

JOINT PEDC & TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Subject: Consideration of Concept Review Application #CR 21-001, requesting PEDC and Town Council feedback on a proposal to redevelop the Mammoth Main Lodge Base with hospitality and lodging products, multi-family and single-family for-sale residences, commercial services including food, beverage and retail offerings, skier service facilities, parking and associated infrastructure and support improvements.

Meeting Date: June 16, 2021

Written by: Chandler Van Schaack, Senior Planner

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning and Economic Development Commission (PEDC) and Town Council consider Concept Review Application #CR 21-001 along with presentations from staff and MMLR (the applicant) and provide preliminary feedback on the proposed Main Lodge redevelopment project.

BACKGROUND:

As a result of the United States Forest Service (USFS) approval of the 2019 Land Exchange, the Mammoth Main Lodge Base “Parcel A” and proximal “Parcel B” (See **Figure 1** below), together consisting of approximately 35.7 acres of land currently located within the municipal boundary limits of the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Town), are now owned by Mammoth Main Lodge Redevelopment LLC (MMLR). The Land Exchange parcels currently include commercial uses and associated infrastructure including, but not limited to, the Mammoth Mountain Inn, the Yodler restaurant, gondola and ski lift bases, a snowmobile and snow cat rental and tour service, wastewater treatment ponds and several parking areas.

As explained in the Mammoth Base Land Exchange Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS), one of the purposes of the exchange was to facilitate potential future redevelopment of the parcels to “increase the intensity of use of the parcel and modernize or replace outmoded and decrepit facilities that have reached the end of their useful life. New or updated amenities may include skier facilities, visitor lodging, fractional and whole ownership condominiums, and employee housing.” (Final EIS, p. 3.). As no specific redevelopment plans were contemplated when the Land Exchange was approved, the Final EIS explains that “redevelopment would be contingent on Town of Mammoth Lakes and CEQA review processes, which would analyze plans for redevelopment...” (*Id.* at p. 5.)

