
IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

B. AESTHETICS

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the subject of aesthetics with respect to the Project and includes a description of existing visual conditions and an evaluation of potential aesthetic effects associated with implementing the Project. Computer-generated visual simulations illustrating “before” and conceptual “after” visual conditions at the Project site as seen from three representative, public vantage points are presented as part of the analysis. Digitized photographs and computer modeling and rendering techniques were used to prepare the simulation images. In addition, this section addresses the subjects of nighttime illumination and daytime glare.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regulatory Framework

Mammoth Lakes is a recreation resort community located in the Eastern Sierra and contains a plethora of mountain meadows, creeks, mountain vistas, forests, and wildlife. Visitors enjoy fishing, skiing, snowboarding, hiking, camping, bicycling, and other recreational pursuits throughout the year. To ensure the preservation of existing valuable visual resources and the Town’s visual character, regulations and requirements have been integrated into the current General Plan as well as the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code.

The 1987 General Plan is currently in the process of being updated following a four-year planning and review process. A Draft Program EIR was previously prepared and circulated regarding an earlier version of the General Plan Update. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft Program EIR was distributed on April 25, 2003. A Draft Program EIR was prepared and distributed to the public for review from February to May 2005 for public comments. Based on the extent and range of comments received, the Town determined that the proposed General Plan should be revised to the extent that required recirculation of a Revised Draft Program EIR. The Revised Draft Program EIR was circulated for public review from October 31, 2005 to December 14, 2005. The Town adopted the 2007 General Plan on August 15, 2007 and is currently considering the Revised Final Program EIR on the General Plan Update for certification. Because the certification of the Revised Final Program EIR is an ongoing process, the standard for analysis used in this Draft EIR is based on both the 1987 General Plan and the 2007 General Plan. Therefore, the relevant policies that address aesthetics resources from both the 1987 and 2007 General Plans are addressed below.

As mentioned earlier in this Draft EIR, in the Introduction and Project Description, the Snowcreek Master Plan and development on the Project Site has been contemplated for more than three decades. The Snowcreek Master Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors of Mono County in 1975. When the Project Site was incorporated into the Town in 1984, the General Plan and zoning code of the Town were

amended to incorporate the Master Plan; the resort development continued to be the vision for the Snowcreek area of the Town. This remains true in the 1987 General Plan, the Town Zoning Code and the recently adopted 2007 General Plan.

Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code Section 17.32.120 sets forth the design review process and authority. The Design Guidelines for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, in accordance with Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code Section 17.32.120, are a communication tool to assist the Town in guiding and evaluating renovation of existing and new development projects. The Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code also sets forth design criteria for Signs and Outdoor Lighting (Section 17.40 and Section 17.34, respectively).

1987 General Plan

Visual resources are addressed in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan. As discussed therein, the Town's dramatic visual setting is one of the major attractions to residents and visitors.

According to the 1987 General Plan, a viewshed is a visually significant area which may be viewed from the Town of Mammoth Lakes, along roadways to and within the community, and from other areas utilized by residents and visitors. Significant viewpoints in Mammoth Lakes include the ski slopes on Mammoth Mountain, Sherwin Bowl, Lake Mary Road, State Highway 203 east of Old Mammoth Road, Old Mammoth Road south of Mammoth Creek, the Gateway District – particularly along State Highway 203 and the Meridian extension and U.S. Highway 395. Significant vistas may also occur in the space between buildings and properties, called “subvistas,” and should be retained where appropriate.

Several policies in the 1987 General Plan are applicable to the Project with respect to visual resources. Consistency with these policies is analyzed below under “Environmental Impacts.”

General Plan (2007)

Visual resources are addressed in the Community Design Element of the 2007 Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan. Similar to the 1987 General Plan, the 2007 General Plan addresses the Town's dramatic setting as one of the major attractions to residents and visitors. The policies in the 2007 General Plan support the retention of major landscape characteristics and unique natural features such as large trees, Mammoth Mountain, Mammoth Rock, Crystal Crag, the Bluffs, the Sherwin Ridge, Long Valley, Mammoth Knolls, and Mammoth Crest. Major view corridors and vistas toward these important landscape features are identified in the proposed General Plan, and are shown in Figure IV.B-1, Major View Corridors and Vistas.

The 2007 General Plan sets forth policies and implementation measures to ensure the preservation of the visual resources and visual character of the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Consistency with these policies and implementation measures is analyzed below under “Environmental Impacts.”

Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines for the Town of Mammoth Lakes (the “Design Guidelines”) are “intended to bring a comprehensive and unified approach to the review of development projects so that integration of individual projects can create an attractive community.”

The Design Guidelines are based on core community values to guide future development to ensure that the Town retains its uniqueness as a mountain resort. The community values include the following:

- Unique eclectic character;
- Identifiable neighborhoods;
- Maintenance of important views and vistas;
- Natural beauty;
- Healthy forests;
- Understandable, convenient and complete pedestrian, bike and transit connections;
- Building scale and proportions appropriate to a pedestrian environment;
- Use of natural, regional materials in the built environment;
- Encouragement of integrated systems design; and
- Environmentally sensitive design.

Each of the community values has associated design principles detailed in the Design Guidelines. The design principals are expressed throughout the Design Guidelines in the form of specific objectives and guidelines. The six objectives in the Design Guidelines include the following:

- **Site Design.** Proposed developments shall address the opportunities and limitations of the site and its surroundings and should integrate the relationship between the site’s topography, existing vegetation, other natural features, adjacent properties, views, solar access, the uses proposed and the development plan.
- **Architectural.** The architectural style of buildings within the Town of Mammoth Lakes is currently diverse and of an eclectic quality. Residents and property owners identify with this character and would like to see it maintained, while improving the general quality of the built environment, pedestrian spaces and pedestrian relationships to buildings.

- **Landscape and Public Space.** The objective of any landscaping plan shall be to create a pleasant setting and to preserve and enhance the natural landscape character of the development area. The scale and overall design shall be such that new vegetation and landforms blend with the natural environment.

Removal of trees, shrubs, and non-hazardous native plant materials generally shall be limited to that essential for development of the site.

Each development application shall evaluate any and all existing trees on-site greater than six inches in diameter at shoulder height, and substantiate proposed removal to the Town of Mammoth Lakes. New vegetation should be of substantial size and variation to resemble a natural pre-disturbance condition.

- **Lighting.** Outdoor lighting plays a significant role in creating safe pedestrian environments, establishing character in the town and highlighting special features of the built environment. Exterior lighting must conform to the Municipal Code Chapter 17.34 – Ordinance No 03-09 “Outdoor Lighting” in addition to these Design Guidelines.
- **Signage.** Signage should reflect the character of the neighborhood with regard to materials, form and use.

Signage form and quality should relate directly to its purpose, context and location.

Signage should inform and direct, but in a manner and style which creates a memorable environment, particularly within pedestrian zones. As such, signage provides an opportunity to introduce whimsical, historical and/or sculptural character.

- **Outdoor Sales/Storefront Displays.** Outdoor sales, public events, and storefront displays provide the opportunity for businesses and event sponsors to create an attractive environment, adding interest and activity to the streetscape, and attracting residents/tourists and pedestrians/shoppers.

Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code

The Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code sets forth rules and regulations governing the design, use, and display of lighting and signs within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. It is acknowledged in the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code that the economy of the Town is dependent upon aesthetics, as it is a tourist-based economy. Lighting and signs have the potential to substantially impact the environment and, as such, affect the local economy.

Outdoor Lighting

Chapter 17.34 of the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code sets forth rules and regulations for outdoor lighting within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The purpose of Chapter 17.34 is to accomplish the following:

- To promote a safe and pleasant nighttime environment for residents and visitors;
- To protect and improve safe travel for all modes of transportation;
- To prevent nuisances caused by unnecessary light intensity, direct glare, and light trespass;
- To protect the ability to view the night sky by restricting unnecessary upward projection of light;
- To phase out existing non-conforming fixtures that violate this chapter, including those owned by the Town and other public agencies; and,
- To promote lighting practices and systems to conserve energy.

Section 17.34.060 of the Municipal Code requires that an Outdoor Lighting Plan be submitted in conjunction with: an application for design review approval; a conditional use permit; subdivision approval; or, a building permit for a new structure or addition(s) of 25 percent or more in terms of gross floor area, seating capacity, or parking spaces (either with a single addition or cumulative additions). An Outdoor Lighting Plan is required for all new outdoor lighting installations on commercial (including four or more units of multi-family residences), industrial, public and institutional properties.

Signs

Chapter 17.40 of the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code sets forth rules and regulations governing the display of signs within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The purpose of Chapter 17.40 is to achieve the following:

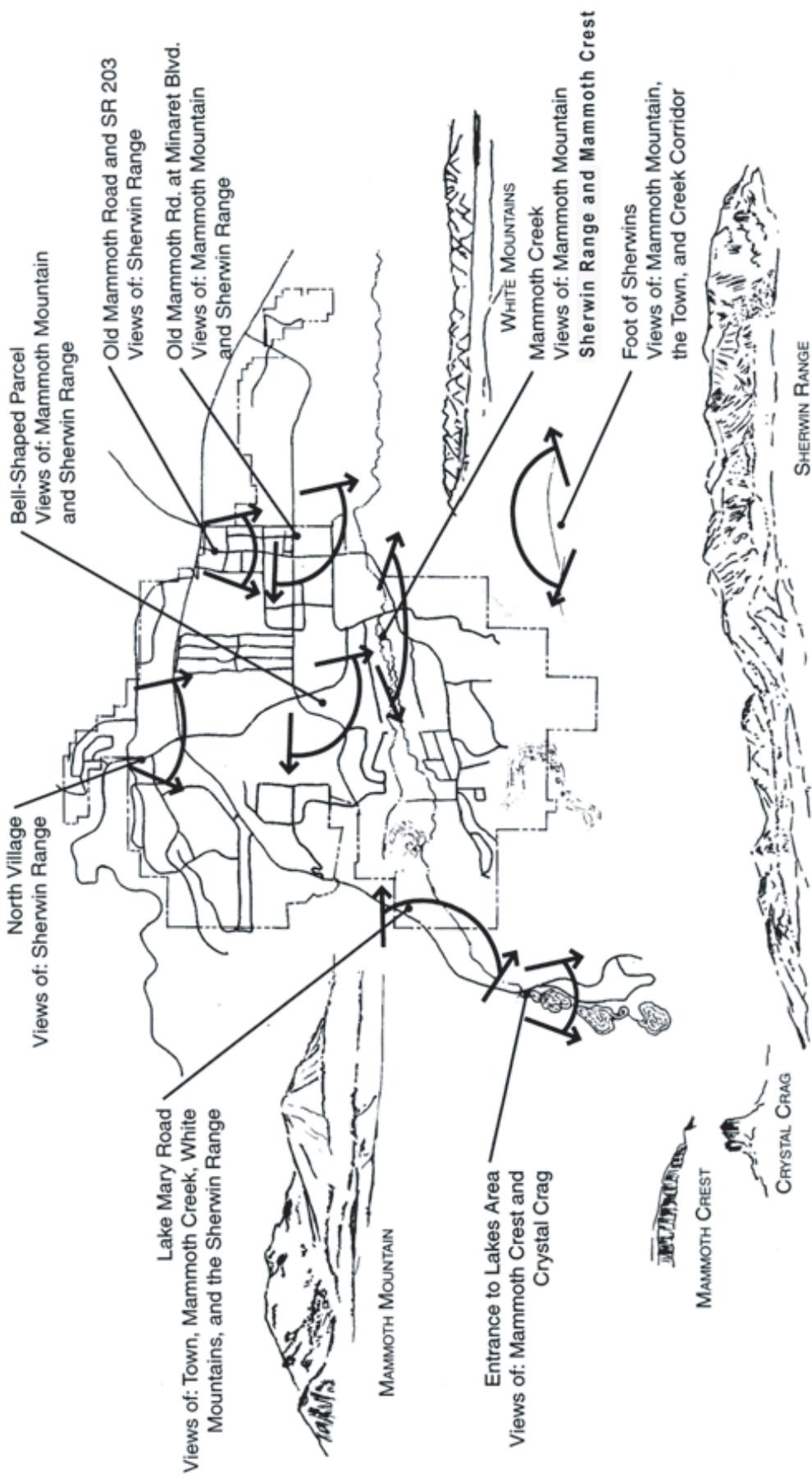
- Recognize that commercial signs are a necessary means of useful communication for the convenience of the public;
- Regulate the number, location, height, size, design, construction, color and illumination of signs in order to maintain and improve the image, attractiveness and environmental qualities of the town;
- Preclude sign size and placement from conflicting with the principal permitted use of the site or adjoining sites;

- Regulate sign size in relationship to the scale of the street frontage and/or building face where such signage is to be placed;
- Enhance the attractiveness and economic well-being of the town as a place to live, vacation and conduct business while cultivating the town's premier status in an increasingly competitive resort market;
- Protect, preserve and enhance the unique aesthetic character, beauty and charm of the town, and thereby encourage the continued development of tourism within the town;
- Protect the public from hazardous conditions that can result from commercial signs which are structurally unsafe, obscure the vision of motorists, create dangers to pedestrian traffic, or which compete or conflict with necessary traffic signals and warning signs;
- Avoid the creation of a "tourist trap" atmosphere which can result when business enterprises compete for attention through the use of commercial advertising signs, and promote an overall visual effect which has a minimum of clutter;
- Eliminate distracting lighting and excessive glare by reasonably limiting the illumination of signs to subdued, adequately shielded or concealed light sources;
- Encourage the construction of commercial signs of natural materials which are aesthetically pleasing and are compatible with natural surroundings and the buildings to which they identify; and,
- Retain permit affordability in order to promote maximum applicant revenues being used for creative signage.

