

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

I. LAND USE AND PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide an analysis of the Project's consistency with policies and regulations set forth in local and regional plans that are applicable to the development of trails or other improvements proposed as part of the Project. Applicable adopted plans include the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan and the Inyo National Forest Land Resources and Management Plan (LRMP). The provisions set forth in these plans have been adopted for the purpose of administering land use and managing existing and future development within their jurisdictional boundaries. This section also evaluates the compatibility of the Project with surrounding or interfacing land uses in the Project Area. Potential physical effects that typically have an influence on land use compatibility include air emissions, noise, impacts to biological or cultural resources, visual impacts, and traffic. Accordingly, the assessment of land use compatibility in this section is partially based on analyses of physical impacts presented in the Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Noise, and Traffic sections of this EIR.

Three boundaries define the Town, including (1) the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), an area encompassing approximately 4.5 square miles and forming the nucleus of the town, (2) the Municipal Boundary, an area encompassing approximately 25 square miles and including the Lakes Basin, Shady Rest, and most of the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area; and (3) the Planning Area or "sphere of influence," an area encompassing approximately 125 square miles that includes destinations such as Reds Meadow, Devils Postpile National Monument, the John Muir Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail. The Sherwins Area is located to the south and east of the UGB, generally within the Municipal Boundary, and within the Mammoth Lakes Planning Area. The vast majority of lands outside of the UGB are National Forest lands of the Inyo National Forest, administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS).

1. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

a. Regulatory Framework

(1) Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan

The Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan is made of a range of elements, or subject areas, that are integral to the unique identity of Mammoth Lakes. Elements that are applicable to the TSMP are Mobility and Parks and Open Space. Within the Mobility Element is the sub-topic of Walking and Bicycling that is applicable to the TSMP and within the Parks and Open Space Element is the sub-topic of Trail System that is applicable to the TSMP. Goals and policies that are specific to these sub-topics are listed below.

Walking and Bicycling

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

Trail System

Goal P.3.: Create a Master Plan for an integrated trail system that will maintain and enhance convenient public access to public lands from town.

- Policy P.3.A.: Ensure public routes for access to public lands are provided in all developments adjacent to National Forest lands.
- Policy P.3.B.: Coordinate with multiple organizations, agencies and jurisdictions to plan, steward, interpret, promote and sustain trails, public access and outdoor recreation amenities in the Mammoth Lakes region.
- Policy P.4.B.: Provide an affordable and wide range of year-round recreational opportunities to foster a healthy community for residents and visitors. Applicable activities include but are not limited to walking interpretive trails & signage, touring, street & mountain biking.
- Policy P.4.C.: Ensure balance of use, enjoyment and separation where appropriate between motorized and non-motorized modes of recreation.
- Policy P.5.: Link parks and open space with a well-designed year round network of public corridors and trails within and surrounding Mammoth Lakes.
- Policy P.5.B.: Design and construct trails as components of a regional and local network for recreation and commuting.

(2) Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The purpose of the LRMP is to provide integrated multiple resource management direction for all Inyo National Forest resources. Chapter 2 of the LRMP identifies issues and concerns that came up in the development of the plan. Areas relevant to land use include the construction and maintenance of facilities and the construction of facilities where needed. Identified needs were the construction of trails and the improvement of existing trails; the need for trails specific to cross-country trails, hiking and handicapped trails; the need to locate, design, and construct trails to provide the desired experience while minimizing resource damage. The LRMP identifies the greatest need for new trails in concentrated recreation use areas and Nordic ski areas.

The LRMP includes monitoring of more than 20 broad resource categories ranging from air quality to wilderness. Chapter 5 (Management Direction) of the LRMP provides management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, prescriptions and direction for each of the twenty management areas. The TSMP area is located in both LRMP Management Area No. 8 (Mammoth Escarpment) and Management Area No. 9 (Mammoth). A goal of the LRMP is to continue a land and resource management program with non-federal lands through special use administration, landownership adjustment, and other measures. Another goal is to provide a broad range of developed and dispersed recreational opportunities.

The LRMP's land use policies are to acquire lands with water frontage, key game management areas, lands needed to reduce fire risk, lands with easements to assure access to public lands and resources, lands with unique cultural or historical resources, and wilderness in-holdings. Lands to be disposed of through

exchange include the tracts inside or adjacent to communities that are suitable for private use; land under special use permit within or adjacent to communities; and small federal parcels that are intermingled with other non-federal parcels.

General objectives and guidelines related to trails include the following:

- Construct and maintain facilities to regional standards, design at least 10 percent for the physically limited;
- Develop day-use facilities and interpretive and informational sites and trails;
- Provide parking facilities for snow play and Nordic skiing; and
- Manage off-highway vehicle (OHV)/over-snow vehicle (OSV) use according to Forest-wide standards and guidelines.

Objectives and guidelines related to Management Areas No. 8 and No. 9 include the following:

Management Area No. 8:

- Identify and program dispersed trail facilities in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, including hiking and equestrian trail opportunities in all areas and bicycle trails in the Lakes Basin. Include opportunities for mountain bike trails within the Management Area. Interface the trail system with the community.

Management Area No. 9:

- Provide trail interface opportunities with the community of Mammoth Lakes.

b. Existing Conditions

(1) Town of Mammoth Lakes UGB and Municipal Boundary Areas

Existing Conditions are considered to be existing trails, recreation nodes and other related facilities within the Town and the Sherwins Area. Within the Town, paths and trails, which were categorized under the Town's adopted 1991 Trail System Plan, consist of the following:

- Paved Multi-Use Paths (MUPs): The Town's Main Path and other MUPs were generally constructed in conformance with the 1991 Trail System Plan. Existing MUPs implement the concept of a Main Path loop with connections to other paths extending inward or toward the center of Town and outward or away from Town. Some MUPs are located within National Forest lands, and were built and are managed under a Special Use Permit with the USFS.
- At Grade and Grade Separated MUP Crossings: There are 16 at-grade crossings and one grade-separated crossing along existing paved MUPs. Safety features and treatments at these crossings vary widely. The only grade-separated crossings currently in the Town consist of under crossings or tunnels. The Town's tunnels vary in width and height.

