



Town of Mammoth Lakes

Planning & Economic Development Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: May 14, 2025

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of Major Design Review Application (DR) 24-004 for the revised Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center (MACC) project located in the Public/Quasi-Public (P/QP) zoning district. The project consists of the addition of an approximately 7,482 square foot performing arts theatre attached to the east side of the existing Edison Hall building located at 100 College Parkway. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project was found to be consistent with the scope of development analyzed in the November 2023, Addendum to the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (State Clearinghouse No. 2019012023) which determined the revised project design would not result in any new environmental impacts that were not previously analyzed in the approved IS/MND.

Applicant/ Property Owner: Amy Callanan, TOML Engineering Manager / Mammoth Lakes Foundation

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

Community & Economic Development

Nolan Bobroff, CED 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 Design Review and CEQA findings, and approving Major Design Review Application (DR) 24-004 as recommended by staff.
 - b. Adopt the Resolution with modifications; or
 - c. Deny the Resolution

SUMMARY:

Proposal:	Major Design Review application for the construction of a 7,482 square foot performing arts theatre attached to the east side of the existing Edison Hall building.
Project Name:	Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center (MACC)
Location:	100 College Parkway (APN: 035-010-049-000)
Size of Property:	7.9 Acres
Zoning:	Public / Quasi Public (P/QP)
General Plan:	Institutional Public (IP)

Environmental Review: The revised MACC project is consistent with the scope of development analyzed in the 2023 Addendum to the Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center (SCH No. 2019042023). A Notice of Determination (NOD) will be filed pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15162 and 15164.

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

In 1994, a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) was prepared for the Eastern Sierra College Center (ESSC) Project. The project sponsor was the Mammoth Lakes Foundation via the Kern Community College District (KCCD), and the project objective was to locate a permanent college center in the Mammoth Lakes area and to expand course offerings and educational opportunities in the Eastern Sierra Region. The PEIR included the evaluation of several related projects that were planned for the 80-acre site, which included an Upper Division College facility, a Mammoth Unified School District facility, and a Cultural Center.

The Mammoth Lakes Foundation, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, was the local sponsor for the project. MLF evolved from the Eastern Sierra College Committee, and acted as the primary college advocacy organization whose stated purpose at that time was to “Support development of higher education and cultural enrichment in the Eastern Sierra region, including the establishment of a permanent campus in the Mammoth Lakes area that would provide facilities for academic studies, appreciation of the arts and student housing...”

The PEIR prepared for the ESSC described a College Center, Cultural Center, Upper Division College, Student Housing, and a Mammoth Unified School District (MUSD) Facility. The Cultural Center was described as Phase 2 of the project which would include a 21,000 square foot theater with 500 seats on 2.5 acres and a 35,000 square foot amphitheater with 1,000 sloped seats and 800 grass seats on 2.7 acres.

More than twenty years later, in 2017, the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center Project (Project) was proposed. The project was the result of a partnership between the Mammoth Lakes Foundation, Cerro Coso Community College, Town of Mammoth Lakes, and private donors.

The PEDC approved the MACC project and associated CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration on April 10, 2019. The approved project included construction of a 298-seat Performing Arts Theater building, a 500-seat outdoor amphitheater, and associated parking lot.

FIGURE 1 - 2019 APPROVED MACC DESIGN AND LAYOUT



A few years after the 2019 approval of the original MACC design, the Mammoth Lakes Foundation requested approval for modifications to the approved design and layout of the project which would reduce the square footage of the theatre and situate the structure closer to the existing Edison Hall building. The modified project also included leasing the remainder of the project site to the Town for construction and operation of a new childcare center, dog park, and parking lot. An Addendum to the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared in 2023 to document the analysis of the modified project.

In June 2024, the Town Public Works Department submitted a Major Design Review application to the Planning Division for a revised design of the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center (MACC) project. The modified design of the MACC has been scaled back from the original approved design due to shortfalls in financing for the project and high construction and operational costs. The Town and the Mammoth Lakes Foundation collaborated on developing a viable project design that will accomplish the goals of providing a year-round venue for performing arts events, including live theater, musical performances, films, lectures, conferences, and community activities.

The Town is currently in negotiations with the Mammoth Lakes Foundation to purchase the 7.9-acre parcel which includes the existing Edison Hall building. The Town intends to assume responsibility for final design and construction of the MACC, as well as future operations. Town staff anticipate putting the project out to bid in May 2025, with a possible groundbreaking this Fall.

