



Town of Mammoth Lakes

Planning & Economic Development Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: April 9, 2025

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of Major Design Review 25-001 requesting approval of a 10,461 square foot multipurpose building for housing airport safety operations equipment including the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) equipment and snow removal equipment located within the Terminal Area Development Project site of the Mammoth Yosemite Airport property. The modified multipurpose building design is consistent with the 2022 Addendum to the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Project certified EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2019100384).

Applicant/ Property Owner: Sierra Waugh, Deputy Airport Manager / Town of Mammoth Lakes

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

Community & Economic Development

Nolan Bobroff, Community and Economic Development Director

Kimberly Cooke, Senior Planner

OBJECTIVE:

1. Receive Staff and Applicant presentations
2. Planning & Economic Development Commission (PEDC) discussion
3. PEDC action to:
 - a. Adopt the attached Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution (the Resolution), making the required CEQA and Municipal Code findings, and approving Design Review 25-001 as recommended by staff.
 - b. Adopt the Resolution with modifications; or
 - c. Deny the Resolution

SUMMARY:

Proposal:	Request for approval of a Major Design Review application for construction of a 10,461 square foot multipurpose building that will house the Town's Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) vehicle and snow removal operations equipment. The proposal also includes construction of supporting infrastructure such as access road, parking lot, and asphalt apron.
Project Name:	Mammoth Yosemite Airport Multipurpose Building
Location:	1300 Airport Road
Size of Property:	MMH Terminal Area Development Project site comprises 22-acres of the 196-acre MMH Airport Parcel.
Zoning:	Airport (A)
General Plan:	Airport (A)

Environmental Review: The project conforms to the 2022 Addendum to the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Project EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2019100384). A Notice of Determination (NOD) will be filed pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15094 and 15373.

KEY ISSUES:

1. Does the proposed project meet the Design Review criteria and required findings pursuant to Municipal Code (MC) Chapter 17.88?
2. Is the proposed project consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On October 6, 2021, Town Council adopted Resolution No. 21-83 to approve the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Project and certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCH No. 2019100384) for the project. At the same meeting, Town Council authorized an agreement with Brandley Engineering for the development of a conceptual design of the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF)/Snow Removal Equipment (SRE) Facility component of the project, which was included as a high priority item in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) approved by Town Council on September 1, 2021.

During the conceptual design process, Town staff determined that the ARFF/SRE facility would require minor design changes to improve facility efficiency and provide additional space for airport operations. Since the design changes would result in changes to the description of the ARFF/SRE facility as analyzed in the certified EIR, the Town prepared an Addendum to the EIR in order to update the project description for the ARFF/SRE Facility. The Addendum described minor technical changes to the certified EIR and concluded that the environmental data and analyses presented in the certified EIR remained valid with respect to the modified ARFF/SRE, and that the proposed ARFF/SRE modifications would not involve new or more severe environmental impacts compared to those identified in the certified EIR.

A Major Design Review application (DR 22-007) was submitted on December 8, 2022. In reviewing the application, staff requested the proposed color palette be revised to improve compliance with applicable Town Design Guidelines. The applicant team revised the color palette for the project and submitted revised renderings and color and material board. The Design Review application was subsequently presented to the PEDC Design Committee on December 15, 2022, and the Committee was in support of the building design as well as the color and material palette.

The PEDC held an administrative hearing for Major Design Review application (DR 22-07), on January 10, 2022. At that meeting, the Commission adopted the Addendum to the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Project EIR and approved the Design Review application with the conditions recommended by staff.

The project bidding process began in March 2023. Staff received a bid for the sitework but did not receive a bid for the structure and received feedback that the bid costs for the structure would be much higher than the engineer's estimate. After an unsuccessful bidding process for the structure, the FAA determined that many of the rooms in the building were no longer considered eligible due to changes in the Town's commercial air service. The Town determined it did not want to take on the full financial burden of the ineligible components along with anticipated construction costs being much higher than the engineer's estimate, so the Town decided to reject the site work bid and redesign the project.

