the city will advance design and reevaluate existing approval documents for an updated entrance that balances traffic flow and transit, minimizes impacts to open space, and positions the city for long-term maintenance of entrance infrastructure.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Lead reevaluation of the Colorado Department of Transportation's Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.
- b. Complete initial 30% design documents.
- c. Implement a community engagement framework that ensures all stakeholders are appropriately informed and involved.

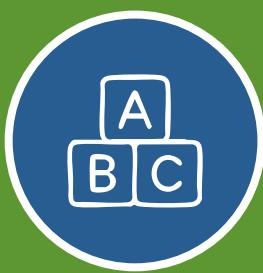


Lumberyard Affordable Housing



Entrance to Aspen

Strategic Objective 2



Early Childhood Education



The city will champion affordable, high-quality early childhood education so working families and children can thrive. During the next two years, the city will reduce access barriers through expanded financial aid and capacity planning, increase quality with a substitute educator program and expanded training, and improve sustainability with teacher wage stipends and grants.

KEY OUTCOMES WE'RE TRACKING:

Do working families have access to childcare when and where they need it?

Is childcare affordable for all working families?

Are children and teachers thriving in stable, supportive, high-quality classrooms?

PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

1. Childcare Availability

The city is dedicated to advancing efforts that specifically support the availability of childcare for working families. This initiative focuses on assessing current facility capacity and future needs, empowering existing providers to expand their programs, and collecting enrollment and capacity data to inform effective decision-making.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Complete Burlingame Ranch childcare facility assessment.
- b. Continue provider capacity expansion grant program.
- c. Collect and analyze provider data to assess emerging trends and needs.



Childcare Availability

2. Childcare Affordability

The city is committed to making childcare financially accessible for working families. The city will take direct action to manage costs for parents by expanding access to financial aid programs and support sustainability for providers through targeted subsidies for infant and toddler classrooms and expanded grants.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Expand outreach and education to promote family financial aid program expansion.
- b. Strengthen infant and toddler classroom subsidy program.
- c. Collaboratively refine program grants to improve school sustainability.



Childcare Affordability

3. Childcare Quality

Children deserve nurturing environments and teachers who feel valued. The city will improve classroom quality by investing in programs and policies that directly enhance learning environments for children and support sustainable careers for teachers. These initiatives aim to reduce teacher turnover and burnout, ensure educators receive fair and competitive wages, and provide access to professional development, including one-on-one coaching with early childhood experts.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Establish permanent teacher wage enhancement program.
- b. Improve professional development opportunities for teachers and program directors.
- c. Expand bilingual coaching services for early childhood educators.



Childcare Quality



Resource and Infrastructure Resilience



The city needs resilient infrastructure and natural resources capable of withstanding climate change, wildfire risk, and other hazards. Over the next two years, the city will strengthen critical systems and infrastructure, protect the urban forest, and promote fire-resistant building practices. The city will work with regional partners to improve emergency preparedness, identify and plan for emerging risks, and reduce environmental vulnerabilities through measures such as fuels reduction.

KEY OUTCOMES WE'RE TRACKING:

Are critical infrastructure and natural environments becoming more resilient?

Are water resources being conserved, future needs planned for, and watersheds protected?

Are wildfire preparedness efforts improving each year through prevention, readiness, resiliency, and community planning?

PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

1. Energy Resilience

This initiative focuses on strengthening the city's energy infrastructure to ensure long-term reliability, affordability, and resilience. Key efforts include renewing aging electric system infrastructure, aligning rate structures to support grid modernization, and exploring utility-scale emergency backup energy storage.

What Success Looks Like:

- Develop future electric demand plan.
- Adjust electric rates to support system resiliency.
- Complete utility-scale microgrid planning study.



Energy Resilience

2. Water Resilience

The city will strengthen the resilience and sustainability of our natural and utility water systems to meet current and future challenges, adapting to environmental and usage pressures. This initiative promotes conservation, advances long-term storage solutions, and prepares the city's infrastructure to ensure reliable service — even during power outages. By prioritizing healthy river systems and investing in modern water facilities, the city will protect and manage the community's water supply.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Complete water plant design and begin construction.
- b. Promote water conservation through reduced usage and healthy river systems.
- c. Advance a comprehensive water storage strategy.
- d. Strengthen water infrastructure to ensure service continuity during power outages.



