

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Comprehensive Town-wide planning effort and Parks and Recreation Master Planning Process Update.

Meeting Date: September 3, 2025

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive an update from staff and provide consensus comments and/or direction regarding the on-going Town-wide comprehensive planning effort.
2. Authorize the Town Manager to finalize and execute a Professional Services Agreement with the selected consultant to develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in the amount of \$299,981 and authorize the Town Manager to permit extra work by the consultant with a not to exceed amount of \$60,000.

BACKGROUND:

On April 16, 2025, Town staff presented Town Council with an initial review and proposed course of action to conduct a comprehensive review and prioritization of all Town plans and implementation efforts throughout the organization. Staff provided a Planning Document Matrix that identified several themes along with a recommendation to begin the extensive review and update process with a bottom-up approach.

In 2007, the Town completed a comprehensive General Plan update. In the following years, numerous planning efforts in support of the General Plan were completed. While these efforts provided appropriate guidance at the time, this top-down approach to planning ultimately resulted in a somewhat fragmented series of documents. The bottom-up approach recommended by staff will allow the General Plan to more clearly and succinctly represent the action items, tasks and guidance generated from the revision of the general plan elements.

At Town Council direction, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP), Request for Proposal (RFP) document was published on April 21, 2025. A total of eight (8) submittals were received by May 30, 2025 with six (6) consultants selected for in-person presentations between July 14 – 23, 2025. A selection Committee comprised of Town Staff and Parks and Recreation Commissioners participated in the 90-minute in-person interviews that culminated on August 5 with a collective decision to conduct a second-round of interviews with the top two (2) consultants. These subsequent interviews occurred on August 15, and with recommendations provided by the Selection Committee, the Town's Technical Team have selected a preferred consultant to develop a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the community of Mammoth Lakes.

ANALYSIS:

Prior to the April meeting, staff conducted a comprehensive review of the Town's existing planning work by cataloging existing documents. Each plan was assigned a category and was reviewed for relevance, life cycle, status, and goals for the plan, as well as specifics, such as when it was adopted and any legal requirements. A detailed review of these older plans is necessary to better understand the intent, ideas, and concepts each plan generated, with the understanding that these details will be necessary for incorporation into larger guiding documents. Staff envision a dynamic multi-year process to update the core plans.

Staff proposed a framework for updates rather than a rigid schedule. Planning efforts take time to develop and complete. Staff anticipate significant public engagement activities for each and every plan. The political landscape is ever changing, and our responsibilities and needs must adapt with policies outside of the control of the Town. This may require us to evaluate plans out of sequence along the way. The proposed framework has four tracks that can occur at the same time. The planning efforts within each track may be dependent on each other but can be independent of other tracks. They are as follows:

- ***Track 1: Emergency Operations and Preparedness***
 - Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), Climate Action/Adaptation Plan, Safety
- ***Track 2: Town Infrastructure***
 - Begins with land use of Town owned/controlled sites (housing and parks and recreation) which informs connectivity (transit, mobility, trails)
- ***Track 3: Economic Development***
 - Economy, Marketing, Arts, CEDS
- ***Track 4: Regulatory***
 - Land Use, Community Design, District Character, Resource Management and Conservation, Noise

Once the tracks are further refined, prioritized and completed, the Town can move forward with the General Plan Update and incorporate these efforts into a comprehensive plan. Additionally, as plans are revised, Staff recommend formally retiring older and superseded plans and incorporating the relevant parts of the plans into the revised documents. This should help to limit confusion in future years as to the validity of older Town plans.

A. Track 1

Work on track 1 is well underway with the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan being developed by a consultant hired by Mono County. The effort is funded fully by grants from CALOES and FEMA. Staff and community partners (i.e., MLFPD, MCWD, USFS) are deeply involved in the development of this plan which is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Work is just starting on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and a Climate Adaptation and Action Plan (CAP), which the Town recently received a Caltrans grant to develop.

B. Track 2

Staff are moving forward with a bottom-up approach, starting with Parks and Housing first to inform Mobility. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is the first of the Track two plans to be initiated. The work program and deliverables will inform future plans, so it is important to staff to establish the process and vocabulary now. Work on the Housing Element update is anticipated to begin in 2026.

Staff are initiating this effort by developing a glossary of terms and a Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) document. The QA/QC document will ensure terminology is used consistently across all planning efforts and spells out details like how to use commas, line spacing, justification, fonts, image placements and other technical details that will ensure documents look and feel consistent across planning efforts. To further refine this effort into components, Staff are thinking about this effort as three plans in one.

The three components include:

- a) The traditional and formal Parks and Recreation Master Plan;
- b) A dynamic and prioritized driven Strategic Action Plan (SAP); and
- c) Conceptual Site Plans.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

An element of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are the typical key goals, visions, and policies found in the General Plan Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Element. This portion of the document is effectively static, and little is expected to change over the years; however, staff are working to revise and update the Parks, Open Space and Recreation Element, which will help inform this and future planning and implementation efforts. The rigidity and structure of the General Plan typically results in a static document that can hamper other planning efforts. For this reason, Staff plan to add policy directing the development of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), which will be implemented and updated on an ongoing regular basis thereby resulting in a dynamic document that is more responsive to trends and community needs. A draft of the General Plan element update is included as an attachment to this staff report.