Existing Visual Character

Project Site

The Project site is currently largely undeveloped and is characterized by an open meadow vegetated with abundant sagebrush scrub, grasses, and areas of scattered boulders. In addition to sagebrush, some Jeffrey pines exist on the portion of the Project site north of Old Mammoth Road. The topography of the Project site is relatively flat with a gentle slope towards the northeast. Fairway Drive extends through the Project site connecting the existing Snowcreek V development south of the Project site with Old Mammoth Road. The Project site is surrounded by existing development (See Figure III-1) to the north, west, and southwest. Some residential uses are visible from the Project site to the north of Old Mammoth Road and south of the site along Fairway Drive. The areas directly south and east of the site are undeveloped.



Source: Natural Resources Conservation & Open Space Plan for the Town, September 2000, prepared by Diane Bonanno and Intis Lutens.

Surrounding Area

Existing Viewsheds

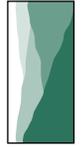
Viewsheds refer to the visual qualities of a geographical area that are defined by the horizon, topography, and other natural features that give an area its visual boundary and context, or by development that has become a prominent visual component of the area. In the area surrounding the Project site, the existing viewsheds are defined primarily by major view corridors and vistas (see Figure IV.B-1) as well as the nearby roadways (e.g., Old Mammoth Road, Sherwin Creek Road, and Minaret Road). The major view corridors and vistas that could be potentially affected by the development of the Project as well as other viewpoints of interest are identified and discussed in detail below. The locations of all of these viewpoints are depicted in Figure IV.B-2, Viewpoint Location Map.

Public views are those which can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as streets, freeways, parks and vista points. These views are generally available to a greater number of persons than are private views. Private views are those which can be seen from vantage points located on private property. Private views are not necessarily considered to be impacted when interrupted by land uses on adjacent blocks.



Image © 2007 DigitalGlobe

Source: Google Earth, DigitalGlobe, CAJA 2007.



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Figure IV.B-2
Viewpoint Location Map

Back of Figure IV.B-2

Public Views and Scenic Vistas

Throughout the Town of Mammoth Lakes, there are several places where views of the Project site are publicly accessible. These views could potentially be affected by the Project and are depicted as Views 1 through 6 in Figures IV.B-3 through IV.B-8 and are identified in Figure IV.B-2. To more realistically represent the views, all viewpoint vantages are shown under two conditions: summer and winter.

Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road Looking South (View 1)

View 1, Figure IV.B-3, is located on Old Mammoth Road just east of its intersection with Minaret Road. This view looks south directly into the Project site. Views from this area include a landscaped turf area in the foreground, a grove of trees to the west, and rolling hills and mountains directly to the south. A log fence is located along the edge of Old Mammoth Road separating the open space areas from the roadway. Although this view is dominated by the hilly terrain in the foreground and mountains in the distant background, views of the landscaped turf area give an impression of development in the area.

Old Mammoth Road and Sherwin Creek Road Looking South (View 2)

View 2, Figure IV.B-4, is located on Old Mammoth Road west of its intersection with Sherwin Creek Road. A log fence is located along the edge of Old Mammoth Road separating the open space areas from the roadway. Only very distant development is seen from this view and the dominate views from this location are of natural open space areas dominated by hilly terrain in the foreground and mountains in the distant background.

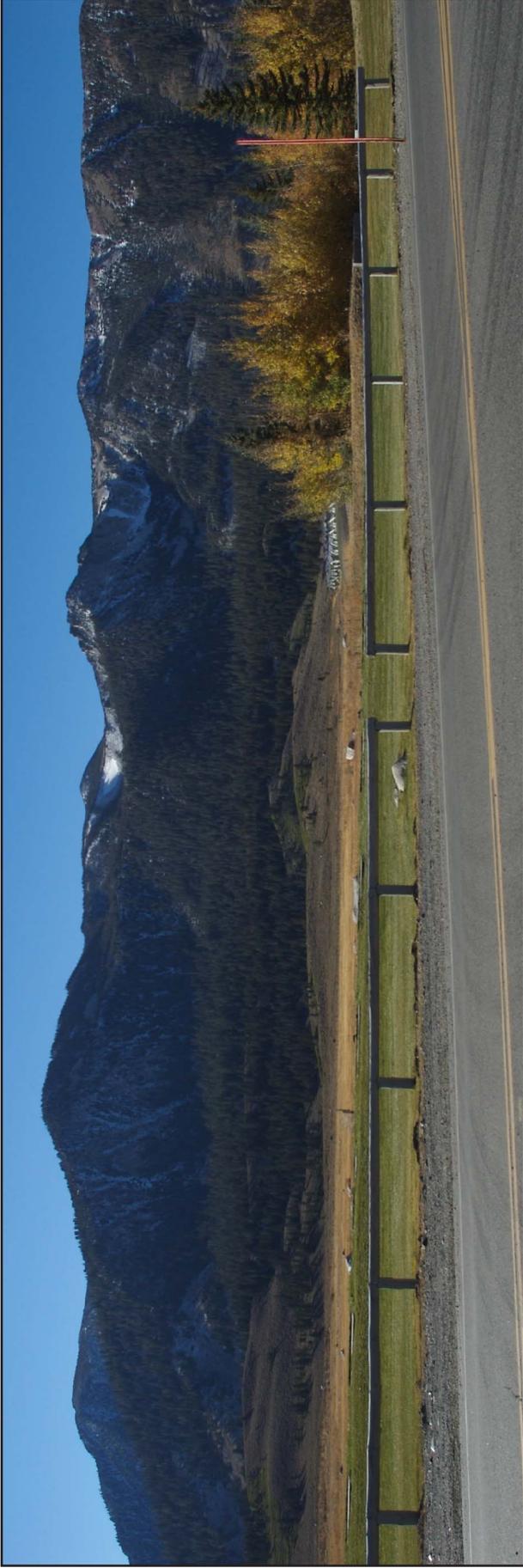
Minaret Road Looking South (View 3)

As shown in Figure IV.B-5, View 3 is located north of the Project site looking south from Minaret Road near its intersection with Chateau Road. The near view is dominated by development, including a two-lane roadway, residential uses, berms, and landscaping. Distant views are dominated by the mountains.

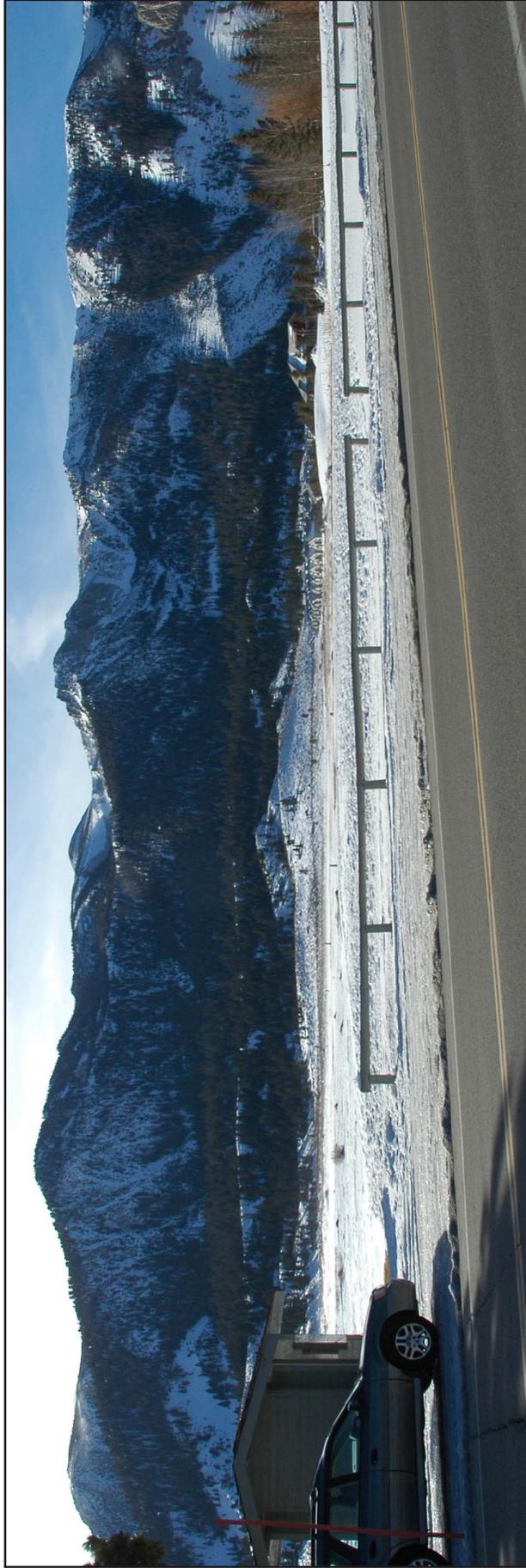
Sherwin Creek Road Looking West (View 4)

As shown in View 4, Figure IV.B-6, views of the Project site looking west from Sherwin Creek Road are dominated by open meadows, rolling foothills, and the Mammoth Mountain to the west. Ski runs on the Sherwin Range are visible under both summer and winter conditions. Views in the distant foreground include some scattered development; however, the predominating foreground views are of undeveloped scrub grasslands, boulders, distant trees, and mountains.

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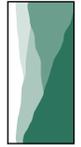


View 1: Old Mammoth Road & Minaret Road, Looking South (Summer)



View 1: Old Mammoth Road & Minaret Road, Looking South (Winter)

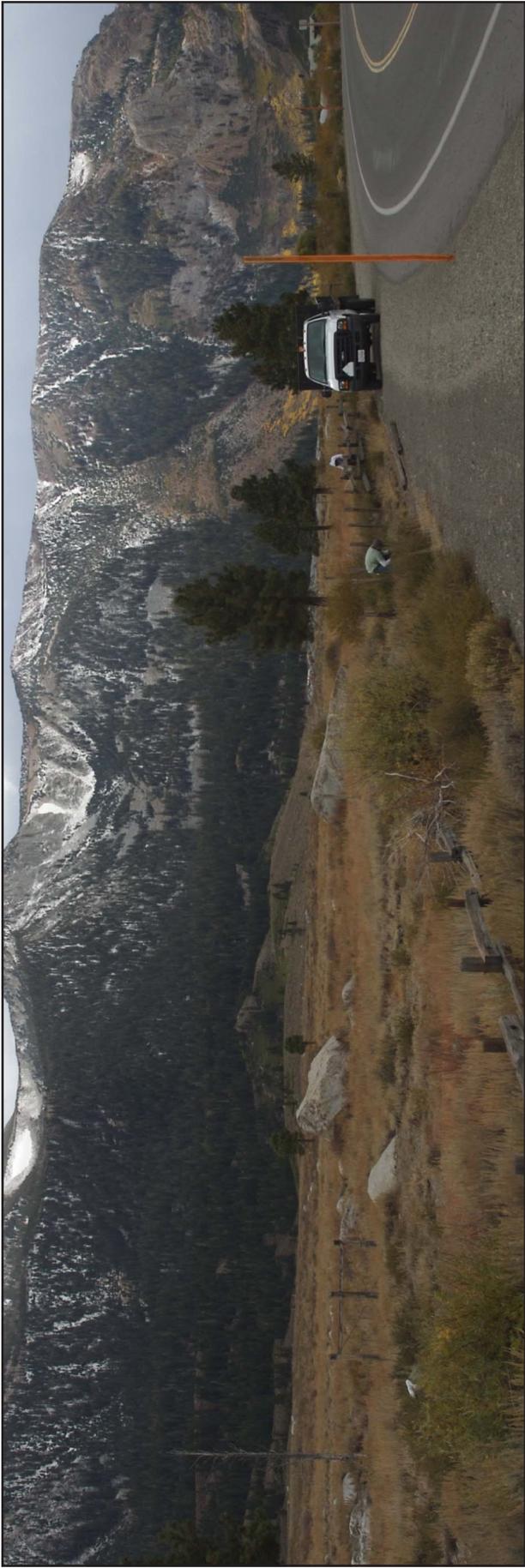
Source: Christopher A. Joseph & Associates, 2007.



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Figure IV.B-3
View 1 Old Mammoth Road
& Minaret Road, Looking South

Back of Figure IV.B-3: View 1, Old Mammoth and Minaret Road Looking South



View 2: Old Mammoth Road & Sherwin Creek Road, Looking South (Summer)



View 2: Old Mammoth Road & Sherwin Creek Road, Looking South (Winter)

Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, 2007.