Since the FAA provided eligibility feedback so late in the approval process, the agency agreed that redesigning the project was appropriate and granted funding to the Town for the redesign work. The redesign eliminated spaces

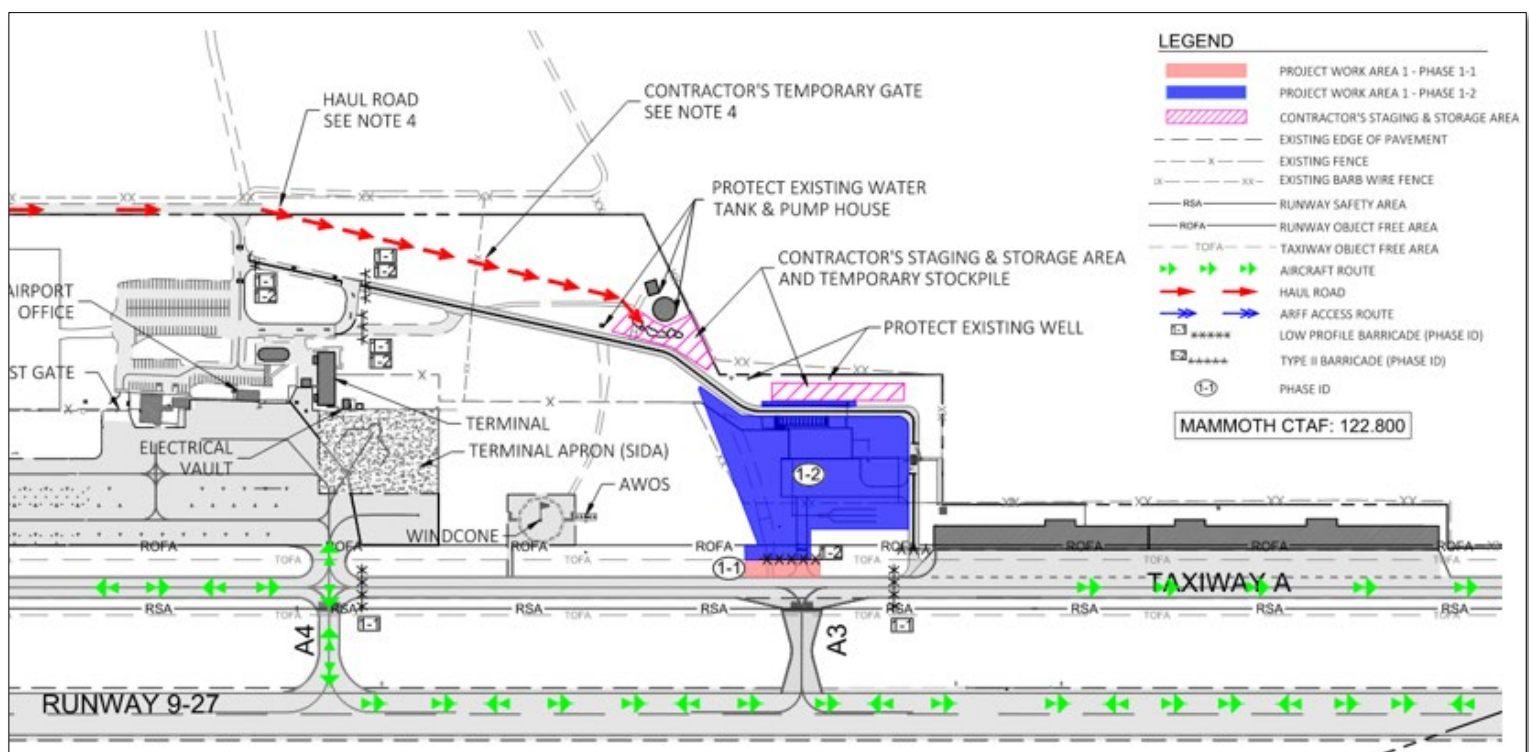
that were no longer considered eligible for FAA funding, such as a wash/dryer room, first aid/medical room, dayroom, two dorms, two locker rooms, and additional storage.

