

CHAPTER 1. VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan is to update the 1991 Trail System Plan, in accordance with the 2007 General Plan. This document also carries forward projects from the General Bikeway Plan and the Sherwins Area Recreation Plan (SHARP). Elements of the 2006 Physical Development and Mobility Study, the 2008 Draft Park and Recreation Master Plan and other planning efforts are brought together in order to create the vision of an integrated trails network—the Mammoth Lakes Trail System—that enhances recreation and mobility in the Mammoth Lakes area. This chapter describes guiding principles, vision, goals and objectives that are the foundation for the Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan. By setting the qualitative and quantitative benchmarks for success, these measures will ensure that the community is able to envision the planned system, maintain its safe use, and confirm ongoing success. The vision, goals and objectives described here are intended to guide the development and implementation of the master plan. The primary focus of this plan is the area within the Town’s urban growth boundary (UGB). All recommendations for areas outside the UGB require further study by jurisdictional partners and should not be considered formal recommendations.

1.1. Vision

The Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan was conceived as a way to guide the development of an extensive, integrated, year-round trails network for the Town of Mammoth Lakes which will improve mobility and quality of life for residents, and provide the widest range of outdoor experiences for both residents and visitors. The trails network will also support sustainable economic development, allowing Mammoth Lakes to grow its economy while maintaining the desirable characteristics that have brought residents and visitors here in the first place. Every aspect of this planning process is rooted in the following guiding principles:

Table 1-1. Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan Guiding Principles

Accessibility	Cooperation
The trail system shall be accessible to users of all ages, abilities, and socioeconomic status for both visitors and residents.	A sense of cooperation must permeate all levels of the process: between agencies, between government and businesses, between user groups, between residents and visitors.
Community Character	Environmental Stewardship
The trails network must be developed in a way that maintains or enhances the small-town character of Mammoth Lakes.	Providing access to the natural environment will be balanced with a respect for the natural environment. Sustainable design principles will guide the development of all recommended projects.
Community Engagement	Sustainable Economics
The development of an integrated trail system cannot occur without widespread community support. Community members have had (and must continue to have) access to the planning process through a variety of means including public workshops, surveys, local media, and the distribution of draft documents.	A year-round trail system is essential to sustain Mammoth’s recreation-based economy. The funding to build the trail system must come from a variety of sources—private and public (Town, state, and/or federal).

In the early months of 2007, the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) initiated an effort to update the Town’s then current trails plan (“Mammoth Lakes Trail System Plan – 1991”). MLTPA convened a multi-partnered task force to identify the potential scope and costs of such an effort. The resulting “Planning Proposal” detailed a summary of program goals and objectives for a trails planning process in Mammoth Lakes and was used to attract a variety of partners to a proposed Concept and Master Planning (CAMP) trails planning effort. Three partnership groups were identified: **Jurisdictional Partners** (the United States Forest Service and the Town of Mammoth Lakes); **Funding Partners** (the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area LLC, MLTPA, and “The Developers” Forum, a joint effort of MLTPA and the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce); and **Planning Partners** (the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, the United States Forest Service, and MLTPA). These partners and other regional agencies, including Mono County and Caltrans, are signatories to the “Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Memorandum of Understanding,” an MOU initiated by MLTPA for regional co-operation on trails efforts, including trails planning.

1.2. Goals and Objectives

1.2.1. Trails Network

Goal 1: Develop a plan for an integrated year-round trail network that provides for a seamless transition between the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the surrounding federal lands (USFS).

- Objective 1.1:** Identify improvements for signage, wayfinding and amenities throughout the existing network.
- Objective 1.2:** Close gaps in the existing network.
- Objective 1.3:** Expand the network within the Urban Growth Boundary to provide access to new destinations, activities and experiences from both public and private property.
- Objective 1.4:** Identify locations for potential recreation nodes and public access easements that will enhance connections between Town and surrounding public lands for summer and winter recreation.
- Objective 1.5:** Identify preferred summer and winter uses for each segment in the network.
- Objective 1.6:** Provide design guidelines that will minimize user conflicts, provide for sustainability, and reduce maintenance needs.
- Objective 1.7:** Provide uniform signage and wayfinding along the network and at all recreation nodes.