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Figure IV.B-4
View 2, Old Mammoth Road
& Sherwin Creek Road, Looking South

Back of Figure IV.B-4: View 2, Old Mammoth and Sherwin Creek Road Looking South



View 3: Minaret Road, Looking South (Summer)



View 3: Minaret Road, Looking South (Winter)

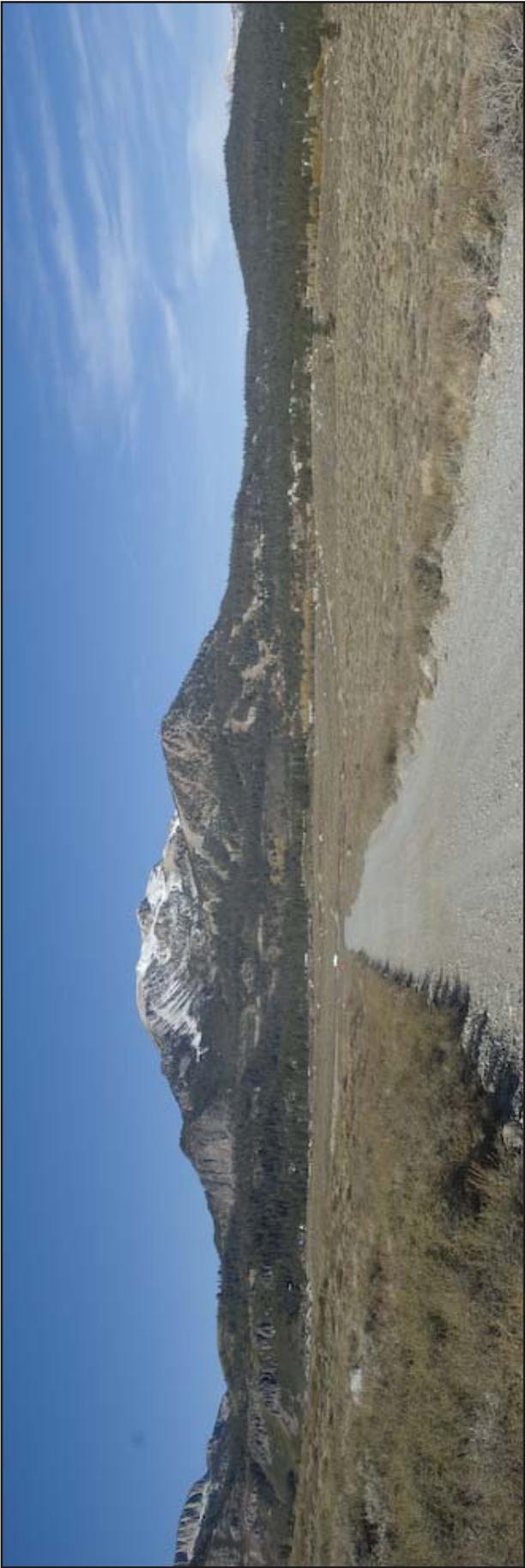
Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, 2007.



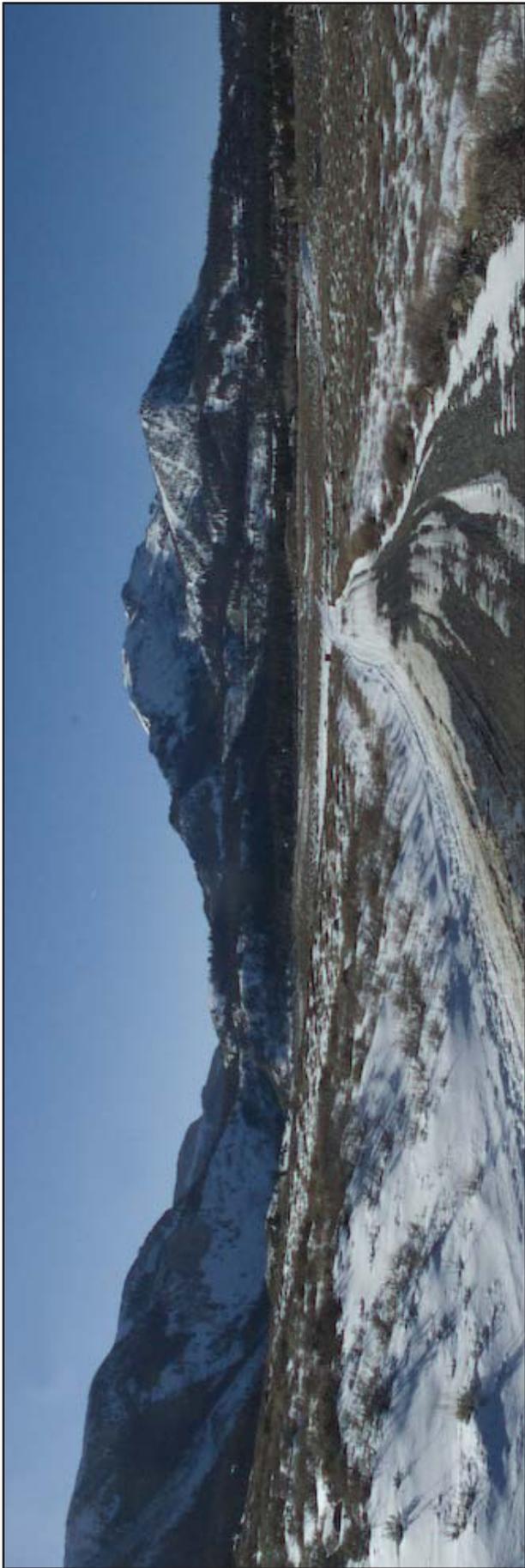
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Figure IV.B-5
View 3, Minaret Road, Looking South

Back of Figure IV.B-5: View 3, Minaret Road Looking South



View 4: Sherwin Creek Road, Looking West (Summer)



View 4: Sherwin Creek Road, Looking West (Winter)

Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, 2007.



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Figure IV.B-6
View 4, Sherwin Creek Road, Looking West

Back of Figure IV.B-6: View 4, Sherwin Creek Road Looking West

U.S Forest Service Lands to the West of Sherwin Creek Road (View 5)

View 5 is located to the west of View 4 on U.S. Forest Service lands. As shown in Figure IV.B-7, views of the Project site looking northwest from these lands include near and far views of rolling tree covered hills. Some development in the Town is visible in the distance. The far views are dominated by the mountains to the west. Ski runs on the mountains are visible under both summer and winter conditions.

Panorama Dome Trail Looking East (View 6)

As shown in View 6, Figure IV.B-8, views of the Project site are available from a hiking trail on the Panorama Dome in the Sherwin Range to the southwest of the site. The Project site is visible to the northeast in the distance in the near meadow areas of the view. A large resort development is visible in the mid-ground. Development in the Town of Mammoth Lakes is visible to the north among the trees. Mountains are visible in the distance.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**Thresholds of Significance**

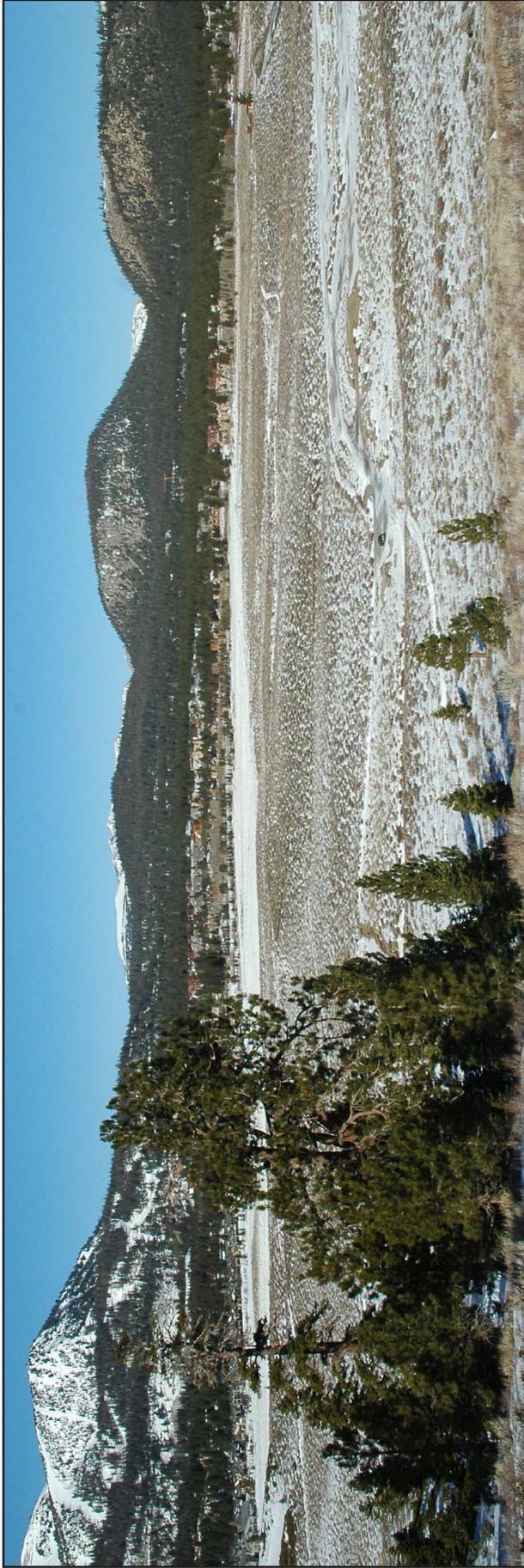
In accordance with Appendix G to the State *CEQA Guidelines*, the Project could have a significant environmental impact if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings within a scenic highway;
- Significantly degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

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View 5: U.S. Forest Service Lands to the West Sherwin Creek Road (Summer)



View 5: U.S. Forest Service Lands to the West Sherwin Creek Road (Winter)

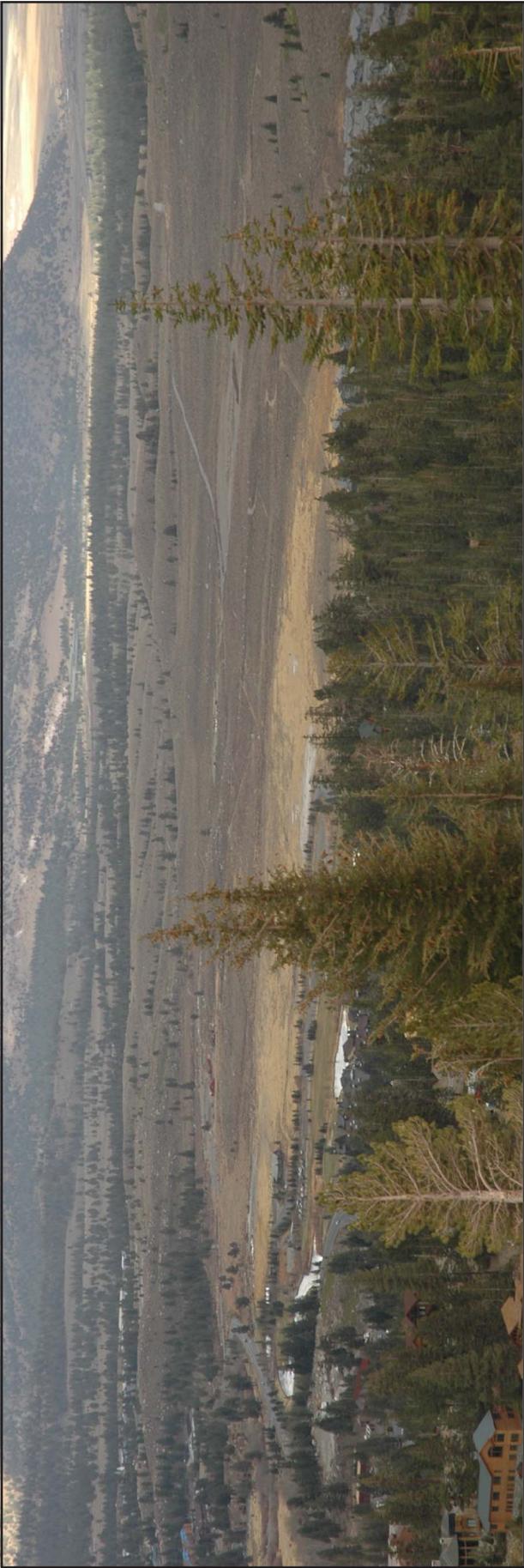
Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, 2007.



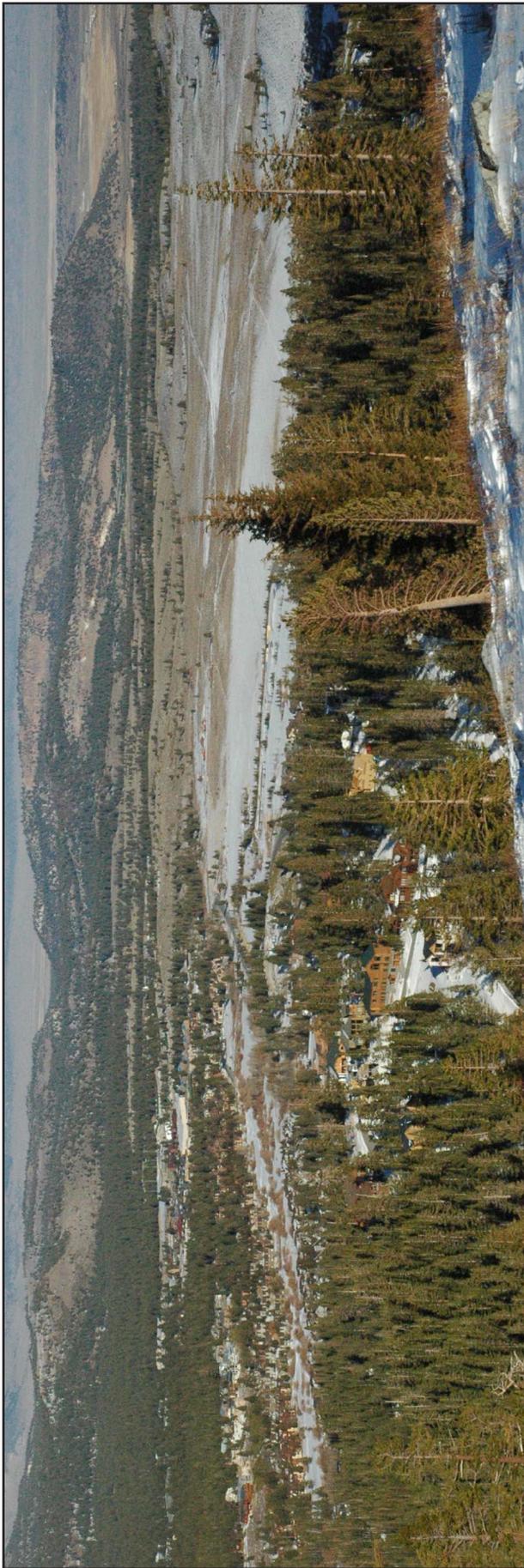
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Figure IV.B-7
View 5, U.S. Forest Service Land to the
West of Sherwin Creek Road

Back of Figure IV.B-7 View 5 U.S Forest Service Lands to the West of Sherwin Creek Road



View 6: Panorama Dome Trail, Looking East (Summer)



View 6: Panorama Dome Trail, Looking East (Winter)

Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, 2007.