A Major Design Review application (DR 25-001) was submitted on March 6, 2025, for the modified building design, which is a smaller-scale structure compared with the 2022 approved version.

Project Proposal:

The project includes the construction of a new 10,461 square foot, 7-bay multipurpose building for housing airport safety operations equipment including the Airport Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) vehicle and snow removal equipment (SRE) as well as maintenance operations. The building includes a small lobby for customer service and access badging operations, airport staff office space, a training room, break room, and restrooms. Other site improvements associated with the new multipurpose building include pavement areas for a parking lot, access apron, airside access road, and a septic system with leach field.

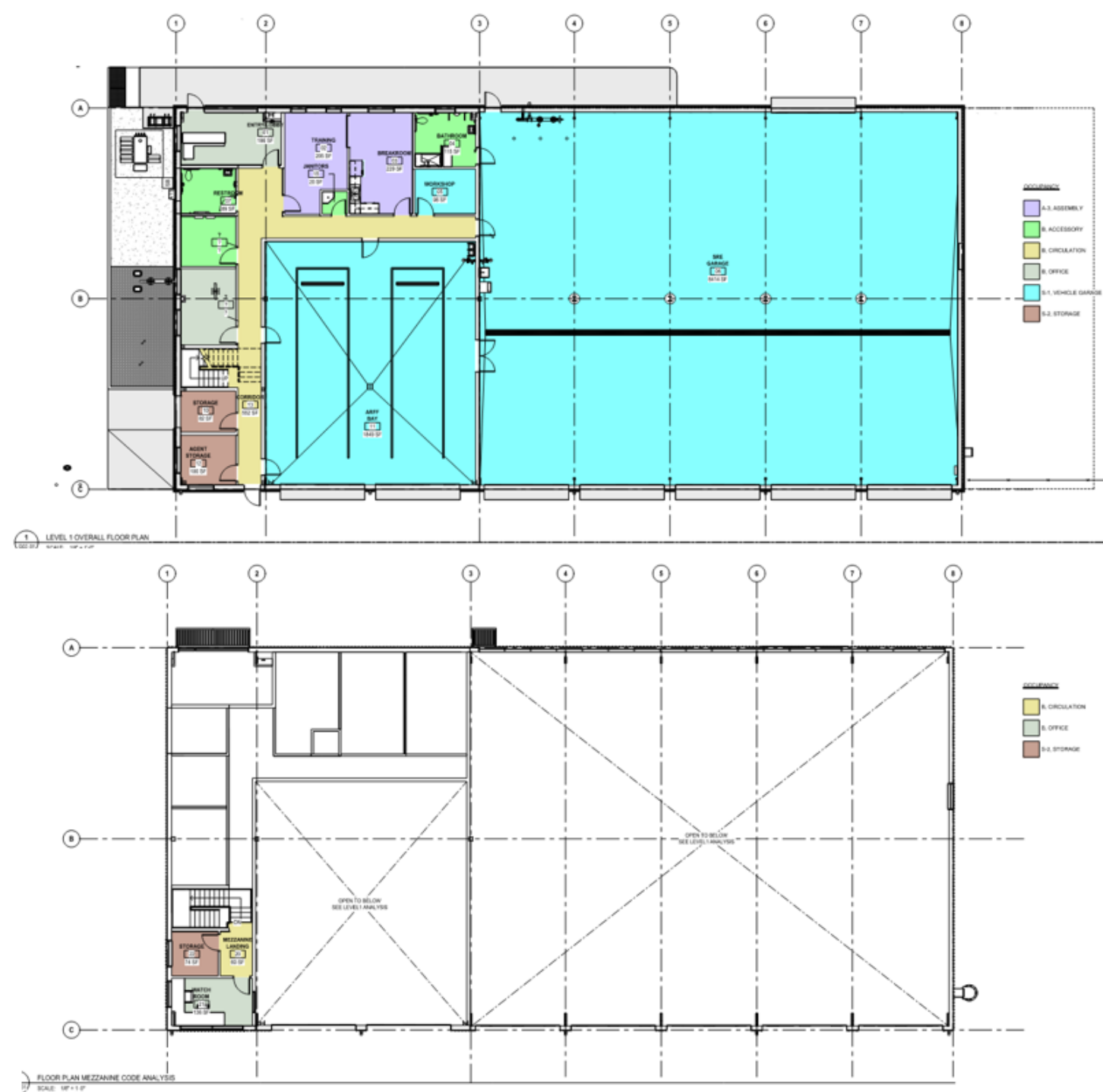
Figure 1 – Project Footprint (Building and Pavement)