Strategic Action Plan

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) concept is to create a plan that can actively respond to trends and opportunities in the community, along with the constantly evolving development of parks and recreation programming. This short-term plan will absorb other parks planning efforts that occur in the future so that there are never more than one guiding park and recreation plans. The SAP shall include strategic priorities that align with Town Council strategic priorities, operations and maintenance plans, a staff implementation program, programming needs, project prioritization that informs the CIP, and a robust financial analysis and strategy document.

SAP Format

The SAP will be anchored by a set of overarching goals, followed by guiding objectives, and implementable actions designed to direct Town staff.

Implementation actions are well-defined steps that Town staff can take to achieve objectives. As actions are completed, objectives go from being goals to actualized outcomes. Actions will be categorized into a “Staff Implementation Program” to provide Town staff with a clear path for carrying out the Master Plan’s recommendations.

Staff Implementation Program

The Staff Implementation Program (SIP) will summarize Master Plan recommendations into a concise, action-oriented work plan in a table format. The work plan can be used to assign tasks to Town staff or other local agencies, monitor implementation progress, and provide updates to the Town Council and the public on a biennial basis. The table will include action descriptions, responsible department(s), timing (i.e., short, mid, long term), and qualitative or quantitative metrics for tracking progress.

Regular Updates

The SAP will include a schedule for regular updates, such as every three to five years or other timeframes. Regularly updating the SAP ensures that projects remain at the forefront of Town decision-making and financial planning while allowing for the constant integration of learning and best practices. The SAP will also foster accountability within the community without conducting a comprehensive Master Plan update.

Staff see the introduction and implementation of a Strategic Action Plan as the most important aspect of the General Plan update, as it sets the Town up for future success that spans any staffing or leadership change. Cataloging and accounting for community needs in a matrix will allow staff and consultants to identify duplicative support systems (e.g., restrooms and parking), evaluate compatibility of uses, and consider staff capacity.

Conceptual Site Plans

The development of the SAP and the cataloging and accounting for community needs will help inform the future space planning for Town sites and as a part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, staff and the consultant will develop conceptual site plans for key opportunity sites in the community. The conceptual site plans will reflect both short-and long-term visions and aid in the prioritization of systems to allow amenities to seamlessly come online, dependent on funding and staff capacity.

C. Track(s) 3 & 4

Work on the elements in Tracks 3 and 4 can occur at any point in the revision process. These plans generally stand alone and provide guidance and establish the regulatory framework in the General Plan. Staff are evaluating when this work could occur, but it is not expected to occur in the near term. The larger efforts in Track 2 will take precedence on Staff resources and time.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Development

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) will be a guiding document for future development and redevelopment of the Town's system of parks, facilities, and recreation programs and services over the next 10-15 years or longer. The plan will define goals, tasks and prioritized strategies and program and amenity recommendations based on current and future funding, land use and level of service scenarios and standards.

The PRMP will be action orientated built on the foundation of robust community engagement reaching distinct and diverse demographics who live, work and play in Mammoth Lakes.

A comprehensive master plan is expected to take 12-18+ months, depending on the desired outcomes and defined deliverables. There are several phases and tasks required to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) that are outlined below.

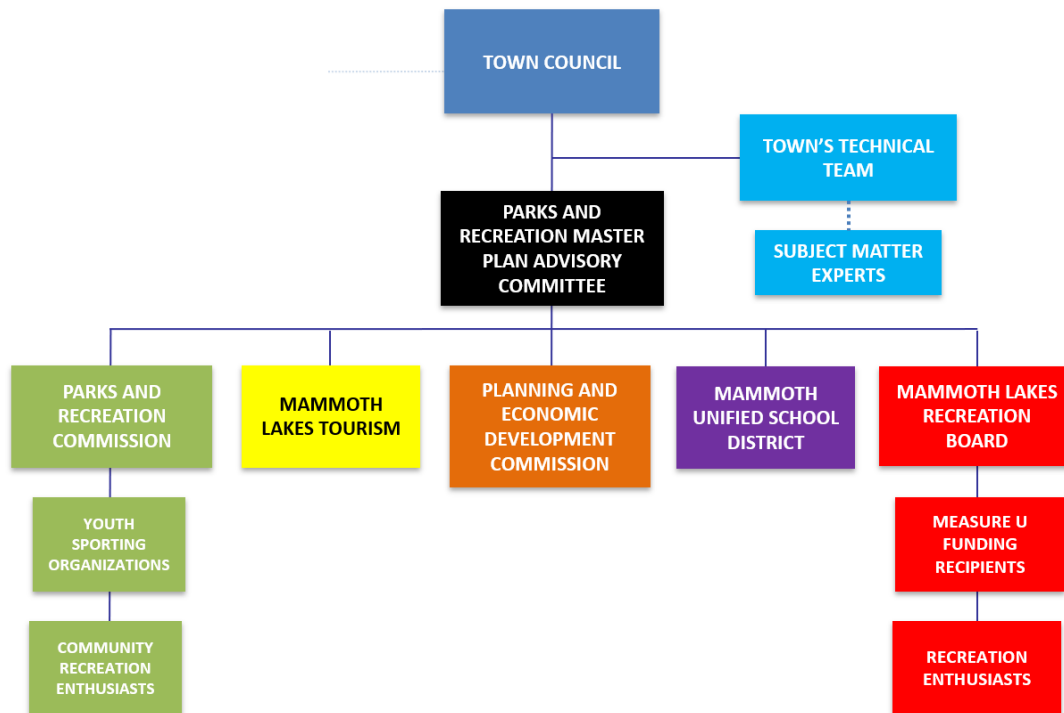
- ~~Phase 1 – Preparation Phase (March – May 2025)~~
- **Phase 2 – Consultant Selection (June 2025 – September 2025)**
- Phase 3 – Community Engagement, Data Collection and Plan Development (October 2025 – Summer 2026)
- Phase 4 – Plan Approval and Public Presentation Phase (Fall 2026)
- Phase 5 – Implementation Phase (Fall/Winter 2026/27)