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Figure IV.B-8
View 6 Panorama Dome,
Looking East

Back of Figure IV.B-8: View 6 Panorama Dome Trail Looking East

Project Impacts and Mitigation

Impact AES-1a Consistency with Policies (1987 General Plan)

As discussed above, several policies in the 1987 General Plan are applicable to the Project with respect to visual resources. A consistency analysis of the Project with applicable policies contained within the 1987 General Plan is presented in Table IV.B-1, Consistency with 1987 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies.

**Table IV.B-1
Consistency with 1987 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
LAND USE AND PUBLIC FACILITY AND SERVICES ELEMENT	
Open Space Policies	
<p>4 The unique physical and visual features of the Mammoth Lakes Community should be maintained by an open space program and Development Code criteria which preserves the unique alpine qualities of the Town and wildlife habitat, including major rock outcroppings, forest canopies and mixed-aged stands of trees.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project would cluster development in the interior of the Project site and reserve open space areas around the perimeter. Although few trees currently exist on the Project site, the site would be landscaped with trees resulting in an extension of the alpine and forested qualities throughout the Town to the Project site. Also, the Project will not affect any major rock outcroppings or forest canopies.</p>
<p>7 The Town shall maximize the visual quality of designated passive open space areas by careful screening of those development areas which can be viewed from the open space areas and by the maximum retention of the forest canopy and understory through design review criteria in the Town's Development Code.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project would organize residential uses into a series of clustered neighborhoods (including low-, medium-, and high-density residential development) interspersed among outdoor use/open space areas, commercial and resort uses, and recreational amenities. The Project would provide for sensitive transitions between residential and other land uses through open space dedication and design. The Project is set back in excess of approximately 1,950 feet from Old Mammoth Road. Additionally, landscaping will provide screening of portions of the Project.</p>
<p>8 The visual impact of active recreation areas should be minimized through cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and other appropriate agencies in areas outside the Town's jurisdiction and through incentives in the Town's Development Code, for areas within the Town's jurisdiction. The Town shall encourage the Forest Service to permit active recreational uses, including ice skating rinks, golf courses and similar community recreational facilities when those facilities cannot reasonably be located on the private land base.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project includes active recreational uses including an ice rink, Golf Course, and access to hiking, biking, and cross-country ski trails. The Golf Course would be landscaped with some native vegetation which would serve to blend the Golf Course into the existing open space areas on the edges of the Project site.</p>

**Table IV.B-1
Consistency with 1987 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT	
Parking	
<p>1.20 Consider the visual impacts of parking lots during project review. Implement design standards to locate parking to the rear of buildings, utilize land forms to reduce the bulk of structures, or provide substantial screening of parking areas.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project considers the impacts of parking lots by providing understructure parking with only minimal parking in surface lots. Project building design would be consistent with height and bulk as permitted on the Project site. Screening of all surface parking lots would be provided by landscaping consistent with other site landscaping. Landscaping plans would be reviewed by the Town for consistency with Design Guidelines.</p>
Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination	
<p>2.2 New roads and roadway improvements shall be located, designed, constructed, and maintained in a manner that prevents adverse impacts to air quality, water quality, and significant biological and scenic resources.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project is consistent with the underlying concepts expressed in this policy related to protection of air quality, water quality, biological resources, and scenic resources. The Project would provide transit connections, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and on-site services to reduce the number of vehicular trips and improve air quality. The Project would include adequate retention of surface runoff to protect water quality. The Project would avoid wetland and riparian habitat and incorporate measures to protect special status species. All roadways would be landscaped consistent with other site landscaping. Project design, including landscaping plans, would be reviewed by the Town for consistency with Design Guidelines.</p>
<p>2.4 New and replacement road lighting shall use fixtures and light sources that are shielded or constructed so that the source of illumination is not readily visible at a distance, and shall be energy efficient, without compromising traffic safety.</p>	<p>Consistent. The proposed Project would include an Outdoor Lighting Plan to ensure compliance with the Town's Lighting Ordinance (Chapter 17.34 of the Municipal Code). All fixtures would be down-shielded to avoid excessive illumination. Lighting would be designed to ensure safety and would be designed to minimize glare and reflection.</p>
CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT	
Natural Vegetative Resources	
<p>1 The Town shall preserve the resort-alpine character of Mammoth Lakes through the adoption of tree preservation standards which retain heritage trees and groves where reasonable, and retain to the maximum extent feasible, the forest canopy and forested character of the Town. Native tree species should be planted to help offset the loss of trees unavoidably removed during construction. (Parks and Recreation Element 1A-3).</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project design would create a scale, form, and mass suited to the resort-alpine character of the site and the adjacent land uses. Few trees exist on the Project site and none of the on-site trees are heritage trees, nor are there any heritage groves. Grading plans are not available for the Project at this point; however, as part of the approval process, the Town will review the grading plans to assess the need for removal of any trees.</p> <p>Additionally the Town will review all landscaping plans. To the maximum extent possible, native trees and shrubs are used to revegetate disturbed areas, to buffer or frame views, to allow summertime shading of outdoor places,</p>

**Table IV.B-1
Consistency with 1987 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
	to allow transition in scale and to soften building massing, and to introduce decoration and color into outdoor use areas. Planting on the project site would use native conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs and would be consistent with Town Code.
Visual Resources and Community Design	
1 The Town shall adopt and enforce community design standards to help preserve and enhance the aesthetic and biological environment.	Consistent. Prior to Town approval, the final Project design would be reviewed for consistency with the Town's Design Guidelines.
2 These standards shall include design criteria to assure proposed developments are located, sited and designed to be subordinate to the pre-existing character of the site to the maximum extent possible.	Consistent. The Project is organized into a series of clustered residential neighborhoods interspersed among outdoor use/open space areas and recreational amenities. The Project would retain the natural contours of the site and provide for sensitive transitions between residential and other land uses through open space dedication and design and would preserve the existing character of the site.
4 The Town shall develop aesthetic controls to be applied to utility structures, road signs, traffic signals, lighting, overhead wires and utility poles.	Consistent. Utility structures, road signs, and lighting would be subject to review under the Town's Design Review Guidelines prior to Town approval of final Project designs.
6 Primary Scenic Areas and Scenic Resources shall be protected through design criteria and incentives and disincentives in the Town Development Code including: a) location of structures, or modification of building height and bulk, to reduce impact to views of primary scenic areas and resources. b) control of development on prominent ridgelines, bluffs and exposed hillsides, c) use of building materials, and colors which blend rather than contrast with the surrounding visual resources, d) limiting removal of vegetation, particularly mature trees, e) locating sensitive visual, biological and geological resource areas within Special Conservation Planning districts.	Consistent with the 1987 General Plan but inconsistent with the Town Development Code. Consistent with Town Development Code if the Zone Code Amendment is approved. The Town will review the location of the proposed structures, bulk/massing, use of building materials, colors, and landscaping to ensure consistency with the Town Development Code. Although the Hotel would not exceed 120 feet in height (the maximum allowed by the Fire Code) and would be located at a distance of approximately 1,950 feet from Old Mammoth Road, public views to the surrounding mountains would be altered. Residential buildings would be two- or three-stories in height and would not obscure views of the surrounding mountains. The Town's Zoning Code states that any commercial structure, such as a hotel, where the majority of the ground floor is devoted to understructure parking, the Planning Commission may approve an increase of up to 10 feet in height for a total of 45 feet (17.20.040.G.4). The height of the Hotel would not be consistent with the height limitation in the Town's zoning code, but would be consistent if the applicant's proposed Zone Code Amendment is approved.

**Table IV.B-1
Consistency with 1987 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>7 Preserve the important scenic vistas which occur along Old Mammoth Road, Meridian Boulevard and other defined areas by retaining sufficient minimum building setbacks and adoption of viewshed protection criteria and requirements in the Town Development Code.</p>	<p>Consistent with the General Plan but inconsistent with the Town Development Code. Consistent with Town Development Code if the Zone Code Amendment is approved. The 1987 General Plan contemplated the build-out of the Snowcreek Master Plan and an EIR was prepared in connection with the adoption of the 1987 General Plan. The height of the Hotel is a significant conceptual change to the Project; however the location of the Hotel is setback approximately 1,950 feet from Old Mammoth Road, thus reducing its visibility from this viewpoint. Residential buildings would be two- or three-stories in height and would not obscure views of the surrounding mountains. With respect to the development of the Project (with the exception of the height of the Hotel), the policy of the Town has been to permit development of the character and scale that has been contemplated. The Hotel is the tallest structure on the site and would not exceed 120 feet in height (the maximum allowed by the Fire Code). Although, the Hotel would be setback approximately 1,950 feet from Old Mammoth Road, public views of the site would be altered and views to the surrounding mountains would also be altered. While there is no direct conflict with the 1987 General Plan, this Project feature was not contemplated at the time the 1987 General Plan was adopted. As stated above, although there is a direct conflict with the Town's Zoning Code, if the Town Council approves the Zone Code Amendment, this inconsistency would be eliminated.</p>

As indicated in Table IV.B-1 above, the Project would be generally consistent with most of the applicable policies associated with aesthetics in the 1987 General Plan with respect to the identified viewpoints. However, as also stated in Table IV.B.1, the Hotel element of the Project would not be consistent with 1987 General Plan policies pertaining to scenic vistas because it would alter the visual character of the site, which would be apparent to viewers looking toward the Sherwin Range from public areas near the Project site. The Hotel element of the Project would also be inconsistent with the height limitation contained in the Town's Zoning Code unless the Town Council approves the requested Zone Code Amendment. Inconsistency with a policy may indicate a significant physical impact, but the inconsistency is not itself an impact. Similarly, consistency with a policy does not necessarily mean there is no environmental impact. It is difficult to quantify and judge aesthetic impacts, which can be quite subjective. Although the Project has been previously considered for development on this site, given the character of the site and the fact that the aesthetic impact of a 120 foot Hotel has not been previously studied in a CEQA compliance document, the Project would result in significant impacts to scenic vistas

by altering the visual character of the site, which would be apparent to viewers looking south toward the Sherwin Range from public areas near the Project site. Therefore, development of the Project would create an impact for which there are no mitigation measures available and this impact would be considered *significant and unavoidable*.

Impact AES-1b Consistency with Policies (2007 General Plan)

As discussed above, the 2007 General Plan sets forth policies and implementation measures to ensure the preservation of the visual resources and visual character of the Town of Mammoth Lakes. A consistency analysis of the Project with applicable policies contained within the proposed General Plan is presented in Table IV.B-2, Consistency with 2007 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies.

**Table IV.B-2
Consistency with 2007 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT	
Celebrate Public Spaces	
C.2.A Create well-designed and significant public spaces in resort/commercial developments to accommodate pedestrians and encourage social interaction and community activity.	Consistent. Public outdoor spaces would be designed to emphasize the natural beauty of the Town and surrounding areas and complement the buildings' design features and overall site plan.
C.2.D Preserve and enhance special qualities of districts through focused attention on land use, community design and economic development.	Consistent. The Project would complement the design of the existing Snowcreek Master Plan area by being consistent with design for the area, proposing land uses in an efficient fashion, and contributing to the resort environment of the Town.
C.2.E Ensure that each district center is an attractive destination that is comfortable and inviting with sunny streets, plazas and sidewalks.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.D. The Project would include a pedestrian and bicycle system with interior trails and some sidewalks fronting internal streets as well as connecting trails from recreational amenities, outdoor spaces and neighborhoods.
Celebrate the Spectacular Natural Surroundings	
C.2.I Achieve highest quality development that complements the natural surroundings by developing and enforcing design standards and guidelines.	Consistent. As discussed in more detail below, the Hotel element of the Project would exceed the height limitation in the Town's Zoning Code and may result in significant unavoidable impacts to scenic vistas. The Project is subject to design review by the Town Planning Department, other Town departments and divisions, and outside agencies. As part of the approval process, the Town will review the location of the proposed structures and bulk/massing to determine if this impact can be reduced, and, if so, will work with the Project applicant to reduce the impacts to the extent feasible, and as part of such review will evaluate the use of building materials, colors, and landscaping to ensure consistency with the Town Development Code. Landscaping would incorporate some native trees and shrubs to revegetate disturbed areas, to buffer or frame views to allow summertime shading of outdoor places, to allow