The proposed multipurpose building is 27-feet tall and is primarily single-story with a small, 270 square foot second-floor mezzanine to accommodate a watch room and additional storage. The building footprint is 10,740 square feet with 10,461 square feet of usable floor area. **Figure 1** illustrates the location of the project work area shown in blue, in relation to existing airport improvements.

The overall size and height of the proposed facility is determined by the size and type of equipment that will be stored inside. **Figure 2** illustrates the interior building footprint with equipment layout and specific use areas.

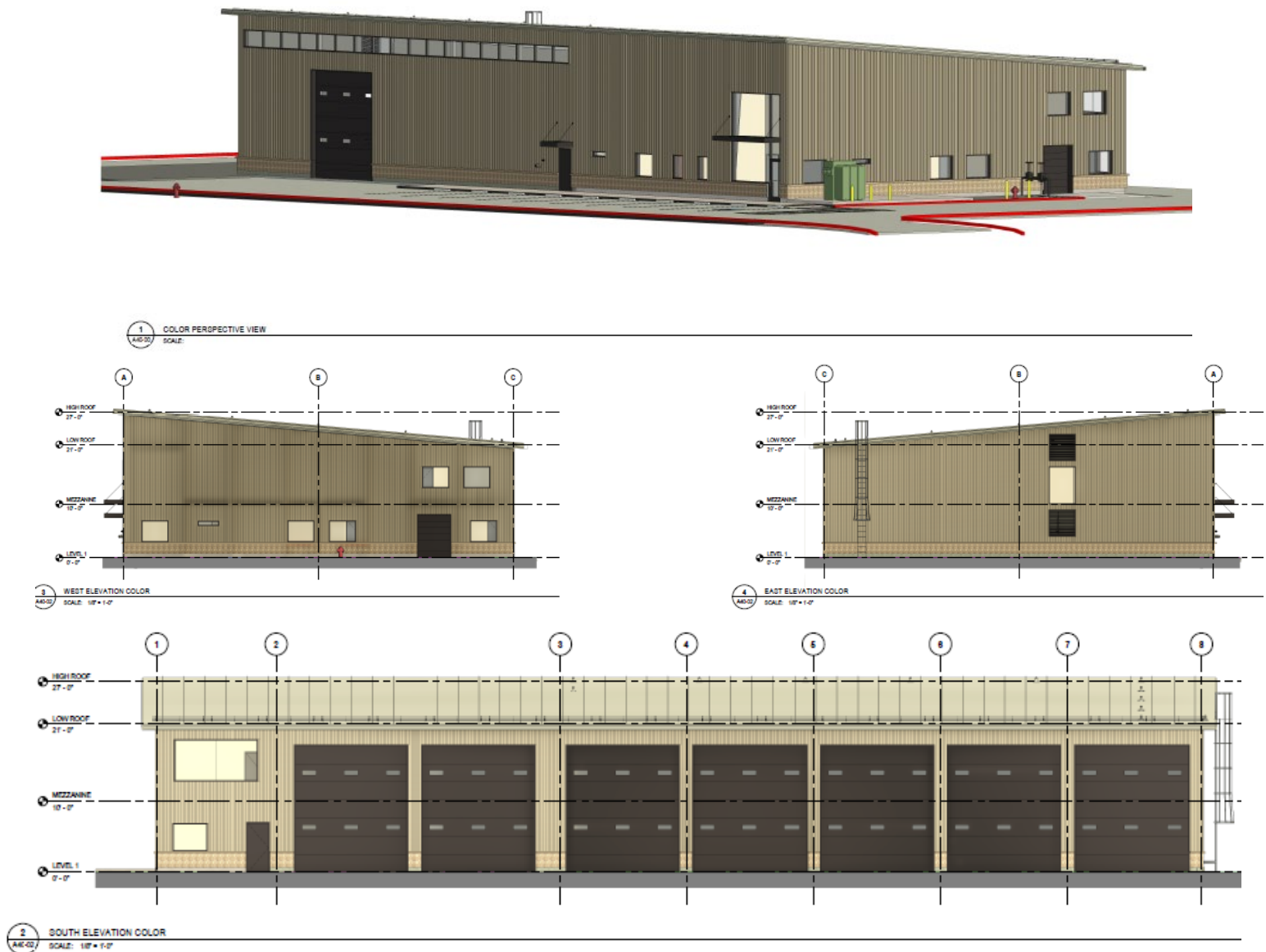
Figure 2- Floor Plan 1st and 2nd Floor Plan