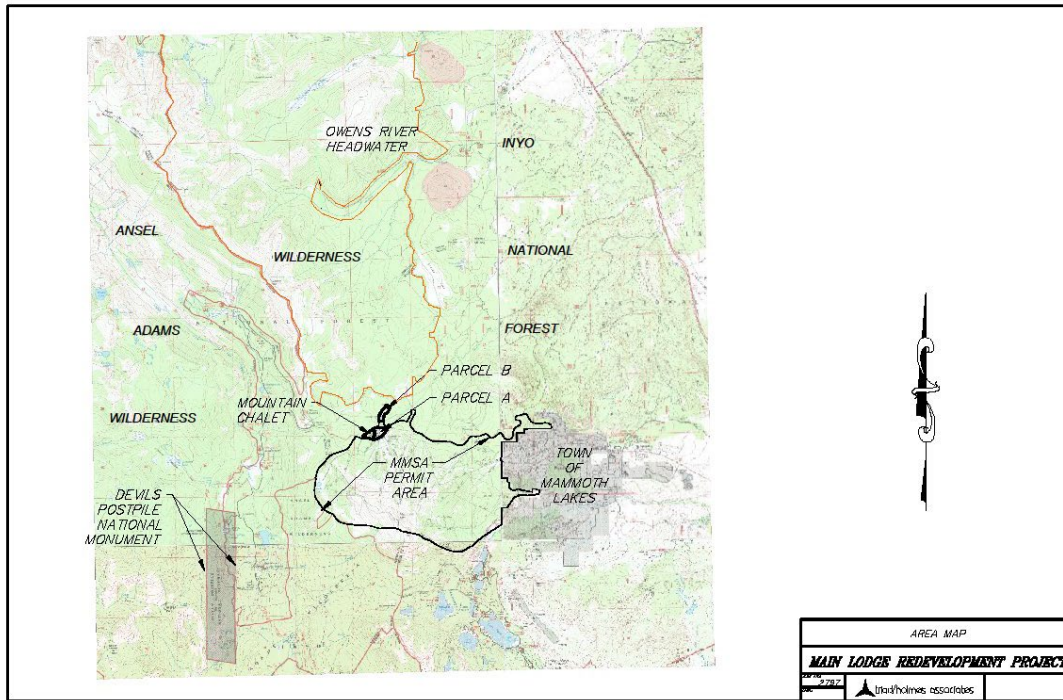


Figure 1: Vicinity Map

MMLR submitted a Pre-Application to the Town in January of 2021 that included a conceptual land use plan and project description. In the following months, Town staff met with MMLR on several occasions to discuss the project and provide information on applicable regulations and process requirements. On May 13, 2021, MMLR submitted a Concept Review Application in order to receive preliminary feedback from PEDC and Town Council prior to submitting the formal entitlement package (the required entitlements are described in further detail in under “Entitlement Process” below).

CONCEPT REVIEW PURPOSE:

Pursuant to Section 17.60.040 of the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code, the purpose of Concept Review is to *“inform the applicant of Town requirements as they apply to the proposed development project, provide a preliminary list of issues that will likely be of concern during formal application review, suggest possible alternatives or modifications to the project, based on identified development standards and other adopted policies and regulations, and identify technical studies that may be necessary for the environmental review process when a formal application is filed.”* In this case, staff has already informed the applicant of the applicable Town requirements and technical studies that will apply to the proposed project, so the purpose of this meeting is to allow the Planning and Economic Development Commission and Town Council to identify issues that will likely be of concern during the application review and/or to suggest possible alternatives or modifications to the project based on existing development standards or other adopted policies or regulations. It should be noted that no formal action from either the PEDC or Town Council is requested at this time. Once the formal entitlement package is submitted

and reviewed by Town staff, public hearings will be held and formal actions by both PEDC and Town Council will be required. Additional information on the required entitlement processes for the project are described below.

CONCEPT REVIEW PROPOSAL:

The proposed plan combines overnight accommodations, residential real estate, retail, food and beverage options, and facilities for skiers and summer visitors. As part of these improvements, Minaret Road (State Route 203) is proposed to be realigned along the northern edge of Parcel A to facilitate direct connection of the MMSA permit area to the new village. Supporting improvements are proposed on USFS permit land, including reconstruction of the existing Main Lodge skier services facility, a new visitor parking lot, a new pulse gondola, and additional ski trails. An updated Master Development Plan (MDP) is being processed by the USFS to characterize these related improvements in more detail.



Figure 2: Parcel Map

Parcel A

The plan for Parcel A (shown in **Figure 3** below) includes two hotels, for-sale residential, residential club amenities, and a variety of retail, dining, and skier services distributed through a vibrant village core. As summarized in the table on page 37 of the Concept Review submittal (**Attachment A**), the plan proposes up to 1,610,000 square feet of total gross area including up to 350 hotel keys, 400 residential units, 100,000 square feet of commercial facilities, and 45,000 square feet of skier services facilities. Basement parking in the various hotel and residence buildings add over 900 parking stalls in total to Parcel A.



Figure 3: Parcel A Site Plan

A hotel at the southwest corner of the site grounds the opposite end of the “ski beach” at the confluence of the chairlifts, and a Residents’ Club, second hotel, and additional condos throughout the site provide opportunities for varying levels of ownership, with club amenities and programming. Family-focused condo residences on the hilltop at the northwest corner of the parcel tie directly into the kid-friendly terrain connecting to the “Ski Ranch” with several new ski runs and a pulse gondola to Parcel B. The expanded food and beverage options paired with fragmented buildings activate the pedestrian corridor and create a small-town village feel that optimize views up the mountain.

Parcel B.

Set into the forest north and downhill of Main Lodge Village, the “ski ranch” is envisioned as a lower intensity complement to the Village. A series of cabins surrounding a lodge building and fitness pavilion constitute a unique family-oriented hospitality offering – the appeal of Tamarack but organized around downhill skiing. These cabins would be complemented by a limited number of single-family homes at the northernmost end of the parcel.