1.2.2. Mobility

Goal 2: Develop a plan that enhances mobility in a way that is consistent with the Town’s “Feet First” strategy.

Objective 2.1: Identify necessary improvements to improve pedestrian safety, convenience and comfort.

Objective 2.2: Update the General Bikeway Plan and develop an on-street bikeway network that enhances bicyclist safety, convenience and comfort.

Objective 2.3: Ensure that pedestrians and bicyclists can access the public transit system safely, conveniently and comfortably; and that public transit serves all key recreation nodes.

Objective 2.4: Provide the information necessary for residents and visitors to navigate around town on foot, bicycle and transit.

1.2.3. Implementation

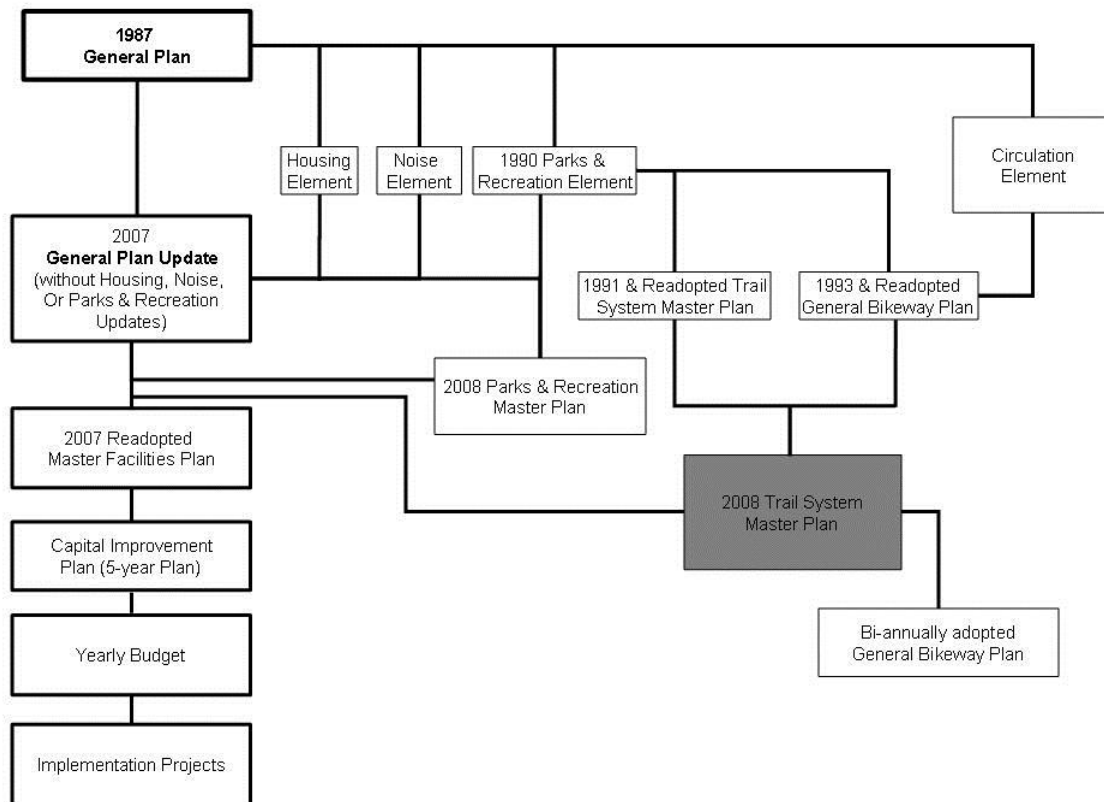
Goal 3: Create a plan that clearly identifies the projects and programs necessary for implementation.