Water Resilience

3. Fire Resilience

The city will strengthen wildfire resilience through proactive planning, community engagement, and regional collaboration. It includes updating construction codes to promote fire-resistant development, offering incentives for property owners to harden existing structures, and advancing fuels reduction and forest management strategies. The city will also contribute to a regional resiliency framework and improve public communication around air quality best practices to protect health and safety.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Develop policy to incentivize fire-hardening for new and existing properties.
- b. Implement urban forest management and fuel reduction plan.
- c. Establish regional wildfire resilience partnerships.



Fire Resilience

Strategic Objective 4



Traffic Flow and Congestion



The city will strive to reduce congestion and improve mobility through practical solutions that support multimodal travel, strengthen regional and community partnerships, and help residents, workers, and visitors move safely and efficiently throughout the community using their preferred method. This will be achieved through robust transportation demand management strategies, adapting multi-modal options to reflect emerging modes of transit, and making targeted infrastructure investments.

KEY OUTCOMES WE'RE TRACKING:

Are more people traveling with fewer cars?

Are people traveling safely via streets, paths, and trails?

Are travel times predictable for buses, bikes, and pedestrians?

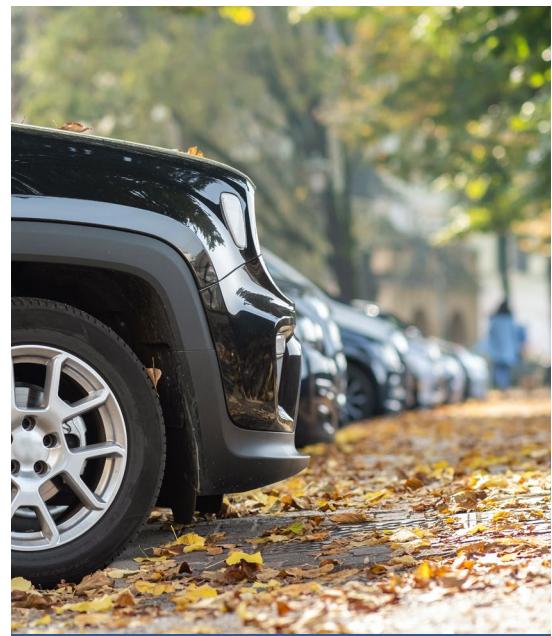
PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

1. Demand Management

Multiple, desirable transit options are essential for a healthy mobility network. The city will implement targeted demand management measures to directly address causes of congestion and improve mobility. The city will deploy short-term rental tax collections to mitigate tourism-related congestion, expand car sharing options for residents and visitors to make the decision not to drive easier, and introduce specific incentives for all user groups to shift travel patterns. Parking policies and pricing will be adjusted to better manage peak demand, and data-driven approaches will be used to monitor and refine these strategies.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Expand car sharing access for residents and visitors.
- b. Introduce targeted travel incentives for tourists, commuters, and residents.
- c. Adjust parking policies and pricing to manage demand.



Demand Management

2. Safe and Welcoming User Experience

Potential users of alternative transportation options are more likely to use them if they feel safe and welcome — and if the service provides a benefit that driving a personal vehicle does not. Over the next two years, the city will focus on targeted improvements to ensure the community's transportation options continue to meet these needs.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Develop and implement e-bike safety strategies.
- b. Enhance user experience at Rubey Park and other bus stops.
- c. Create a transportation plan for the West End that respects its residential nature.
- d. Implement key recommendations from the Safety Action Plan.



Safe and Welcoming User Experience

3. Infrastructure Maintenance and Sustainability

A transportation system only works when it's well-cared for and easy to use. Over the next two years, the city will regularly assess its transportation network support for all modes of travel, address maintenance needs, and invest in upgrades that improve the quality of local roadways and the experience of multimodal users.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Complete existing city bus stop infrastructure maintenance and sustainability assessment.
- b. Integrate transit planning into lumberyard development.
- c. Support WE-cycle growth through station electrification and capacity enhancement.
- d. Increase pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure usage through targeted improvements.