The plan for Parcel B includes a mix of visitor accommodations (up to 100 units within 84,500 square feet of a Tamarack-style offering with combined cabins, amenities, and

dining options), up to 14 for-sale single family residences (90,000 square feet), 2,500 square feet of commercial facilities, and 3,000 square feet of skier services.

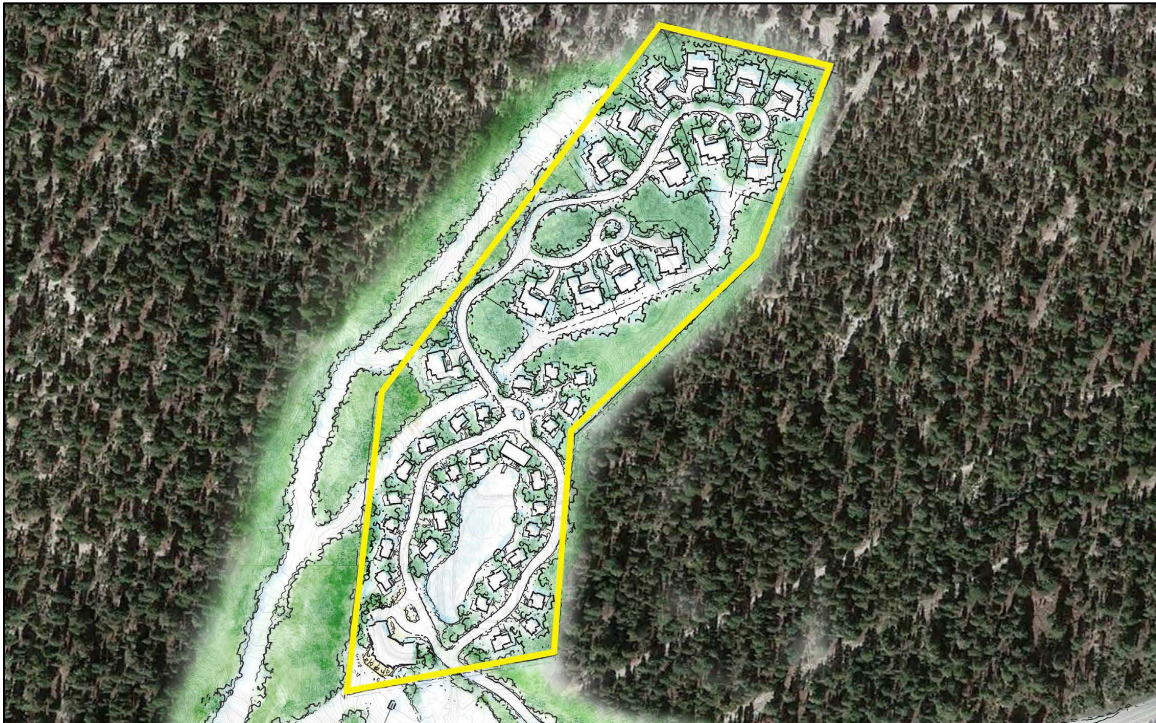


Figure 4: Parcel B Site Plan

Approximately 40 parking stalls are provided at the lodge, in addition to 15 residential visitor stalls, and separate private parking for each cabin.

A new road is proposed to connect Parcel A to Parcel B along the alignment identified in the transfer from USFS. This will be a 26'-wide roadway with two-12' travel lanes, 5' uphill bike lane, and 1' downhill paved shoulder. A minimum of 10' of snow storage will be provided on either side of the road.

In total, new and existing development on Parcels A, B, and adjacent ski area permit land will include up to 415 residential units (up to 900,000 square feet of sellable space), up to 450 lodging keys distributed between several locations, up to 156,000 square feet of commercial space, and up to 175,000 square feet of skier services and support areas.

Realignment of Minaret Road.

The proposed realignment of Minaret Road provides for a more seamless connection between new visitor-serving uses in the Village and Mammoth Mountain itself, while also maintaining winter access to the adjacent Chalets and summer access to Devil's Postpile National Monument, John Muir Trail and Red's Meadow. A new transit plaza would be the primary access portal to the Village year-round, improving transit convenience for skiers arriving at the mountain and maintaining transit service for those continuing to Devil's Postpile and Red's Meadow in the summer.

