

## TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Prop 68 Regional Park Program Update, Survey Analysis, and Design Input.

Meeting Date: October 20, 2021

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive an update from staff, take comments from the public, and provide consensus comments or design input regarding the Prop 68 Regional Park Program grant application for the Whitmore Track and Sports Field.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Town in partnership with Mammoth Lakes Recreation (MLR), Mammoth Hospital, Mammoth Track Club, and Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLPTA) are submitting a \$3 million competitive grant application for the Proposition 68 Regional Park Program.

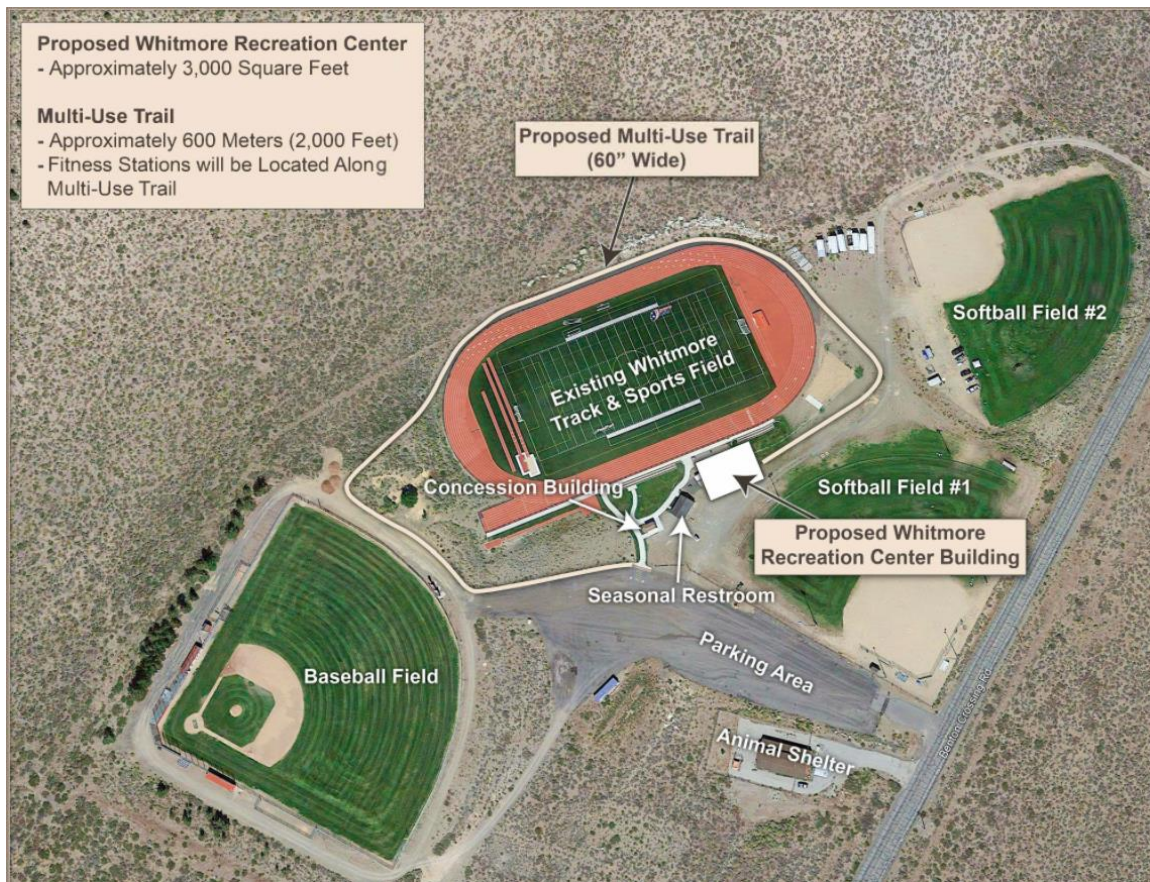
Regional Park Program (RPP) competitive grants will create, expand, and improve regional parks. RPP projects need to create at least one new recreation feature that attracts visitors from at least a 20-mile radius or county-wide population to a regional park. While renovation of recreation features may be included, a project will be more competitive if it creates at least one new recreation feature and a new multi-use trail. The total amount available statewide for award is \$23,125,000.

Combined with the stunning 9-lane polyurethane track and full-size synthetic turf field, the new recreation features will further position Mammoth Lakes' reputation as a premier high-altitude training destination for a multitude of endurance sports and recreation.

**NEW Application deadline:** Thursday, January 20, 2022 before 5:00pm (moved from the original November 5, 2021 due date).

### **ANALYSIS:**

The grant application proposes a NEW recreation center (approx. 3,000 sq. ft.) and a NEW multi-use trail (approx. 2,000 linear ft.) with fitness stations. The Whitmore Track and Sports Field project was adopted by the Town's Planning Commission on October 26, 2011, and Phase I was completed on November 17, 2012. The Phase II recreation features will enhance the operation of the existing Whitmore Track and Sports Field, but also further attract visitors from around the county, throughout the state, and potentially from across the country.



