

Chapter 3. Framework, Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints

This Chapter provides an overview of the DNDP Framework and the existing conditions, issues, opportunities and constraints that were established during the district planning process.

The Framework is a key component of the DNDP, since it provides the overall guidance and scope of work for the planning effort. It defines the study area to be addressed, establishes guiding principles based on the General Plan, and outlines the initial range of issues, and subjects to be considered. The Planning Commission and Town Council considered and approved the DNDP Framework in Fall 2009. The components of the Framework are summarized below, and the complete Framework approved by the Planning Commission and Town Council is included as Appendix B.

A. Study Area Boundaries

Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2 shows the DNDP study area, which covers approximately 210 acres and extends from the North Village to the Mammoth RV Park and Welcome Center at the east entry to the town. The study area encompasses multiple districts defined by the General Plan, including the entire Main Street and Shady Rest districts, the north portion of the Old Mammoth Road District and the northwest portion of the Gateway District. The inclusion of multiple districts within the study area allows for a comprehensive planning effort for the Main Street corridor, and for key interface and transition areas between Main Street and adjoining districts to be addressed.

The relationship of the Study area to other Town boundaries is also illustrated in Figure 3-1. The Welcome Center and USFS lands north of Main Street are outside of the Town's UGB. The study area includes properties zoned Commercial Lodging (CL) and Commercial General (CG) along both sides of Main Street as well as Public and Quasi Public zoned properties such as Fire Station #1, the Town/County Civic Center site, and the Mammoth RV Park (USFS land).

To organize and facilitate the analysis of the study area, five subareas were identified, based on their location and characteristics. A complete description of existing conditions within the study area and its subareas is provided in Section E of this Chapter.