Pursuant to the Town's design review requirements (MC Chapter 17.88), the Project requires Major Design Review approval by the Planning and Economic Development Commission (PEDC) because it is new construction that is not exempt from design review or subject to Minor Design Review. Additionally, projects which are deemed significant by the Community and Economic Development Department also require review by the ADP prior to

review and decision by the PEDC. The role of the ADP is to provide impartial and professional advice to Town staff and the PEDC on site planning and building design based on the same guidance that staff uses in their analysis. Those recommendations are then typically used to make changes to the project that improves conformity with the guiding documents, which include the Town's General Plan, Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, and Color Handbook.

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) reviewed the project on July 25, 2024. Revisions to the building and site design were made to address the ADP's comments and recommendations. ADP members agreed that a second ADP meeting would not be necessary if their comments and recommendations were addressed.

I. PROJECT PROPOSAL

The scope of the current MACC project includes the addition of a single-story performing arts theatre attached to the east side of the existing Edison Hall building. Use of the Edison Hall building in the project redesign has reduced the need for additional 'back of house' space in the new facility and minimizes the amount of new construction. The proposed theatre is approximately 7,482 square feet in size and the layout provides a 259 +/- seat performing arts auditorium which is designed to accommodate a mix of users and different types of performances. The design of the addition was primarily driven by the specific requirements for theatre operations and programming, resulting in the tall rectangular building form. The building is 46 feet tall with a flat roof design to minimize overall height.

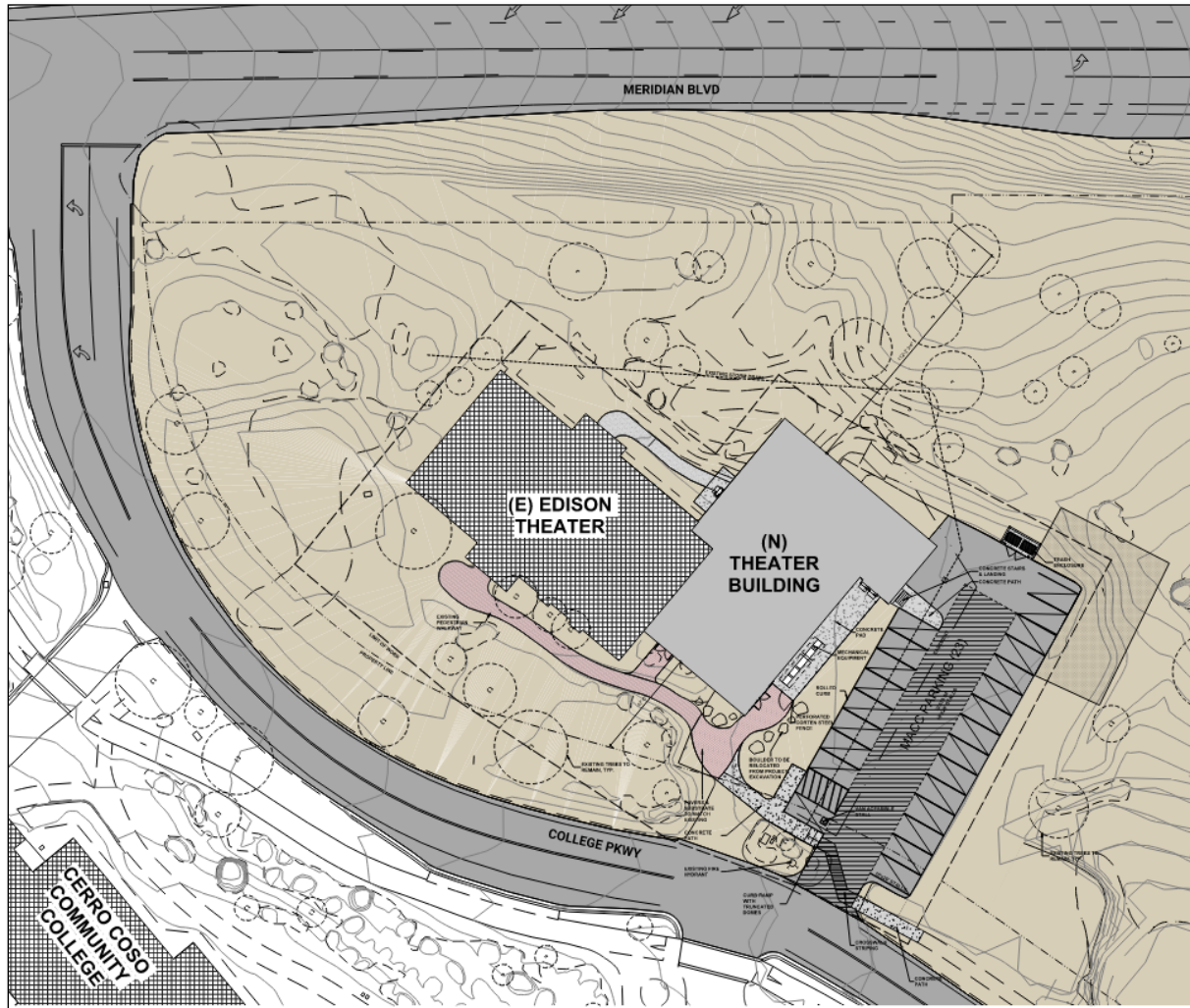
A total of 64 on-site parking spaces will be available for the project, and a condition of approval is included, which requires a shared parking agreement between the Town and Cerro Coso Community College to ensure adequate parking is provided when larger events are scheduled. Other site improvements include a new trash enclosure, reconfiguration of the existing parking lot, walkway connections and landscape/revegetation of disturbed areas.