The \$3 million grant application includes a proposed recreation center and multi-use trail with fitness stations. The proposed recreation features are listed in detail below in Table A.

TABLE A.

Whitmore Track and Sports Field - RPP Grant Submittal		Estimate
<b>New Recreation Features</b>		
Recreation Center (approx. 3,000 sq. ft.)		\$ 2,500,000.00
Multi-use trail (approx. 600 meters) + fitness stations (approx. 7-10)		\$ 400,000.00
		<b>\$ 2,900,000.00</b>
<b>Project Contingency and Grant Administrative Costs</b>		
Includes eligible grant costs and project contingency		\$ 100,000.00
		<b>\$ 100,000.00</b>
<b>Total Project Estimate</b>		<b>\$ 3,000,000.00</b>

## **Design Input**

A significant component of the grant submittal and scoring matrix is design input. The applicant needs to describe what engagement methods were used to obtain specific design ideas for the recreation features (Recreation Center & Multi-Use Trail) from a broad representation and number of participants throughout the community. Design ideas can include:

- Detailed design ideas of the proposed recreation features.
- Location of certain recreation features or major support amenities within the project site.
- Public art, kiosks, panels, and themes to establish a sense of place by celebrating the history, culture, environment, or notable people tied to the site or surrounding region.
- Safe public use, signage, landscaping, and other ideas.

To satisfy and hopefully exceed the grant requirement, we are using the following public engagement methods.

### **Method 1: Online Survey**

A 12-question online survey was posted on the Mammoth Lakes Recreation website (<https://mammothlakesrecreation.org/>) for public access and sent to several user groups for their design input of the two new recreation features. The survey also included frequency of use and demographic information to assist in better understanding park users.

Survey Timeframe:

- Survey Launch: September 1
- Survey Close: September 27
- Survey goal: 100
- Surveys completed: 118
- Link: <https://mammothlakesrecreation.org/regional-park-program/>



## **WHITMORE TRACK AND SPORTS FIELD ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY**

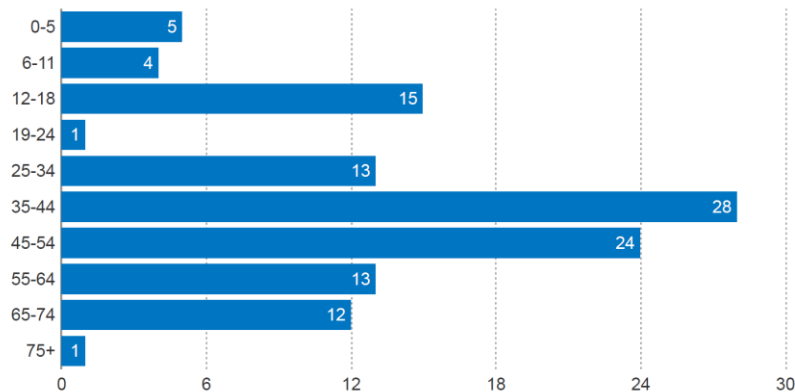
### **Summary of Survey Findings**

The survey was made available to the general public and promoted through several partner and stakeholder communication channels, such as subscriber e-mails, social media pages, and word of mouth. For example, as a partner, the Mammoth Track Club distributed the survey to their 1,003 subscribers, 7,380 Twitter followers, and 4,896 Instagram followers.

To ensure the survey was completed by a broad representation of participants, the survey was sent to the following county-wide user groups: Mammoth Track Club (partner), Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (partner), Mammoth Hospital (partner), Mammoth Lakes Trail System, Mono County Little League, Mammoth AYSO Soccer, Mammoth Unified School District, Mammoth Sharks Swim Team, Mammoth Nordic Team, Mono County Community Services Area 1, Town of Mammoth Lakes Parks and Recreation Department, Eastern Sierra Tri Club, and Eastside Velo.

The survey was completed by a broad representation of participants that either use the facility or were included as users reflected in the demographic tables below. The majority (44%) of responses were between the ages of 35-54, 22% were over the age of 55, and 38 respondents/users of the regional park were 34 years of age or younger (32%). 90% of survey respondents indicated their residence as Mono County, while twelve respondents live outside Mono County in places including Inyo County, Ventura County, and Los Angeles County.