- **Bike Lanes (Class II)**: These consist of striped and stenciled lane for one-way travel on both edges of a roadway. Class II bike lanes are located on Minaret Road, Meridian Boulevard, Canyon Boulevard and the Mammoth Scenic Loop Road. Shorter segments are on Old Mammoth Road.
- **Bike Lanes (Class III)**: These bike routes share lanes with bicyclists and motor vehicle traffic and are typically identified only by signing. Bike routes exist on Main Street/SR-203, portions of Canyon Boulevard, Forest Trail, and Lakeview Boulevard, and along the length of Majestic Pines Drive and Kelley Road.
- **Soft-Surface Trails**: The walking trail through Snowcreek Meadow is the only soft surface trail in the UGB. Other soft surface trails are located within National Forest lands in the Lakes Basin and Shady Rest areas. These are used for walking and groomed in the winter for Nordic skiing. Groomed cross-country ski trails are also located to the east and west of Sawmill Cutoff Road.
- **Recreation Nodes and Activity Centers**: In addition to trail-related facilities described above, the TSMP identifies key areas where the trails network should facilitate access for in-town, short-distance recreation, linked recreational/utilitarian trip-making, and provide points of connection, access, egress and dispersion to the broader network of formal and informal recreational trails. Such locations are described in the TSMP as “recreational nodes” for which, in many cases, the TSMP identifies specific desired improvements and facilities. Recreation nodes are locations with existing or potential significance for outdoor recreation, which can facilitate recreational experiences. The TSMP also considers “activity centers,” which are existing, established locations that form a point of origin or destination for trails system users. Activity centers are locations that attract significant levels of human activity or trips (civic buildings, schools, shopping centers, areas of high employment, etc). Section 2.0, *Project Description*, provides further details on the recreation nodes and activity centers identified in the TSMP.

(2) Sherwins Area

The Sherwins Area is located on National Forest lands within the Town’s Planning Area, but outside the Municipal Boundary. It consists of a diverse high-desert landscape that contains such features as Mammoth Rock, the Sherwin Range, Hidden Lake, Panorama Dome, Solitude Canyon, and Mammoth Meadows as well as forests, wetlands, bodies of water, and wildlife. While recreation use in the Sherwins area has traditionally been high, no formal trailheads or facilities (benches, restrooms, parking, trash receptacles, etc.) exist at this time and the area receives no maintenance. The area has a mix of trails, some of which are part of the Inyo National Forest trail system, others that have been user created, and some that are remnants of historical use. Facilities in this area include USFS recognized trails (such as the Mammoth Rock Trail), USFS and Town roads (such as 4S100 and Sherwin Creek Road), a portion of the legacy Blue Diamond Trail System, and unofficial social trails.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

a. Significance Thresholds

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of the Project Initial Study, which is contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The Initial Study Environmental Checklist includes questions relating to land use and planning. The Initial Study Environmental Checklist questions relating to land use and planning have been utilized as the thresholds of significance in this section. According to the land use and planning questions listed in CEQA Guidelines,

Appendix G, a project may create a significant environmental impact if it causes one or either of the following to occur:

- Threshold 1: Physically divide an established community (refer to Impact Statement 4.I-2).
- Threshold 2: Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect (refer to Impact Statement 4.I-1); and
- Threshold 3: Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan (refer to Section 4.C, *Biological Resources*, Impact Statement 4.C-5).

b. Methodology

The analysis of land use impacts considers the consistency of the Project with adopted plans and policies that regulate land use in the Town and Sherwins Area and that relate specifically to the characteristics of the Project as a trails master plan. The analysis also takes into consideration the compatibility of the Project with the existing physical environment and the extent to which incompatibilities or other land use changes could result in physical impacts to the environment or division of the community. With the exception of Priority Projects, which have near-term completion dates and known components, the TSMP and SHARP are primarily conceptual guides for future trails and related improvements. Therefore, the evaluation of the compatibility of these programs with land uses that would be adjacent to trails and recreational facilities or with the overall character of the Town and surrounding National Forest lands is general in nature. Any inconsistencies with the policies of adopted plans that would result in significant physical impacts would be considered potentially significant. Applicable policies are those considered directly relevant to the components of the Project. Priority Projects are components of both the TSMP and the SHARP and the evaluation of these plans applies to the Priority Projects as well as long-term projects envisioned under these plans, unless stated otherwise.

c. Project Components

(1) Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan

The three primary goals of the TSMP are as follows:

- 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 Mountain Bike Park, and the surrounding federal lands overseen by the USFS.
- Goal 2: Develop a plan that provides guidance for enhancing year-round mobility in a way that is consistent with the Town's "Feet First" strategy.
- Goal 3: Create a plan that clearly identifies the projects and programs necessary for implementation.

Components of the TSMP that relate directly to objectives of the General Plan include: (1) access to public lands, (2) Town of Mammoth Lakes “Feet First” strategy, (3) safety, (4) public easements, (5) coordination with other agencies and entities, and (6) local and regional network for recreation and commuting. The approach of the TSMP to these topics is summarized below.