Infrastructure Maintenance and Sustainability

Strategic Objective 5



Exceptional Experiences and Services



Aspen is a remarkable city, and preserving its character requires dedicated staff commitment. We will maintain and renew public spaces for future generations, make permits, licensing, and other regulatory interactions as smooth as possible, and protect the moments that define Aspen — from a friendly, responsive community policing presence to pristine parks to the surprise of encountering public art.

KEY OUTCOMES WE'RE TRACKING:

Are public spaces clean, safe, and welcoming year-round?

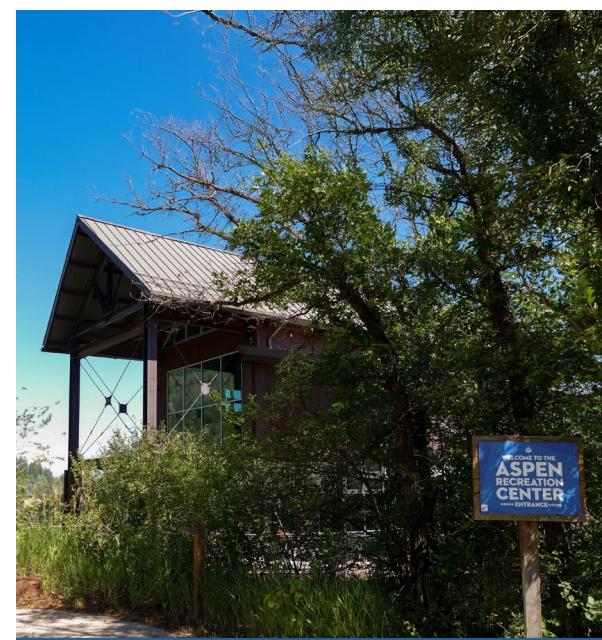
Can people access help and information quickly?

Are residents reporting higher satisfaction in community surveys?

PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

1. Maintain and Enhance Public Spaces

This initiative continues the city's long-standing focus of maintaining high standards across parks, facilities, and rights of way, ensuring they remain clean, safe, and welcoming. It also supports new programming that responds to evolving community needs, including the integration of public art and the hosting of inclusive, local-serving events that foster community connection.



What Success Looks Like:

- a. Assess existing conditions and lifespan for public facilities, parks, and rights-of-way.
- b. Develop and implement a public art plan.
- c. Prioritize local community engagement through special events and expanded community programming.

Maintain and Enhance Public Spaces

2. Outcomes-Focused Permits and Licensing

Aspen's unique development context requires a regulatory system that reflects its distinct needs. The city will prioritize clarity and efficiency for applicants while protecting neighbors, the broader public, and the natural and built environment. Over the next two years, the city will work to centralize permits and licensing and provide clear, user-friendly self-service materials and eliminate outdated rules and processes that no longer align with community priorities. The city will strengthen cross-department collaboration, reduce unnecessary steps, and right-size requirements so compliance is easier and enforcement is clear.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Review and update key regulations and documents to better reflect community priorities.
- b. Assess feasibility of consolidating city permit and licensing touchpoints.
- c. Provide clear, user-friendly training and application materials for all permit types.

3. Convenient and Responsive City Services

Over the next two years, the city will make it easier than ever to get help or answers — whether in person, by phone, or online. Building on the Customer Service Standards Framework, the city will streamline public records accessibility, foster a straightforward and welcoming experience for all who visit city facilities, and maintain a visible, friendly presence of staff throughout the community.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Improve access to public information and updates.
- b. Conduct regular community engagement to ensure staff's public presence consistently meets community expectations.



Outcomes-Focused Permits and Licensing



Accessible and Responsive City Services



Organizational Excellence



The city's ability to achieve outstanding results increases as our organization becomes more agile and effective. Over the next two years, the city will invest in its people, technology, and processes so municipal government can consistently meet and exceed community expectations. A central pillar of this work is WorkWays, a citywide initiative to modernize how the organization operates. This effort brings expanded training, enhanced hybrid meeting capabilities, clearer definitions of success, and thoughtful flexibility which improves service. The city will also strengthen its approach to attracting and retaining the talented, dedicated workforce needed to deliver on top priorities.

KEY OUTCOMES WE'RE TRACKING:

Are employees engaged, supported, and choosing to stay employed at the city?