The theatre addition is designed with sensitivity to the surrounding environment in that the project is situated to preserve existing trees, natural landscaping, and utilizes existing paved areas where feasible. The Edison Theater's current main entrance will be maintained as the building's primary entrance, ensuring continuity to the public. The exits from the proposed addition are downplayed, and new pathways from the addition are designed and landscaped to direct foot traffic to the main entrance.



FIGURE 2 - SOUTH ELEVATION

FIGURE 3 – PROPOSED SITE PLAN



Project Design

In general, the site has been designed to utilize existing infrastructure and to integrate with surrounding natural landscape and adjacent properties. To the extent feasible, the building and the reconfigured parking lot are oriented to take advantage of solar exposure and avoid shadows. Pedestrian and vehicle circulation have been designed to minimize conflicts and provide functional access to the theater building as well as the adjacent childcare center to the east.

The Project was reviewed by the Town's Advisory Design Panel (ADP) on July 25, 2024. A summary of the ADP consensus comments and the applicant's response to each comment are provided below:

- Incorporate a more substantial width to the coping installed around the perimeter of the flat roof portion of the theatre building.
 - *Parapet flashing depth was increased.*
- Incorporate a darker CMU Block color for the northern section of the theatre building. This may also be beneficial above the shed roof on the south elevation.
 - *The CMU block material was changed to a darker earth tone and the concrete pilasters will be painted brown to match the color of the exterior doors.*

- Change the shed roof over the northeast corner pop-out to a gable roof design.
 - *The direction of the slope of the roof on the northeast pop-out was reversed so the two sloped roofs imply an offset gable. This also prevents snow shedding into equipment areas.*
- Add a roof element to the east elevation, creating a gable design by meeting up with the top of the shed roof on the south side of the structure. This element may function to shelter the mechanical equipment underneath and break up the mass of the theatre wall on this side of the structure.
 - *The flipped direction of the sloped roof on the northeast pop-out now provides an appearance of an offset gable roof feature.*
- Remove the excess pavement between the exterior equipment enclosure and the pop-out to allow for landscape area against the building wall.
 - *Reduced paving and added landscape area per comment.*
- Provide a Landscape Plan to add evergreen trees along the east elevation and the north elevation to help screen, soften, and break down the mass of the structure.
 - *Additional landscape to be provided. Additional landscaping added to the design, removed a section of mechanical yard pavement adjacent to building to allow for more landscaping and screening of the new theatre building.*
- Add a pedestrian walkway that leads directly to the Edison Hall entrance from across the street, where most attendees will park and where the bus stop is located.
 - *The pedestrian walkway was revised to improve access to site from the Cerro Coso Parking lot.*

FIGURE 4



DESIGN REVIEWED BY ADP ON 7-25-24

REVISED DESIGN PER ADP COMMENTS

Existing Site and Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is shown in **Figure 3** below. The 7.9-acre parcel is in the Public and Quasi-Public (P-QP) zoning district and includes the existing Edison Hall building with associated parking lot, childcare facility, public dog park, and a 40-space parking lot. **Table 1** describes the surrounding land uses and zoning. The surrounding uses include other Public and Quasi-Public uses such as the Cerro Coso Community College campus and public schools located across Meridian Boulevard.