Short-term parking would serve the ski school and other Village uses. “Big Bend,” a new 360-stall visitor parking area is proposed just the east of Main Lodge Village on ski area permit land, which will be served by the resort shuttle system. Additionally, below-grade visitor parking spaces will be provided within the footprints of proposed buildings within the Village – for a total of 1,443 stalls across the entire project. The proposed road realignment and parking improvements are illustrated in **Figure 5** below.

Figure 5: Proposed Road Realignment

At the west end of Parcel A, adjacent the Mammoth Mountain Chalets and the hotel, a new turn-around is proposed with limited spaces for pick-up/drop-off. This turn-around would facilitate year-round turnaround of tourist buses and serve as a potential drop-off location for the Red's Meadow shuttle in the summer.

Additional development on USFS permit area land adjacent to the site will optimize the use of the site and provide the required skier services efficiently allowing Mammoth Mountain to support increased skier throughput in the future. Skier services (approximately 126,000 sf) are partially concentrated on the southern edge of Parcel A in several interconnected Skier Services Buildings, the relocated gondola and Chair Lift 11, the new

Big Bend Parking Area and Operations Headquarters Building, and several kiosks located along the promenade on ski area permit land within the existing Special Use Permit Area. Additional supplemental skier services (approximately 45,000 sf) are efficiently spread throughout Parcel A, with some skier services located on Parcel B as well. The Panorama Gondola lower terminal and Chair 11 lower terminal are both relocated along their respective alignments, creating more unobstructed area for the ski beach and walkable village. Several kiosks line the ski beach providing additional retail and “grab’n’go” food options.

The plan expands and improves beginner terrain in Gus’ Teaching Area, while also positioning ski school facilities slope-side adjacent to the drop-off area. Additional ski terrain from the base of Chair 12 provides direct ski-in access to the Mammoth Mountain Chalets and down to Parcel B. 24,000 square feet of administration and employee facilities and 360 surface parking stalls are located at Big Bend just east of Parcel A along Minaret Road.

ENTITLEMENT PROCESS:

As described above, the current Concept Review Application is not part of the formal entitlement process for the proposed project; rather, it is an opportunity for PEDC and Town Council to provide feedback on the project prior to completion of project plans and submittal of entitlement applications. Based on the preliminary information provided by the applicant, staff has identified the following entitlement applications which will be required for the project:

- General Plan, Zoning Code and Zoning Map Amendments (MC Chapter 17.112) to include the parcels within the Town’s UGB as provided for in Policy L.6.E and to create a Mammoth Main Lodge Base Specific Plan (MMLBSP) land use designation and zoning district.
- Specific Plan (MC Chapter 17.116) to establish a base density, permitted uses and associated development standards.
- Development Agreement (MC Chapter 17.108)

Additionally, as development proposed in the Mammoth Main Lodge Base Specific Plan moves forward, the following additional discretionary and ministerial approvals will be required from the Town:

- Tentative and Final Tract Maps
- Design Review
- Grading Permit
- Building Permits

For the purposes of this Concept Review, staff recommends that the PEDC and Town Council focus on the findings for the proposed Specific Plan, as that is the primary entitlement that will create the development standards and design guidelines that will

regulate development within the project area. Specific Plans are required to include the following information:

1. **Proposed land uses.** The distribution, location, and extent of land uses proposed within the area covered by the specific plan, including open space areas.
2. **Infrastructure.** The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private circulation/transportation (including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit), sewage water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, water, utilities, and other essential features proposed to be located within the specific plan area and needed to support the proposed land uses.
3. **Land use and development standards.** Standards, criteria, and design guidelines by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
4. **Implementation measures.** A program of implementation measures, including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the proposed land uses, infrastructure, and land use and development standards and criteria.
5. **Relationship to the General Plan.** A discussion of the relationship of the specific plan to the goals, policies, actions, general land uses, and programs of the General Plan.
6. **Additional information.** The specific plan shall contain any additional information deemed necessary by the Director because of the characteristics of the area to be covered by the plan, applicable policies of the General Plan, or any other issues determined by the Director to be relevant.

