



**Town of Mammoth Lakes**  
Whitmore Park Track and Sports Field Project  
Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

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**Lead Agency:**

Town of Mammoth Lakes  
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study has been prepared by the Town of Mammoth Lakes to assess the potential environmental impacts of developing the Whitmore Park Track and Sports Field Project (“Project”).

The Project includes the construction and operation of a high-performance, all-weather track and field facility, sports field, and associated amenities, including a concessions building, terraced seating, a covered open-air pavilion, walkways and plaza, fitness trails, workout stations, and landscaping. The Project would be located within the existing Whitmore Regional Park, which is situated southeast of the Mammoth-Yosemite Airport. Access to the Project site would occur along a looped driveway with parking areas off Benton Crossing Road. Following preliminary review of the proposed Project, the Town of Mammoth Lakes determined that it is subject to the guidelines and regulations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects associated with the Project, as proposed, and includes a project description, environmental checklist, and discussion focused on issues identified in the checklist.

### 1.1 STATUTORY AUTHORITY AND REQUIREMENTS

The proposed Project site is located in the Whitmore Regional Park, which is located within unincorporated Mono County but is operated by the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes determined that the Town of Mammoth Lakes will act as the Lead Agency for this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. In accordance with the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)* (Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21177) and pursuant to Section 15063 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the Town of Mammoth Lakes, acting in the capacity of Lead Agency, is required to undertake the preparation of an Initial Study to determine whether the proposed project would have a significant environmental impact. If the Lead Agency finds that there is no evidence that the project, either as proposed or as modified to include the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study, may cause a significant effect on the environment, the Lead Agency shall find that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and shall prepare a Negative Declaration (or Mitigated Negative Declaration) for that project. Such determination can be made only if “there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the Lead Agency” that such impacts may occur (Section 21080(c), Public Resources Code).

The environmental documentation, which would ultimately be approved and/or certified by the Town of Mammoth Lakes and then considered by Mono County during use permit approval in accordance with *CEQA*, is intended as an informational document undertaken to provide an environmental basis for subsequent discretionary actions upon the project. The resulting documentation is not, however, a policy document, and its approval and/or certification neither presupposes nor mandates any actions on the part of those agencies from whom permits and other discretionary approvals would be required.



## 1.2 PURPOSE

Section 15063 of the *CEQA Guidelines* identifies specific disclosure requirements for inclusion in an Initial Study. Pursuant to those requirements, an Initial Study shall include:

- A description of the project, including the location of the project;
- Identification of the environmental setting;
- Identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other method, provided that entries on a checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries;
- Discussion of ways to mitigate significant effects identified, if any;
- Examination of whether the project would be consistent with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls; and
- The name(s) of the person(s) who prepared or participated in the preparation of the Initial Study.

## 1.3 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The references outlined below were utilized during preparation of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. The documents are available for review at the Town of Mammoth Lakes Community Development Department and Mono County Community Development Department, located at 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, California 93546. Chapter 5.0, References, contains a detailed list of all reference materials used in the preparation of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.

- *Mono County General Plan*. The Mono County General Plan establishes standards, guidelines, and priorities for Mono County now and for the future. The General Plan is organized by elements. Each element in the *Mono County General Plan* is introduced with the goal identification and a description of issues, opportunities, and constraints. Goals, objectives, policies and actions are included in each element:
  - Land Use (2009);
  - Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Circulation (2009);
  - Housing (2009);
  - Conservation/Open Space (1993);
  - Safety (1993);
  - Noise (1993);
  - Hazardous Waste Management (1993); and
  - Economic Development (2002).



- *Mono County Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) (2001).* The MEA contains all of the background information for the *Mono County General Plan* and serves as a database for the development of General Plan policies. The MEA also fulfills the CEQA requirements for environmental setting information contained in an environmental impact report.
- *Mono County Parks Development Plan (1984).* The *Mono County Parks Development Plan* contains information regarding existing parks facilities and suggests guidelines for orderly development of Mono County recreational facilities to meet the near and long term needs of Mono County, including residents and visitors.
- *Mono County Municipal Code.* The Mono County Municipal Code lists the laws of Mono County, which include requirements for public health and welfare, noise, airports, and others.
- *Mammoth/June Lake Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP) (October 1986).* The *ALUP* is a comprehensive land use plan which defines the type and pattern of future development at the Mammoth Yosemite Airport and in the surrounding areas. It includes specific policies and guidelines intended to protect the safety and general welfare of people in the vicinity of the airport and to ensure the safety of air navigation.
- *Mammoth/June Lake Airport Land Use Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA) (July 1986).* The *DEIR/EA* analyzed the potential environmental impacts associated with the *ALUP*. This incorporated mitigation measures to lessen potential environmental impacts.
- *Final Environmental Assessment for Proposed Operations Specifications Amendment Approval Related to the Scheduled Commercial Air Service into Mammoth Yosemite Airport by United Airlines (FEA) (June 2010).* The *FEA* was prepared by the Town of Mammoth Lakes and United Airlines for the Federal Aviation Administration to analyze environmental impacts of daily flights from San Francisco International Airport to Mammoth Yosemite Airport using CRJ700 aircraft.
- *U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (March 2008).* The *FEIS* was prepared to disclose the potential environmental impacts of the Federal Aviation Administration approval of Horizon Air's request for amendment of their Operations Specifications to accommodate proposed scheduled commercial air service into Mammoth Yosemite Airport.