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee will function as the Town Council's advisory body for the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The composition of the committee and its relationship with the Town Council is illustrated below in the organizational chart.

Completing the composition of the advisory committee are three (3) Community at Large representatives. Applicants will be asked to complete the online form¹, with the representatives selected by the Town's Technical Team.

¹ <https://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov/FormCenter/Parks-Recreation-2/PARK-AND-RECREATION-MASTER-PLAN-COMMUNIT-81>



The Town Council Advisory Committee will meet 4-6 times during the development of the master plan and will provide general input, guidance and communicate their affiliated organization's recreation interests to the consultant and the Town's Technical Team. At this time, staff have secured the majority of participants to the Advisory Committee and are working to encourage members of the community to join as "Community At Large" representatives.

Consultant Selection

The consultant selection process was extremely competitive with all committee members commenting on the high caliber and quality of proposals and in-person presentations. Committee members used a Town staff provided scoring matrix that included the following evaluation criteria:

- Responsiveness to the request for proposal.
- Demonstrated understanding of the project scope, stated timeline and the resort community of Mammoth Lakes and desired deliverables.
- Experience and demonstrated success of the respondent in developing Parks and Recreation Master Plans for communities that have characteristics and demographics similar to the resort community of Mammoth Lakes.
- Methodology and approach to completing the project and coordination and engagement with staff, committees and stakeholders.
- Methodology and approach to thoughtful and extensive public engagement and project outreach.
- Experience and expertise of the firm, consultants, partners and assigned staff.
- Quality of submittal, including detailed timeline, and overall presentation, and;

- References.

Following the presentations, staff and the committee members were able to narrow the list down to top two (2) consultants, who were then provided with detailed follow-up questions and tasks, with a short 7-day time period to respond. The questions focused on: (1) detailing specific community engagement strategies and tools (the what), tactics (how and where) and timelines (when) relative to the distinct and diverse demographics who live, work and play in Mammoth Lakes; (2) detailing their scope of work for conducting a financial analysis of the department and providing their methodology for financial sustainability, trends analysis and recreation programming relevant to Mammoth Lakes; (3) defining and illustrating their project branding examples and preliminary development of a conceptual site plan for the Bell Shaped Parcel; and (4) examples of recently completed Parks and Recreation Master Plans (including the dedicated public facing website URL) from communities that have characteristics similar to the mountain resort community of Mammoth Lakes. The top two (2) consultants were then asked to present their responses to the four (4) follow-up questions at a subsequent interview with Town staff.

Following the second interview, it was a unanimous decision to select [ktua](#), a planning & landscape architecture firm based in San Diego. The ktua team includes [110%](#), [Ascent](#), [RRC Associates](#) and [Evari GIS Consulting](#). A key distinction that separated ktua from other consultants was not only the breadth and depth of their subconsultants but their comprehensive, detailed bilingual community engagement plan. The plan was rated consistently high by all committee members that included tried and tested strategies, but also more dynamic ‘pop-up’ events, with specific goals, expectations, and detailed phases/timelines and tactics. The outreach plan also included a statically valid survey conducted by RRC Associates. Below are a few comments from the Selection Committee.

“I liked ktua’s familiarity with the area and that they have worked in June Lake. Farrell [from 110%] was the strongest financial analyst presenter, and I like that they use Ascent for their environmental consultant.”

“They appeared really ready and wanting this contract. Liked their outreach program the best.”

“ktua exhibited a strong and competent skillset, with a high degree of confidence in their work products, emphasizing an emotional connection to recreation and parks.”

“All material was extremely well presented, and was relevant, personal and on point with Parks and Recreation in a mountain resort.”

Upon execution of the Professional Services Agreement with ktua, the Town’s Technical Team will participate in the Kick-off meeting with the consultant to discuss and finalize the project schedule, deliverables and expectations.

Attachments:

- A. DRAFT - Revised Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Element
- B. DRAFT - Professional Services Agreement