The Design Review application provides information regarding the need for an appropriate facility to house all the airport’s ARFF equipment and snow removal equipment including an indoor maintenance bay. The airport currently leases a hangar from the Fixed Base Operator (FBO) to house some of the ARFF and snow removal equipment; however, that building does not have the capacity to hold all the airport’s equipment and lacks adequate ARFF support rooms. The project narrative indicates that construction of the proposed multipurpose building for housing the ARFF and snow removal equipment will extend the life of the equipment and meet the

FAA's goal of housing ARFF vehicles and snow removal equipment indoors. Additionally, the proposed facility enhances airport safety by providing adequate ARFF support rooms and improved access and response times to airport incidents. As such, the proposed structure is considered a required aviation safety structure.

Figure3- Color Elevations



The proposed infrastructure improvements proposed to serve the multipurpose building are summarized below and illustrated on the site plan:

- Personnel Parking – 7 parking spaces
- ADA Parking – 1 parking space
- Visitor Parking – 3 parking spaces
- ARFF/SRE apron – 20,058 square feet
- Airside Access Road
- Septic system with leach field

Municipal Code Consistency

The project site is located within the Town's Airport (A) Special Purpose Zoning District. *"The Airport (A) Zoning District is intended to implement the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and the goals and policies in the General Plan related to airport facilities."* The proposed project is classified as a required aviation safety structure, which is a permitted use in the (A) zoning district subject to Design Review.

The project complies with all applicable development standards, as summarized in the following **Table 2**.

Table 2: Zoning Consistency.

General Information			
General Plan: Airport (A)		Specific Plan: N/A	
Zoning: Airport (A)		Overlay Zone/District: N/A	
Existing Land Use: MMH Airport		Permits Required: Design Review	
Development Standards M.C. Section 17.32.060.C			
Standard		Proposed/Provided	Complies?
Design			
All facilities shall incorporate architectural, landscaping, signage and site design standards which support goals and policies of the General Plan. The design shall enhance the airport facility to ensure that a first-class entry statement for the Mammoth Lakes resort community is maintained.		Yes, this application is subject to Design Review and the proposed design of the facility is consistent with the Town Design Guidelines.	
Yards, Separation			
Adequate space for landscaping, vehicular/ pedestrian circulation and emergency access as determined through the Design Review process. Hangars shall not require separation between structures.		Yes, ample separation from existing airport structures is provided to allow for adequate room to maneuver the ARFF/SRE equipment	
Parking	Shall conform to parking for similar uses: 1.6 / 1,000 GLA	(3 spaces required) 1.6 x 2,100 sq.ft. of conditioned office space /1,000	Yes, 11 parking spaces provided
Building Height	45 feet - permitted for required aviation safety structures	27 Feet	Yes

Figure 4 – Color and Material Board



General Plan Consistency

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Airport (A), which allows aviation, fueling, and fixed-base operator services at the Mammoth Yosemite Airport. The proposed multipurpose building for housing the airport ARFF and snow removal equipment is an FAA required aviation safety structure and is consistent with the aviation uses on the airport property.