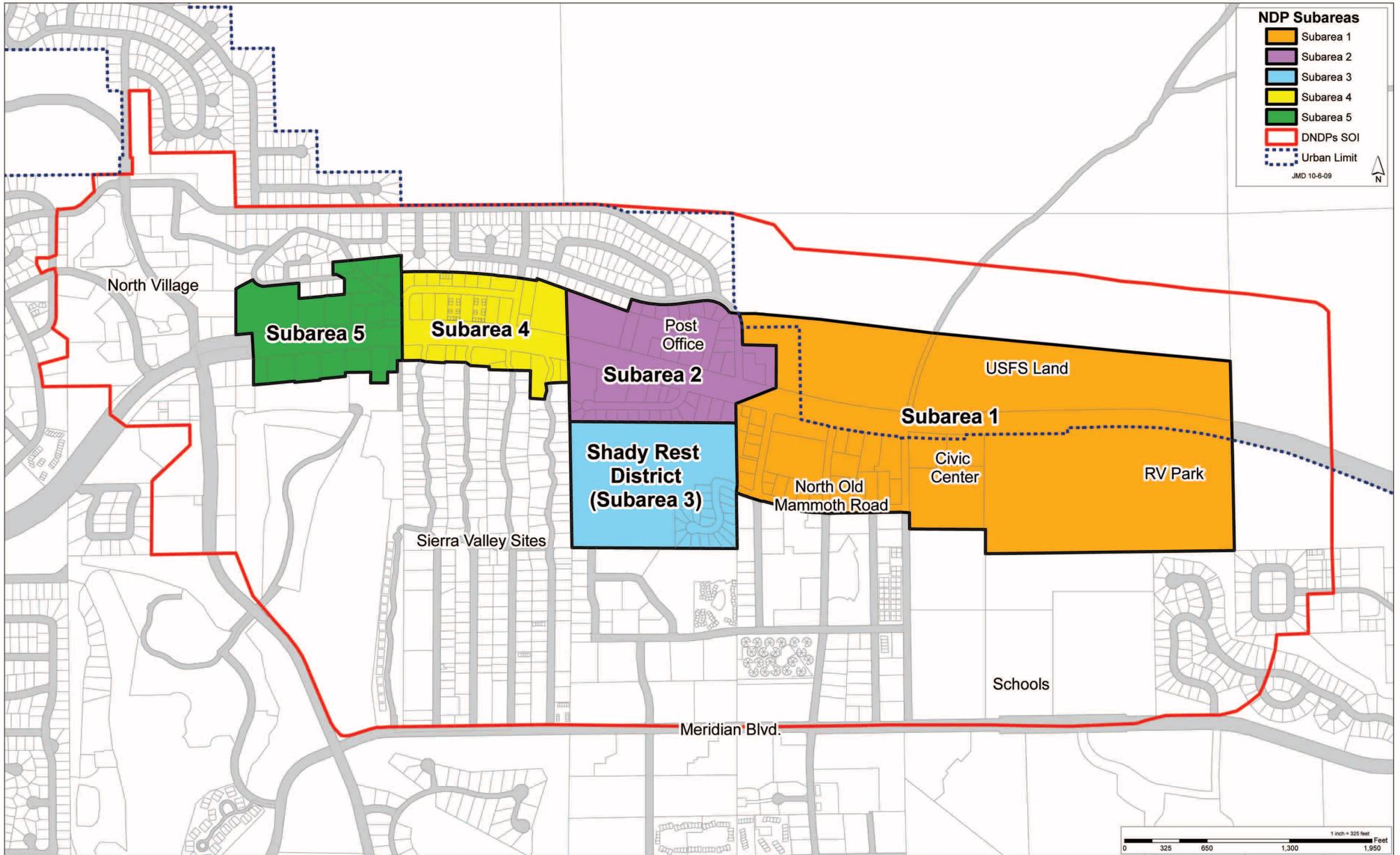
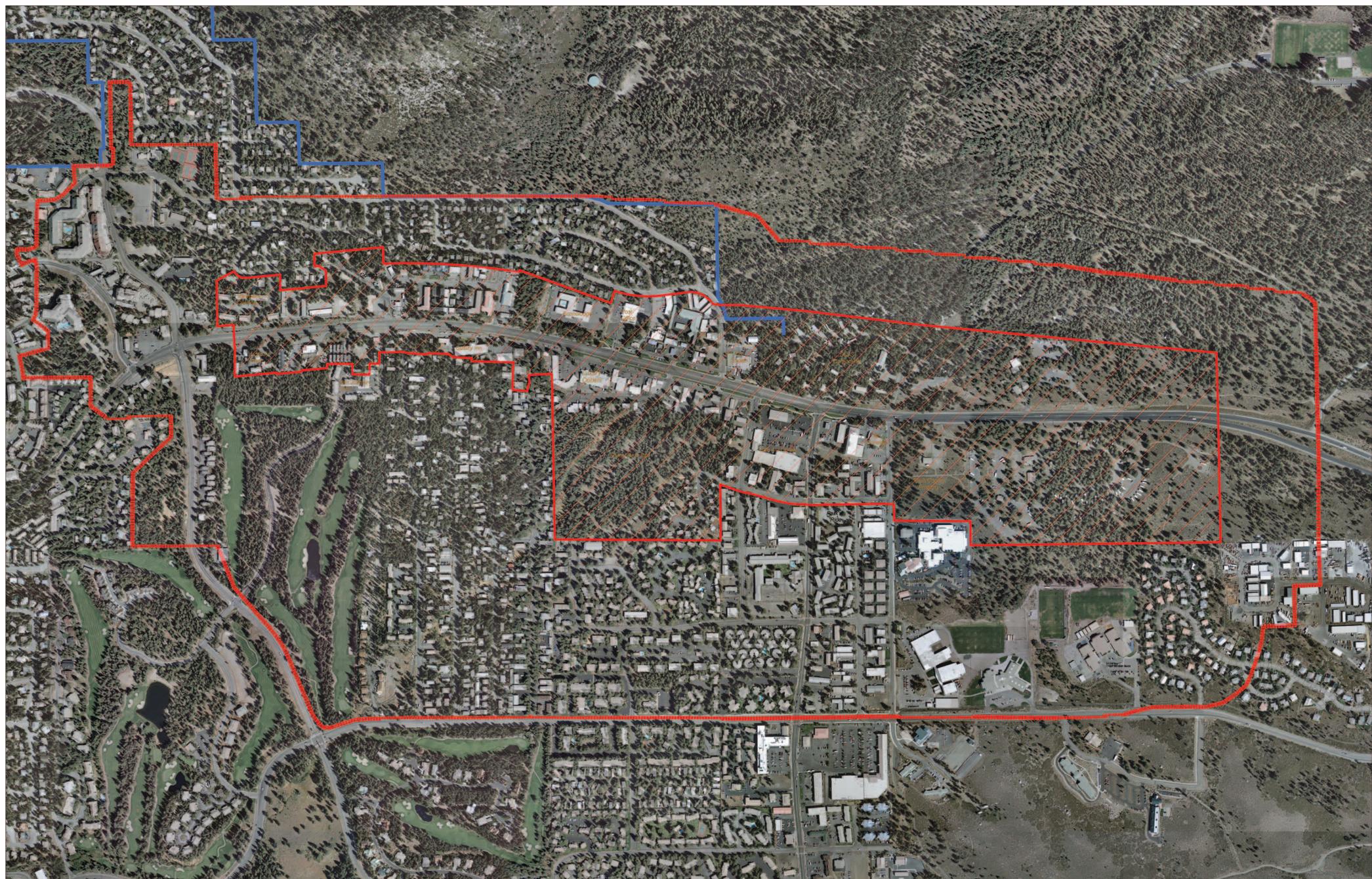