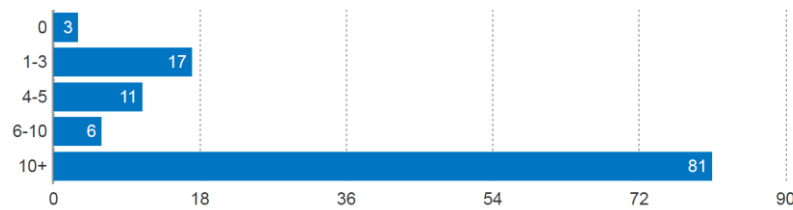
**What is your age or the age range of your business, youth sports, school, club or health organization users?**



**Are you a Mono County or Mammoth Lakes resident?**



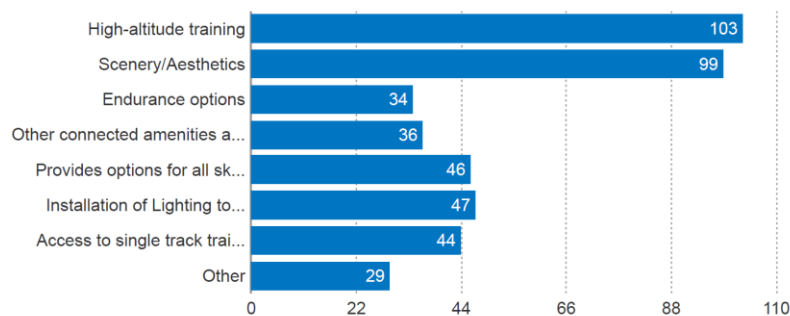
How many times have you visited the Whitmore Recreation Area?



Would the proposed Whitmore Recreation Center and multi-use trail with fitness stations increase your use/visitation of the Area?



What differentiates this facility and makes it exceptional from others in California?



### **Method 2: In-Person Meeting**

The Mammoth Track Club hosted an in-person meeting and venue site-walk at the Whitmore Recreation Area on **Saturday, October 16, 2021, from 9-10am**. The purpose of the site-walk is to provide information to the public about the proposed Regional Park Program grant project and to acquire additional community design input for programming needs, space alternatives, and path/fitness activities for the project. Coffee, tea, and bagels will be provided. Staff will provide Town Council with a verbal summary of design input received at the site meeting.

### **Method 3: Recreation Commission Meeting**

The third public engagement method used to seek design input for the recreation features was the Recreation Commission meeting on October 5, 2021. Staff made a presentation to the Commission summarizing the online survey results and design input, followed by public comment. The Recreation Commission participated in a discussion regarding the proposed recreation features at the Whitmore Recreation Area pertaining to the RPP grant application.

### **Summary of Design Input Recommendations**

Design ideas generated from public engagement planned to be included in the final project were collated into the following categories:



#### A. Public Art

- 42% of survey respondents recommended the installation of public art in the final project. The project now includes the installation of interpretive panels along the multi-use trail to introduce recreation users to the geologic, natural, and cultural history of the eastern sierra, along with the resilient flora and fauna found in this unique high-alpine environment. In addition, the project applicant now plans to paint a mural on the side of the recreation center. Designed by a local artist, the mural will represent the unique culture and landscape of the eastern sierra to be painted by volunteers living in disadvantaged communities throughout Mono County.

#### B. Signage

- Installation of dog leash requirement signs. This safety recommendation was identified in the survey along with the building of a dog park that is now part of a future project.

#### C. Park Amenities

- 23% of survey respondents indicated that shaded areas would greatly benefit the park and trail users. A shade structure is planned for the picnic area located along the multi-use trail.

#### D. Multi-use Trail

- 82% of survey respondents preferred that the multi-use trail should be made from decomposed granite (DG) or left as a natural compacted surface.

#### E. Fitness Stations

- The installation of fitness stations in clusters (2-3 units) versus single unit locations was made by public comment at the in-person meetings. This configuration will greatly increase access for mobility impaired users and encourage social engagement community connections. Clusters will also maximize the installation of the fitness stations by leveraging economies of scale for staff, material, plants/shrubs, and irrigation.
- The majority of survey respondents preferred a total of 8-10 fitness stations be located along the multi-use trail.
- The top 10 fitness stations as voted by the public were as follows:
  - i. Pull-up bar
  - ii. Sit-up bench
  - iii. Balance board
  - iv. Plyometric boxes
  - v. Leg press
  - vi. Monkey bars
  - vii. Push-up bars
  - viii. Sit-up back extension
  - ix. Lat Pull downs
  - x. Leg extension

The working group recognizes that the RPP grant is extremely competitive and will take considerable time and effort to complete the required grant tasks by November 5, 2021. Combined with the stunning 9-lane polyurethane track and full-size synthetic turf field, the new recreation features will further position Mammoth Lakes' reputation as a premier high-altitude training destination for a multitude of endurance sports, and recreation.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The grant will fund the entire project. Staff time in preparing the grant is included in departmental budgets.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Town's Planning Commission adopted the Whitmore Track Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration on October 26, 2011.

**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

If successful, the Town will be required to sign an agreement with the California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Grants and Local Services that will be reviewed by the Town Attorney.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Whitmore Track and Sports Field Online Community Survey Responses