TABLE 1: SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING.

Location	Zoning*	Land Use	Notes / Special Considerations
North	P-QP, RSF	Mammoth Elementary School, single-family residential neighborhood (The Trails)	Uses are located across Meridian Boulevard
South	P-QP	Cerro Coso Community College, parking lot, student housing, open space	Uses are located across College Parkway
East	P-QP	Vacant Land	Vacant land owned by the Mammoth Lakes Foundation
West	P-QP	Cerro Coso Community College, vacant land	Uses located across College Parkway

*P-QP = Public and Quasi-Public Zone; RSF = Residential Single-family Zone

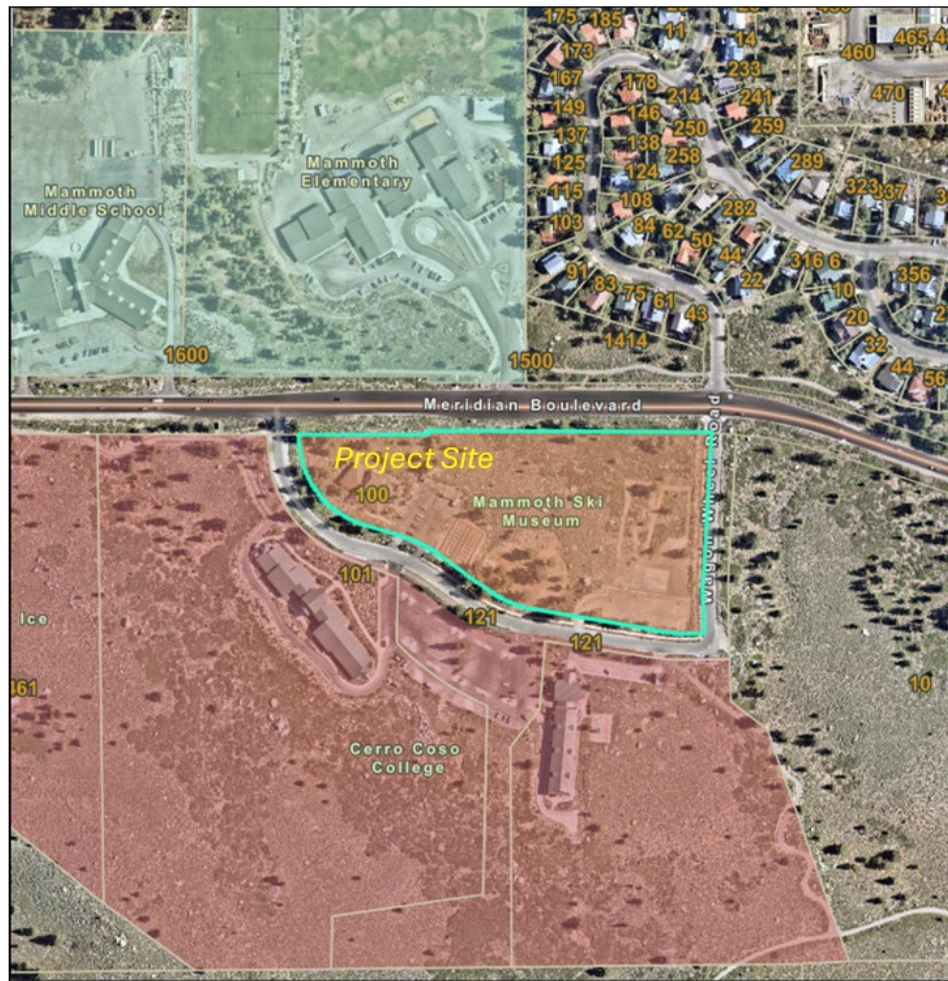


FIGURE 5 - PROJECT SITE

Municipal Code Consistency

The project site is located within the Public and Quasi-Public (P-QP) Special Purpose Zoning District, which the Municipal Code describes as follows, “*The (P-QP) Zoning District is intended to permit adequate identification of areas reserved and developed for public uses other than street rights-of-way, to provide for educational and cultural activities and facilities, to provide for expansion of their operations or change in use, and, to identify and preserve areas of historic and community significance for the enjoyment of future generations.*” The proposed project is classified as a performing arts theater, which is a permitted use in the (P-QP) zone.