Figure 3-1: Study Area Boundaries



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan

-  Downtown NDP Study Area
-  Downtown NDP SOI
-  Urban Growth Boundary



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Figure 3-2: Study Area with Aerial Photograph

The five subareas are also shown in Figure 3-1, and include the following:

- **Subarea 1** – North Old Mammoth Road, Civic Center site, RV Park, and Welcome Center.
- **Subarea 2** – Center Street and the Post Office.
- **Subarea 3** – Shady Rest District.
- **Subarea 4** – Mountain Boulevard and north/commercial end of Sierra Valley Sites, and
- **Subarea 5** – Viewpoint Road and commercial lodging uses.

B. Sphere of Influence (SOI) Boundaries

The sphere of influence for the DNDP encompasses a more extensive area to consider in relationship to the Study Area in terms of surrounding uses, relationships, and impacts. As shown in Figure 3-1, the SOI includes an area bounded by Meridian Boulevard to the south and Forest Trail to the north, encompassing the North Village, Sierra Valley Sites and Forest Trail area neighborhoods.

C. Guiding Principles

The Framework’s Guiding Principles are based on the applicable Neighborhood and District Character description from the General Plan. They indicate the key characteristics and concepts that should guide planning for the study area. A compiled, comprehensive list of Guiding Principles, as well as a summary list of key principles for the DNDP study area is included in the approved Framework in Appendix B. The complete list of guiding principles is lengthy, since it addresses three major districts in the General Plan. However, there are a number of common themes and ideas for each of these areas, allowing a “distilled” list of principles to be developed, including the following (numbering does not indicate priority or importance):

1. Mixed use (retail, commercial, hotel/lodging, workforce housing, parks, etc); lively, animated with people on the street. Where appropriate, uses should allow offices, residential housing and visitor accommodations above ground floor retail oriented to the street.
2. Active day and evening and through all four seasons where appropriate (e.g. anchor retail, services, open space and parks, entertainment uses/special events, workforce housing, art, etc).