**Table IV.B-2
Consistency with 2007 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
	transition in scale and to soften building massing, and to introduce decoration and color into outdoor use areas. Planting on the Project site would use native conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs.
<p>C.2.J Be stewards in preserving public views of surrounding mountains, ridgelines and knolls.</p>	<p>Consistent with the General Plan but inconsistent with the Town Development Code. Consistent with Town Development Code if the Zone Code Amendment is approved. The majority of the Project would not exceed the height limitation in the Town's Zoning Code, Residential buildings would be two- or three-stories in height and would not obscure views of the surrounding mountains, although they would obscure some views of the meadows and foothills in the distant foreground. However, the location and massing of the proposed structures would be consistent with the Town's Design Guidelines and the General Plan policies under Neighborhood and District Character, Snowcreek. The proposed 2007 General Plan Update states that in the Snowcreek district, "strong vertical elements are encouraged." If the proposed 2007 General Plan Update is adopted by the Town Council, it may be that this 120 foot height element could be determined to be consistent with the policies of the 2007 General Plan Update with regard to aesthetics. Additionally, the Project proposes a Zone Code Amendment to revise the Zoning Ordinance. If approved, the height of the Hotel would be consistent with the height limitation in the Town's Zoning Code.</p>
<p>C.2.L Create a visually interesting and aesthetically pleasing built environment by requiring all development to incorporate the highest quality of architecture and thoughtful site design and planning.</p>	<p>Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.I.</p>
<p>C.2.M Enhance community character by ensuring that all development, regardless of scale or density, maximizes provision of all types of open space, particularly scenic open space.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project would organize residential uses into a series of clustered neighborhoods (including low-, medium-, and high-density residential development) with open, landscaped areas interspersed among commercial and resort uses, and recreational amenities. The Project would provide for sensitive transitions between residential and other land uses through open space dedication including the golf course and design.</p>
<p>C.2.N Plan the siting and design of buildings to preserve the maximum amount of open space, trees and natural features to be consistent with themes and district character.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Project design would create a scale, form, and mass suited to the resort-alpine character of the site and the adjacent land uses. The Project would cluster development to preserve and maximize open, landscaped areas interspersed among commercial and resort uses, and recreational amenities. Few trees exist on the Project site. As part of the approval process, the Town will review the grading plans to assess the need for removal of any trees.</p>

**Table IV.B-2
Consistency with 2007 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
	<p>Additionally the Town will review all landscaping plans to ensure that some native trees and shrubs are used to revegetate disturbed areas, to buffer or frame views to allow summertime shading of outdoor places, to allow transition in scale and to soften building massing, and to introduce decoration and color into outdoor use areas.</p>
<p>C.2.O Site development adjustments may be considered to preserve significant groups of trees or individual specimens. Replanting with native and compatible non-native trees to mitigate necessary tree removal is required.</p>	<p>Consistent. There are no significant groups of trees or individual specimens on the Project site. Development on the portion of the site north of Old Mammoth Road would be located out of the riparian corridor and would affect some trees and vegetation. Landscaping would include replanting with native and compatible non-native trees. It is the intent of the Project that all Native/Naturally-occurring trees remain on-site in their current location, subsequent to an arborist's review of the health and status of the tree.</p>
Distinctive Architecture	
<p>C.2.T Use natural, high quality building materials to reflect Mammoth Lakes' character and mountain setting.</p>	<p>Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.D.</p>
<p>C.2.U Require unique, authentic and diverse design that conveys innovation and creativity and discourages architectural monotony.</p>	<p>Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.D. and C.2.I.</p>
Comfortable Building Height, Mass, and Scale	
<p>C.2.V Building height, massing and scale shall complement neighboring land uses and preserve views to the surrounding mountains.</p>	<p>Consistent with the General Plan but inconsistent with the Town Development Code. Consistent with Town Development Code if the Zone Code Amendment is approved. See response to Policy C.2.J.</p>
<p>C.2.W Maintain scenic public views and view corridors as shown in Figures 1 and 2 that visually connect community to surroundings.</p>	<p>Consistent with the General Plan but inconsistent with the Town Development Code. Consistent with Town Development Code if the Zone Code Amendment is approved. See response to Policy C.2.J.</p>
<p>C.2.X Limit building height to the trees on development sites where material tree coverage exists and use top of forest canopy in general area as height limit if no trees on site.</p>	<p>Consistent. There is no material tree coverage on the Project site. Therefore, development of any height on the portion of the site south of Old Mammoth Road would not conflict with this policy. Development on the portion of the site north of Old Mammoth Road would not be in excess of forest canopy in the general area.</p>
Community Design and Streetscape	
<p>C.3.B Require distinctive design features at unique sites such as mountain portals, the terminus of a public view and other important public spaces and social gathering places.</p>	<p>Consistent. The Town will review the location of the proposed structures, bulk/massing, use of building materials, colors, and landscaping to ensure consistency with the Town Development Code which strives to protect major view corridors and major landscape characteristics.</p>

**Table IV.B-2
Consistency with 2007 General Plan Applicable Aesthetics Policies**

Policy	Consistency Analysis
C.3.E Ensure that landscaping, signage, public art, street enhancements and building design result in a more hospitable and attractive pedestrian environment. Require an even higher level of design quality and detail in commercial mixed use areas.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.D. and C.2.N.
C.3.F Underground utilities within the community.	Consistent. The Project is subject to design review by the Town Planning Department, other departments and divisions, and outside agencies. All utilities would be located underground and would be reviewed by the Town for consistency with Design Guidelines.
Natural Environment	
C.4.B To retain the forested character of the town, require use of native and compatible plant species in public and private developments and aggressive replanting with native trees.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.N.
C.4.C Retain overall image of a community in a forest by ensuring that native trees are protected wherever possible and remain an important component of the community.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.N.
C.4.D Retain the forested character of the town by requiring development to pursue aggressive replanting with native trees and other compatible species.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.N.
Night Sky, Light Pollution, and Glare	
C.5.A Require outdoor light fixtures to be shielded and down-directed so as to minimize glare and light trespass.	Consistent. The Project would include an Outdoor Lighting Plan to ensure compliance with the Town's Lighting Ordinance (Chapter 17.34, Municipal Code). Excessive illumination would be avoided and lighting would be designed and placed to minimize glare and reflection. The Project is subject to design review by the Town Planning Department, which would consider the adequacy of signage and markings for pedestrian safety.
C.5.C Improve pedestrian safety by eliminating glare for motorists through use of non-glare roadway lighting. A light fixture's source of illumination shall not be readily visible at a distance. Number of fixtures used shall be adequate to evenly illuminate for pedestrian safety.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.5.A.
LAND USE	
Livability	
L.1.B Require all development to meet community goals for highest quality of design, energy efficiency, open space preservation, and promotion of a livable, sustainable community. Development that does not fulfill these goals shall not be allowed.	Consistent. See response to Policy C.2.I. The Project has a variety of resort lodging supported by restaurants, resort, services, neighborhood conveniences, commercial, retail, and outdoor ancillary recreation designed as a traditional small-scale village. The Project has dispersed structures and a strong vertical emphasis with a 120-foot Hotel.

While the 2007 General Plan does not explicitly prohibit a 120 foot Hotel, the Town's Municipal Code does. Inconsistency with a policy may indicate a significant physical impact, but the inconsistency is not itself an impact. Although development of the Project Site has been previously contemplated, given the character of the Project site and the fact that the site has been undeveloped for that period of time, the Project would result in significant impacts to scenic vistas by altering the visual character of the site, which would be apparent to viewers looking toward the Sherwin Range from public areas near the Project site. Whether the Town decides to amend the zoning code and allow the Hotel to have increased height or not, the Project would create an impact for which there are no mitigation measures available and this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Impact AES-2 Public Views and Scenic Vistas

The following discussion provides a comparison of "before" views and "after" views associated with the Project. A total of 12 photo simulations depicting views after the Project is constructed are presented below. The locations from which the view photographs were taken and the direction of each view is indicated on Figure IV.B-2. The "before" views associated with each simulation are presented in Figures IV.B-3 through IV.B-8, and are described above. The "after" views were produced by simulating what the Project is expected to look like after construction is completed using computer modeling, photographs, and Project plans. For all viewpoints with the exception of View 6, the proposed building heights are illustrated with yellow lines. Because the View 6 vantage point is from a substantially higher elevation to the south of the Project site, building heights cannot be accurately portrayed on a two-dimensional graphic and, thus, are not illustrated.

Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road Looking South (View 1)

View 1, Figure IV.B-9, located on Old Mammoth Road just east of its intersection with Minaret Road is shown under non-snow and snow conditions. The Resident's Club with a snack bar and swimming pool, and low-density stacked flats and townhouses constructed as part of the Project would be visible in the mid-foreground from this view. Other view features would remain unchanged, including views of the driving range (landscaped turf area to become part of the reconfigured 18-hole golf course), a grove of trees to the west, and rolling hills and mountains directly to the south. Although views of the Sherwin Range would not be obscured by the Project, the Project would result in substantial changes to views of the Project site and the alteration of views toward the Sherwin Range from the View 1 location. Therefore, the Project would result in significant changes to views from Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road looking south and this impact would be **significant**.

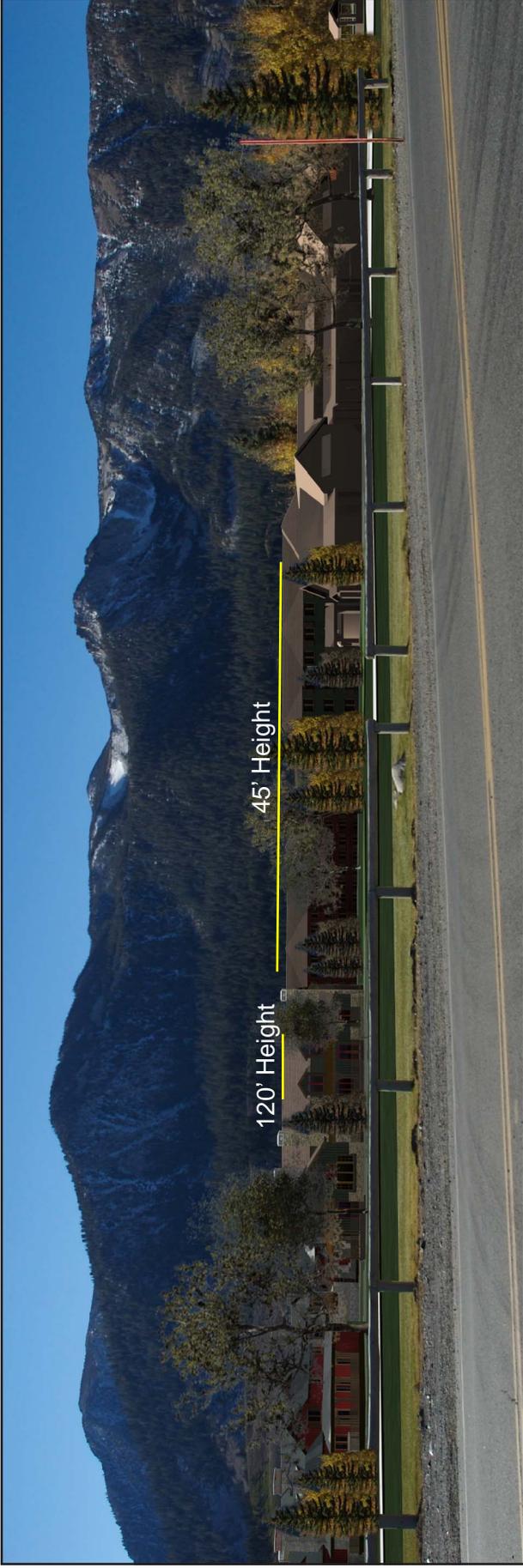
Old Mammoth Road and Sherwin Creek Road Looking South (View 2)

View 2, Figure IV.B-10, located on Old Mammoth Road just west of its intersection with Sherwin Creek Road is shown under non-snow and snow conditions. The Hotel and high- and low-density stacked flats and townhouses constructed as part of the Project would be visible in the mid-foreground from this view. Other view features would remain unchanged, including views of a mountain meadow with boulders,

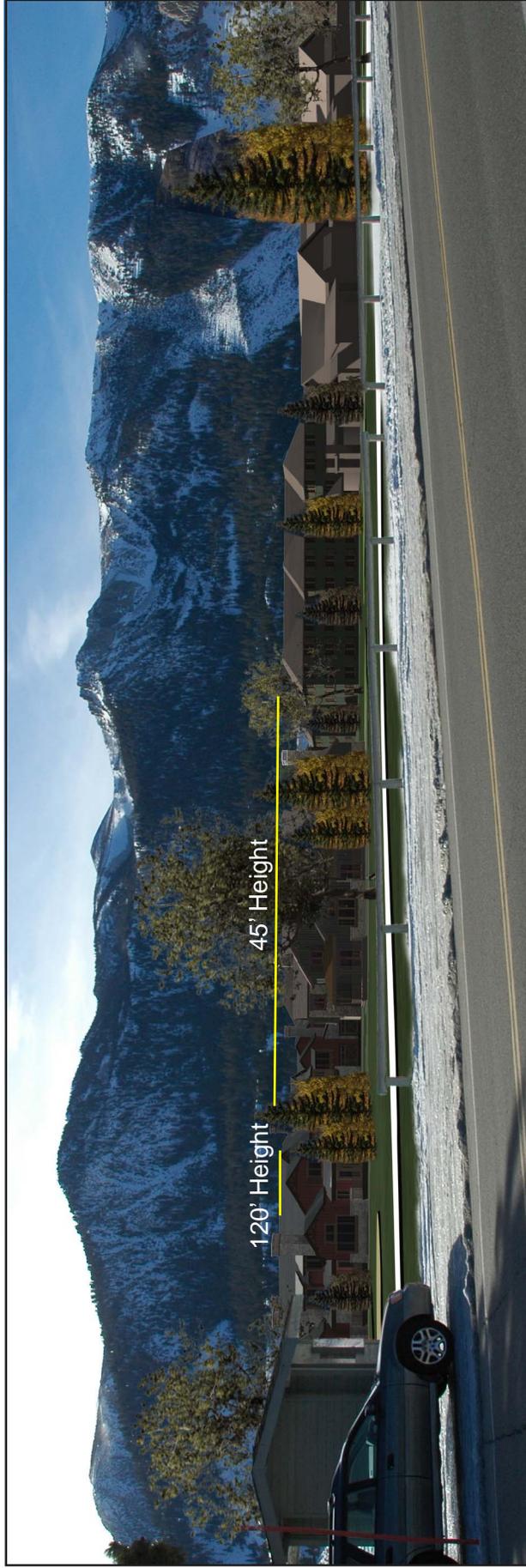
scrub, and scattered pines. Although the characteristics of the Project site would be altered with development of the Project, views of rolling hills to the southeast and the Sherwin Range directly to the south would not be obscured by the Project. Therefore, although the Project site would be altered, the Project would not result in significant changes to views from Old Mammoth Road and Sherwin Creek Road looking south and this impact would be *less than significant*.

