



October 31, 2022

To: Mayor Torre and Aspen City Council

Re: 2022 Galena Cooper Living Lab

The Aspen Chamber Resort Association and the business community is in line with council's goal to increase safety, ease, and intuitiveness for all users, including pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles downtown. We appreciate the opportunity to be a partner in outreach and education to our 750 local business members. The ACRA Board of Directors and Public Affairs committee has participated in focus groups and check ins regarding safety in the downtown core and the summer 2022 Galena Living Lab, the full summary of our outreach is attached.

To fully represent our members regarding safety in the downtown core, we have used our newsletter and social media accounts to share outreach opportunities provided by the city. We have also set up a resource page on [aspenchamber.org](https://www.aspenchamber.org) that includes a history of the project, news coverage, and links to Aspen Community Voice outreach opportunities.

Along with convening multiple focus groups over the last year, we further solicited feedback from the business community through an open-ended comment form, a poll distributed through the webpage and newsletters, and an in-person feedback forum hosted on October 13th, 2022.

As you consider the future of the Galena corridor and any permanent modifications, we ask you to give credence to the community members who have shared their perspectives and concluded that this summer's modifications do not feel like a safe solution. You have already made steps in line with community wishes by removing the counterflow bike lane and returning one side of the street to angled parking, and we thank you for those revisions.

We respectfully ask that Hyman Avenue be returned to two-way traffic, presented as "Option One" in your packet. This street serves as a vital way out of the busy Galena/Cooper corner. This is needed not only for those who find themselves headed south on the 200 block of Galena, but also for the daily occurrence of those who unwittingly find themselves going the wrong direction on Cooper into Galena, as is frequently observed by our guest services staff at the visitor information booth on the Paradise corner. Furthermore as your data shows, an average of 1.93 cars every 30 mins - or nearly 4 an hour - turn left at the Galena/Hyman intersection and go the wrong way down Hyman, significantly increasing danger in this high use area.

You will see in the attached charts that more than 60% of survey respondents request that Hyman Ave. return to two-way traffic, and this was a frequent comment in our intersection-by-intersection station at our open house.

Secondly, we ask that you allow for open public comment and community discussion before directing that there be permanent changes or future labs downtown. As you have heard, the top message we received from our membership was that they did not feel their input or participation mattered before or during this experiment.

We understand that feedback was collected through public surveys and the hotline, but the absence of opportunity for public comment in any council discussions on the topic has created an incomplete engagement environment. While council has access to the full variety of comments that have ended up in your inbox, individuals are not privy to the varying perspectives of their fellow community members, and unable to share their thoughts constructively in a public manner.

Again, ACRA and the business community appreciate the need for creative solutions to improve safety for all those who travel to and through our downtown core. We thank you for addressing this need, and look forward to further opportunities to facilitate community-oriented solutions for all.

Sincerely,

ACRA Public Affairs Committee
Through: Alycin Bektesh Public Affairs Manager, ACRA

Attch:
ACRA Pedestrian Safety in the Core outreach timeline
ACRA Galena Living Lab Survey Results
ACRA Galena Living Lab Open House summary

ACRA outreach on the Galena Cooper Living Lab is as follows:

Aug 2, 2021 Downtown traffic focus group convened at request of city
Aug 2, 2021 Public Affairs Committee Update included notice of Aug 23 work session
Aug 9, 2021 Downtown traffic questionnaire on social media
Aug 11, 2021 Member Newsletter, notice of Aug 23rd Pedestrian Safety meeting & link to questionnaire
Aug 12, 2021 One-on-one, ACRA/City of Aspen Engineering
Sept 16, 2021 City releases safety & mobility memo, ACRA forwards to focus group
Sept 23, 2021 Correspondence with City of Aspen requesting memo revision to reflect business concerns with the lab
Sept 27, 2021 Concerns over the lab sent to Board of Directors at request of Meridian Jewelers
Sept 28, 2021 ACRA BOD Meeting, Mitch Osur & engineering team present lab concept
Nov 3, 2021 Member Newsletter, Save the date for Safety & Mobility in the Downtown Core Town Hall
Nov 17, 2021 Member Newsletter, Submit questions for Safety & Mobility in the Downtown Core Town Hall
Nov 29, 2021 E Blast, Safety & Mobility in the Downtown Core Town Hall invite reminder
Dec 1, 2021 Safety & Mobility in the Downtown Core Town Hall
Dec 2, 2021 Member Newsletter, link to grassroots recording of Safety & Mobility in the Downtown Core Town Hall
Feb 11, 2022 Member Newsletter, Feb 15 work session notice
Feb 15, 2022 City Council approves lab installation
Apr 21, 2022 ACRA Public Affairs committee update on lab plans
Jun 15, 2022. Member Newsletter announces upcoming lab
Jun 24 - July 1, 2022 Galena Cooper Living Lab Installation
Jul 6, 2022 CCLC presentation from project team
Jul 11, 2022 Launched project information page and feedback form online
July 13, 2022 Member Newsletter, providing engagement opportunities, project phone number, link to ACRA info page and feedback form
Jul 27, 2022 Member Newsletter, resource page and input form
Aug 1, 2022 Instagram post and stories announcement public discussion notice
Aug 1, 2022. Aspen City Council work session
Aug 2, 2022. Work Session summary sent to ACRA Public Affairs Committee
Aug 10, 2022 Member Newsletter, business impact poll
Aug 15, 2022 Instagram post & stories pop up event notice
Aug 16, 2022 Mid-lab focus group with project team and downtown business reps
Aug 17, 2022 CCLC check in with project team
Aug 18, 2022 ACRA Public Affairs Committee, business check in
Aug 19, 2022. ACRA sends task force notice of Aug 23 public discussion
Aug 24, 2022 Member Newsletter with lab updates and sentiment survey
Oct 13, 2022 ACRA Feedback Forum
Oct 20, 2022 ACRA Public Affairs Committee presentation – member feedback results