



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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

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www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov

July 23, 2019

Drew Hild
Highmark Advisors
550 S. Barrington Ave. Suite 4201
Los Angeles, CA 90049
dhild@hmadvs.com

Re: Design Review (DR) 19-003: Highmark Mammoth – Sierra Center Mall
452 Old Mammoth Rd.
APN: 035-200-019-000

Dear Mr. Hild:

Staff has completed the initial review of your application, and while the current submittal is a good first step, revisions to the plan set are required in order to meet the Design Review criteria and demonstrate consistency with the zoning standards. Further, staff finds that the applicant has not adequately addressed the required findings for a Height Adjustment as set forth in section 17.76.040 of the Municipal Code, and will need to provide further justification if the request is to be approved. Please see the review comments below for additional information. Once the comments below have been addressed, please submit a new plan set in both digital and hard copy form to the front counter of the Community & Economic Development Department at your convenience.

Staff recommends that a meeting be scheduled with the Town and Applicant team to discuss these comments prior to resubmittal. Please contact Chandler Van Schaack at cvanschaack@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov or (760) 965-3637 at your convenience to schedule a meeting.

Chandler Van Schaack, Community & Economic Development – (760) 965-3637

1. Staff finds that the written narrative does not adequately address the [required findings](#) for the requested height adjustment. Specifically, the proposed change of use from office to hotel does not constitute a public benefit in and of itself, as the hotel and all proposed accessory uses would be private businesses rather than resources addressing a specific community need. Public benefits are typically the provision of community facilities, programs and other measures, or the monetary equivalent of such items to meet a community need. Examples of acceptable public benefits include but are not limited to parking resources, affordable housing, public parks or open space, dedicated space for community facilities, or streetscape or mobility improvements. Further, if the applicant cannot provide a public benefit to justify the requested height adjustment, then the applicant must adequately address each of the seven variance findings set forth in [MC section 17.72.040](#).
 - While staff is supportive of the applicant's desire to ensure that the project is economically feasible, it should be noted that the variance findings included in MC Section 17.76.040 relate to the physical constraints of the property and neither "hardships" nor "expense and difficulties" are included in the variance findings required to be met in lieu of the other adjustment findings set forth in [Section 17.76.040](#). It should also be noted that while staff understands that the existing underground parking structure may create a "special circumstance" in terms of relocating said parking or modifying the existing building foundation, staff does not find that adequate information has been provided to show that the existing underground and surface parking somehow preclude constructing additional building square footage elsewhere on the site. In terms of meeting the intent of the Commercial District Standards, staff finds that it would be desirable to include new building area along Old Mammoth Road to achieve a project that better responds adjacent projects as well as the design standards. .
2. Per [MC Section 17.24.030](#), Subdivisions, new land uses and structures, and alterations to existing land uses and structures, shall be designed, constructed, and/or established in compliance with the requirements in

Tables 17.24.030-1 through 17.24.030-5 in addition to the applicable development standards (e.g., landscaping, parking and loading, etc.) in Article III (Site Planning and General Development Standards). While staff understands that the structure's nonconforming status allows the remodeled structure to maintain its existing nonconforming footprint, every effort should be made to meet the Commercial District Standards to the extent possible, particularly with regards to elements of the project that are proposed to be changed anyways (i.e., streetscape and parking area design, building entries, windows and façade materials, etc.). Placing new uses/ building frontage and/or significant new landscaping or other pedestrian amenities along Old Mammoth Rd., including potentially removing one of the existing curb cuts and improving pedestrian access to the site, are examples of actions that would help to meet the intent of the Commercial District Standards.