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

Table 2: Zoning Consistency.

General Information			
General Plan: Institutional Public (IP)		Specific Plan: N/A	
Zoning: Public and Quasi-Public (P-QP)		Overlay Zone/District/Master Plan: N/A	
Existing Land Use: Edison Theatre and parking lot, Childcare facility, public dog park, 40-space parking lot		Permit(s) Required for Use: Major Design Review (DR)	
Development Standards			
Standard	Required	Proposed	Complies?
<u>Lot Requirements</u>			
Lot area (s.f.)	20,000 s.f.	No change (~430,000 s.f.)	Yes
Lot width (feet)	100 feet	No change (~1,000 feet)	Yes
Lot depth (feet)	100 feet	No change (~140 feet)	Yes
<u>Setbacks</u>			
Front yard (East)	20 feet	Greater than 600 feet	Yes
Rear yard (West)	20 feet	Approximately 265 feet	Yes
Street side yard (North)	20 feet	85 feet ¹	Yes
Street side yard (South)	20 feet	29 feet	Yes
<u>Lot Coverage</u>	N/A ²	N/A	N/A

¹ The Performing arts theater addition is set back approximately 133 feet from the Meridian Boulevard roadway.

² There is no lot coverage standard in the P-QP Zone.

<u>Snow Storage</u>	60% ³ - 6,407 s.f.	60% - 6,490 s.f.	Yes
<u>Building Height</u>	N/A ⁴	46-Feet	Yes
<u>Parking and Loading Standards</u>			
Number of vehicle spaces ⁵	“Off-street parking facilities shall be provided for each use as prescribed for similar uses in this chapter” Retail and Service uses require 4 spaces per 1,000 sq.ft. GLA = 58	64 total on site spaces + Shared off-site parking spaces per Shared off-site Parking Agreement (COA #23)	Yes (14,386/1,000) x 4 = 58
Number of bicycle spaces	8 (7 short-term and 1 long-term spaces)	7 short-term spaces and 1 long-term space	Yes (COA #24)
Trash/Recycling	Required	Provided	Yes

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Institutional Public (IP). This designation allows for institutional uses such as schools, hospitals, governmental offices and facilities, museums, and related uses.

The project is consistent with the following General Plan Vision Statements as 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 modified project utilizes the existing Edison Hall building, which results in design efficiencies and utilizing existing infrastructure which minimizes new disturbed areas on the site.
<i>“Being a great place to live and work”</i>	The Project would provide a new facility where large cultural events and performances can take place. This cultural amenity would increase Mammoth Lakes’ desirability for future residents and workers.

³ Although there is no Snow Storage standard in the P-QP Zone, the commercial zones have a 60% requirement, which is referenced here as being most appropriate for the proposed project.

⁴ Although there is no height limit in the P-QP Zone, building height is limited to the tree canopy height based on General Plan policies (e.g., Policy C.2.X, see Table 3). For reference, commercial zones adjacent to the P-QP Zone to the west have maximum heights of 45 to 55 feet (Old Mammoth Road and Downtown zones, respectively).

⁵ The review authority shall establish the required number of parking spaces for nonresidential uses that are not assigned a specific parking ratio per M.C. § 17.44.030 – *Number of parking spaces required*.

<i>“Being a premier, year-round resort community based on diverse outdoor recreation, multi-day events and an ambiance that attracts visitors.”</i>	The performing arts theater and outdoor amphitheater would accommodate year-round events.
<i>“Exceptional standards for design and development that complement and are appropriate to the Eastern Sierra Nevada mountain setting and our sense of a “village in the trees”</i>	The Project incorporates design recommendations from the Advisory Design Panel, limits tree removal to the maximum extent feasible and proposed landscaping includes both evergreen and deciduous trees.

