

# Neighborhood District Planning: Downtown Concept for Main Street

July 2010

## A Downtown for Mammoth Lakes!

For many years, the Mammoth Lakes community has struggled with how to “fix” Main Street. While improvements have been made, like new street lighting, crosswalks, and construction of some sidewalk segments, businesses nearly disappear behind high snowbanks, and existing development is a hodge-podge of parking and buildings.

The community has said it wants a better future for Mammoth’s Main Street. A pedestrian-friendly business district, a true downtown, could set the stage for new public and private reinvestment in the community.

Through a Neighborhood District Planning (NDP) process as outlined in the General Plan, a Focus Group with input from the public reached consensus on a bold, long-term vision for Main Street. Turning Main Street into Mammoth’s “Downtown” could result in:

- A distinctive, attractive and welcoming gateway to Mammoth.
- A revitalized, attractive and pedestrian-friendly business district, with a unique sense of character and place.
- A walkable, mixed use downtown that offers shopping, dining, entertainment, lodging and housing within easy walking distance.
- Places to hold public events, festivals and gatherings that will draw residents and visitors to Downtown’s shops and restaurants.
- Opportunities to help business and property owners, and attract investment.



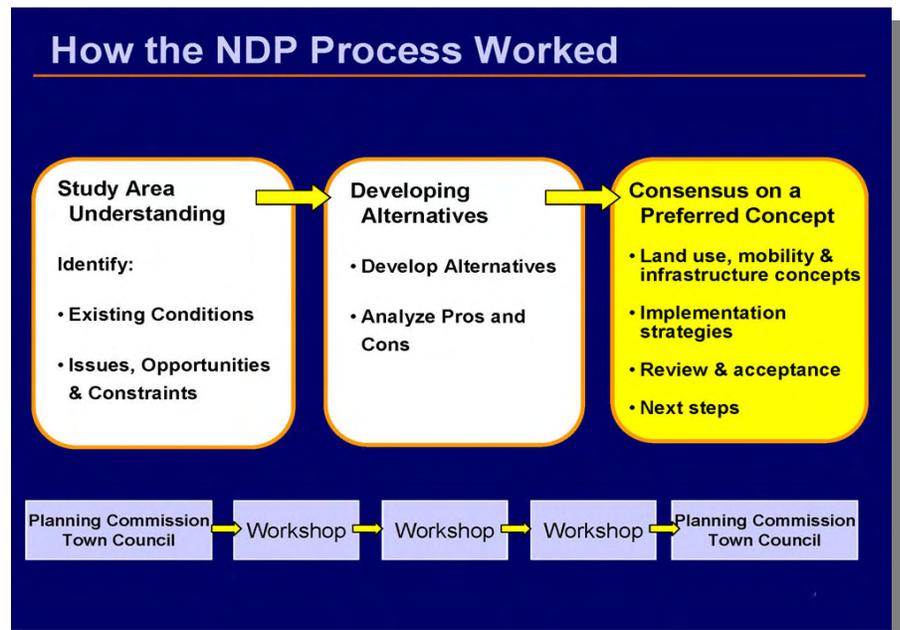
Downtown will be a place for pedestrian activity and vibrant street life year round

**A pedestrian-friendly Main Street will benefit local residents, visitors and downtown businesses alike.**

## Shaping the Downtown Concept

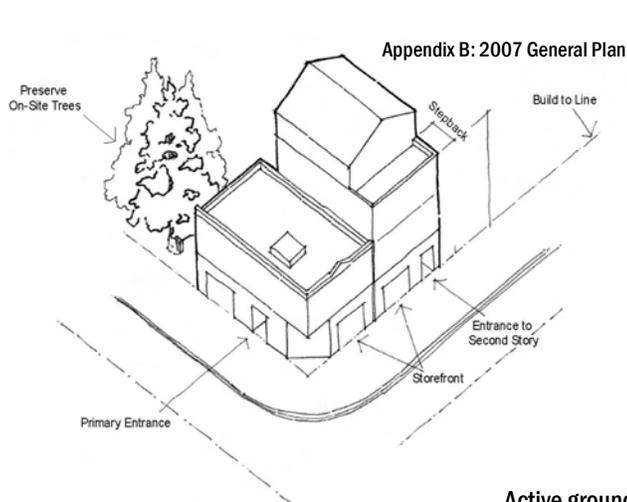
The Downtown planning process was inclusive, reflecting input from the whole community. Over the course of 10 months, public workshops and meetings with a 15-member Focus Group, with Town Commissions, and Town Council were held to gather ideas and input.

Starting with a look at the overall study area and issues, then working through a series of options or alternatives, participants arrived at a strong consensus around a preferred concept that was the basis for the Downtown NDP Study and its recommendations.



## Community-Driven Guidance

- A concept developed by and for the community
- Based on consensus.
- Can be implemented by property and business owners at their own pace.
- Does not require wholesale change “all at once” to be successful.
- Respects existing businesses and properties.
- Avoids takings or down-zonings of private property.



**Commercial Building Form and Function:**  
Active ground level uses animate the street; step-backs allow for solar access and views

## Main Street: Challenges and Opportunities

Main Street's status as a State highway and major transportation corridor is a significant challenge that has made the maintenance of traffic flow a priority over pedestrian friendliness or aesthetics.

A wide-ranging list of issues and opportunities were identified through the initial steps of the Downtown NDP process, including issues related to mobility, the character and appearance of the Downtown district, livability and neighborhood compatibility, as well as concerns related to existing businesses and land uses. Some include:

- Make the Downtown district a distinctive place with attractive development, a high level of design, and active street-level uses.



Existing businesses are one of Main Street's major assets

- Work with Caltrans to effectively plan for the area within the right-of-way.
- Provide for "walkability" and a safe, high-quality, well-connected pedestrian environment that is useable all year.
- Address snow management and the piling of snow along the street that blocks views of businesses.
- Effectively manage and accommodate traffic and parking; maintain efficient circulation.



Piles of snow block visibility of businesses in winter

- Integrate places for events, activities and open space.
- Build on the existing business base; enhance opportunities for commercial success and a diverse, year-round economy.
- Take advantage of solar exposure, public views and opportunities to enhance mountain character.
- Develop a financially feasible plan that can be accomplished within available resources.
- Create a high quality, livable workforce neighborhood at Shady Rest.



All modes of transportation including walking, bikes, transit and cars should be accommodated safely

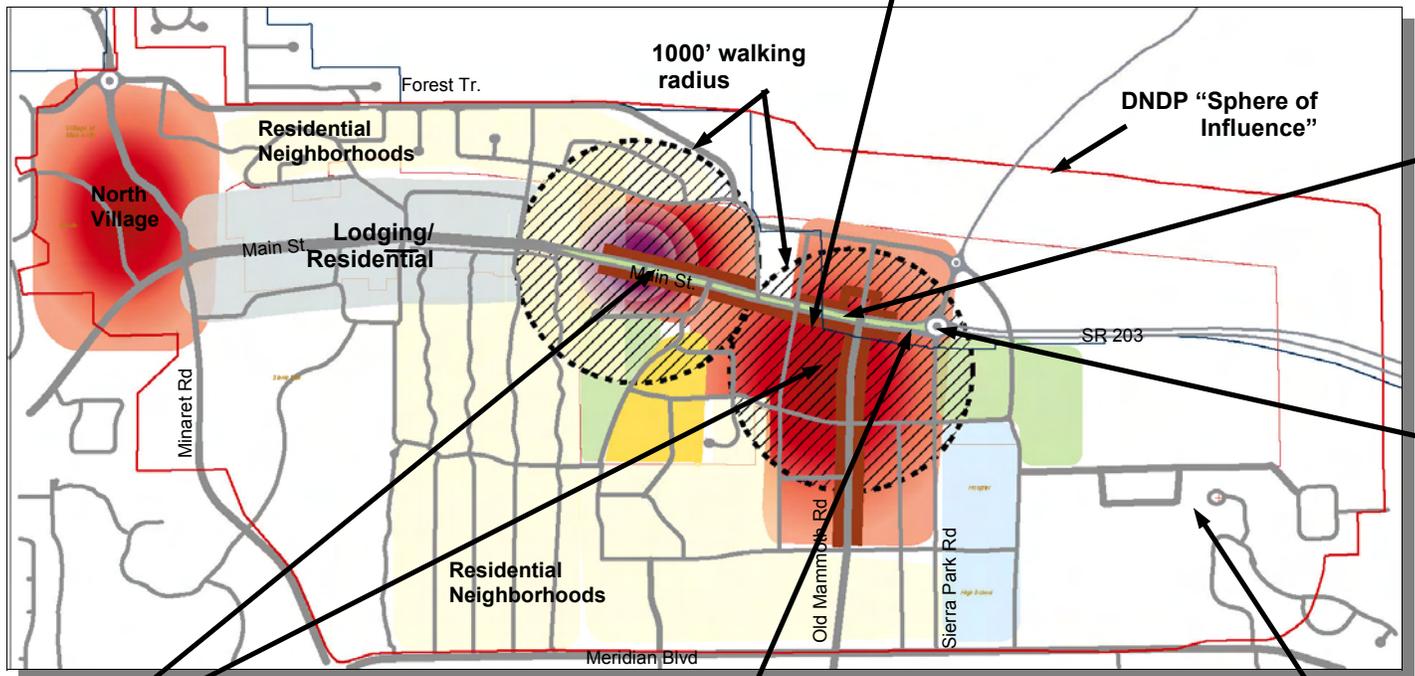
## Creating a Sense of Place

Land use, “place-making” and implementation of design and development standards will create the clearly identifiable areas key to the Downtown Concept for Main Street.



### 1 Mixed Use Downtown

A mixed use downtown would be focused around Main Street and Old Mammoth Road with shopping, dining, lodging and housing in convenient proximity.



### 2 Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Streets

Primary retail streets would include buildings up to the sidewalk edge, but stepped at upper levels to allow for solar access and views. Active ground level uses, sidewalks and public gathering spaces would animate the district.

### 3 Distinctive, Attractive Town Entry

A distinctive gateway to Mammoth would be created with streetscape and wayfinding and entry markers, reinforced by a new sports park/event center and town square/civic center (see pages 6-7). The entry to town would reflect a clear transition from undeveloped open space to the built townscape.

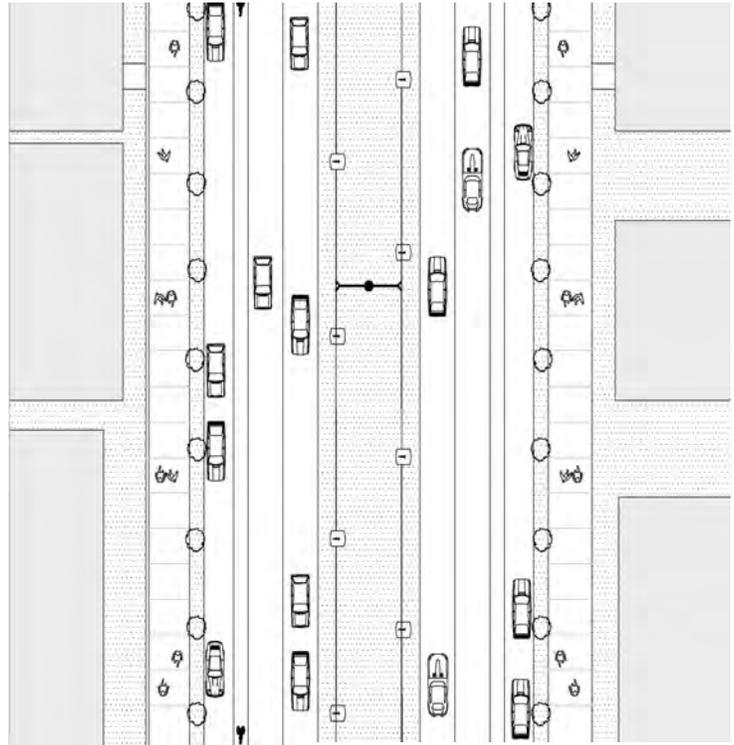


## An Attractive Boulevard for People, Bikes, Trolleys and Cars

The Downtown Concept envisions a series of new facilities and upgraded infrastructure that support the land use and place-making ideas shown in the concept diagram. They include new and reconfigured elements of the roadway network and circulation system, as well as new opportunities for public art and wayfinding.

### 4 Reconfiguring Main Street

Main Street would be reconfigured to a new four lane cross-section with large center median, and will be a “complete street” with on-street parking, bike lanes, and sidewalks on both sides. The existing frontage roads would be eliminated, resulting in an overall narrowing of the existing 200 foot right-of-way and an opportunity to convert that land to developable property.



Conceptual Main Street cross-section

### 5 Roundabouts and Medians

The reconfigured Main Street would include a large median, as well as possible roundabouts (subject to further study) that can smooth traffic flow, and provide a key opportunity for the placement of public art, monumentation and wayfinding features.



Example of a more formal landscaped median. The Main Street median would be designed to reflect Mammoth’s character and local conditions.



### 6 Expanded, Connected Network of Complete Streets

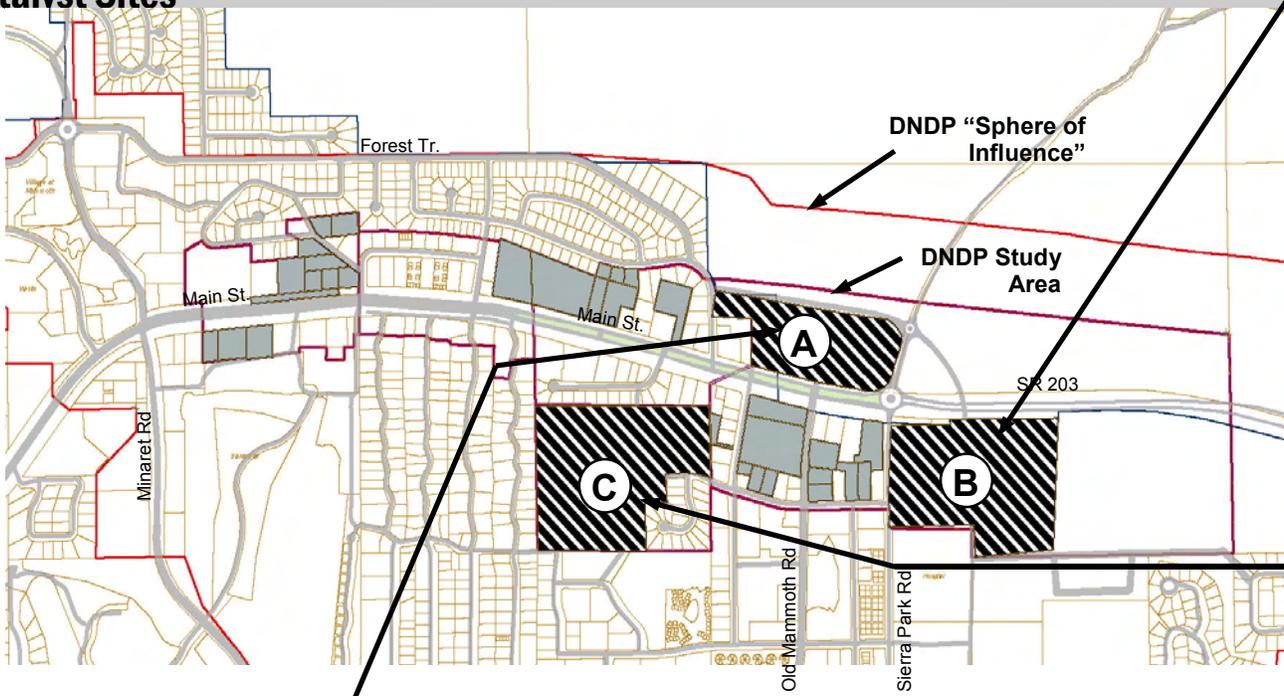
Providing additional road connections would allow traffic flow to be accommodated, spread traffic among more roadways and away from Main Street, and allow alternate routes for emergency and other vehicles. All new streets would be complete streets that accommodate bikes, transit, and pedestrians.

### Catalysts for Change

A series of long, medium and short-term actions will be needed to successfully implement the Downtown Concept. Among the “critical path” priorities identified by the community are the reconfiguration of Main Street and the right of way; providing a program of business/property owner incentives and shorter-range improvements; and implementation of snow and parking management strategies. Additional information on these implementation steps can be found on Page 8.

Another key idea in the Downtown Concept is the redevelopment of a series of key “catalyst sites” which include large public and privately-owned properties, as well as smaller parcels that could potentially be assembled and developed. Together these catalyst sites provide opportunities for larger scale re-investment in Mammoth’s Downtown. Some illustrative concepts for three of the major sites, the USFS property, Town/County property, and Shady Rest site, are shown below.

### Catalyst Sites



#### Catalyst Site A: USFS Property



The Concept envisions that the Forest Service property north of Main Street would be acquired through a land exchange, and used as the site for a new civic center complex centered around a town square, and upgraded housing for USFS employees.



### Catalyst Site B: Town/County Property

The Concept envisions that the Town/County property south of Main Street at Sierra Park Road would be a combined sports park and open-air events facility for summer concerts and festivals. The proximity to nearby school sites offers an opportunity for shared use of facilities. The event venue would create energy and a synergy with Downtown's lodging, transit and commercial services.



### Catalyst Site C: Shady Rest Site



The Downtown District Concept envisions that the Shady Rest site would be a livable workforce housing neighborhood with a mixture of income levels and housing types. A large portion of the site would be open space and parks, including preservation of the existing wetlands.



## Realizing the Downtown Concept: Implementation and Action

The Downtown Concept is based on short-, medium- and long-range actions that are practical and allow incremental and feasible changes to be made.

### Building Momentum: Next Steps

The DNDP Concept is a starting point. It will be developed and refined through additional study and analysis following direction from the Town Council to proceed. Key actions for the concept and next steps needed to move these actions forward are:

#### Reconfigure Main Street

- Coordinate with Caltrans to model and test the proposed circulation system and Main Street cross-section.
- Report results to Commissions and Town Council; confirm direction.
- Develop final schematic Main Street configuration and design.
- Town Council “check-in;” direction.
- Implement improvements.

#### Set Land Use and Development Standards

- Draft mixed use zoning standards and building envelopes.
- Report results to Commissions and Town Council; confirm direction.
- Model and analyze buildout (PAOT) and Project Impact Evaluation Criteria (PIEC).
- Town Council “check-in;” direction.
- Incorporate into Zoning Code update revised land use standards.

#### Agency Coordination and Partnership

- Caltrans
- Mammoth Community Water District
- Mammoth Hospital
- Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District
- Mammoth Unified School District
- Mono County
- US Forest Service

### Short Range Actions

There are a range of action items that can be implemented in the near-term to build early momentum and progressive “successes” for a revitalized Main Street:

- Implement pilot projects like pedestrian/walkabout spaces in frontage roads.
- Install wayfinding and informational signage.
- Installation of a message/gateway marker.
- Establish a design palette and begin installation of street furniture like benches, lighting, trash cans and planters.
- Explore snow removal/management options and programs.
- Provide additional transit service and shelters/stops.
- Develop and implement a special events program.



### Want to Get Involved?

Contact Jen Daugherty at [jdaugherty.ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us](mailto:jdaugherty.ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us) or at (760) 934-8989 ext. 260 to sign up for email notification.

Or visit the Downtown NDP web-page at: <http://www.ci.mammoth-lakes.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=133> for all Main Street NDP documents and downloads.