Minaret Road Looking South (View 3)

Figure IV.B-11 shows View 3, located north of the Project site looking south from Minaret Road near its intersection with Chateau Road under non-snow and snow conditions. Development on the Project site would be partially obscured by existing trees. Some building roofs would be visible interspersed with the trees, but these buildings would only minimally obscure views of the bottom of rolling hills behind the site. The Project would not obscure views of the Sherwin Range and this impact would be *less than significant*.



View 1: Old Mammoth Road & Minaret Road, Looking South with Project (Summer)



View 1: Old Mammoth Road & Minaret Road, Looking South with Project (Winter)

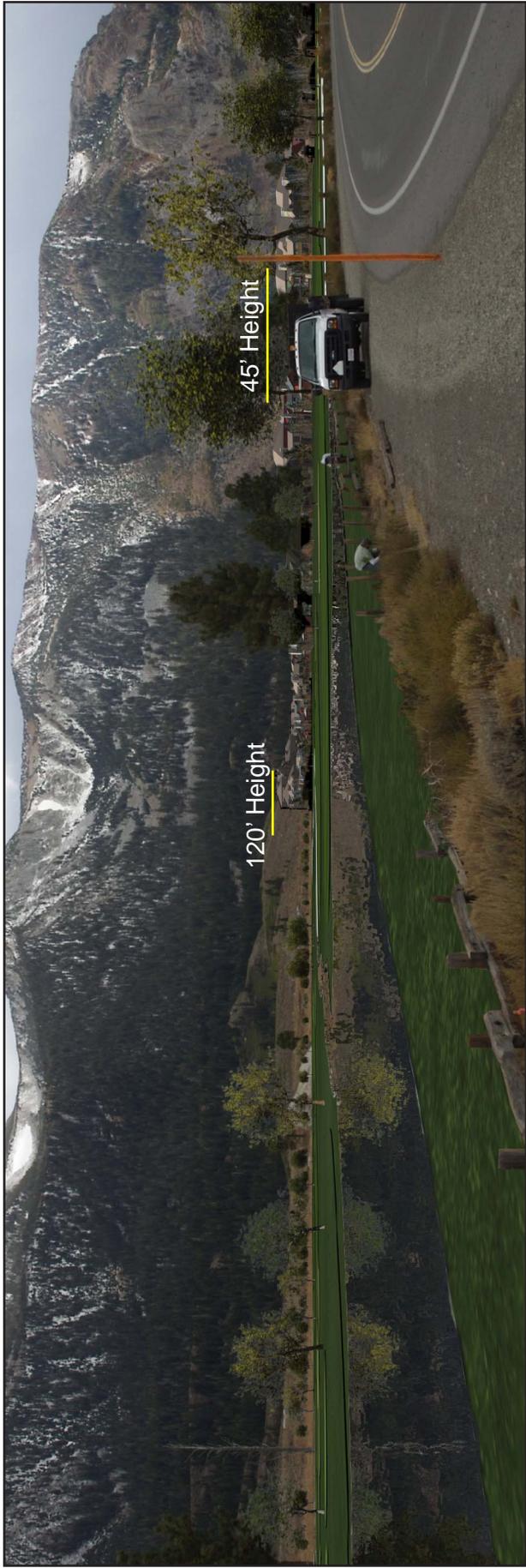
Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, Henry Lenny Design Studio 2007.



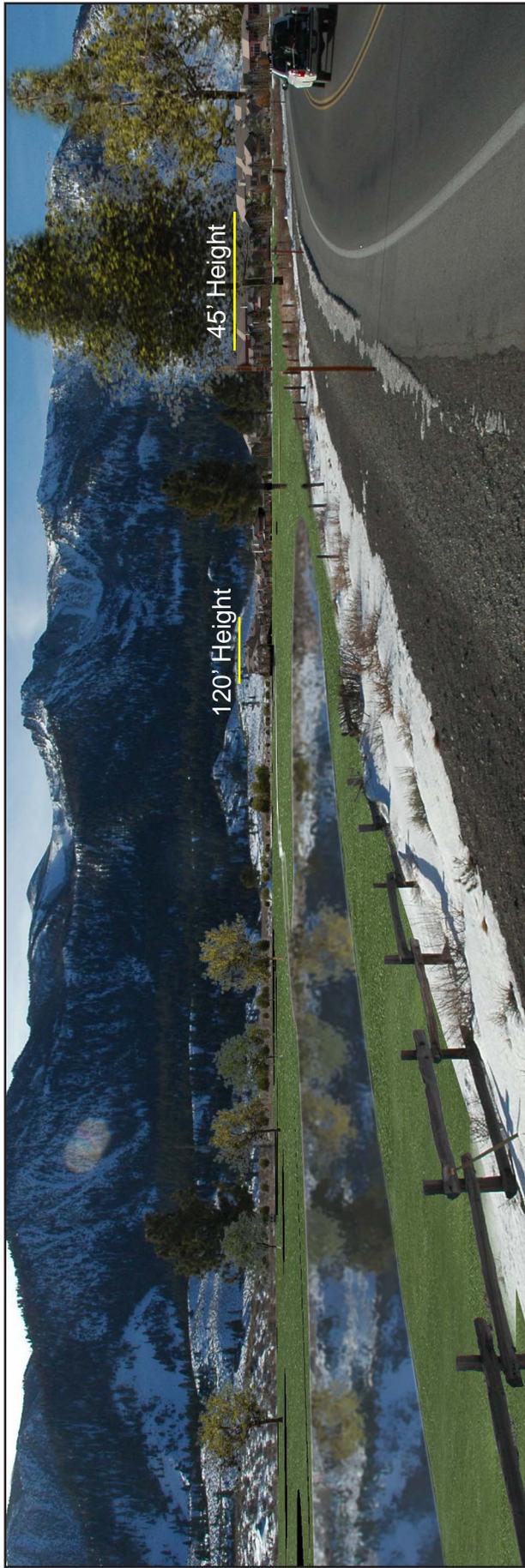
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Figure IV.B-9
View 1, Old Mammoth Road & Minaret
Road with Project

Back of Figure IV.B-9



View 2: Old Mammoth Road & Sherwin Creek Road, Looking South with Project (Summer)



View 2: Old Mammoth Road & Sherwin Creek Road, Looking South with Project (Winter)

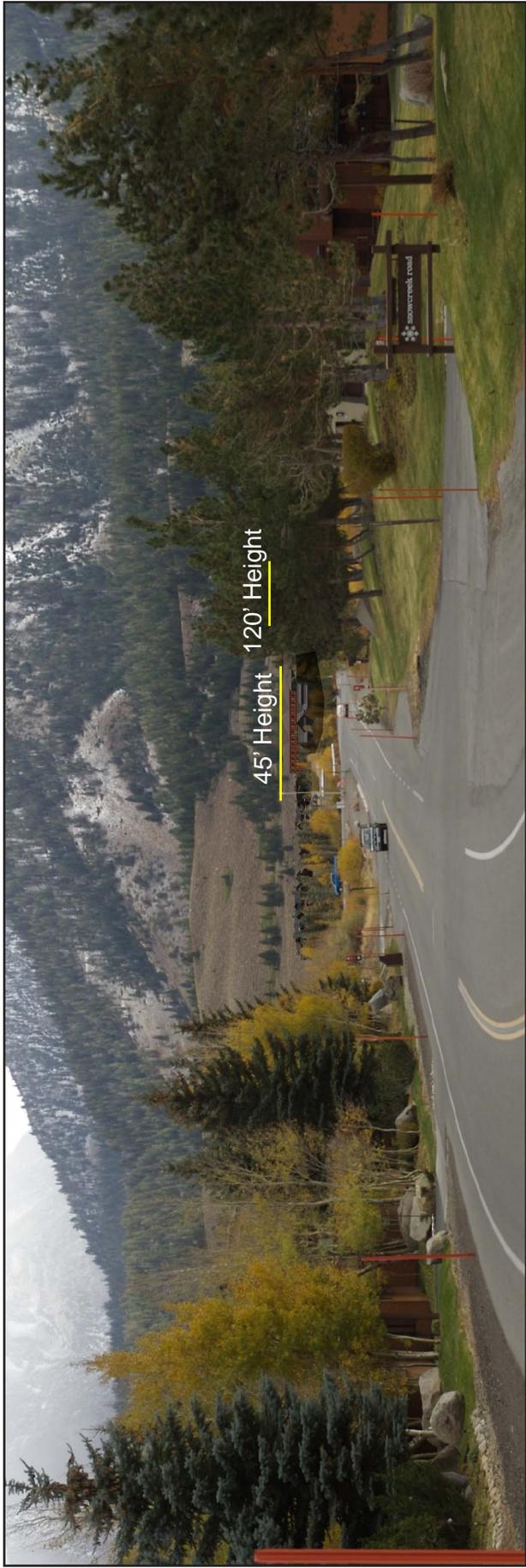
Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, Henry Lenny Design Studio 2007.



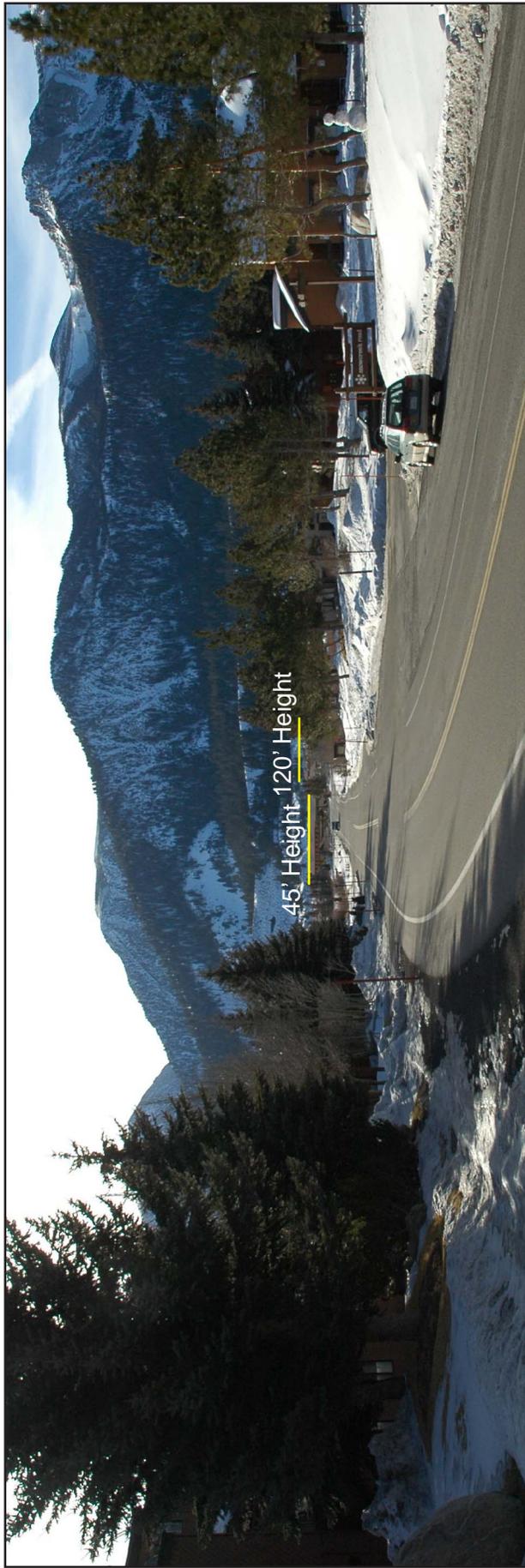
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Figure IV.B-10
View 2, Old Mammoth Road & Sherwin
Creek Road with Project

Back of Figure IV.B-10



View 3: Minaret Road, Looking South with Project (Summer)



View 3: Minaret Road, Looking South with Project (Winter)

Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, Henry Lenny Design Studio 2007.



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Figure IV.B-11
View 3, Minaret Road with Project

Back of Figure IV.B-11

Sherwin Creek Road Looking West (View 4)

View 4, Figure IV.B-12, looking west from Sherwin Creek Road is shown under non-snow and snow conditions. Views of the Hotel, low-density housing, and medium-density housing would be seen in the mid-ground. Views in the distant foreground of scattered development would still be visible. Although views of rolling hills and the Sherwin Range would not be obscured by the Project, the Project would alter the visual characteristics of the Project site and contribute to the perception of more development in the foothills adjacent to the Sherwin Range, resulting in a **significant** impact.