(a) Access to Public Lands

The first goal of the TSMP (Goal 1) is to develop a plan for an integrated trail network between the Town and surrounding public lands. The TSMP includes seven objectives (Objectives 1.1 to 1.7) to support and implement this goal. These objectives are list in sub-section 2, *Project Objectives* (refer to Section, 2.0, *Project Description*). In addition, the following recommendations would support and implement this goal:

- Recommendation G1: *Consistent Naming Conventions* - For recreation nodes, paved paths, on-street bikeways, and soft-surface trails.
- Recommendation G2: *Updated Trail Maps* - Provide updated trail maps for each season that cover the primary recreational opportunities available in the Mammoth Lakes area. G3: *Uniform Trail Signage* General consistency for signage along multi-use paths and soft-surface trails.
- Recommendation G4: *Interpretive Signage* - Identify opportunities for interpretive signage and work with local experts to develop content.
- Recommendation G5: *Trail-Oriented Development* - Make MUPs more viable for both recreation and utilitarian purposes by requiring new development to provide strong connections to adjacent paths.

(b) Town of Mammoth Lakes “Feet First” Strategy

Goal 2 of the TSMP is to develop a plan that provides guidance for enhancing year-round mobility in a way that is consistent with the Town’s “Feet First” strategy. Objectives of the TSMP are to provide connecting trails between summer and winter activity centers, which the TSMP considers vital for “feet first” mobility (see Objectives 2.2 to 2.4 in sub-section 2.2, *Project Objectives*, of Section, 2.0, *Project Description*). Recommendations to implement the “feet first” goal include the following:

- Recommendation P1: *Sidewalk to Major Roadway Ratio* - The Town of Mammoth Lakes should achieve a minimum sidewalk to major roadway Ratio of 1.6 to 1 over the next five years. The minimum ratio could be achieved by including sidewalks on both sides of all arterial streets and at least on one side of all collector streets. According to the TSMP, the construction of mid-block sidewalks where no roads currently exist would allow the Town to improve the ratio and greatly enhance the pedestrian experience and encourage “feet first” mobility.
- Recommendation P2: *Sidewalks along Major Roads* - Construct sidewalks on all primary and secondary major roads or arterials where they do not already exist. Existing MUPs directly adjacent to roadways, may substitute for a

sidewalk facility on that side of the road. A sidewalk or MUP should be located on both sides of all major roadways within the UGB except in areas there are significant physical constraints and low-levels of pedestrian activity. This will add approximately 5.6 miles of sidewalk.

Recommendation P3: *Sidewalks along Collector or Local Streets* - Collector streets should have a sidewalk on at least one side whenever possible. Sidewalks may or may not be feasible or desirable on local streets as they may require tree removal or roadway widening that would significantly impact the character of the roadway.

Recommendation P4: *Mid-Block Pedestrian Connectors* - Mid-block pedestrian connectors should be considered in areas where pedestrian activity is high and where key destinations are located. These connectors are not roadway crossings, but pedestrian-only shortcuts that exist where vehicular roadways do not. In areas where existing streets end, pedestrian connectors that allow pedestrians to continue through to a nearby roadway or commercial area are highly desirable. These facilities can improve pedestrian mobility in general and shorten the distance between one's home and recreational trail facilities. These should be established as opportunities arise through new developments and the Neighborhood District Plan (NDP) process.

Recommendation G6: *Pedestrian-Oriented Development* - Improving the pedestrian environment can improve overall mobility and create a more seamless transition between the recreational experience and in-town economic activities. Pedestrian-oriented developments have buildings that are situated adjacent to the sidewalk and parking that is situated behind the building and away from the major thoroughfares.

(c) Safety

TSMP Chapter 9 provides measurable benchmarks and evaluation measures related to trail, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. The TSMP also provides goals and recommendations to improve safety for trail and path users, including the following:

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

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

Recommendation E3: *Safe Routes to School* - Work with local schools to develop Safe Routes to School infrastructure and programs.

Recommendation MUP5: *Lighting on Multi-Use Paths* - Lighting should be considered for segments of multi-use paths that are not currently illuminated by adjacent street lighting. Due to the cost of installing and maintaining lighting, segments should be prioritized based on their potential demand for nighttime use.

Recommendation X1: *Design of At-Grade MUP Crossings* - The basic design elements of at-grade crossings should be uniform wherever possible. Particular locations may require additional safety measures and/or unique treatments based on context (see Design Guidelines in Chapter 6 of the TSMP). At-grade MUP crossings should be limited to crossings of local or collector streets.

(d) Public Easements

The TSMP supports the acquisition of easements to facilitate access to public lands and areas within the trails system. Chapter 4, *Future Trail System Recommendations*, of the TSMP states that the “Town should aggressively pursue additional opportunities for the further development of multi-use paths, bikeway, trails and trail access easements as they arise.” Objective 1.4 of the TSMP is to 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. Recommendation G10 (*Future Access Easements*) states that the Town should study the potential to acquire additional easements to improve recreational access to public lands. According to the TSMP, an analysis of land ownership and recreational access potential at all GIC points along the UGB would be an important first step in this process.

(e) Coordination with Public and Private Entities

The TSMP recognizes the need to coordinate with multiple organizations, agencies and jurisdictions to plan, steward, interpret, promote and sustain trails, public access and outdoor recreation amenities as envisioned in the TSMP. The TSMP states: “The relationship between the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the United States Forest Service is critical to the success of the Trails Master Plan, as are the various means used to coordinate their efforts, including special use permits and MOUs. These include accessibility, community character, community engagement, cooperation, environmental stewardship and sustainable economics.” The TSMP also recognizes the “important innovative public, private and non-profit partnerships to address these needs and recognizes that, without a coordinated effort, critical points of public access could be at risk.”