Objective 3.1: Provide specific lists of projects that the Town of Mammoth Lakes can incorporate into the Capital Improvement Program. Complete the near-term projects identified in the Trail System Master Plan in the next two years.

1.3. Existing Plans, Policies and Data Sources

The Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan will build on and conform to existing plans and policies. This section describes the key planning and policy documents and their relationship to the Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan. In summary, the Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan will conform to the Town’s Vision Statement and General Plan; carry forward and replace the recommendations from the General Bikeway Plan and the 1991 Trail System Plan; and be informed by the Physical Development and Mobility Study and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Figure 1-1. Relationship of Trail System Plan to other Town Plans and Processes



1.3.1. Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan (2007)

The General Plan is the key document guiding development and the provision of public services in TOML. It provides a broad community vision and detailed lists of goals and policies to guide development. Many of the goals and policies listed in the General Plan are addressed through this Mammoth Lakes TSMP. Most specifically, the General Plan calls for the development of a “Master Plan for an integrated trail system.” **Figure 1-2** shows the General Plan goals that are most directly linked to this effort. The Mammoth Lakes TSMP conforms to these and all other goals and policies of the General Plan.

As a component of the 2007 General Plan Update, the Mammoth Lakes Town Council established land use policies creating a Neighborhood District Planning (NDP) process, a series of land use planning efforts for identified “neighborhood districts” within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. These Neighborhood District Plans were not designed to be coordinated with the CAMP trails planning effort. It was determined that the individual Neighborhood District Plans would provide trail and public access planning within the boundaries of the individual districts and ensure connectivity to neighboring districts, existing infrastructure, and be coordinated with the recommendations of the Trail System Master Plan. The NDP process is described in more detail in section 1.3.7.

Figure 1-2. General Plan Community Vision and Selected Goals

<p>Community Vision</p> <p>Surrounded by uniquely spectacular scenery and diverse four-season recreational opportunities, the community of Mammoth Lakes is committed to providing the very highest quality of life for our residents and the highest quality of experience for our visitors.</p> <p>To achieve this vision, Mammoth Lakes places a high value on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainability and continuity of our unique relationship with the natural environment. As stewards, we support visitation and tourism as appropriate means to educate and share our abundant resources. We are committed to the efficient use of energy and continuing development of renewable resources. 2. Being a great place to live and work. Our strong, diverse, yet cohesive, small town community supports families and individuals by providing a stable economy, high quality educational facilities and programs, a broad range of community services and a participatory Town government. 3. Adequate and appropriate housing that residents and workers can afford. 4. Being a world-renowned year-round resort community based on diverse outdoor recreation, multi-day events and an ambiance that attracts visitors. 5. Protecting the surrounding natural environment and supporting our small town atmosphere by limiting the urbanized area. 6. 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” with small town charm. 7. Offering a variety of transportation options that emphasize connectivity, convenience and alternatives to use of personal vehicles with a strong pedestrian emphasis. <p>Parks, Open Space, and Recreation</p> <p><u>Trail System</u> P.3 GOAL: Create a Master Plan for an integrated trail system that will maintain and enhance convenient public access to public lands from town.</p> <p><u>Connected Throughout</u> P.5 GOAL: Link parks and open space with a well-designed year-round network of public corridors and trails within and surrounding Mammoth Lakes.</p> <p>Mobility</p> <p><u>In-Town Transportation</u> M.3 GOAL: Emphasize feet first, public transportation second, and car last in planning the community transportation system while still meeting Level of Service standards.</p> <p><u>Walking and Bicycling</u> M.4 GOAL: Encourage feet first by providing a linked year-round recreational and commuter trail system that is safe and comprehensive</p>

1.3.2. Trail System Plan (1991)

The 1991 Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Plan outlined the development of a trail system comprised of a paved “Main Path” forming a loop around town and a series of “Future/Alternative” trails extending out from the Main Path into the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and other National Forest Lands. The plan described the primary uses to be accommodated on the Main Path as walking, jogging, mountain biking, cross-country skiing and road biking. Much of the “Main Path” system described in this plan has since been constructed. The recommendations of the 1991 Trail System Plan will be evaluated and considered for inclusion in the Trails Master Plan. Once adopted, this Trails Master Plan will replace the 1991 Trail System Plan.

