

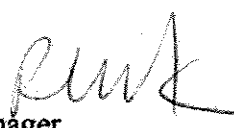
OFFICE OF TOWN MANAGER

Robert F. Clark, Town Manager

P.O. Box 1609, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

MEMORANDUM

To: Town Councilmembers
Planning Commissioners

From: Robert F. Clark, Town Manager 
Karen Johnston, Assistant Town Manager
Mark Wardlaw, Community Development Director
Raymond Jarvis, Public Works Director
Bill Taylor, Deputy Community Development Director

Subject: Council Commission Workshop

Date: March 7, 2007

Over the next twelve months the Town Council and Planning Commission will be taking action on the General Plan Update, considering eleven very significant entitlement proposals, and approving a variety of fees and requirements that are attached to new development. A key theme that carries through all of these decisions is how the Town will work together with development community to provide the features, amenities and programs that will make Mammoth Lakes a livable community and a successful destination resort.

One Time Opportunity

The entitlement process governs the character of individual developments as well as the community benefits provided by the development. The significance of having this large number of entitlement decisions come forward in a compressed time frame is hard to overstate. The decisions on design, density, configuration and project features will set the tone for what Mammoth Lakes will be for the next generation. Furthermore, the ability to address environmental, economic and social impacts and obtain a fair share contribution toward community benefits is a one time opportunity. If this opportunity is not attained now it will be lost forever.

Questions for the Council and Commission

The Council Commission Workshop provides a good opportunity for the members of the two bodies to step back from the detailed nuances of various projects and policies and to consider some higher order questions about how to make sure that the decisions of the coming year move the Town toward its vision of being a livable community and successful destination resort. Staff has attempted to identify some of the higher order issues and suggested follow up actions as guide for your discussion:

Is this truly a watershed moment?

A list of eleven major entitlement applications which are either already under review or are expected to come forward during the course of the year has been attached. The scope and breadth of the list speaks for itself. It represents almost all of the undeveloped land in Town. According to the Community Development Department there have only been twelve EIRs in the twenty three year history of the Town (including the EIR for Eagle Lodge. Considering the current projects, the airport and the GPU itself we are likely to equal or exceed that number in one year. It is suggested that the Council and Commission acknowledge this as a way of framing the remaining questions.

How will community benefits be provided prior to implementation of incentives and performance zoning?

The Vision and GPU contain broad concepts. The concepts of incentives, performance zoning and community benefits are included in the GPU, but not precisely defined or enacted. It is unlikely that any of the detailed implementation measures associated with these concepts will occur before the eleven entitlement applications come forward for action. It will be necessary for the Town and developers to define the specific uses, features and programs that are required to assure that each of these developments makes Mammoth Lakes a better place to live and a better place to visit.

Are there one time opportunities to provide community facilities that will be lost forever if not acted upon now?

Our recent experience with projects such as the Visitor and Welcome Center, Fire Station, Skateboard Park, Library, Ice/Multi Use Facility, North Village Parking Structure, Roundabout, Lake Mary Road Bike Path and Tavern Road Mixed Use Development all illustrate how difficult it is to finance important community facilities. None of these projects would have been possible without a fair share contribution from new development. The Town and developers need to assure that all of the public facilities that have been included in the vision are provided for as development proceeds.

How does the Town effectively partner with the development community?

The development community argues that the combination of escalating building costs, weak demand, and development fees will render development impossible. Some want government to reduce their requirements to allow current projects to go forward. The Town has generally been willing to consider reliable alternate ways of achieving community benefits other than through the normal fees and development requirements. If the Town proceeds without these we will have lost the opportunity to sustain a livable community.

What actions are needed to assure a livable community and economic sustainability?

Many cities use targeted incentives and fee reductions to enable high priority development. General rollbacks reduce public benefits across the board. Not all development requires incentives, and the Town may not want to incentivize all development as a matter of policy. Members of the community have pressed to link expanded recreation/leisure activities to new development.

Potential Follow-Up Principles:

1. Agree that proper planning of these current applications is the most important task and highest priority of the Council, Commission and staff over the next twelve months.
2. Assure that adequate staff, consultant and financial resources are allocated to this work and not diluted by other lower priority activities.
3. Establish an open, participatory, community process to work together with the developers to identify project specific uses, features and programs that are required to assure that each of these developments makes Mammoth Lakes a better place to live and a better place to visit.
4. Continue to review the development impact fees, art ordinance, housing mitigation options and other implementation measures are in order to assure that all of the community facilities that are included in the Vision are provided as development proceeds.
5. Consider targeted incentives and fee reductions where appropriate to enable development that is necessary for economic sustainability.

Major Development Entitlement Applications

Clearwater
Eagle Lodge
Hidden Creek
Main Lodge
Mammoth Crossings
Mammoth Hillside
Mountain View
Sherwins
Sierra Star
Snowcreek VIII
The "1" Hotel

Major Development Activity