The incorporation of the SHARP, which is the product of a diverse coalition of volunteer citizens, the Town and the USFS, demonstrates the commitment of the TSMP to coordinate with multiple agencies and jurisdictions.

TSMP recommendations for that also support coordination with public and private entities include Recommendations G12 and M1. Recommendation G12 (*Coordination with Local Non-Governmental Organizations*) recommends that the Town seek opportunities to form partnerships with local non-governmental organizations that may be able to assist in the planning, development and/or maintenance of the trail system. Recommendation M1 (*Development of Coordinated Year-Round Maintenance Plan*) supports coordination between the Department of Tourism and the Department of Public Works to develop a year-round maintenance plan. Coordination with Caltrans to install, improve and maintain bike routes on rural

highways is also recommended. Furthermore, Recommendation G15 (*Trail System Management MOU*) encourages the development of a management partnership through any appropriate combination of informal and/or formal agreement(s) or other governance structure, such as an amendment to the MLTPA MOU, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities of each of the participating agencies for the further development and management of the Mammoth Lakes Trail System. Similarly, Recommendation G16 (*Mammoth Lakes Trail System [MLTS]*) suggests recognition of and support for—through technical support, funding, inter-jurisdictional cooperation, and adherence to uniform standards and conventions—the development of an integrated regional Mammoth Lakes Trail System that incorporates the components identified in this Trails System Master Plan; this Recommendation also indicates that the components and boundaries of this system should be developed in cooperation with the USFS/INF and other relevant jurisdictional partners.

(f) Local and Regional Network for Recreation and Commuting

The TSMP supports a local and regional network for recreation and commuting through a variety of MUPs and bikeways. Regional commuter routes considered under the TSMP are the Mammoth Creek Path and the Sherwin Creek Road Bike Lanes. The Mammoth Creek Path could be constructed on or adjacent to Mammoth Creek Road. This route has potential to extend the reach of the recreational network and to provide an alternative to SR-203 for long distance road rides, and a potential commuter route for Crowley residents. The Sherwin Creek Road bike lanes would provide a more scenic alternative to SR-203 for road bicycling and potentially for long-distance commuting from out-of-town locations such as Crowley Lake. Recommendations that support the objectives of the TSMP to provide a local and regional network include the following:

Recommendation MUP3: *In-Town Multi-Use Path Connectors* - Multi-use path connectors can reduce the distance of trips while improving mobility and providing enjoyment for non-motorized users. The Town should pursue opportunities for non-motorized connectors in new development projects, especially in locations that provide shortcuts connecting residential, civic and commercial land uses. Areas where bikeways or low-volume vehicular streets end are generally advisable locations for multi-use path connectors because they will improve non-motorized connectivity without bringing additional vehicular through-traffic to an area.

Recommendation MUP4: *Multi-Use Paths Outside the UGB* - According to the TSMP, the Town and its partners should implement the following multi-use paths outside the UGB: Shady Rest Park Path Extension, Forest Trail to Shady Rest Connector, Knolls Path (south route), and Mammoth Creek Path.

Recommendation B2: *Bike Lanes on Major Streets (Arterials)* - Bike lanes are recommended on the following major streets: Minaret Road, Mammoth Scenic Loop, Mammoth Knolls, Main Street, Lake Mary Road, Davison Road, Meridian Boulevard, Majestic Pines Drive, Meridian Boulevard, Sierra Park Rd Highway, Old Mammoth Road, and Red Fir Road. Bike lanes on major streets are considered necessary to provide separation from high-speed, high-volume motor vehicle traffic, and to provide access to major commercial areas.

Recommendation B3: *Bike Lanes on Collector Streets* - Bike lanes are recommended on all collector streets. According to the TSMP, collector streets generally have moderate traffic volumes and provide continuous routing between residential and commercial or civic land uses. Bike lanes on collector streets can provide a more comfortable alternative to using bike lanes along higher volume arterial roadways and can also serve schools and higher-density residential areas.

Recommendation B4: *Bike Routes* - Bike lanes are recommended on segments of eight local streets, including: Forest Trail, Hillside Drive, Lakeview Boulevard, Majestic Pines Drive, Silver Tip Lane, Lodestar Drive, North Waterford Avenue, and Old Mammoth Road.

(2) Sherwins Area Recreation Plan

The goal of the SHARP related to land use is to “provide for a coherent and satisfying recreation system that includes appropriate signage and wayfinding” (Goal No. in sub-section 2, *Project Objectives*, in Section, 2.0, *Project Description*). Projects and programs under the SHARP that are specifically relevant to the policies of the LRMP are summarized below.

(a) Projects Accommodating the Physically Limited

The 2006 USDA Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) and the 2006 Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) require accessibility for the physically limited for all new or altered facilities and trails on National Forest lands. The FSTAG applies only to trails that: (1) are new or altered; (2) have a designed use of hiker/pedestrian under the Interagency Trail Data Standards (ITDS) and Forest Service Trail Planning and Management Fundamentals; and (3) connect directly to a currently accessible trail or a trailhead. FSTAG maximizes accessibility of trails in the National Forest System while protecting the natural setting and recognizes that it doesn’t necessarily apply to most portions of existing primitive, long-distance trails and contains exceptions that will prevent accessibility from being pointlessly applied in a piecemeal fashion along a trail when access between trail segments is not possible. Areas accessible to the physically limited are shown on the SHARP’S Summer Map.¹ New recreational development within National Forest lands as part of the Project would implement the FSORAG and FSTAG Guidelines, as appropriate.

In addition, a number of SHARP projects are specifically intended for ADA (American with Disabilities Act of 1990) access, such as SHARP No. 1, No. 2 (summer)/Project No. 5c (winter), No. 4 (summer), No. 6 (summer), No. 7 (summer), and No. 16 (summer).