1.3.3. General Bikeway Plan (1995-2008)

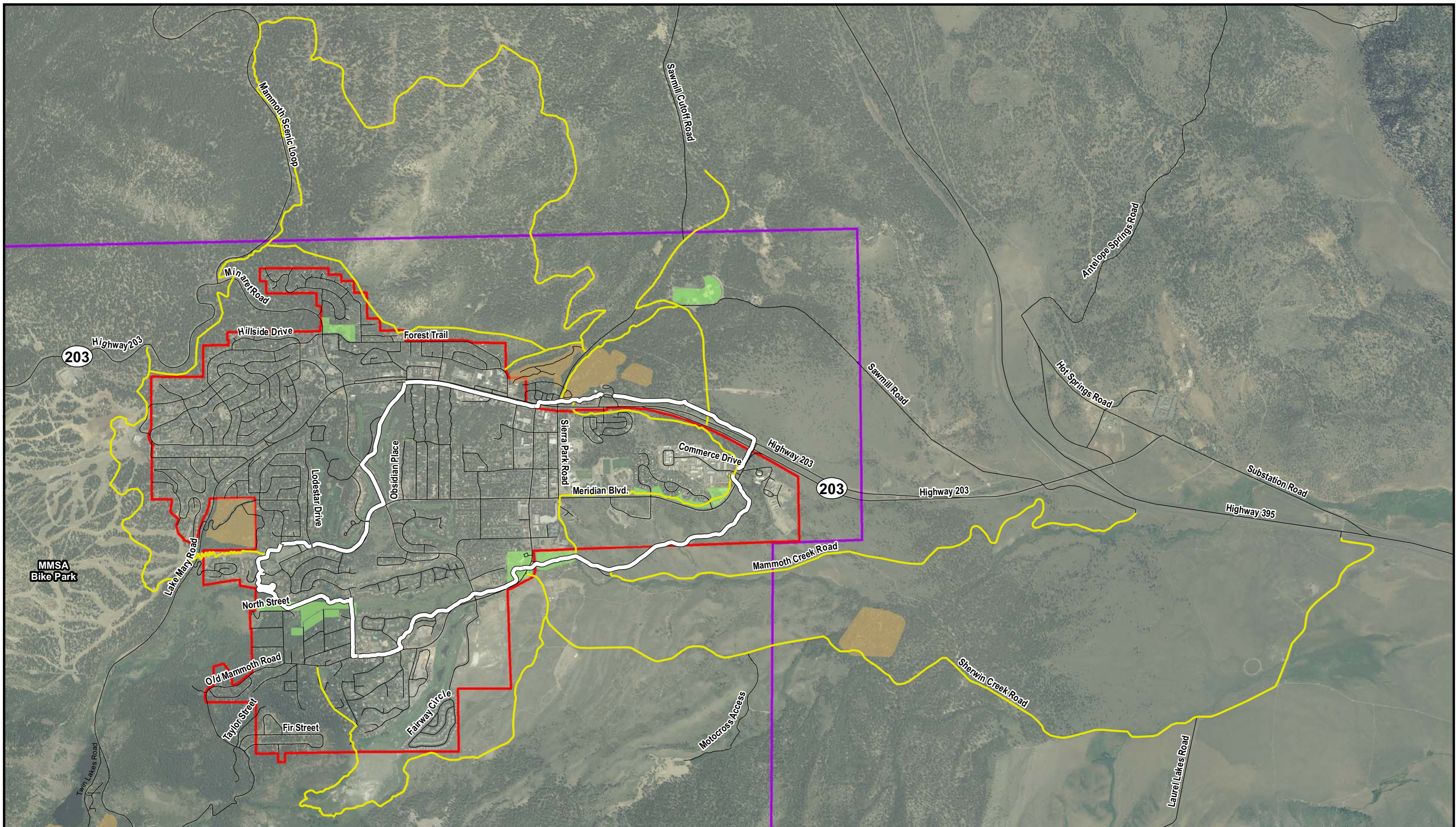
The General Bikeway Plan was originally developed and adopted in 1995. The plan has since been amended and/or readopted in 1996, 1997, 2002, and 2008. The primary purpose of these amendments and readoptions has been to renew its eligibility for Bicycle Transportation Account funding from Caltrans. The recommendations in the General Bikeway Plan have been evaluated and considered for inclusion in this TSMP. However, due to bi-annual updating requirements, the GBP will not be replaced by this document.

1.3.4. Sidewalk Master Plan (1997/2003)

The Sidewalk Master Plan for the Town of Mammoth Lakes was developed in 1997 and updated in 2003. As part of the 2003 update, the Planning Commission determined that the plan is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The plan recommends sidewalks on both sides of most major roadways or areas with high pedestrian activity. The plan recommends sidewalks on only one side of most collector streets or those that provide access to schools or other major destinations. While this Trail System Master Plan discusses sidewalk infrastructure in the context of providing access to the recreational trail system, any recommendations related to sidewalk infrastructure would need to be evaluated and adopted in a future revision of the Sidewalk Master Plan before they can be implemented.

1.3.5. Physical Development and Mobility Study (2006)

Originally the “Physical Development and Mobility Plan”, this document started off as a planning effort to coordinate land use and transportation planning with other community goals such as open space, recreation, and environmental sustainability. The document describes the latest planned development, trails and mobility projects. It also provides updated roadway cross-sections and assigns departmental responsibility for each element of implementation. Since the document was never adopted by the Town Council as a “Plan”, it retains the official title of “Study”. The Town will be initiating a new mobility planning effort for adoption by the Town Council. The relevant recommendations in this TSMP will be considered in the forthcoming mobility planning effort.



**MAP 1-1:
Trail System Plan (1991)**

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Trail System Plan (1991) Proposed Main Path | Streets | Parks & Open Space | Urban Limit |
| Proposed Future/Alternative Trails | Campgrounds | Town Boundary | |

0 0.5 1 Miles

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
(BACKSIDE OF 11x17 MAP)

1.3.6. Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008)

The Town of Mammoth Lakes Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan is being developed concurrently with the Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan. It will provide guidance for enhancing existing parks and developing new park facilities for recreation and enjoyment.

1.3.7. Neighborhood District Plans

A Neighborhood District Plan (NDP) is a planning tool used to assist the Town of Mammoth Lakes in the evaluation, analysis and processing of permit applications for Major Land Use Developments. The NDP process is designed to help determine whether a development project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan and the character of the surrounding district.

A number of Neighborhood District Plans (NDPs) have been completed and accepted since 2007 when the General Plan was adopted. In General, the NDPs reflect the recommendations of the TSMP with regard to trails and related facilities, and articulate similar goals as the TSMP with regard to improved mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists through an enhanced and interconnected trails network.