Specific General Plan Vision Statements with which the proposed project is consistent are described in **Table 3:**

Table 3: General Plan Vision Statement Conformance

General Plan Vision Statement	Explanation of Project Conformance
<i>“Sustainability and continuity of our unique relationship with the natural environment”</i>	The project is located within the Town’s Urban Growth Boundary and is located within a previously disturbed area of the 196-acre Airport Parcel. The proposed multipurpose building for ARFF and SRE equipment is listed as a top priority in the Airport Layout Plan and the Airport Capital Improvement Program.
<i>“Exceptional standards for design and development that complement and are appropriate to the Eastern Sierra Nevada mountain setting and our sense of a</i>	The design of the ARFF/SRE facility integrates desirable architectural details such as a cultured stone base material combined with a dark, neutral color palette, which results in a balanced aesthetic with the utilitarian form of the structure. The

<i>“village in the trees” with small town charm</i>	design incorporates colors and materials that are compatible with the mountain resort community character.
<i>“Offering a variety of transportation options that emphasize connectivity, convenience and alternatives to use of personal vehicles with a strong pedestrian emphasis.”</i>	The MMH airport operations provide essential public services for the community and permitting the proposed project would result in improved airport safety and maintenance operations.

The project is consistent with the following General Plan goals, policies, and actions as described in **Table 4**:

Table 4: General Plan Conformance with Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal, Policy, or Action	Explanation of Project Conformance with Goal, Policy, or Action
Policy E.1.F.1: Establish and maintain air service connecting the Mammoth Lakes area with destination visitor markets. • E.1.F.1.: Actively seek state and federal funding for airport improvements. • E.1.F.2: Upgrade the Mammoth Yosemite Airport terminal to allow for regional air service • E.1.F.3: Update the Airport Master Plan	The project incorporates improved safety infrastructure at the airport which will primarily be funded with FAA grant funding. The project is also consistent with the 2023 Airport Layout Plan.
Policy M.18.5: Continue to support Mammoth-Yosemite Airport as a regional transportation hub through advancement of the policies and actions for air service established in the General Plan Economy Element.	The proposed multipurpose building is listed as the #1 priority project in the 2023-2030 Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP). Implementation of this project will serve to support and improve ongoing Airport operations.
Policy C.2.V: Building height, massing and scale shall complement neighboring land uses and preserve views to the surrounding mountains.	Building height and massing are similar to the heights and massing of surrounding structures on the Airport property and the tallest ridgeline is 27-feet tall, which is 18-feet below the maximum allowed height of 45 feet. The location of the structure does not obstruct views to the surrounding mountains and the color palette is intended to blend with the backdrop of Doe Ridge.

II. ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

KEY ISSUE #1: Can the findings be made for approval of a Design Review pursuant to Municipal Code (MC) Chapter 17.88?

Design Review is required per MC Section 17.88.020. The purpose of Design Review is to implement the General Plan policies related to community design and character, to promote excellence in site planning and design to complement the natural environment and enhance the image of the town as a mountain resort community, and to ensure that the architectural design of structures and their materials and colors are appropriate to the function of the project and visually harmonious with surrounding development.

Staff finds that the proposed site layout and building design has met the overall intent of the Design Review criteria. Below is staff's analysis of the project's consistency with the Design Review criteria.