3. Grand boulevard, most significant entry and exit for the town; determine how to improve the appearance of State Route 203 and the entrance to town (“sense of arrival”), including appropriate traffic calming.
4. Improve connectivity and circulation with bike and pedestrian paths, sidewalks, roads, and transit; emphasize connectivity, especially feet-first connections to the North Village and the resort corridor. Incorporate suitable traffic calming measures and effective snow removal strategies (e.g. assessment districts).
5. Pedestrian-oriented streetscape that is walkable year-round, landscaped, accessible and safe.
6. Maintain views of the Sherwin Range, the Knolls and Mammoth Mountain from public spaces and include significant tree preservation.
7. Assess strategic parking solutions tailored to context and location, including both underground and at-grade parking. Convenient public parking facilities, structured parking, small-scale surface parking, and shared and pooled parking. Strip mall development pattern shifted where appropriate to a pattern of commercial in front and parking in back with suitable screening of parking from neighboring properties.
8. Provide public access to surrounding forest lands.
9. Energy efficient design and infrastructure and high quality architecture (i.e. site and Mammoth appropriate, quality materials and finishes, geothermal heating district).
10. Emphasize the unique qualities of and provide a sense of arrival, transition and connection where appropriate to subareas within the district. Encourage a transition to more visually cohesive and well-defined development from existing “hodgepodge” of development types and uses (see specific characteristics in the Neighborhood and District Character Element of the General Plan).

D. General Plan and Zoning

This section describes relevant General Plan and Zoning regulations for land within the study area. As noted above, the General Plan identifies the areas requiring district planning and a special study, which is being accomplished through the DNDP (Actions L.1.D.1); it also incorporates a description of the characteristics of each district including Main Street, Old Mammoth Road, and Shady Rest that were used to develop the Framework Guiding Principles. Other related planning efforts and documents are summarized in Chapter 2.