U.S. Forest Service Lands to the West of Sherwin Creek Road (View 5)

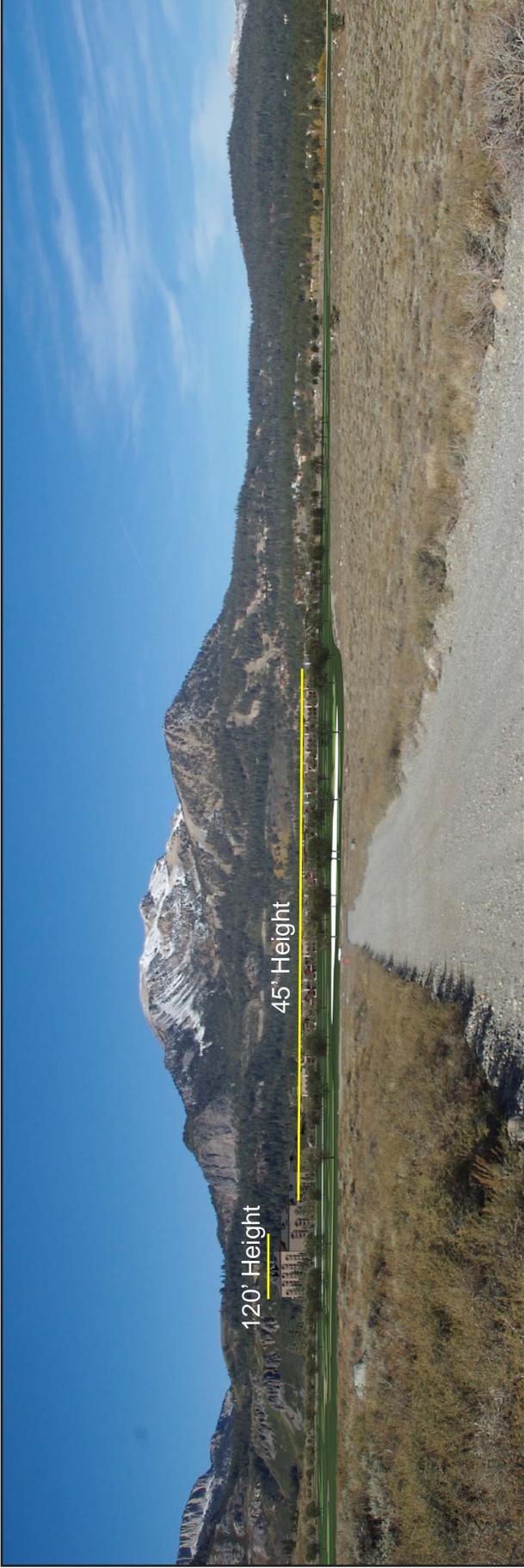
Figure IV.B-13, View 5 located to the west of View 4 on U.S. Forest Service lands is shown under non-snow and snow conditions. Views of the Hotel, Golf Clubhouse, and low-density stacked flat constructed as part of the Project would be partially screened by trees, but still visible in the mid-foreground from this view. Development in the Town would still be visible in the distance. Far views of rolling tree-covered hills would still be visible and the far views of the mountains to the west would not be obscured. However, although views of rolling hills and the Sherwin Range would not be obscured by the Project, the Project would alter the visual characteristics of the Project site by developing an open meadow area with resort development, resulting in a **significant** impact.

Panorama Dome Trail Looking East (View 6)

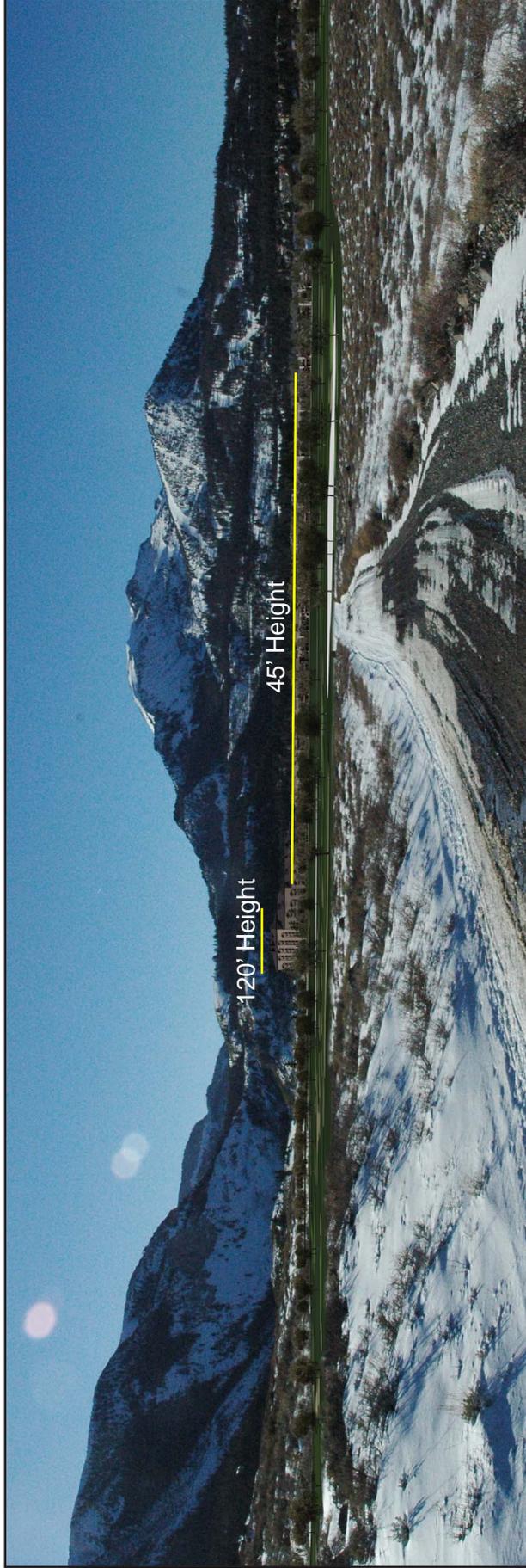
View 6, Figure IV.B-14, looking east from a hiking trail on the Panorama Dome in the Sherwin Range is shown under non-snow and snow conditions. The Project would be visible to the northeast in the distance in the near meadow areas of the view. The Project would result in visual changes to the Project site by developing a meadow with resort uses. The Project would not obscure any views of mountains in the distance; however, changes to visual character from development of the meadow would be substantial and this impact would be **significant**.

The Project would not obscure views of the Sherwin Range from Views 2 and 3. Views of the Sherwin Range from Views 1, 4, 5, and 6 would be slightly obscured. However, the Project would result in substantial changes to visual character on the Project site within the viewshed, resulting in impacts to views. No mitigation measures are available to fully mitigate such impacts. Therefore, impacts to views would be **significant and unavoidable**.

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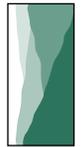


View 4: Sherwin Creek Road, Looking West with Project (Summer)



View 4: Sherwin Creek Road, Looking West with Project (Winter)

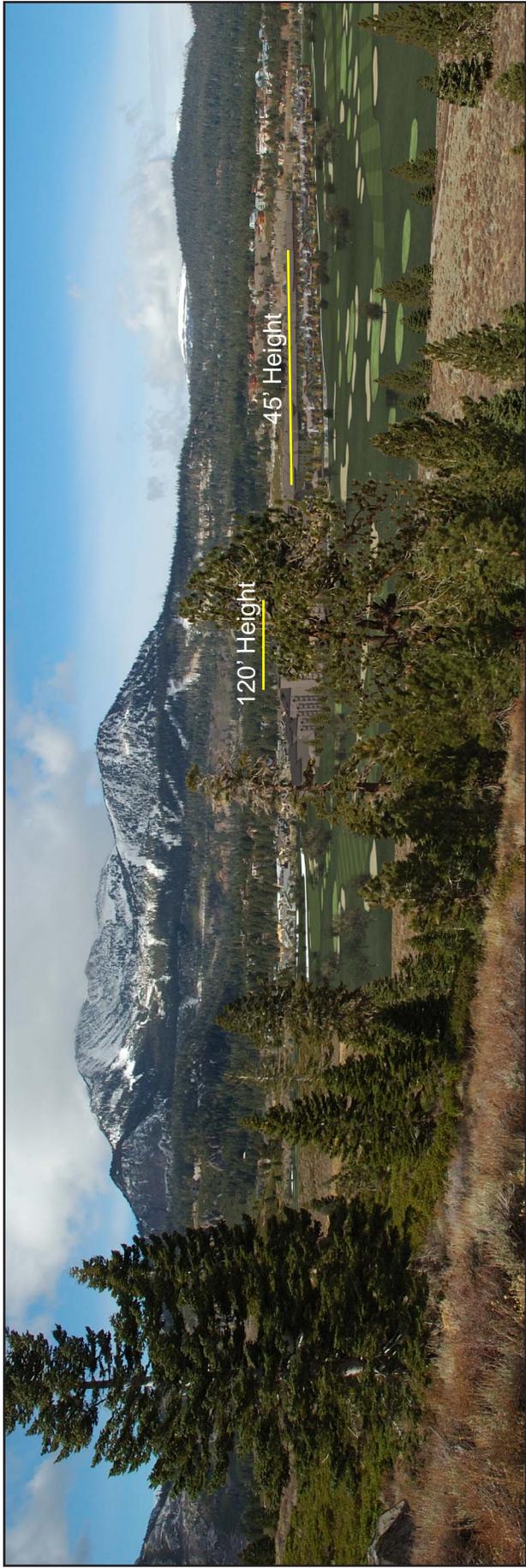
Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, Henry Lenny Design Studio 2007.



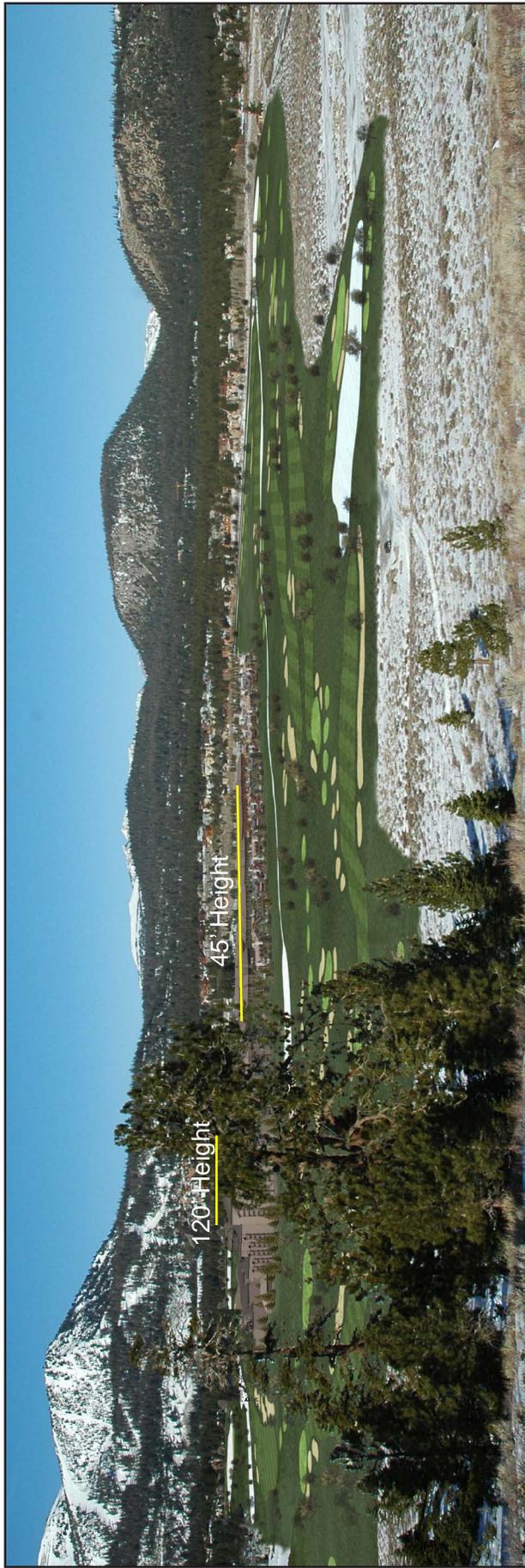
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Figure IV.B-12
View 4, Sherwin Creek Road, Looking
West with Project

Back of Figure IV.B-12



View 5: U.S. Forest Service Lands to the West of Sherwin Creek Road with Project (Summer)



View 5: U.S. Forest Service Lands to the West of Sherwin Creek Road with Project (Winter)

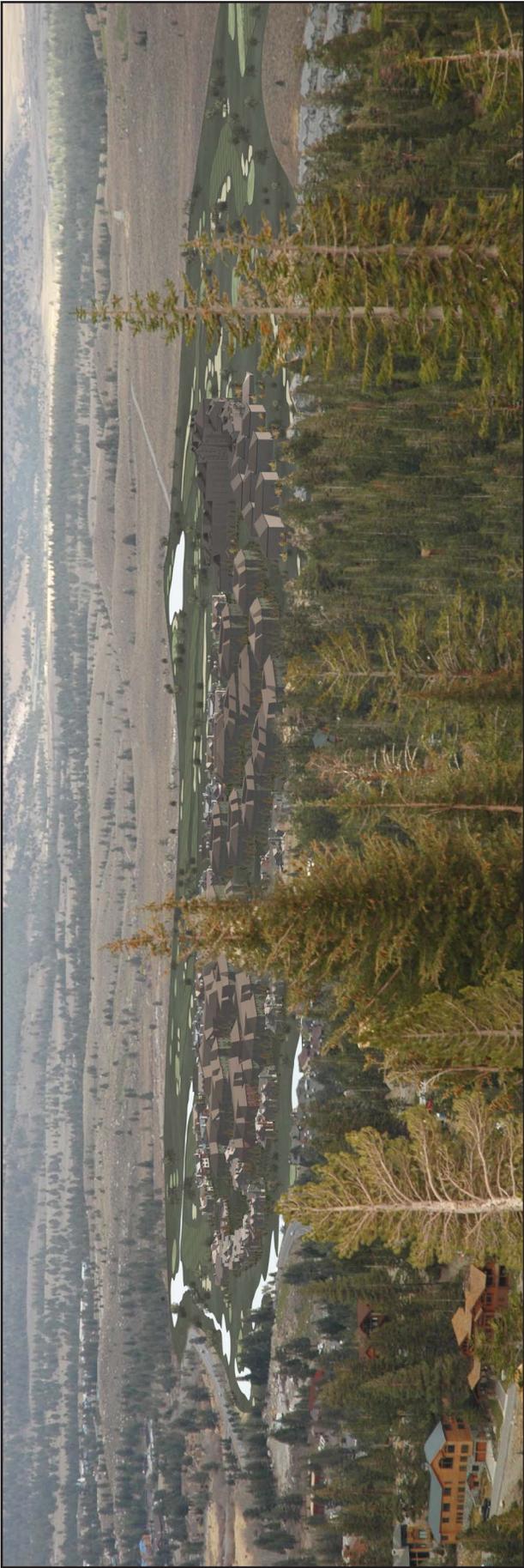
Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, Henry Lenny Design Studio 2007.