(b) Day Use Facilities and Recreational Sites

The SHARP recommends a variety winter and summer projects regarding trails, public access, and recreation facilities that would be suitable for day use. Interpretive sites identified by SHARP include: Projects Nos. 1, 5b, 7, 13, 14, 24, and 25. SHARP Project No. 1 would provide an education/interpretive area at the Borrow

¹ The SHARP Summer Map can be found in Appendix A of the Initial Study. The Initial Study is included in Appendix A of this EIR.

pit site; No. 5b (South Trail) would offer historical/interpretive opportunities as the trails pass through the Mammoth City site; No. 7 (Meadow Trail/Backbone Trail) would provide historical/interpretive opportunities as the trails pass through the Kerry Meadow; No. 13 would provide a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system that would be installed throughout the study area and include educational and interpretive opportunities; No. 14 would present interpretive opportunities at the Mill City historical site; No. 24 would include a walking/interpretive trail at the Old Mill site; and No. 25 would promote historic elements at Hayden Cabin.

(c) Snowplay and Nordic Skiing Opportunities

Included within the SHARP projects would be opportunities for snowplay and Nordic skiing at several sites as part of its winter projects. The borrow pit site (SHARP Project No. 1) would serve as a major multi-use staging area with access to Nordic skiing and snowplay. SHARP Project No. 2 is a non-motorized snowplay and sledding area located in proximity to, and visible from, the borrow pit site. Under the SHARP, the parking lot at the borrow pit site is intended to serve the adjacent snow play area (Project No. 2). Expanded parking at the Old Mammoth Road winter closure would be provided at the multi-use staging area at Mill City (SHARP Project No. 6), and parking would be provided at the multi-use staging area at the Lake Mary Road winter closure (SHARP Project No. 16). Both of these areas provide snowplay and Nordic skiing opportunities, which would be accommodated by expanded parking area. SHARP Project No. 18 includes a developed, partially groomed non-motorized recreation zone, including a snowplay area, that would extend from the borrow pit staging area to Old Mammoth Road. New parking would be available to serve this recreation zone at both the borrow pit site and Old Mammoth Road winter closure site.

(d) OHV/OSV Use Opportunities

The SHARP would provide opportunities for and control OHV and OSV use. Sharp Project No. 1 (summer), the borrow pit site, would be a major multi-use staging area and would provide opportunities for OHV. The development of this project would require changes in the maintenance level on Sherwin Creek Road to allow OHVs to travel eastbound along the entire length of Sherwin Creek Road to US-395 (across both USFS and LADWP land) to access appropriate OHV routes. OHV use is currently prohibited in open areas and on some routes within the Sherwins area, including much of Sherwin Creek Road. No other OHV use is permitted in the SHARP area. The OHV area is designated on the SHARP Summer Map.

Sharp Project No. 1 (winter) the borrow pit staging area, would provide for OSV staging, as well as OSV use of Sherwin Creek Road. SHARP Project No. 3 (winter) would provide additional off-loading area for OSV users near the borrow pit staging area. Project No. 3 would extend a spur from the borrow pit staging area along Sherwin Creek Road that would be able to accommodate a pickup truck with a trailer. However, this spur would not be limited to or reserved strictly for OSV users.

SHARP Project No. 6 (winter) would be a multi-use staging area at Mill City. Located at the Old Mammoth Road winter closure, this staging area would be closed to OSV uses until after April 17, when snowmobiles are permitted in the Lakes Basin. SHARP Project No. 8 (winter) involves the grooming of Old Mammoth Road from the Mill City staging area to the Lakes Basin and SHARP Project No. 16 (winter) would be a multi-use staging area at the Lake Mary Road winter closure. Project No. 8 and No. 19 would also be closed to OSV uses until after April 17.

SHARP No. 18 (winter) would be a partially groomed recreation zone extending from the borrow pit staging area to Old Mammoth Road that is specifically designed for non-motorized use (no OSVs permitted). The project would encompass a formal non-motorized access/egress point at Snowcreek VIII, a formal non-motorized access/egress point at the Snowcreek golf course, a non-motorized trailhead at Tamarack Street, a multi-use staging area at Mill City, a non-motorized connector from the Mill City staging area to Hidden Lake meadow, and a non-motorized stacked-loop trail system in the meadow.

(e) Inyo National Forest Management Area No. 8 Trail System

The SHARP identifies and programs dispersed trail facilities in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, including hiking and equestrian trail opportunities throughout that extend from the Town of Mammoth Lakes to the Lakes Basin. These include opportunities for mountain bike trails within the Inyo National Forest Management Area No. 8. One of the primary purposes of the SHARP is to create interfacing trails between National Forest lands and the Town. Specific projects under SHARP that serve the Lakes Basin include SHARP Project No. 5c (summer), a soft-surface pedestrian and bike connections from the intersection of Old Mammoth Road and Lake Mary Road to the Lake Mary Road MUP. SHARP projects in the vicinity of the Lakes Basin also include Project No. 12a (summer), a non-motorized staging area at the Lake Mary Road winter closure. This project would provide a soft-surface, non-motorized trail from the end of the Lake Mary Road Bike Path to connect to the Panorama Dome trail. A bridge would be constructed to connect to the Lake Mary Road MUP. Other Projects that would enhance connectivity to the Lakes Basin from the Town include SHARP Project No. 15 (summer), the Old Mammoth Road soft-surface, non-motorized safe crossing; and, SHARP Project No. 17 (summer and winter), the Sherwin Ridge soft-surface, non-motorized trail leading out from Mill City. This trail would improve access between the Sherwins and Lake Mary Road. Access between the Town and the Lakes Basin during the winter would also be facilitated by SHARP Project No. 16 (winter), which would provide a formal non-motorized staging area at the Lake Mary Road winter closure, above the bridge. The staging area at the Lake Mary Road winter closure would alleviate existing pressure on the current Lake Mary Road, which is used to access the Lakes Basin recreational amenities.

(f) Inyo National Forest Management Area No. 9 Trail System

The SHARP would provide trail interface opportunities between National Forest lands in the Sherwins Area and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. SHARP Project No. 6 (summer) also known as 10a (winter) would provide a hard-surface or paved non-motorized connector from the borrow pit staging area to Mammoth Creek Park East at the bridge. During winters this trail would be groomed in the winter months (but no Nordic track). This trail would provide connectivity between the park, the borrow pit staging area, the stacked-loop trail system, and formal access/egress points along the meadow's northern boundary. It would also provide a direct connection to the Mammoth Lakes Library, Cerro Coso Community College, and will facilitate access to the Hayden Cabin near Mammoth Creek Park East. Other trails that provide interface opportunities between USFS lands in Management Area No. 8 and the Town include SHARP Project No. 2 (summer), also known as No. 5c (winter), would be non-motorized trailhead at Tamarack Street. This trailhead would create an important link within the stacked-looped trail system in the meadow. Specific access/egress points are also planned at Snowcreek VIII. This point, known as SHARP Project No. 3 in the summer and Project No. 5a in the winter, would allow residents and visitors to the residential development non-motorized access to the borrow pit site.

d. Analysis of Project Impacts

The analysis of Project impacts regarding land use and planning below applies to all future trail components associated with the Project, including the Priority Projects, unless stated otherwise.

(1) Consistency of the Proposed Project with Applicable Plans and Policies

4.I-1 The Project would be substantially consistent with applicable adopted plans, including the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan and the Inyo National Forest Land Resources and Management Plan. Land use impacts with respect to adopted plans would be less than significant.

(a) Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan

The purpose of the TSMP is to update the 1991 Trail System Plan, in accordance with the policies of Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan. As previously described, the General Plan includes several policies that are specific to the development of trails and similar facilities. The Project is compared to the policies of the General Plan in **Table 4.I-1, Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies of the General Plan**, below. As discussed in the detailed comparison of the TSMP to applicable land use policies of the General Plan, the Project would be consistent with the Walking and Bicycle policies and the Trail System goals and policies of the General Plan. Therefore, land use impacts with respect to this plan would be less than significant.

Table 4.I-1

Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies of the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan

General Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
Walking and Bicycling Policy	
M.4. Goal: Encourage feet first by providing a linked year-round recreational and commuter trail system that is safe and comprehensive.	Consistent. Goal 2 of the TSMP is to develop a plan that provides guidance for enhancing year-round mobility in a way that is consistent with the Town’s “Feet First” strategy. Objectives of the TSMP are to provide connecting trails between summer and winter activity centers, which the TSMP considers vital for “feet first” mobility. With the addition of bicycle, pedestrian and trail facilities, the TSMP would connect nodes to the Town’s network of non-motorized infrastructure and improve “feet first” access to and from nodes. The addition of amenities such as signage, restrooms, bus stops and parking would enhance the user experience by making recreation nodes more user-friendly. Recommendations to implement the “feet first” goal include Recommendation P1 - <i>Sidewalk to Major Roadway Ratio</i> , Recommendation P2, <i>Sidewalks along Major Road</i> , Recommendation P3 - <i>Sidewalks along Collector or Local Streets</i> , Recommendation P4 - <i>Mid-Block Pedestrian Connectors</i> , Recommendation G6 - <i>Pedestrian-Oriented Development</i> . Improving the pedestrian environment would improve overall mobility and create a more seamless transition between the recreational experience and in-Town economic activities. Pedestrian-oriented developments have buildings that are situated adjacent to the sidewalk and parking that is situated behind the building and away from the major thoroughfares (also see response to Policy P.5.B in Table 4.K-1 in Chapter 4.K, <i>Recreation</i> , of this EIR).

Table 4.I-1 (Continued)

**Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies
of the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan**

General Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>M.4.A. Policy: Improve safety of sidewalks, trails and streets.</p>	<p>Consistent: TSMP Chapter 9 provides measurable benchmarks and evaluation measures related to trail, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. Goals and recommendations related to safety include Mobility Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and Recommendations MUP5 and X1 to provide lighting on MUP segments based on potential demand and provide additional safety measures for at-grade MUP crossings, respectively.</p>
<p>Trail System Goals and Policies</p>	
<p>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>Consistent: The first goal of the TSMP (Goal 1) is to develop a plan for an integrated trail network between the Town and surrounding public lands. Although the purpose of the range of policies, recommendations, and benchmarking and evaluation strategies in the TSMP is to carry out this goal, specific objectives and recommendations that would support and implement this goal include Objectives 1.1 through 1.7 and Recommendations G.1 and G.5. These objectives are to close gaps in the network, expand the network, identify locations for recreational nodes, identify preferred summer and winter uses, provide uniform signage and wayfinding, updating of trail maps, coordinate with governmental and non-governmental entities, and other procedures that would enhance the use of trails.</p>
<p>P.3.A. Policy: Ensure public routes for access to public lands are provided in all developments adjacent to National Forest lands.</p>	<p>Consistent: The TSMP supports the acquisition of easements to facilitate access to public lands and areas within the trails system. Chapter 4, <i>Future Trail System Recommendations</i>, of the TSMP states that the “Town should aggressively pursue additional opportunities for the further development of multi-use paths, bikeway, trails and trail access easements as they arise.” Objective 1.4 of the TSMP is to 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 and Recommendation G10 (<i>Future Access Easements</i>) states that the Town should study the potential to acquire additional easements to improve recreational access to public lands. According to the TSMP, an analysis of land ownership and recreational access potential at all GIC points along the UGB would be an important first step in this process.</p>
<p>P.3.B. Policy: Coordinate with multiple organizations, agencies and jurisdictions to plan, steward, interpret, promote and sustain trails, public access and outdoor recreation amenities in the Mammoth Lakes region.</p>	<p>Consistent: The TSMP states, “The relationship between the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the United States Forest Service is critical to the success of the Trails Master Plan, as are the various means used to coordinate their efforts. These include accessibility, community character, community engagement, cooperation, environmental stewardship and sustainable economics.” The TSMP also recognizes the “important innovative public, private and non-profit partnerships to address these needs and recognizes that, without a coordinated effort, critical points of public access could be at risk.” The incorporation of the SHARP, which is the product of a diverse coalition of volunteer citizens, the Town and the USFS, demonstrates the commitment of the TSMP to coordinate with multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Recommendation G12 of the TSMP is that the Town</p>