- Mammoth Lakes Airport Expansion, Subsequent Environmental Impact Report and Updated Environmental Assessment, State Clearinghouse No. SCH 96112089 (C1-23) (SEIR/EA) (1997). The Town of Mammoth Lakes purchased the Mammoth Yosemite Airport (“Airport”) from Mono County in September 1992. A 1997 Airport expansion program was environmentally reviewed in a 1997 EIR. The *SEIR/EA* evaluated environmental issues relative to changes in the project proposal, and substantial new information or changes in conditions since 1986. The Town of Mammoth Lakes certified the *SEIR/EA* as adequate. There was no FAA action taken at that time.

The Airport development reviewed in the *SEIR/EA* included both airside and landside developments by a private developer, and included evaluation of the right to construct an access road from Benton Crossing Road to the Airport and signage on Town property along Highway 395.

- Final Supplement to the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the Mammoth Yosemite Airport Expansion Project State Clearinghouse No. SCH 2000034005 (SSEIR) (2002). The Town of Mammoth Lakes prepared a Supplement to the 1997 Subsequent EIR in 2002. The *SSEIR* evaluated 333,000 annual enplanements and 23,650 annual aircraft operations. The primary proposed changes to the Airport under consideration included: extending the runway by 1,200 feet, widening the runway by 50 feet, replacing barbed wire fencing with chain link, construction of a new wastewater treatment plant, and replacement or relocation of the Green Church.
- Mammoth Yosemite Airport Expansion Project Final Environmental Assessment (EA) (2000). In addition to the certified environmental documents summarized above, the FAA prepared the *EA* to evaluate a proposed runway expansion under NEPA guidelines. The *EA* was prepared to provide the community full disclosure of the proposed improvements and potential environmental impacts of development alternatives for the airport. This development differed from past development plans principally because it involved less land disturbance. As permitted under State CEQA Guidelines § 15150, relevant data from the *EA* was incorporated by reference into the *SSEIR*.
- Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan 2007 (August 2007). The Town of Mammoth Lakes Council adopted the *2007 General Plan* on August 15, 2007. Each element in the *2007 General Plan* is introduced with an explanation of the intent of the goals, policies, and actions within that element. The *2007 General Plan* contains the following elements:
  - Economy;
  - Arts, Culture, Heritage and Natural History;
  - Community Design;
  - Neighborhood and District Character;



- Land Use;
  - Mobility;
  - Parks, Open Space and Recreation;
  - Resource Management and Conservation;
  - Public Health and Safety;
  - Housing;
  - Noise; and
  - Parks and Recreation.
- 
- *Town of Mammoth Lakes 2005 General Plan Update Final Program Environmental Impact Report (GPEIR) (May 2007)*. The *GPEIR* involves the update of the Town's General Plan, which provides the Town's long-range comprehensive direction to guide future development and identifies the community's environmental, social, and economic goals. This document was prepared as a Program EIR, which is intended to facilitate consideration of broad policy directions, program-level alternatives and mitigation measures consistent with the level of detail available for the Plan. The *GPEIR* concluded significant and unavoidable impacts regarding aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, public safety and hazards, noise, public services and utilities, and recreation.
  - *Town of Mammoth Lakes Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) (April 2008)*. The *PRMP* assesses the Town of Mammoth Lakes recreation needs for the future and establishes goals and policies to guide park improvements. It also recommends implementation strategies to help meet the challenges of providing parks and recreation facilities.
  - *Town of Mammoth Lakes Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan (PRE) (April 1990)*. The *PRE* includes an analysis of the Town's park and recreation facilities and their existing conditions. Also included are a needs analysis and park and recreation goals, objectives, and policies. The *PRMP* described above would update the *PRE*.
  - *Lease for Whitmore Park (Ball Fields) between the City of Los Angeles and Department of Water and Power of the City of Los Angeles and the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Lease) (1994)*. The *Lease* area is 23.75 acres and allows the use of the ball fields and animal shelter at Whitmore Park. The term of the *Lease* is 25 years, terminating on February 28, 2019.