



Town of Mammoth Lakes

Planning & Economic Development Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: May 14, 2025

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of an amendment to the approved Major Design Review (DR) 24-001 for the “Rockspring” resort condominium development project located in the “Resort General” zone of the North Village Specific Plan (NVSP) at the northeast corner of Main Street and Minaret Road. The proposed amendment is to allow for revised building design and site design elements that were not previously considered by the PEDC on April 10, 2024. A CEQA conformance analysis was prepared for the “Rockspring” project which found the project to be in conformance with the certified 1999 North Village Specific Plan Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR).

Applicant/ Property Owner: Mark Rafeh / 6060 Minaret, LLC

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

Community & Economic Development

Nolan Bobroff, Director

Kim Cooke, Senior Planner

OBJECTIVE:

1. Hear Staff and Applicant presentations
2. Receive Public Comments
3. Planning & Economic Development Commission (PEDC) discussion
4. PEDC action to either:
 - a. Adopt the attached Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution (the Resolution), making the required Design Review and CEQA findings, and approving Design Review Amendment Application #DR 24-001A with conditions as recommended by staff;
 - b. Adopt the Resolution with modifications; or
 - c. Deny the Resolution

SUMMARY:

Proposal:

The proposed Amendment to approved Design Review #DR 24-001 is to allow for revised building and site design elements for the “Rockspring” project. The number of resort condominium units is also reduced from 118 units to 110 resort condominium units.

Project Name:

“Rockspring” - Resort Condominium Development

Location:

6040, 6042, and 6060 Minaret Road ([APNs: 033-043-002-000, 033-043-001-000, and 033-043-003-000](#))

Size of Property:	Combined 2.6 acres (Approx. 113,080 square feet)
Zoning:	Resort General (RG) zone - North Village Specific Plan
General Plan:	North Village Specific Plan (NVSP)
Environmental Review:	The project conforms to the North Village Specific Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (1999 SPEIR)

KEY ISSUES:

1. Does the proposed amendment meet the Design Review criteria and required findings pursuant to MC Sections 17.88.050 and 17.88.060, respectively?
2. Is the proposed project consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On April 10, 2024, the Planning and Economic Development Commission (PEDC) voted 4-0 to approve Tentative Tract Map 24-002, Use Permit 24-001, and Major Design Review 24-001 for the “Rockspring” resort condominium development project. The approved project consists of a five-story, resort condominium development comprised of 118 resort condominium units with a total of 198 bedrooms. The project features one level of understructure parking for 127 vehicles and an exterior parking area for fourteen vehicles. The site amenities are oriented to condominium owners and guests including approximately 2,200 sq. ft. of restaurant/reception area, accessory retail, fitness center, sauna, flex space, ski valet and lockers, and outdoor pools, spas and courtyard. A Rough Grading permit was issued for the project in August 2024.

During the Building Permit plan check process, staff found that design changes were made to the project which would require review and approval by the Advisory Design Panel (ADP) and the PEDC.

The Rockspring development team submitted an application for a Major Change to an Approved Project on February 21, 2025. Pursuant to [M.C. Section 17.64.070](#) – *Changes to an Approved Project*, the original review authority may authorize major changes to an approved site plan, architecture, or the nature of the approved land use.

Since the original Design Review application was reviewed by the Advisory Design Panel and the PEDC, the application was reviewed by ADP on March 5, 2025. ADP provided consensus comments regarding the modified project design and indicated that a second ADP meeting would not be necessary if their recommendations are addressed.

Project Proposal:

The revised project design includes site design changes to the retaining walls located at the south/east corner of the project in order to accommodate a new subterranean mechanical equipment vault. Architectural design changes include the following elements:

- Projecting tower architectural features have been removed from the roofline.
- Windows have been enlarged on the vertical architectural features.
- The two sides of the project located on the Minaret Road frontage still feature a gable roof design on the west facing façade; however, the roof overhang is reduced, and the vertical design features no longer extend to the cable roof ceiling. Metal beams are added for architectural detail.
- Extended balconies located on the front (West) façade have been removed.
- Columns along the property frontage are changed from 10 columns to 15 less robust columns.

- The lower height colonnade cover is removed from the façade.
- The clear story windows above the pedestrian arcade are replaced with siding.
- New elevator tower projections are proposed on the roof.