Table 4.I-1 (Continued)

**Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies
of the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan**

General Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>P.4.B. Policy: Provide an affordable and wide range of year-round recreational opportunities to foster a healthy community for residents and visitors. Applicable activities include but are not limited to walking interpretive trails & signage, touring, street & mountain biking.</p>	<p>should seek opportunities to form partnerships with local non-governmental organizations that may be able to assist in the planning, development and/or maintenance of the trail system.</p> <p>Consistent: The TSMP envisions a broader range of walking paths, interpretative trails and signage, and biking paths and trails that currently existing in the Town of Mammoth. Chapter 3 of the TSMP (<i>Needs Analysis</i>) recognizes that trail system would be an affordable recreational option, both in the development costs and to the users. The TSMP also considers that the trail system would accrue health benefits to the community and would allow people to integrate healthy activities into their daily lives. Chapter 9 (<i>Benchmarking and Evaluation</i>) provides a methodology by which health benefits of the trail system can be assessed and the determination made that it would result in a health cost savings to the community.</p>
<p>P.4.C. Policy: Ensure balance of use, enjoyment and separation where appropriate between motorized and non-motorized modes of recreation.</p>	<p>Consistent: The TSMP provides an expanded program of MUP development, which represents a separation between motorized and non-motorized transportation. According to conceptual design guidelines set forth in Chapter 6 of the TSMP, the implementation of MUPs provides a service for novice riders, recreational riders, and cyclists of all skill levels preferring separation from traffic. MUPs can also potentially provide safe alternatives for winter pedestrian travel. Multi-use paths may be considered along roadways when bicycle and pedestrian use is anticipated to be high, in order to provide continuity for an existing path through a roadway corridor, when the path can be terminated at each end onto streets with good bicycle and pedestrian facilities, or onto another safe, well-designed path, when there is adequate access to local cross-streets and other facilities along the route.</p>
<p>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>Consistent: Figures 2-1 to 2-7 in Section 2.0, <i>Project Description</i>, identify the Town’s existing and proposed trail facilities. As shown therein, the proposed trail facilities would help link the Town’s parks and open space facilities.</p>
<p>P.5.B. Policy: Design and construct trails as components of a regional and local network for recreation and commuting.</p>	<p>Consistent: The TSMP supports a local and regional network for recreation and commuting through a variety of MUPs and bikeways and has developed recommendations to include in-town MUP connectors, MUPs outside the UGB, bikeways on major and collector streets, and bike routes. Regional commuter routes considered under the TSMP are the Mammoth Creek Path and the Sherwin Creek Road Bike Lanes. Recommendations that support the network of MUPs and trails are Recommendation MUP 3- <i>In-Town Multi-Use Path Connectors</i>, Recommendation MUP4 - <i>Multi-Use Paths Outside the UGB</i>, Recommendation B2 - <i>Bike Lanes on Major Streets (Arterials)</i>, Recommendation B3 - <i>Bike Lanes on Collector Streets</i>, and Recommendation B4 - <i>Bike Routes</i>.</p>

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2011.

(b) Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The LRMP includes policies that would apply to the National Forest lands contained within the Project Area. The Project is compared to the land use policies of the LRMP in **Table 4.I-2, Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies of the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**, below. The analysis in Table 4.I-2, indicates that the Project would be consistent with applicable LRMP policies, which include handicapped access, interpretive and informational sites and trails, parking facilities for snow play and Nordic skiing, OHV/OSV management, trail opportunities in the Lakes Basin, and trails connecting national Forest lands to the Town. Because trail improvements on National Forest lands would be consistent with the LRMP, land use impacts associated with plan consistency would be less than significant.