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.D. Encourage restaurants, retail, entertainment, lodging, and services.	The Project provides a venue for cultural and theatrical performances and other arts and entertainment events (e.g., live music).
Policy E.1.L. Support diverse arts, cultural, and heritage programming, facilities and development of public venues for indoor and outdoor events.	A venue for year-round performances, activities, and events would be realized with the development of the Project.
Policy E.2.A. Support a range of outdoor and indoor events, facilities, and services that enhance the community’s resort economy.	Indoor and outdoor events occurring at the Project would enhance the community’s resort economy through the attraction of performers, lecturers, musicians, and others, in addition to creating jobs and work for local businesses as a result of events year-round.
Policy A.3.B. Encourage development of arts, culture, and heritage facilities and venues.	See Policy E.1.D, above.
Policy C.2.H. Support transit ridership and pedestrian activity by emphasizing district parking, shared parking, mixed use and other zoning strategies to achieve more efficient use of land and facilities.	Shared parking is proposed among various uses (the Performing Arts Center, Community College, childcare facility and dog park).
Policy C.2.N. Plan the siting and design of buildings to preserve the maximum amount of open space, trees and natural features to be consistent with themes and district character.	The redesigned performing arts theatre is attached to the existing Edison Hall building which preserves a greater amount of open space, trees and natural features on the site.
Policy C.2.V. Building height, mass and scale shall complement neighboring land uses and preserve views to the surrounding mountains.	Although building height, mass, and scale would be taller and larger than surrounding uses, height would not exceed the height of trees on-site and the building would be attached to the existing Edison Hall building which results in clustered development that facilitates preservation of views. See Policies C.2.X, below.

Policy C.2.X. Limit building height to the trees on development sites where material tree coverage exists and use top of forest canopy in general areas as height limit if no trees exist on site.	Building height would be a maximum of 46 feet tall which is consistent with the existing mature trees located adjacent to the proposed theatre.
Goal L.4. Be the symbolic and physical heart of the Eastern Sierra: the regional economic, administrative, commercial, recreational, educational and cultural center.	The Project would create a performing arts and cultural center that would help establish Mammoth Lakes as the educational and cultural center of the Eastern Sierra.
Policy M.6.A. Develop efficient and flexible parking strategies to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking.	Shared parking is proposed to reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking. Conditions of approval ensure a shared parking agreement is provided between the Town and Cero Coso Community College prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

II. ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

KEY ISSUE #1: Can the findings be made for approval of a Design Review pursuant to 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 has determined that the proposed site layout and building design meets the overall intent of the Design Review criteria described in the required Design Review findings below.

Design Review Findings:

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

The proposed project is consistent with the applicable standards and requirements of the Mammoth Lakes Zoning Code because the proposed project is a permitted use in the Public and Quasi-Public Zone, and the project complies or is conditioned to comply with all of the applicable development standards of the Zone and the Municipal Code, including but not limited to setbacks, parking, landscaping, and exterior lighting.

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

The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan or master plan because the project is within the Institutional Public (IP) land use designation, which allows performing arts and cultural facilities. The project is also consistent with the Economy Element of the General Plan because the project provides a year-round venue for cultural and theatrical performances and special events. The project is consistent with the Community Design Element of the General Plan because the siting and design preserves open space, mature trees, and natural features by utilizing existing infrastructure and clustering development on the site. Building materials

and colors reflect Mammoth Lakes' character and setting as recommended by the Town's Advisory Design Panel; building height would remain below the tree canopy.

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

The project is consistent with the Town of Mammoth Lakes Design Guidelines because the site layout has been designed to integrate well with surrounding natural features and adjacent properties; buildings and parking lots are oriented to take advantage of solar exposure; pedestrian and vehicle circulation have been designed to minimize conflicts and provide functional access to various buildings; utilities and mechanical equipment are screened; and rooftops are free of equipment clutter. Additionally, while the building may diverge from a more traditional interpretation of the Design Guidelines, the design is reflective of the intent of the Design Guidelines and expressive of the character and function of a theater building as supported by the Town's Advisory Design Panel.

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 project scope analyzed in the 2023 CEQA Addendum to the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.

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

Staff determined that the revised MACC project is consistent with the scope of development contemplated in the 2023 Addendum to the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration. This CEQA Addendum supports the conclusion that the proposed project would result in 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. Overall, based on the smaller scale and massing of the proposed structure under the modified project, compared to those under the approved project, no new significant impacts have been identified, and no new mitigation measures are required.

The applicable mitigation measures from the 2023 Addendum remain applicable and are included as conditions of approval for the project. The 2023 CEQA Addendum is included as **Attachment C**.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed project meets the applicable requirements and recommends that the Planning and Economic Development Commission adopt the Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution making the required CEQA and Municipal Code findings, and approving Design Review (DR) 24-004 with conditions as recommended by staff, or with modifications.

Attachments

Attachment A: Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution PEDC 2025-06

Attachment B: Project Plans, dated received by the Town on March 28, 2025

Attachment C: 2023 Addendum to the Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration