



May 13, 2008

Town of Mammoth Lakes Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 1609,  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Framework of the Shady Rest Neighborhood District Plan (SRNDP). Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) provides the following comments in furtherance of its mission and of the General Plan goals and policies that support that mission. These comments are on the Sphere of influence, scope, and content of the SRNDP. More detailed comments may be provided on the Hidden Creek Crossing development proposal depending upon the outcome of the district planning process and the responsiveness of the project application to that outcome and to the adopted General Plan goals and policies.

Because of the objective of creating a livable locals neighborhood for the Shady Rest Tract, there will be a higher percentage of employees and children than in many other neighborhoods. To address the recreational and other access needs of families, the SRNDP Sphere of Influence must include multi-modal connections to the Gateway area, Vons, Shady Rest Park, the Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System as well as multi-modal connections to other commuter and recreational destinations. Ease of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access to these destinations must be a key organizing theme within the Sphere and must be designed to function effectively year round.

The organizing principles of the alternatives in the WRT PowerPoint presentation appear to start with a street system and then insert buildings and alternate transportation modes. The only multi-modal facilities actually mapped in the plans are the trail to Manzanita Street, crosswalks, and a bus stop. The plan alternatives read like a “feet second” approach to site design, which is contrary to significant elements of the recently adopted TOML General Plan (2007). MLTPA strongly recommends that the site planning start by determining the accessibility/connectivity needs of the target population and then design the non-vehicular system to maximize the opportunities to meet those needs without a personal motorized vehicle. With this suggested infrastructure in place, personal vehicle circulation can then be added. This assures that pedestrian, bike, and transit use are not afterthoughts and maximum utility of the alternative modes is achieved. Efficient multi-modal design can then be accomplished without ignoring the personal vehicle ownership and uses necessary to support permanent residential households in Mammoth Lakes.

The “feet first” pedestrian system must be designed to function effectively year-round. MLTPA suggests that in addition to trails that are designed for year round maintenance and operation, any other pedestrian infrastructure be well separated from roadways so as to provide for easier snow removal and enhanced pedestrian safety.

The open space portion of the project provides opportunities for walking paths in a natural setting. This can be a major enhancement to the Hidden Creek development and to the adjoining Sierra Valley Sites. The site planning should maximize the non-motorized connections to this location from within and outside the district.

The SRNDP process and product must include data available in the MLTPA/Town of Mammoth Lakes GIS Inventory Contract (MLTPA GIC – updated 4/20/08). This compilation of access points and existing and potential recreation uses provides a graphic and data baseline for determining recreational opportunities and connections. The MLTPA GIC is being cited in all of the NDP efforts currently under way in the Mammoth Lakes community.

Given the comments above, additional alternatives need to be developed that focus on readily usable pedestrian/bicycle and transit as the basis for site design and organization.

A detailed list of excerpts from the General Plan that support these comments is included in attachment 1. We look forward to participating in the meetings with the Planning Commission and to reviewing the responses to those meetings.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the Shady Rest District Plan. MLTPA looks forward to participating in the development of the District Plan and the review of the Hidden Creek project.

Sincerely,

Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access

## Attachment 1

### Excerpts from the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan 2007

The following excerpts from the Town of Mammoth lakes General Plan support the Vision and Mission of Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access as applied to the Shady Rest Neighborhood District Plan.

#### Neighborhood and District Character, Page 25

Shady Rest Characteristics:

3. A Community Oriented Design:
  - a. Neighborhood Context and Connections:
    - (1) Pedestrian and auto connections to adjoining areas and neighborhoods (e.g. Sierra Valley District, Tavern Road, Main Street and Center Street)
    - (3) Trail and pedestrian emphasis
    - (4) Transit accessible
  - b. Integrated site planning and architectural design
    - (1) Accessible wetlands and community park(s) connected to the community

Parks, Open Space and Recreation Element:

P.4.B. Policy: Provide an affordable and wide range of year-round recreational opportunities to foster a healthy community for residents and visitors. Activities include but are not limited to:

- downhill skiing & snowboarding • day & backcountry hiking
- cross-country skiing • walking
- back-country skiing & snowboarding • interpretive trails & signage
- snowshoeing • climbing
- sledding • touring
- dog sledding • street & mountain biking
- ice skating • camping
- snowmobiling • fishing
- sleigh rides • fall-color viewing
- tennis • birding
- swimming • health & fitness
- soccer • off-highway vehicles
- racquetball • equestrian activities
- snow play • BMX
- skateboarding

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.5.B. Policy: Design and construct trails as components of a regional and local network for recreation and commuting.

P.5.C. Policy: Require development to incorporate linked public trail corridors identified in the Mammoth Lakes Trail System Plan into overall project site plan.

P.5.E. Policy: Design parks and open space to be accessible and usable except when set aside for preservation of natural resources, health and safety.

P.5.H. Policy: Dedicated parkland suitable for active recreation uses shall have a maximum slope of 10%, be accessible to the community, and be free of significant constraints.

#### Mobility Element:

M.2.A. Policy: Maintain and expand access to recreation areas via coordinated system of shuttle and bus services, scenic routes, trails and highways.

M.4. GOAL: Encourage feet first by providing a linked year-round recreational and commuter trail system that is safe and comprehensive.

M.4.A. Policy: Improve safety of sidewalks, trails and streets.

M.4.B. Policy: Provide a high quality pedestrian system linked throughout the community with year round access.

M.4.B.1. Action: Develop and implement a pedestrian improvement plan.

M.4.C. Policy: Design streets, sidewalks and trails to ensure public safety such as:

- adequate dimensions and separation
- glare-free lighting at intersections
- directional and informational signage
- trash receptacles
- benches
- shuttle shelters
- protected roadway crossings
- landscaping
- groomed community trails
- snow removed from sidewalks

M.4.D. Policy: Provide safe travel for pedestrians to schools and parks.

M.4.D.1. Action: Update trail, streetscape and roadway design standards as well as the Circulation, Trail System and General Bikeway Plans to:

- Establish a system of bicycle routes and pedestrian trails for recreation, commuting and shopping that is comprehensive and safe
- Develop a town wide maintenance, grooming and/or snow removal program for sidewalks and trails to provide year-round pedestrian access
- Design and construct streetscapes and roadways to reduce long-term maintenance costs in a harsh climate

M.7. GOAL: Maintain and improve safe and efficient movement of people, traffic, and goods in a manner consistent with the feet first initiative.

M.7.H. Policy: Development shall dedicate, design and construct internal and adjacent streets, sidewalks and trails to Town standards.

Community Design Element:

C.2.G. Policy: Ensure that development in commercial areas provides for convenient pedestrian movement between adjoining and adjacent properties.

C.2.R. Policy: Plan parks for safety and compatibility with adjacent uses through thoughtful design including location of buildings, lighting, parking, emergency access, public transit and pedestrian/bicycle access.

Arts, Culture, Heritage and Natural History Element:

A.1. GOAL: Be stewards of Mammoth's unique natural environment.

A.1.A. Policy: As stewards of our natural environment recognize that our natural history is the framework for all other human activities whether economic or aesthetic and so must be conserved and protected for future generations.