

BUDGET POLICY DECISION #12

ISSUE: Trails Planning Proposal initiated by Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA)

DESCRIPTION: MLTPA is bringing forward to the Town of Mammoth Lakes a trails planning proposal that seeks to ensure the integration and stewardship of surrounding public lands.

JUSTIFICATION: The Town has an existing Trail System Plan that was adopted in 1991. Additionally, it has a Bicycle Plan and Sidewalk Plan, both adopted in the early 90's. The Bicycle Plan and Sidewalk Plans have been periodically updated; however, the Trail System Plan has not been updated since 1991. The proposal being brought forward would serve to update the Town's Trail System Plan, expanding beyond the urban growth boundary and out to the Town's planning boundary. An outline and summary of the proposal is attached.

MLTPA has been incorporated as a local citizens group dedicated to trails and public access issues in Mammoth Lakes and the Eastern Sierra Region. The role of MLTPA in this trails planning proposal is yet to be fully defined; however, they are a proven and valuable resource for public outreach and collaborative efforts.

The Community Vision outlined in the current draft version of the Town's General Plan Update identifies a commitment to providing the very highest quality of life for residents and the highest quality of experience for visitors. A comprehensive trails and public access system is a necessary element to ensuring this vision is upheld. Access to the surrounding public lands provides a unique recreational experience for our residents and visitors and is the cornerstone of our economic sustainability.

The need for a comprehensive trails and public access planning process has been identified by MLTPA, the Tourism and Recreation Commission, community members and staff as a critical element of the Town's current development environment. The options being presented are intended to show a financial

commitment from the Town for such a planning process; however, the details of the process will need to be finalized between the funding and jurisdictional partners.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes has partnered with other organizations to help implement important Town policies. For example:

- The Town provides approximately \$340,000 per year from the Measure A allocation to housing to Mammoth Lakes Housing, Inc., to support its administrative operations. As part of its duties, MLH administers Town housing grants and provides advice on housing-related policies.
- The Town provides \$25,000 per year to the High Sierra Energy Foundation. This provides support to HSEF for administrative functions. As part of its duties, HSEF provides advice on implementation of energy policy and administration of Town energy grants. HSEF is also able to charge some of its administrative costs to the grants it administers for the Town.
- The Town is currently negotiating a contract with the Chamber of Commerce to provide contractual services to businesses in the community. The Chamber is able to charge some of its administrative costs to this contract. We are also negotiating a lease for Chamber office space in the Tourism and Recreation Admin Building.

Staff would like to explore the possibility of an ongoing relationship, similar to those with these other organizations, with MLTPA. This longer term relationship could start with FY 2007-08, or Council could fund a share of the Master Plan and consider an ongoing relationship in FY 2008-09.

OPTIONS:

MLTPA is requesting that the Town allocate \$100,000 for FY 07-08 towards a \$475,000 planning process. The balance is to be raised from private sources. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area has committed to provide \$100,000 to this program contingent upon the Town committing an equal amount. Three funding

options for that amount are provided for consideration, along with other options.

Option 1. Increase the deficit in DIF Administration account by \$75,000 (currently the projected year-end deficit is \$230,000) and reallocate \$25,000 from the monies allocated in the LTC for the transit master plan to total a \$100,000 financial commitment towards a trails planning process. The resolution establishing the DIF Administrative account allows for funding of administrative work under a planning process.

Option 2. Decrease the Measure A allocation to the Tourism and Recreation Department by \$100,000. This would negatively impact the Town's proposed tourism budget with potential to result in staff reductions, inability to complete the current brand strategy process, reduction in advertising and promotions or reduction in special event funding.

Option 3. Allocate \$100,000 from the Town's General Fund. This increases the projected operational shortfall for the GF in the new FY '07-'08.

Option 4. Fund a comprehensive trails and public access planning process at a level other than the recommended \$100,000.

Option 5. Do not fund a comprehensive trails and public access planning process.

**MANAGER'S
RECOMMENDED
ACTION:**

Option 1. Increase the deficit in DIF Administration account by \$75,000 (currently the projected year-end deficit is \$230,000) and reallocate \$25,000 from the monies allocated in the LTC for the transit master plan to total a \$100,000 financial commitment towards a trails planning process. The resolution establishing the DIF Admin account allows for funding of administrative work under a planning process.

The \$25,000 from the LTC budget will be used to establish a contracted relationship between the Town

and MLTPA for ongoing specific services relative to a planning process, intended to be developed into an annual level of funding. The \$75,000 from DIF will be allocated towards the planning process.