In order to approve the proposed Specific Plan, the Town Council will need to make the required findings found in Municipal Code Section 17.116.060. These findings are quite broad, with the primary finding being *“That the specific plan is consistent with the General Plan and other adopted goals and policies of the Town.”* Staff has provided several discussion questions below to provide examples of some adopted goals and policies that the PEDC and Town Council may wish to consider.

PUBLIC PROCESS:

There will be several opportunities for public input as the project progresses. The required amendments to the General Plan, Zoning Code and Zoning Map will all require a public hearing and recommendation by the PEDC followed by a public hearing before the Town Council after which the Council must vote to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the application. Public notice for these hearings will be posted in accordance with Municipal Code requirements.

In addition to project entitlements, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required under CEQA. The extent of the review and type of document to be prepared under NEPA has not been confirmed; however, based on initial discussions with the environmental

consultant, Town staff assumes that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be the appropriate NEPA document and that a joint EIR/EIS will be prepared to satisfy CEQA and NEPA requirements. A summary of the opportunities for public input on the CEQA/NEPA documents and required public hearings is included below:

Noticing and Scoping (August/ September 2021)

A 30-day scoping period will introduce the project to members of the public, explain the process for review, and solicit input on the project and alternatives. The scoping period will begin when the Notice of Preparation of an EIR and Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS is distributed to the public, per the State CEQA Guidelines. During the 30-day scoping period there will be a joint public scoping meeting/open house, to be organized by the Town and the Forest Service.

Public Draft EIR/EIS (April 2022 – 45 day review period)

Following receipt of comments from the Town, the Forest Service, and the applicant team, and approval of the Screencheck Draft EIR/EIS, the CEQA consultant will prepare the Public Draft EIR/EIS. The Town and the Forest Service will prepare and distribute the notices of availability to the project mailing list, the Federal Register, the county clerk's office, and any other necessary agencies. Additionally, the Town and/or the Forest Service will be responsible for newspaper noticing and any other noticing. A public hearing will be held during the public review period.

Final EIR/EIS Hearings (December 2022)

Final public hearings before the PEDC and Town Council will be held addressing EIR/EIS certification and project approval.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **Overall, does the project as shown appear consistent with the Town's General Plan and other adopted goals and policies?**
2. **What key issues should the applicant take into consideration as they develop their entitlement application package?**
3. **Are there related issues outside of the project area that the applicant should consider (e.g. public access to Devil's Postpile, employee housing, etc.)?**

OPTIONS ANALYSIS

Option 1 (staff recommendation): PEDC and Town Council consider Concept Review Application #CR 21-001 and provide feedback to the applicant regarding consistency with adopted goals and policies and other issues that should be taken into consideration for the project.

STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS:

Processing of this Concept Review Application and future entitlement applications is within the normal scope of work for Planning staff. No special staffing considerations are anticipated.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The applicant is required to bear the cost of all consulting work, Town Attorney time spent on the project and staff time, as well as any other fees and charges established by the Town Council for the filing and processing of the entitlement package. In the event that the applicant submits a development agreement application, the Community and Economic Development Department would likely request authorization of an additional consulting agreement with Kosmont or another consultant for Public-Private Transaction Advisory Services for the duration of the negotiation. The cost of such an agreement is unknown at this time.

If an application for a development agreement is submitted, negotiations between the Town and the Applicant will require detailed financial analysis of the project and proposed agreement terms, and Town Council will ultimately have the authority to approve or deny such application.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Town Attorney will participate in this project as it progresses. The Town has also engaged Alisha Winterswyk, a CEQA/NEPA expert, to assist the Town in the CEQA/NEPA process. In the event that the applicant submits a development agreement application, extensive consultation with the Town Attorney will be required throughout the negotiation process to ensure that the development agreement furthers the Town's interests and that the Town is legally protected.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Concept Review Application