3. Please revise the written narrative to address the issues raised in Comment #1 above and to include a response to the [Design Review Criteria](#) found in section 17.88.050, including a general discussion of how the proposed project is consistent with General Plan policies (particularly the General Characteristics described in the Community Character Chapter) and the Town of Mammoth Lakes Design Guidelines. Please be specific in terms of how the project meets each applicable criterion/ policy rather than just responding in the affirmative with no supporting evidence.
4. Based on Town records, it appears that the existing use/ structure does not conform with the off-street parking standards found in [MC Section 17.44.030](#). 2017 records indicate that 264 spaces are required where 203 spaces are provided – a deficit of 61 spaces or 23.2%. Under the current proposal, it appears based on staff's analysis that the number of parking spaces provided would be reduced to 167 spaces, while the amount of required parking would be reduced to 241 spaces, thereby increasing the parking deficit to 74 spaces or 30.2%. Additional information is required to determine:
 - The current parking requirements for the structure/ existing uses (an updated occupancy summary table listing all units, lease names and types, and areas, with land use designations and parking requirements based on the current Municipal Code should be provided);
 - The current number of parking spaces on site (please provide a current parking diagram showing all existing spaces)
 - The total number of parking spaces proposed for the project (the table on Sheet G0.001 states that there are 197 existing spaces; however, only 167 spaces are shown on the plans – please revise)
 - The number of parking spaces required for the proposed project based on current code requirements (the parking ratio shown for each of the accessory uses (2 spaces per 1,000 SF) is incorrect. The current parking requirements are 6.6 spaces/1,000 SF for restaurants and 3 spaces/1,000 SF for retail and office uses - please update the Parking Table accordingly).
 - Staff notes that the floor areas listed for the proposed accessory uses do not appear to be correct or complete. Specifically, the plans indicate a floor area of 2,874 SF for the restaurant/ café, where staff calculates the floor area to be approximately 4,262 SF; The Fort is listed as 2,751 SF where staff calculates approximately 3,616 SF, and the 7,899 SF upper floor restaurant is not included at all. Please revise the Parking Table to show the correct floor area calculations based on the definition of gross leasable area (GLA) found in Section 17.44.030.H, and clearly show the boundaries of each of the proposed accessory uses on the applicable floor plans.
5. While an expansion of the structure and change in use increasing the existing parking deficit are allowed pursuant to MC Sections 17.44.030.F & G, in order for no additional parking to be required the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed change in use and associated increase in the parking deficit would not create a negative impact for neighboring properties. In addition to the information requested above, please provide a detailed description of any [alternative parking provisions](#) that the applicant plans to incorporate to manage parking demand. In addition to potential shared parking strategies, staff strongly encourages the applicant to explore creative Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to further reduce the demand for parking.
6. Please provide additional details in the narrative about the proposed "Ski Shop/ Locker" shown on the first level of the development. Specifically, please indicate whether this will be a retail ski shop open to the public or some other type of use, noting that a ski shop open to the public would be considered additional retail square footage for the purposes of calculating required parking.

7. Staff finds that the loading/trash area as currently shown does not meet the intent of the Design Review criteria as set forth in [MC Section 17.88.050](#) to ensure that development “*complements the desired architectural and/or aesthetic character of the area...encourages increased pedestrian activity, and promotes compatibility among neighboring land uses.*” Table 17.24.030-4, “Parking and Loading Standards,” also requires Loading/Service Areas to be screened from public ROW. In order to meet these requirements, staff recommends screening the loading area in a manner that complements the overall project architecture and provides visual interest to pedestrians while still remaining functional for the operation of the hotel use.
8. Currently, the proposed project does not meet the 10 foot upper story stepback requirement included in the Commercial District Height Standards found in [Table 17.24.030-3](#)., If possible, the project plans should be revised to include a 10 foot step back above the second story.
9. [MC Section 17.24.040.B](#) requires buildings to “have their primary entrances facing the public street.” Currently, the main building entrance is largely hidden by the surface parking area, and the proposed restaurant entrance faces into the parking area as well, requiring customers to walk through the parking lot and across the entrance to the underground parking to reach the building entrance. The plans should be revised to place an entrance to the restaurant along Old Mammoth Rd. so that pedestrians can easily and safely access the proposed restaurant.
10. [MC Section 17.24.040.F](#) requires that “an on-site walkway shall connect the primary building entry or entries to a public sidewalk on each street frontage.” Similarly, the Design Review criteria require that parking areas are designed to “prevent conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists... and achieve a safe, efficient, and harmonious development.” Currently, there is no pedestrian connection to Old Mammoth Road, which requires pedestrians to walk through the parking area in front of the underground garage entrance to reach any of the building entries. The project should be revised to provide a safe, visible, well-delineated pedestrian connection of a minimum of 6 feet in width between the sidewalk and the primary building entrance.
11. In addition, staff finds that the project would better meet the Design Review criteria as well as the Commercial District Parking and Loading Standards requiring curb cuts to be “minimized and in areas least likely to impede circulation” if the site access along Old Mammoth Rd. was redesigned to utilize a single curb cut, ideally on the southern portion of the site (noting that a 26-foot wide access point is required to accommodate emergency vehicles). Please refer to Comment #24 below for additional information.
12. Staff finds that the current window design does not meet the Building Design requirements of MC Section 17.24.040.D. Specifically, these standards encourage details such as window trim and window recesses as well as individual windows set in well-detailed frames, whereas the windows currently shown on the south, east and west elevations are projecting, with no trim or frame details to speak of. Staff finds that recessed windows incorporating a similar materials palette to the building façade would meet this requirement while enhancing the visual interest and façade articulation of the building itself. Revised plans should provide a detailed section drawing of the proposed windows to indicate reveal depth and trim/ frame materials.
13. Please provide a materials board with physical samples of each of the proposed materials, and include the proposed colors on Sheet A2.000. Staff will need to see these samples in order to determine whether the proposed fiber cement siding is in keeping with the Design Review Criteria and [Town Design Guidelines](#). It is worth noting that the Design Guidelines specifically state that fiber cement siding is “acceptable 12 feet from finished grade and in non-pedestrian areas” and that “wall materials of horizontal wood or wood-like siding, vertical board & batten, and stone shall be the primary materials at pedestrian levels, because of their tactile qualities” (Section 4.2.8, Materials).
14. Please remove the graphic depiction of the neighboring building to the north from the South Elevation shown on Sheet A2.001, as it is visually confusing.
15. There is a discrepancy between Sheets L1.01 and A1.001 with regards to the location of The Fort office space. Please revise.
16. Please indicate building setbacks on site plans.

