



A PATH FORWARD ON THE CASTLE CREEK BRIDGE

There is agreement that the existing bridge is aging and needs to be replaced, sooner rather than later. The City now has the opportunity to set the location and move forward.

All elements of a comprehensive solution — including replacing the existing bridge with a new one — have been extensively studied by the City. Now we must implement a build schedule and start the approval process. The essential pieces are:

- A new Castle Creek Bridge in the existing location. A feasibility study for a 3-lane (reversible lane) bridge was conducted in May 2008. It is viable.
- Soften the S-curves to allow 4 lanes and improve throughput from 15 to 20 m.p.h. This was studied in June 2004 and is feasible.
- Modify the Cemetery Lane and Highway 82 intersection to improve throughput during rush hours. This was studied in June 2004 and various alternatives exist.

The result is a NEW Entrance to Aspen with numerous advantages:

- Faster completion than CDOT'S Preferred Alternative (straight shot). Building a new bridge in the current location would not have the EIS or litigation issues that hamper the straight shot. Both are significant hurdles.
- Significantly less expensive than the straight shot, leading to quicker CDOT approval and funding. Castle Creek Bridge would remain a state highway with future maintenance costs borne by CDOT.
- No impacts on the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum, a 2.5-acre historic district that is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Very limited or no impacts on the Marolt/Thomas Open Space.
- A new vote on changes to the 1996 straight shot approval would no longer be required.
- Improves general traffic congestion with two lanes serving peak hours.
- Relieves West End congestion during the PM rush hour.
- Does not alter Cemetery Lane access into and out of town and downvalley, a significant problem with the straight shot for residents of Cemetery Lane and McClain Flats .
- Retains the traditional (120 + year) entrance to Aspen, which is consistent with our small town values, and preserves the traffic calming effect of the S-curves.
- Allows continued use of the new bus stops and crosswalk added in 2018 at 8th & Hallam, eliminating negative impact on mass transit flow, a problem with the straight shot.
- Avoids the significant disruption of the Castle Creek riparian zone caused by the straight shot.
- Protects neighborhoods (affordable and free market housing) along Main Street between 7th and 8th streets.
- Adds emergency evacuation lanes.
- Meets Gov. Jared Polis's mandates to:
 - » Reduce traffic-caused emissions by improving traffic flows;
 - » Solve congestion problems without adding new highway lanes;
 - » Cut costs (dramatically so versus the straight shot)

Prior votes have demonstrated a preference for retaining the S-curves. Ultimately, this is a proposal that can be embraced by the community, and one the Friends of Castle Creek would partner with the City to gain wide citizen approval.