



CASE STUDY

# BALANCING THE NEEDS OF VISITORS AND RESIDENTS



**CLIENT**  
Aspen Chamber  
Resort Association



**SOLUTION**  
Stewardship

## CLIENT NEED

Situated on the western slope of the Rockies and bordered by two Colorado mountain ranges, Aspen is a renowned world-class destination. Vast outdoor and cultural activities provide year-round options for visitors and residents. Aspen is a seasonal destination with high levels of visitation in the winter and summer seasons.

Tourism is an integral part of the city's economic base and needs to generate activity to support the local hospitality industry. Yet Aspen's destination leaders recognized that their work needs to balance tourism activity with resident needs.

Through a grant from the Colorado Tourism Office, the Aspen Chamber Resort Association (ACRA) tasked Clarity of Place with assessing the destination from both the tourism and resident perspectives. Clarity of Place used its data-driven approach to define community alignment. The project identified specific implementation strategies ACRA could take to carry out its recently commissioned Aspen Destination Management Plan.



**ASPEN**  
DEFY ORDINARY

“ We as a travel industry have come to understand that comfort is important. The residents are finally getting their say... long-term, comfort is a very sound business decision because we don't want to overrun the golden goose. ”

—Eliza Voss, Vice President  
Destination Marketing



## SOLUTION



Clarity of Place reviewed destination performance data and assessments of economic and demographic trends facing Aspen. This research identified the specific times of year that strain the destination's product and negatively impact residents' quality of life. Specifically, the assessments did the following:

- Identified the sources of increased visitation at the city's attractions and amenities,
- Documented historic seasonal trends in visitation, and
- Determined which amenities are overtaxed by visitor and resident use and which are underutilized.

By using a holistic approach that measured the Aspen visitor economy's alignment with other aspects of the local community, Clarity of Place helped ACRA develop strategies to meet two goals—to mitigate the tourism's potential negative impacts on the community while balancing the economic needs of the local businesses that depend on a strong visitor economy.

The data and insights garnered from PlaceBalance helped ACRA pinpoint how to shift its programming throughout the year. For example, given the strong seasonality of the destination, Clarity of Place recommended that ACRA pursue this strategy:

- Focus on visitor management during the summer,
- Refocus short-term marketing to encourage travel from drive markets in non-peak times, and
- Coordinate with the ski corporation and resorts to attract visitors during slower periods in winter.

The data also provides “proof-points” to help communicate the value that tourism brings to Aspen's economy beyond visitor activity. It clearly shows how ACRA's efforts to manage the area's visitor economy will support overall community goals.

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## PLACE|BALANCE

PlaceBalance is Clarity of Place's diagnostic tool that provides an evidence-based understanding of these concepts:

- How well the visitor economy is aligned with its community,
- How the physical product of a destination can be leveraged to encourage visitation,
- How non-tourism market forces are impacting the destination product, and
- Which areas of strain or opportunity impact the destination's competitiveness.

PlaceBalance combines the efficiency and scalability of a data analytics platform with Clarity of Place's practitioner expertise. The propriety tool assesses the destination's historic visitor performance, considers sentiment around tourism (from residents and tourism industry partners), and maps and inventories the destination's current physical product.

Clarity of Place evaluates the data and draws insights to solve client concerns or address issues to align the destination with its community.



Contact us to learn how PlaceBalance can help your community.

Clarity of Place  
[www.clarityofplace.com](http://www.clarityofplace.com)