Design Review Findings:

A. The project is consistent with the applicable standards and requirements of the Municipal Code.

The project is consistent with the applicable standards and requirements of the Mammoth Lakes Zoning Code because the project is located within the Airport (A) special purpose zone, which is intended to implement the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and the goals and policies in the General Plan related to airport facilities. The project is listed as a priority project to be implemented within 0-5 years in the Airport Layout Plan as well as the Airport Capital Improvement Program. The proposed structure and related site improvements comply with all the development standards applicable to the Airport zone including standards for building separation, building height, and parking.

B. The project is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan or master plan.

The proposed construction of an ARFF/SRE facility on the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Property is consistent with the General Plan in that the applicable land use designation for the Airport is intended to allow aviation uses. The project accomplishes specific General Plan policies for Air Service including Policy E.1.F.1, E.1.F.2, and E.1.F.3, because the project would be primarily funded by FAA grant program money, and the facility is a high priority project listed within the Airport Layout Plan and the Airport Capital Improvement Program. Additionally, the multipurpose building for housing the ARFF and snow removal equipment represents a major upgrade for airport safety operations.

C. The project is consistent with the Town of Mammoth Lakes Design Guidelines.

The project is consistent with the Town's Design Guidelines applicable to civic and public use buildings because the building form is composed of a simple building form with interesting details to provide visual interest and appropriate scale and proportions consistent with other structures on the airport property. The proposed design integrates desirable architectural details and building form which results in a reasonable balance between aesthetic quality and the utilitarian nature of the structure.

The height of the proposed multipurpose building for ARFF and snow removal equipment is 27-feet tall at the tallest roof ridgeline, which is below the maximum 45-foot height permitted for aviation safety structures and is in keeping with the character of other airport operation structures on the property.

The exterior building colors and materials selected for the project are based on the Mammoth Lakes Design Guidelines recommendations, which incorporate building façade colors that are slightly darker than surrounding natural colors to better blend with the site surroundings. The metal siding panels have a matte finish in “Cool Weathered Copper” with accent siding and roll-up doors in “Cool Ebony.” The base of the structure is distinguished by the incorporation of a precast stone veneer “El Dorado Field Ledge,” and the roof is a metal standing seam material in a matte “Cool Zinc Gray” finish.

The proposed building design and site improvements combine together in a visually cohesive manner that is compatible with the surrounding natural environment and complements the character of Airport property while adhering to the required building separation, building height and parking requirements for the Airport Special Zoning District.

D. The project is consistent with any approved tentative map, use permit, variance, or other planning or zoning approval that the project required.

The proposed project is consistent with the allowable land uses described within the allowable land use table for the Airport (A) zoning district. The project is also consistent with the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), the Airport Capital Improvement Program document, and the approved MMH Terminal Area Development Project and the associated Environmental Impact Report.

KEY ISSUE #2: Is the proposed project consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Project and was certified on October 6, 2021 (SCH 2019100384). The EIR found that there would not be a significant effect on the environment as a result of the project with mitigation measures incorporated. An Addendum to the certified EIR was subsequently prepared in order to address modifications to the ARFF/SRE project description in 2022. The Addendum describes minor technical changes to the certified EIR and concludes that the environmental data and analyses presented in the certified EIR remain valid with respect to the modified design of the 2022 ARFF/SRE project.

The proposed multipurpose building for ARFF and snow removal equipment is consistent with the scope of development contemplated and analyzed in the April 2022, Addendum to Mammoth Yosemite Airport Terminal Area Development Project, which supports the conclusion that the proposed project modifications are minor technical changes that do not result in any new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects. The applicable mitigation measures from the 2022 Addendum remain applicable and are included as conditions of approval for the project.

III. STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed project meets the applicable requirements and recommends that the Planning and Economic Development Commission adopt the attached Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution, making the required CEQA and Municipal Code findings, and approving Design Review 25-001 with conditions as recommended by staff, or with modifications.

Attachments

Attachment A: Resolution No. PEDC 2025-04

Attachment B: Project Plans, Color Renderings and Color & Material Board

Attachment C: 2022 CEQA Addendum to the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Certified EIR