17. The Applicant should note that the proposed project will require review by the Advisory Design Panel (ADP). Once the plans have been revised and resubmitted, staff will work with the applicant to schedule an ADP meeting.

Amy Callanan, Engineering Services Division - (760) 965-3657

18. Please indicate how on-site drainage / stormwater retention and treatment is being handled. [MC Section 17.36.020](#) requires the Town to consider drainage and erosion control as a factor in determining the suitability of a site for a new proposed use. Please contact staff for additional specifications.

19. Exterior surface parking spaces do not currently meet Town Standard and will need to be redesigned to current [Town Standard 116](#), including 10x20 right-angle spaces, 10x23 parallel (drop-off) spaces, and 24ft drive aisle/backup area

20. If a valet service is to be used for below-ground parking, indicate additional drive-aisle spaces that could be accommodated, and provide a Valet Parking Plan detailing how the program will be managed.

21. Please indicate accommodations for tour bus parking as required by MC 17.44.070 and 3.12.030.

John Pedersen, Mammoth Community Water District – (760) 934-2596 x240

22. Since this is an existing connected use, the project proponent will need to apply for a remodel MCWD Connection Permit. The capacity of the existing water and sewer connections will be analyzed at that time based on submitted plans. This is usually a parallel path with the Town Building permit and the applicant will need the MCWD permit to get the Town Building permit. Please contact Kristina Roberts at kroberts@mcwd.dst.ca.us for additional information.

23. Based upon the age of the existing sewer connection and recent analysis completed for the 540 project, MCWD recommends that the applicant re-route the sewer to Meridian Blvd. or Old Mammoth Rd. It should be noted that while the project is not required to re-route the sewer connection at this time, it may be necessary to re-route the connection based on the scope of the projected project sewer flows determined when the applicant applies for a MCWD Connection Permit.

Natalie Morrow, Mammoth Lakes Fire Department – (760) 934-2300

24. The Fire Department would permit the removal of one of the existing curb cuts on Old Mammoth Road given that all of the following requirements are met. A pdf of the minimum truck turning radii is attached to these comments.

- **Section D102 - Required Access**

- **D102.1 Access and loading.** Facilities, buildings or portions of buildings hereafter constructed shall be accessible to fire department apparatus by way of an approved fire apparatus access road with an asphalt, concrete or other approved driving surface capable of supporting the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing at least 75,000 pounds (34 050 kg).

- **Section D105 - Aerial Fire Apparatus Access Roads**

- **D105.1 Where required.** Where the vertical distance between the grade plane and the highest roof surface exceeds 30 feet (9144 mm), approved aerial fire apparatus access roads shall be provided. For purposes of this section, the highest roof surface shall be determined by measurement to the eave of a pitched roof, the intersection of the roof to the exterior wall, or the top of parapet walls, whichever is greater.

- **D105.2 Width.** Aerial fire apparatus access roads shall have a minimum unobstructed width of 26 feet (7925 mm), exclusive of shoulders, in the immediate vicinity of the building or portion thereof.

- **D105.3 Proximity to building.** At least one of the required access routes meeting this condition shall be located within a minimum of 15 feet (4572 mm) and a maximum of 30 feet (9144 mm) from the building, and shall be positioned parallel to one entire side of the building. The side of the building on which the aerial fire apparatus access road is positioned shall be approved by the fire code official.

- **D105.4 Obstructions.** Overhead utility and power lines shall not be located over the aerial fire apparatus access road or between the aerial fire apparatus road and the building. Other obstructions shall be permitted to be placed with the approval of the fire code official.

Next Steps:

Staff recommends that a meeting be scheduled with the Town and Applicant team to discuss these comments prior to resubmittal. Please contact Chandler Van Schaack at cvanschaack@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov or (760) 965-3637 at your convenience to schedule a meeting.

Please revise the plans according to the comments above, and provide a written statement explaining how each of the above comments has been addressed. If changes have been made to the plans not resulting from this correction list please indicate the changes and purpose of the changes in your response.

Please provide the requested materials or advise me in writing as to your intended submittal date within 60 days from the date of this letter. Where the total time to provide the additional materials is expected to take longer than 120 days, the application should be withdrawn and a re-submitted once the application is ready. Absent a response within 60 days, the Town will deem your application withdrawn and return your application materials and any unused portion of your application fee.

Please contact me at this office (760) 965-3637 if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Chandler Van Schaack
Senior Planner