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Figure IV.B-13
View 5, U.S. Forest Service Lands to the
West of Sherwin Creek Road with Project

Back of Figure IV.B-13



View 6: Panorama Dome Trail, Looking East with Project (Summer)



View 6: Panorama Dome Trail, Looking East with Project (Winter)

Source: Christopher A Joseph & Associates, Henry Lenny Design Studio 2007.



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Figure IV.B-14
View 6, Panorama Dome Trail
with Project

Back of Figure IV.B-14

Impact AES-3 Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway

In the vicinity of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, State Highway 203 (Main Street) is an eligible State Scenic Highway (not officially designated) and U.S. Highway 395 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway.¹ The Project site is approximately 1.5 miles from Main Street and approximately 4 miles from U.S. Highway 395. Due to the topography of the area, the Project site is not visible from Main Street. Additionally, the Project site is too distant from U.S. Highway 395 and would not be visible from any vantage point along its route due to intervening topography. Therefore, impacts to scenic resources observable from a State Scenic Highway would be ***less than significant*** with the development of the Project.²

Impact AES-4 Visual Character and Design

Form, Mass, and Scale

The Project would organize the form and mass of a single building in relationship to the scale of neighboring buildings and in relationship to the size and use of adjacent open space. The Town would review all final proposed building designs to ensure that the Project would be responsive and expressive of its unique alpine setting. The Project will take into consideration neighboring building colors when using strong, deep trim colors on doors and structural details. The Project's main street would terminate at the Hotel, with resort amenities, including a public ice skating pond and a swimming pool. The Hotel's form, although tall, would be stepped-down at the ends to reduce apparent mass and to provide a pleasing form that allows for the maintenance of views to the areas beyond.

Residential units would range from two to three stories in height. Building mass would be varied to create variety in the character of the building elevations. A not-to-exceed 120-foot height is proposed for the Hotel. This proposed building height would exceed the height limit of 55 feet in the Town's zoning code and would constitute a substantial change. However, the Hotel would be located at the edge of the Project site and its building elevations would be stepped down or terraced, which would serve to reduce the perceived mass of the Hotel, as described previously under Impact AES-2.

The housing building forms would be set back and stepped, with traditional sloping roofs yielding to terraced forms softened by landscape. The relationship between buildings would be designed to allow openness to views, light, and air. Each building density type (Low, Medium, and High) would be appropriately scaled, massed, and laced with trails, landscaping, and water features between buildings. Medium and High density housing would be built over understructure parking.

¹ California Department of Transportation California Scenic Highway Mapping System, website: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm, June 12, 2006.

² Site reconnaissance and observation noted by Scott Johnson, Graphics Director, CAJA, October 17, 2007.

The Project's massing, form, and scale would be designed to be complementary to the natural setting. The minimal surface parking, the setbacks, the relations between buildings, the landscaping, and the crafted, articulated forms of natural materials with sloping roofs would reinforce a pedestrian scaled complex with visually pleasing buildings of subtle massing separated for views, softened by landscaping and set in a place of natural surroundings. The views and surrounding natural features would dominate the development and contribute to defining the scale of the Project.

Materials

The Town would review all final proposed building designs to ensure that the Project would create interesting building façades through the use of a diverse mix of materials. The building materials would be appropriate to the large scale and climatic extremes of the mountain region. Long-term durability, performance, and quality would be considered to determine which materials and finishes are appropriate to the prevailing climatic conditions in Mammoth Lakes. Pre-cast concrete, poured-in-place concrete and architectural finished concrete would be appropriate in special conditions where a building is distinctly separate from others and where suitable for the design intent. Exposed structural concrete or non-architectural concrete block buildings would not be acceptable. "Split-faced" or other architecturally finished concrete block would be considered for retaining walls and exposed portions of a parking garage and/or foundation wall in locations where visibility is limited. Limited applications of plaster coat would be acceptable, in particular for use on upper levels. Horizontal lap siding, vertical board and batten, or shingle siding (wood or fiber cement) would be painted or stained. Wood siding, rather than fiber cement siding, would be encouraged. Fiber cement siding (such as "Hardiplank" or similar products) would be discouraged on lower portions of building elevations. In general, metal or plastic siding materials will not be acceptable. Columns would be timber, log, metal, or stone clad. If metal is used, it would be well detailed. All columns would have base and top details which would exhibit good connections to other materials. The use of stone and rock cladding at a structure's base would be encouraged.

Colors

The Project would use complementary building colors throughout the site to create an overall architectural unity while introducing other colors to express individuality and diversity within neighborhoods or building groupings. The Project would use a variety of colors drawn from the colors found in nature within the Mammoth Lakes region on buildings, window and door trims, eaves, window shutters, signage, and entrance areas to create vitality and would avoid repetition of similar colors that would create a monotone appearance. The Project will take into consideration neighboring building colors when using strong, deep trim colors on doors, windows, balcony railings, shutters, and structural details. Building colors would be presented on a materials and color board showing primary materials and colors for approval before use. Roof colors would be muted rather than bright. Untreated and shiny metal surfaces would be avoided. Where building walls step to change direction, the wall color may change to emphasize the different façades. Color changes along a building facade would occur at inside,

rather than outside corners. Where appropriate, wall colors may be vertically organized to express building modules or materials.

Structured or Understructure Parking

The Project would provide understructure parking facilities for the majority of the development. Surface parking for check in, tour buses, and delivery/service vehicles would also be provided. The Town would review all final parking structure designs to ensure that they would be consistent with the overall building designs. Parking structures would incorporate appropriate signage and lighting to enable convenient way finding and safety. All exit areas would be well lit. Placement of control gates would be coordinated with building and driveway design. The garage interiors would be well-lit with fixtures that create a general light rather than point source glare. Exterior parking structure lighting would be designed to minimize glare and visible light sources by requiring that light sources be shielded and the light directed downward onto the structure and surrounding grounds. The signage would be appropriately sized, logical, and clearly visible and would conform to the signage plan for the Project.

Landscape Design and Planting

The landscaping plans would reflect a natural “native” feel, utilizing various types of pines, spruce and aspen, natural ground cover, and minimal use of lawn area. Water elements such as ponds and interconnecting streams would meander throughout the Project site. The landscaping would complement the architecture in type and massing. Landscape site work would be consistent with traditional approaches for the region, and would address current needs, codes, regulations, and environmental considerations and would be designed to enhance the user experience, safety, and enjoyment. The use of native plants that are indigenous to the Mammoth Lakes region would be encouraged. Landscaping shall conform to the Town’s adopted water-efficient landscape regulations.

Grading and Drainage

The Project would develop the grades and topographic forms needed to achieve necessary grades for siting buildings in relationship to utility extensions, roads, pedestrian areas, man-made or natural water features and channels, and golf course areas. Grading would be done to create natural-looking slopes that have diversity in gradient and profile where feasible. All grading operations would be carefully managed to blend into to adjacent non-graded areas and protect existing trees.

Utilities

The Project would minimize the visual impacts of aboveground utility structures and equipment including transformers, vents, condensers, fans, etc. The Project would minimize the visibility of exterior service and storage areas. The Project would locate equipment enclosures and storage containers in areas of low visibility, away from major public walks and streets and building entrances to the extent practical. Where possible, the Project would locate utility structures in landscape areas where shrub planting can screen

them. The Project would use landscape materials, berms, and tree planting to visually screen exterior service areas, ramps, docks, etc. Painting of utility enclosures in colors compatible with the surrounding landscape palette would be encouraged when permitted by utility companies. Where size of structure and location warrant, service areas and utility structures would be enclosed behind walls, fences, or screens. The enclosure material would be consistent to that of adjacent buildings in materials, detailing, and color.

Visual Character Summary

This analysis is based on conceptual designs for the Project. As detailed in the preceding discussion, the Project would be designed to complement the existing alpine architectural character of nearby development and elsewhere within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The Town would review all final building designs to ensure that the Project would be responsive to, and expressive of, its unique alpine setting. However, the Project would represent a substantial change in the visual character of the Project site by constructing housing and resort uses on a formerly undeveloped meadow. This change in character would be significant. The Town Code already requires the Project to undergo design review which will review the location of buildings, bulk and massing, materials and colors with the goal of furthering general plan policies and reducing the aesthetic impacts of the Project. There are no mitigation measures available that would reduce this impact; therefore this impact is ***significant and unavoidable***.

Impact AES-5 Signage

The Project would provide signage that is designed to be clear, understandable and attractive to both the vehicular and pedestrian viewer. The signage would reflect the mountain retreat community character of the Project with regard to materials, form and use. Signage would inform and direct, but in a manner and style which is intended to create a memorable impression and show a connection to nature, architecture and the historic past. Signage would link together the entire resort, clubs, and residential components, and cultivate an inclusive relationship throughout the Project site. Compliance with Mitigation Measure AES-5 would ensure that impacts related to signage would be ***less than significant***.

Mitigation Measure AES-5

Prior to the issuance of building permits, all buildings containing three or more separate businesses shall prepare a Master Sign Plan, in accordance with the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code Chapter 17.34 and 17.40.

Impact AES-6 Light and Glare

All site and building lighting would be installed in conformance with the Town's outdoor lighting ordinance.³ Excessive illumination would be avoided and lighting would be designed and placed that minimizes glare and reflection and to maintain "dark skies."

The lighting needs at the Project site would vary according to the type and intensity of use. Varying illumination levels would be developed which address the particular needs of outdoor spaces and activities: safety, security, vehicular and pedestrian movement, retailing, signage, etc. Excessive illumination would be avoided and lighting would be designed and placed to minimize glare and reflection, and light fixtures would be required that shield the light source to direct light downward onto the structure and surrounding grounds to maintain "dark skies."

Although the Project would be required to implement and be consistent with all Town ordinances related to outdoor lighting, the introduction of light and glare on a formerly undeveloped meadow would create a new source of light or glare that would be noticeable and would expand the existing lit footprint of the Town. Project lighting would alter nighttime views from Views 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. This would be a significant impact. Although compliance with Mitigation Measure AES-6 is required, such compliance would not reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, this impact would be ***significant and unavoidable***.

Mitigation Measure AES-6

Prior to occupancy, all lighting on the Project site shall comply with the applicable requirements of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, in accordance with Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code Chapter 17.34.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Impact AES-7 Cumulative Impacts

There are 41 related projects in the vicinity of the Project (see Figure II-10). Related projects that are close enough to the Project site to have a direct cumulative visual quality impact in combination with the Project include Related Project Numbers 1, 13, 23, 33, 35 and 36 (see Table II-1). These related projects are located along Old Mammoth Road in the vicinity of the Project site. Other related projects are scattered throughout the Town and consist of development ranging from ten unit residential projects to larger resort projects. The Project site is located on the southern edge of the Town and is surrounded by existing development to the west and north. The Project would include development of the Golf Course

³ Town of Mammoth Lakes, Municipal Code, Chapter 17.34, Outdoor Lighting Code.

expansion area adjacent to open space areas providing a transition from undeveloped areas to the east and south of the Project site to the Project development.

As described in this section, the Project, although consistent in character with surrounding development, would result in significant impacts to the visual character of the Project site and views of the Sherwin Range. Each of the related projects proposed for the Project vicinity would be required to conform to Town development regulations and be reviewed against Town design guidelines prior to final approval. However, development of the Project in association with these related projects would result in a gradual infill of existing development in this sector of the Town, which would result in changes in visual character in the area. Therefore, the Project combined with the related projects would result in a cumulative impact to views and the visual character of the Town. As a result, cumulative impacts with respect to scenic views and existing visual character would be considered significant and the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts would be *significant and unavoidable*.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Following implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, Project-specific and cumulative impacts with respect to scenic resources and existing visual character would be *significant and unavoidable*.