FIGURES 1 & 2 – APPROVED PROJECT RENDERINGS 4-10-24



FIGURES 3 & 4 – REVISED DESIGN REVIEWED BY ADP ON 3-5-25



Advisory Design Panel Review

The Advisory Design Panel reviewed the revised project plans on March 5, 2025. The ADP provided consensus comments regarding the building and site design, which are summarized below:

ADP Consensus Comments – 3/5/25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replace the gabion wall planters with large natural boulders.• Add a projecting colonnade roofline across the front of the buildings to define the first story of the structure.• Modify the metal frame structure at the gable roof so that it aligns with the central window/tower feature.• Add a tree to the landscape area on the south end of the exterior parking aisle to help screen the surface parking area from Minaret Road.• Add a roof overhang to the gable features to provide depth to the building façade and distinguish the top floor of the building.
<p>Design changes in response to ADP comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The gabion wall planters were replaced with large boulders set into the sloped landscape area at the northeast corner of the property.• The addition of the colonnade roof across the façade of the two end buildings helps to connect the facade and helps reduce the scale of the building mass. This feature helps define the base and middle of the building.• The metal support structure at the two gable roof elements were aligned to meet up with the central window tower features.• A gable roof overhang was added to match the depth of the colonnade roof overhang.

FIGURE 5 – REVISED FAÇADE PER ADP RECOMMENDATIONS



II. ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

KEY ISSUE #1: Does the proposed project meet the Design Review criteria and required findings pursuant to MC Chapter 17.88?

Design Review is required per MC §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.

Below is staff's analysis of the project's consistency with the Design Review criteria. Staff finds that the proposed Amendment to the Major Design Review has met the overall intent of the Design Review criteria.

Design Review Criteria:

To obtain design review approval, projects must satisfy these criteria to the extent they apply:

- A. The site design and building design elements including the architectural style, size, design quality, use of building materials, and similar elements, combine together in an attractive and visually cohesive manner that is compatible with and complements the desired architectural and/or aesthetic character of the area and a mountain resort community, encourages increased pedestrian activity, and promotes compatibility among neighboring land uses.**

The site plan and building design have been reviewed for consistency with the North Village Design Guidelines and was reviewed by the Town's Advisory Design Panel (ADP) on March 5, 2025. The ADP provided several consensus recommendations for revisions to the project design which would improve consistency with the applicable Design Guidelines.

The project design was revised in response to the ADP comments and successfully improved the site design of the proposed structure. With the changes made in response to ADP recommendations the original findings for Design Review approval still apply. Overall, the proposed building and site improvements combine together in an attractive and visually cohesive manner that is compatible with and complements the desired aesthetic character of a mountain resort community, encourages increased pedestrian activity, and accomplishes specific goals and policies specified in the North Village Specific Plan and the General Plan that seek to locate lodging uses in appropriate areas to reach critical mass and mix of uses that will support The Village's success.

- B. The design of streetscapes, including street trees, lighting, and pedestrian furniture, is consistent with the character of commercial districts and nearby residential neighborhoods.**

The proposed streetscape design features a variety of site improvements including a new woodland garden feature with bench seating and bike racks which connects directly to the public sidewalk and a meandering pedestrian walkway that leads further into the site and features additional seating opportunities.

A covered pedestrian arcade frames the front of the property for the length of the building façade along the Minaret Road Street Frontage. These improvements allow pedestrians to detour from the sidewalk along Minaret Road and walk through the property, north to south, without being next to the busy street. The site design also includes a small pedestrian square near the south entrance to the property and features tables and chairs for an outdoor gathering space. These spaces will foster pedestrian activity and interest at the southwest corner of Main Street and Minaret Road.

- C. Parking areas are located, designed and developed to foster and implement the planned mobility system for the area; buffer surrounding land uses; minimize visibility; prevent conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists; minimize stormwater run-off and the heat-island effect; and achieve a safe, efficient, and harmonious development.**

The required number of parking spaces for the resort condominium use are provided on-site within an understructure parking garage and a small exterior parking area for up to fourteen vehicles. The visible portions of the parking podium are screened with concrete walls that are textured with a board formed concrete on east half of the project stone veneer on applied to the western half of the structure. Two garage entrances have roll-up doors with a dark bronze finish that blends with the concrete base material which minimizes the appearance of these entrances. The parking garage design does not feature openings along the east, or south sides which helps buffer the adjacent residential uses to the east of the site.

A small, 14-space surface parking lot is proposed along west side of the property, where a grade change from the higher elevation of Minaret Road to the lower elevation of the project site access creates a natural berm that will effectively screen the exterior parking area from Minaret Road.

- D. Down-directed and shielded lighting and lighting fixtures are designed to complement buildings, be of appropriate scale, provide adequate light over walkways and parking areas to create a sense of pedestrian safety, minimize light pollution and trespass, and avoid creating glare.**

The proposed exterior lighting plan includes light fixture specifications that are appropriate in scale based upon the specific purpose and placement of the lighting. The fixture styles are contemporary with dark finishes, and all proposed festoon lighting is located within the project courtyard which is shielded by the proposed resort condominium buildings. The proposed exterior lighting is shielded to minimize light pollution and trespass. Condition of Approval #17 is included to ensure that exterior lighting is inspected and verified for compliance with Chapter 17.36.030 of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

- E. Landscaping is designed to conserve water resources, promotes a natural aesthetic, and be compatible with and enhance the architectural character and features of the buildings on site, and help relate the building to the surrounding landscape.**

The proposed landscape plan is consistent with the recommendations of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Design Guidelines in that the design promotes a natural aesthetic through the use of native plant species that are prevalent in the Mammoth Lakes region. Approximately 142 existing trees that are 12 inches or greater DBH will be removed from the development footprint, and a total of 36 existing trees will be preserved on the site. 107 new trees are proposed to be planted throughout the landscape areas and include Jeffrey Pine, Red Fir, White Fir, Quaking Aspen, Western Water Birch and Hawthorn. Numerous shrubs are also incorporated into the landscape including Desert Ceanothus, Fern bush, Creek Dogwood, Siberian Dogwood, Forsythia, Mountain Snowberry, and purple sage among others.

The landscape plan softens the perimeter of the development and enhances the architectural features of the building, especially the appearance of the project from Minaret Road. A Landscape documentation package is required as Condition of Approval #32 to ensure the new landscape will comply with the Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (WELO).

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

As part of the approval of the 1999 NVSP Amendment, the Town Council reviewed and certified the Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report for the 1999 North Village Specific Plan Amendment (1999 SPEIR) (State Clearing House SCH#99-092082).

The 1999 SPEIR analyzed the potential impacts of developing the entire NVSP area with the maximum density/intensity permitted under the NVSP development standards, as amended by the 1999 NVSP Amendment. That amendment involved modifications to circulation and parking, height limitations, development opportunities, and setbacks, and included a majority of the development standards and uses that are currently applicable. The 1999 SPEIR found that all impacts, with the exception of Air Quality, would be less than significant through compliance with existing standards and regulations and through the incorporation of the mitigation measures (modified as necessary) imposed under the 1991 EIR and 1994 EIR Addendum. The 1999 SPEIR concluded that impacts to Air Quality would be significant and unavoidable and that the project would contribute on some level to the ongoing violation of the state and federal PM₁₀ standards.¹

The Rockspring resort condominium development project was found to be in conformance with the existing 1999 SPEIR because the proposed project is consistent with all applicable development standards of the NVSP and is within the scope and intensity of the development that was intended for the site and analyzed in the 1999 SPEIR. The proposed amendment to Major Design Review (DR) 24-001 does not result in any change to the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, and all potential environmental effects were found to have been adequately covered in the 1999 SPEIR and no new or increased environmental impacts are expected to occur as a result of project implementation. Therefore, no new environmental compliance document is required, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15168[c][2].

III. STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed amendment to Major Design Review (DR) 24-001 meets the applicable requirements and recommends the Planning and Economic Development Commission adopt the Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution, making the required CEQA and Municipal Code findings, and approving Major Design Review amendment (DR) 24-001A with conditions as recommended by staff or with modifications.

Attachments

Attachment A: Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution 2025-08

Attachment B: Updated Project Renderings dated April 30, 2025

Attachment C: April 10, 2024, PEDC Staff Report Packet

¹ The Town was re-designated by the United State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as “in attainment” for the federal air quality standard for particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM₁₀) in November 2016.