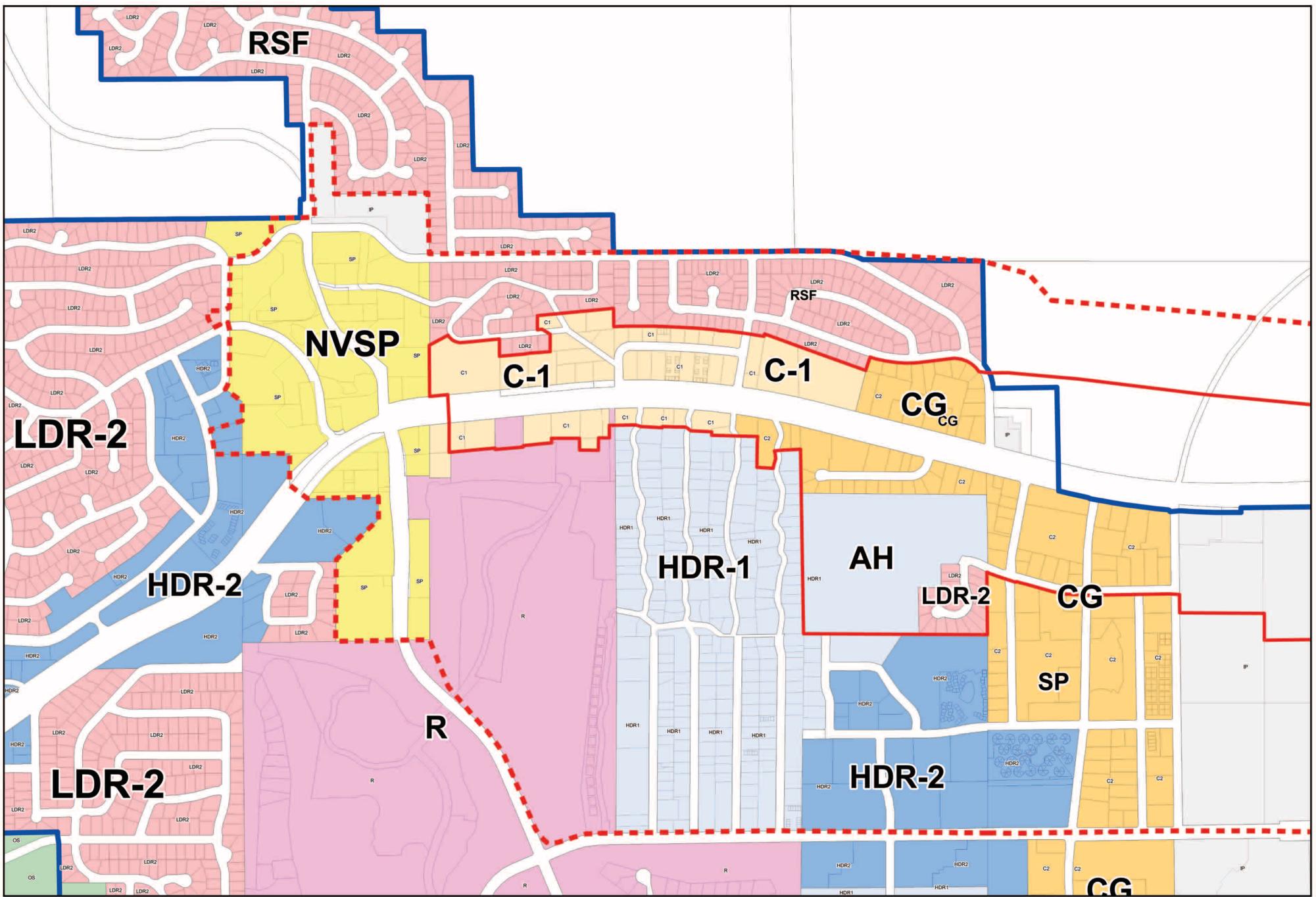
Downtown Concept for Main Street

Chapter 3: Framework & Existing Conditions

1. General Plan Land Use Designations

The General Plan designates the DNDP area as a variety of land uses, including Commercial 1, Commercial 2, High-Density Residential 1, Institutional Public, and National Forest. General Plan land use designations for the Study Area are mapped in Figure 3-3, and are summarized below:

- **Commercial 1 (C1):** The C-1 designation applies to Main Street properties between the North Village and Mono Street/Post Office (Subareas 4 and 5) and allows medium scale commercial mixed-uses. The C-1 density is six to twelve residential units per acre and a maximum of 40 hotel rooms per acre. Policy L.5.G allows up to 80 rooms per acre for hotels and hotel type projects if certain Town objectives are met.
- **Commercial 2 (C-2):** The C-2 designation applies to North Old Mammoth Road and most of Subarea 2 (Center Street and Post Office) and allows medium and large scale commercial mixed uses. The C-2 density is the same as the C-1 density.
- **High-Density Residential 1 (HDR-1):** The HDR-1 designation applies to the Shady Rest Tract (Subarea 3, excluding the Shady Rest Road single family neighborhood) and allows a density of six to twelve residential units per acre. The General Plan states that the Shady Rest Tract is intended primarily for workforce housing.
- **Institutional Public (IP):** The IP designation applies to property east of Sierra Park Road and south of Main Street (southeast portion of Subarea 1) and allows uses such as schools, hospitals, governmental offices and facilities, museums, and related uses. Residential uses are not permitted, with the exception of employee and student housing that is accessory to the College at a maximum of four units per acre.
- **National Forest (NF):** The NF designation applies to property east of Fire Station #1 and north of Main Street. These are lands administered by the Inyo National Forest and are located outside of the Town's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). No residential, commercial, or industrial development is permitted outside the UGB, and adjustments to the UGB cannot increase the acreage of developable land (Policies L.6.A and F).



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan
General Plan Land Use Designations