Table 4.I-2

**Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies
of the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**

LRMP Policy	Consistency Analysis
Construct and maintain facilities to regional standards, design at least 10 percent for the physically limited.	Consistent: The SHARP is an organized program for future recreational development in the Sherwin Area that provides a concept and rationale for a range of recreational facilities and trails. Exact specifications for development would occur under USFS administration and would be required to comply with current government standards and regulations for development on National Forest lands. The 2006 FSORAG and the 2006 FSTAG require accessibility for the physically limited for all new or altered facilities and trails. SHARP Project No. 1 would be developed in compliance with FSORAG guidelines for restrooms, parking, interpretive areas, trash receptacles, and any other constructed facilities. The Project would be consistent with FSTAG guidelines in that it would provide a paved surfacing of Sherwin Creek Road for OHV vehicles. Trails projects that are specifically designed as ADA accessible include SHARP Project Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7, and 16. Because new recreational development is required to implement the FSORAG and FSTAG Guidelines, all applicable components of the Project would be consistent with this policy.
Develop day-use facilities and interpretive and informational sites and trails.	Consistent: The SHARP identifies 31 summer and 19 winter recreational projects suitable for day use and interpretive sites. Interpretive sites identified by SHARP include: Projects Nos. 1, 5b, 7, 13, 14, 24, and 25. These projects are described in the Project Components section above.
Provide parking facilities for snow play and Nordic skiing.	Consistent: Several SHARP winter projects would provide opportunities for snowplay and Nordic skiing at several sites, including SHARP Project Nos. 1, 2, 6, 16 and 18. These projects are described in the Project Components section above.
Manage OHV/OSV use according to Forest-wide standards and guidelines.	Consistent: The SHARP would provide opportunities for and control for OHV and OSV use as part of SHARP Project Nos. 1 (summer and winter) and winter Project Nos. 3, 6, 8, 16, 18, and 19. These projects are described in the Project Components section above.

Table 4.I-2 (Continued)

**Consistency of the Project with Applicable Policies
of the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**

LRMP Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p><u>Management Area No. 8:</u></p> <p>Identify and program dispersed trail facilities in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, including hiking and equestrian trail opportunities in all areas and bicycle trails in the Lakes Basin. Include opportunities for mountain bike trails within the Management Area. Interface trail system with the community.</p>	<p>Consistent: The SHARP identifies and programs dispersed trail facilities in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, including hiking and equestrian trail opportunities throughout that improve opportunities in the Lakes Basin and provide improved access between the Town and the Basin. These include opportunities for mountain bike trails within the Inyo National Forest Management Area No. 8. These project include Sharp Project No. 7 (summer), No. 5c (summer), No. 12a and 12b (summer), No. 15 (summer), No. 16 (winter) and No. 17 (summer and winter). These projects are described in the Project Components section above.</p>
<p><u>Management Area No. 9:</u></p> <p>Provide trail interface opportunities with the community of Mammoth Lakes.</p>	<p>Consistent: The SHARP would provide trail interface opportunities between National Forest lands in the Sherwins Area and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. These projects include SHARP Project No. 6 (summer)/No. 10a (winter); No. 2 (summer)/No. 5c (winter); and No. 3 (summer)/No. 5a (winter). These projects are described in the Project Components section above.</p>

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2011.

(2) Land Use Compatibility

4.I-2: The variety of trails and improvements that would be implemented under the Project would be consistent with and contribute to the predominant land uses of the Town and surrounding National Forest lands. The Project would cause no physical divisions of the Town. Therefore, land use impacts would be less than significant.

The predominant land uses of the Town are related to recreation and tourism, and residential uses that house the Town's permanent and seasonal residents and visitors. During the peak visitor seasons, seasonal residents increase the Town's population approximately five-fold. The implementation of the Project, including soft-surface trails, bikeways, MUPs, recreational nodes, staging areas, and respective facilities, such as identification and wayfinding signage, educational and interpretive signage, and certain safety features, such as regulated street crossings, would contribute to the Town's existing range of recreational resources and trails.

In addition, the Town is surrounded by National Forest lands. The components of the Project, particularly the SHARP, would be consistent with the type of recreational development encouraged on National Forest lands. The TSMP and SHARP were developed through a collaborative effort that included Town and USFS Staff to determine the type of recreational facilities, as well as specific trail projects on National Forest lands.

With the exception of restrooms at the borrow pit staging area (SHARP Project No. 1) and Mill City staging area [SHARP Project No. 4 (summer) and Project No. 6 (winter)], no permanent or habitable structures would be developed under the Project on National Forest Lands. The restrooms would be developed according to federal guidelines.

Overall, the recreational-based components of the Project would be consistent with the predominant land uses of the community, which is based largely on the recreation industry. Because the Project would be consistent with the existing land uses of the Town and consistent with the type of land use encouraged on National Forest lands, the Project result in less than significant land use compatibility impacts.

The Project's proposed trail system components would be located in various locations throughout the Project Area and are intended to provide recreational, as well as alternative transportation amenities that would encourage neighborhood residents and community members to interact and participate in recreational activities. Given that the proposed facilities are anticipated to increase social interactions among Town residents as well as visitors, no impact related to the physical division of an established community would result from Project implementation. To note, the existing USFS 4S100 road would be closed to motorized use to allow the alignment of the non-motorized, hard-surface paved trail under Sharp Project No. 7 (summer). Service and maintenance vehicles would continue to be allowed access to Kerry Meadows via this route for special events, such as weddings. Because this road does not currently serve any neighborhoods, provide connection between neighborhoods and services, or serve as an emergency access route, the closure of this road would not cause any physical divisions of the community.

3. MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are necessary.

4. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

4.I-3 The build-out of the Project in combination with cumulative development within the Town or surrounding National Forest lands would result in less than significant cumulative land use impacts.

The Project would have a beneficial land use effect in that it would increase the Town's non-motorized facilities such as MUPs, bike lanes, bike routes, and servicing features, such as recreation nodes. These facilities would improve convenience, contribute to the livability of the Town, and strengthen the Town as a destination area for recreationists. The on-going development of the trails, recreational nodes, signage, and other associated components under the Project would not, in itself, be considered cumulative. Other cumulative development that would result in additional recreational resources would also likely benefit the community. Because the Project would not result in adverse land use impacts, the build-out of Project, in combination with other cumulative development, including recreational projects, would result in less than significant cumulative land use impacts.

5. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The Project would result in less than significant land use impacts. Thus, no mitigation measures are necessary.