1.3.8. MLTPA GIC

The “MLTPA GIS Inventory Contract” (MLTPA GIC) is an inventory of significant points of public access to recreation amenities as well as identified points of jurisdictional importance in the Mammoth Lakes area. The origins of the MLTPA GIC lie in a report prepared by MLTPA, the “Mobility Plan Resources Report” (MPRR), presented on July 26, 2006, to a joint meeting of the TOML Planning, Tourism & Recreation, and Public Arts commissions. Recognizing the need for a more robust iteration of the MPRR, TOML Tourism & Recreation Director Danna Stroud worked with MLTPA and subsequently drafted an Agenda Bill for the Town Council meeting of August 16, 2006. The bill requested that Town Council vote to approve a contract for MLTPA to conduct a more thorough, extensive, and technically sophisticated survey of Points of Public Access (PPAs) in the region as were initially identified by the MPRR. Town Council unanimously approved this contract with MLTPA “...for the completion of a comprehensive map and inventory of all trails and points of public access between the Town’s urban limit, the Town boundary and the surrounding public lands.” The MLTPA GIC Inventory was then created by “point of public access” (PPA) identification, with consideration to the practical implications of a PPA system, seasonal realities including winter and summer, and a scope of work area. The original MPRR PPA information was used as a baseline for the MLTPA GIC Inventory. MLTPA GIC data was collected using analog field sheets created for each PPA, describing the location, outdoor recreation activities accessed from the PPA, special circumstances, and facilities, with photos of each site’s condition, location, and signage, prior to the transcription of the collected information into a digital database. The MLTPA GIC currently exists as a “living” PDF document as well as verified GIS data.

1.3.9. GIS Database

Sources of GIS data for the trails planning effort came from a variety of sources including the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the Inyo National Forest, Mono County, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and MLTPA, which field collected and developed data over the course of the planning effort. However, a reliable combined data source of GIS data from all federal, state, county, municipal and private sources in the Mammoth Lakes region does not currently exist. There is a strong need for data to be combined into a single, central, and reliable resource.

1.3.10. MLTPA MOU

The Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Memorandum of Understanding, or MLTPA MOU, is a non-binding document whose purpose is to ‘...establish and provide a working public/private cooperative framework, or collaborative planning process, directed toward the establishment and maintenance of a system of public trails providing reasonable access to and enjoyment of public lands that are both within and surround the Town.’ The MLTPA MOU further defines the area of influence as follows: ‘The Town’s Area of Influence consists of approximately 125 square miles of land surrounding the Town. Subject to more precise planning or mapping, that shall become the Area of Influence for the application of this MOU and any agreements among the parties, or any of them, which may come about as a result of this MOU.’ As of January 1, 2009, signatories to the MLTPA MOU are as follows: Inyo National Forest, Town of Mammoth Lakes, County of Mono, Mammoth Community Water District, Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, California Department of Transportation, the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation, and Friends of the Inyo.

1.3.11. Sherwins Area Recreation Plan (SHARP) - November 2009

A Sherwins Area Trails Special Study (SATSS) was developed concurrently with the TSMP, and was included in the February 2009 Draft TSMP. The SATSS resulted in a technical report which was then used as a reference document for the Sherwins Working Group (SWG), a citizen based collaborative planning effort formed at the invitation of regional partners the United States Forest Service/Inyo National Forest, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and MLTPA. The group worked throughout the course of 2009 and 2010 to review and build upon the concepts outlined in the SATSS. The resulting Sherwins Area Recreation Plan (SHARP) is the final deliverable of the SWG process; it was developed for inclusion in the TSMP and intended to serve as a resource document for the USFS, the TOML, private property and real estate development interests, and any other effort with an interest in trails and recreation infrastructure development in the Sherwins region. While a number of the SHARP recommendations are developed to a relatively high level of detail, other concepts are expected to be further refined through additional planning and study. All are subject to review and approval by the US Forest Service, and may be modified through that process. SHARP is included as Attachment C to this TSMP.

1.3.12. Sherwins Egress - October 2009

During the winter of 2005-2006, conflicts between local backcountry skiers/snowboarders, homeowners, and private-property interests threatened to permanently close the safest and most convenient winter egress route from the base of the Sherwin Range to the town of Mammoth Lakes. Today, thanks to a partnership between Snowcreek Investment Company L.P. (developer of Snowcreek VIII), the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and MLTPA, an approved, legal route leading outdoor recreationists home from the base of this well-loved frontcountry ski amenity has been secured and marked with directional signage. The Snowcreek egress route is the result of a two-year decision-making process and is formalized as a component of the adopted Snowcreek VIII Master Development Plan.