Do teams have clear goals and success measures, and are they achieving them?

Are services meeting community expectations, wherever they are delivered?

PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

1. Employer of Choice

The city's future success depends on cultivating a workplace where people feel valued, supported, and equipped to do their best work. This initiative strengthens the city's organizational culture and invests in its teams, fostering an environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and well-being so we can attract and retain the talent needed to deliver on our priorities.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Update the employer housing strategic plan.
- b. Refine compensation and benefits to maintain market leadership.
- c. Implement next steps of cultural roadmap.



Employer of Choice

2. Resilient Workforce

The city will build a resilient workforce that delivers reliable service in a high cost, rural context. This initiative focuses on growing future leaders from within, expanding flexible and mostly remote roles where they improve service, and equipping teams with standardized tools to collaborate effectively across the organization.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Revamp internal staff training and development pathways.
- b. Develop a strategy for flexible and mostly remote roles to enhance service delivery.
- c. Streamline technology to improve collaboration and efficiency.



Resilient Workforce

3. Effective People & Efficient Processes

The city will focus its efforts on what matters most to the community and help teams maximize their impact. We'll do this by establishing clear goals, making collaboration simple, and equipping staff with the right tools for the job. Over the next two years, we'll clarify what success looks like in our highest-impact programs, strengthen collaboration across departments, and provide modern training and technology so staff can deliver seamless service — on-site or remotely.

What Success Looks Like:

- a. Establish clear measures of success for key programs and initiatives.
- b. Streamline essential cross-department processes.
- c. Enhance tools and training to support seamless service from anywhere, for staff and customers.



Effective People & Efficient Processes

Supporting Materials



Many priorities in this strategic plan build on existing work. The supporting documents below provide additional detail and background and are included in full in the appendix.

1. Strategic Objective 1: Critical Public Projects

- a. [Aspen Community Voice](#)
 - i. Provides current project updates and public engagement opportunities at www.aspencommunityvoice.com.

2. Strategic Objective 2: Early Childhood Education

- a. [Kids First Annual Report & Provider Survey](#)
 - i. Summarizes 2024 investments and outcomes to sustain early childhood care in Pitkin County, incorporating provider input.
- b. [Community Childcare Needs Assessment Report](#)
 - i. Assesses current and projected childcare supply and demand in Pitkin County and the Roaring Fork Valley.

3. Strategic Objective 3: Resource & Infrastructure Resilience

- a. [Integrated Water Resource Plan](#)
 - i. Outlines the city's long-range strategy to ensure a safe, resilient, and reliable water supply.
- b. [Drought Mitigation & Response Plan](#)
 - i. Defines staged drought monitoring and response actions, including water-use restrictions, communications, and enforcement to protect essential services and streamflows.

4. Strategic Objective 4: Traffic Flow & Congestion

- a. [Aspen Gets Us There](#)
 - i. Recommends parking and transportation strategies to reduce congestion and vehicle miles traveled by improving parking management and strengthening multimodal options.
- b. [Safety Action Plan](#)
 - i. Uses crash data and public input to prioritize crossing, speed, and street design improvements that reduce serious injuries and deaths.
- c. [Aspen Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#)
 - i. Consolidates community input and a needs assessment identifying priority gaps in Aspen's walking and biking network, with emphasis on safer, more connected routes.

5. Strategic Objective 5: Exceptional Experience & Services

- a. [Customer Services Standards Framework](#)
 - i. Defines five organization-wide service behaviors (authenticity, anticipation, engagement, consistency, accountability) to support a friendly, equitable, and transparent public service experience.

6. Strategic Objective 6: Organizational Excellence

- a. [Cultural Roadmap](#)
 - i. Uses staff feedback to identify and prioritize culture initiatives that strengthen retention, morale, and organizational effectiveness.
- b. [2026 Benefits Roadmap](#)
 - i. Outlines the 2026 employee benefits package and enrollment requirements, including medical plan options, wellness, retirement, and leave.
- c. [Total Compensation Philosophy](#)
 - i. Defines the City's approach to attracting and retaining talent through market-leading, equitable pay; comprehensive benefits; clear pay communication; professional development; recognition; and housing support.



CITY OF **ASPEN**