1.3.13. Snowcreek VIII Master Plan - January 2010

Snowcreek VIII will be the largest single real estate development project in Mammoth Lakes in coming years; its development, including trails and public access through the project area will play a significant role in defining the interface between the Town of Mammoth Lakes and U.S. Forest Service lands along the Town's southern boundary. The trails and access points identified in the Snowcreek VIII Master Plan are incorporated by reference into the MLTS.

1.3.14. Lakes Basin Special Study (LABSS) - September 2010

Thanks to a grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Inyo National Forest (INF) partnered with the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML), the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA), and Friends of the Inyo (FOI) to study mobility and outdoor-recreation patterns in the Mammoth Lakes Basin. As one of Mammoth's most popular amenities, the area sees thousands of visitors every summer who come to experience a wide diversity of recreation experiences. The Mammoth Lakes Basin is also a critical watershed providing water resources to Mammoth Lakes and other downstream communities. Proper planning and management will ensure that the Lakes Basin can continue to provide exceptional recreational experiences while protecting and sustaining the natural resources of the area. Based on public input gathered during 2010 and 2011, the study will identify a series of concepts for the future management of the Mammoth Lakes Basin. The Inyo National Forest will consider these concepts as they develop formal management planning for the area.

1.3.15. Mammoth Scenic Loop Road Reconstruction - October 2010

The Mammoth Scenic Loop project is a 5.847-mile road construction project on the Mammoth Scenic Loop from the Town of Mammoth Lakes north to the intersection with US 395. The project work includes minor grading, drainage, pulverization, aggregate base, hot asphalt concrete pavement, and the addition of Class II Bike Lanes along both sides of the road. Road construction was accomplished in two phases in 2010 with temporary road closures to facilitate construction efforts. Opportunities for new MLTS nodes as well as enhanced recreation opportunities - including snowplay - are outcomes of this project.

1.3.16. Recreation Vision and Strategies for Mammoth Lakes: RECSTRATS - November 2010

The RECSTRATS process was designed to deliver a recreation vision and strategy for Mammoth Lakes while also identifying opportunities that might be realized by formalizing the Town's relationship with the Inyo National Forest. This first phase of the process was completed in November 2010 with the delivery of the vision and seven core strategies for recreation as articulated in the RECSTRATS document to the Mammoth Lakes Town Council, which unanimously accepted the plan. Final delivery of the RECSTRATS project is anticipated for delivery in August of 2011.

1.3.17. Inyo National Forest Shady Rest Motorized Staging Project - March 2011

The Inyo National Forest received an OHV grant from the State of California to support recreation planning efforts for the "Shady Rest" area within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The planning process is designed to address year round motorized use while considering the needs of non-motorized users in the immediate and surrounding area and the potential impact of proposed geothermal development. The desired outcome of the planning process is to design, review, and approve the development of a new year-round motorized staging area.

1.3.18. Mammoth Lakes Trail System Standards Manual - Draft March 2011

The purpose of the MLTS Standards Manual is to guide the various agencies and organizations with identified roles in the management and/or implementation of the Mammoth Lakes Trail System, and to ensure a consistent experience and level of service for trail users. MLTPA has taken the lead in developing the first draft of this document, which will be a living document that is updated as necessary, and conforms to the needs and expectations of the MLTS management and implementation partners. The Standards Manual includes sections on the design and implementation of recreation nodes, signage and wayfinding, soft-surface trails, multi-use paths, on-street bikeways, easements, trail amenities, and pedestrian facilities. In many cases those standards will tier from, but reflect refinements to, the advisory or guideline design concepts outlined in this Master Plan. The Standards Manual when adopted will be the authoritative document with regard to implementation of specific facilities and improvements within the MLTS.