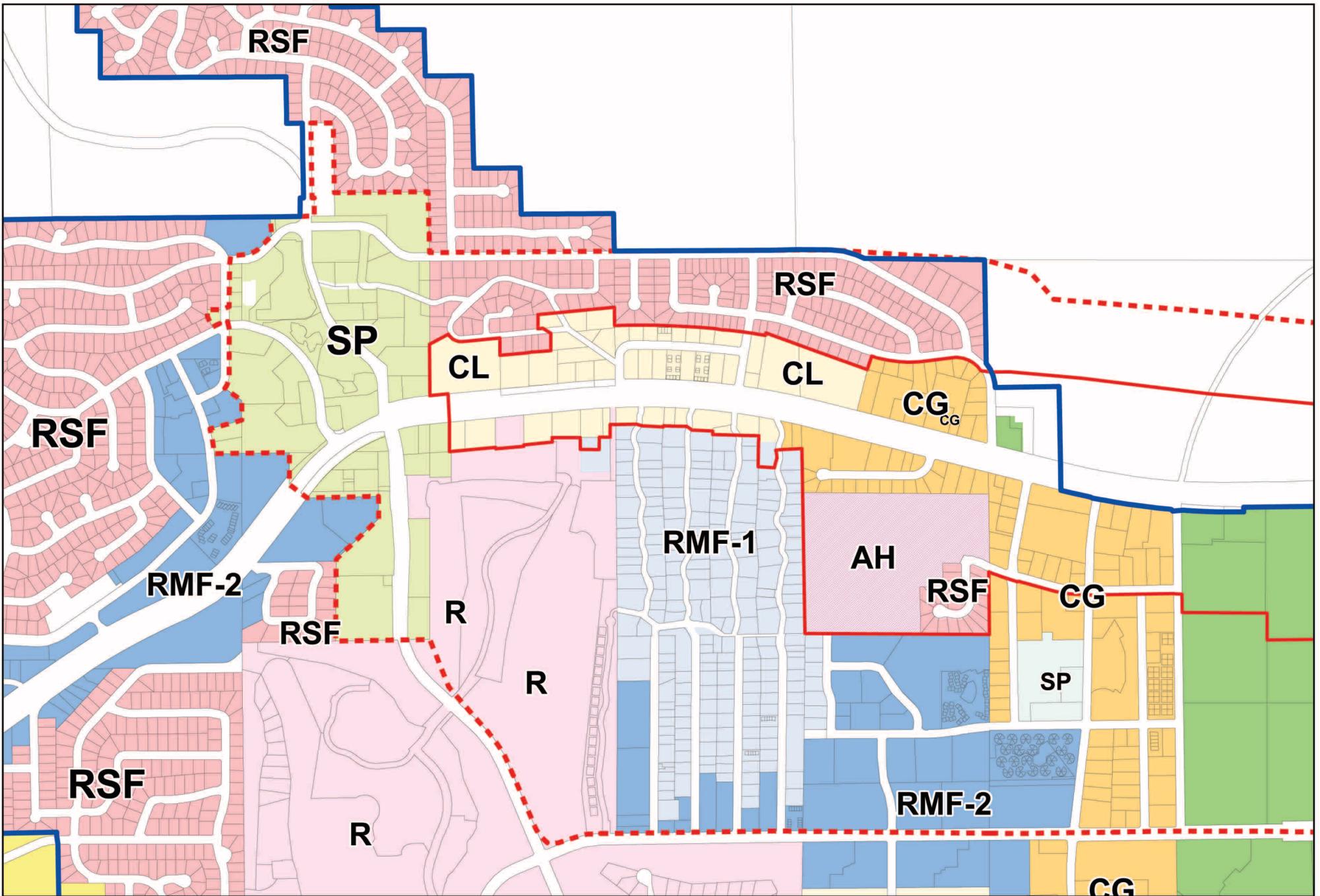
Figure 3-3: General Plan Land Use Designations

2. Zoning Code

Zoning designations for the DNDP correspond to those established in the General Plan land use map, providing more detailed land use and development standards for each area. As shown in Figure 3-4 they include Commercial Lodging (CL), Commercial General (CG), Residential Multi-Family 1(RMF-1)/Affordable Housing (AH), Public and Quasi-Public Space (PS), and Open Space (OS).

- **Commercial Lodging (CL):** The CL zone corresponds to the General Plan C1 land use designation. Accordingly, it is intended primarily for transient lodging facilities and such supporting commercial uses. The allowed density is 40 rooms per acre, but up to 80 rooms per acres may be granted by the Planning Commission if appropriate community benefits are provided.¹ The maximum residential density is twelve units per acre. Allowable building height is 35 feet, but up to 45 feet may be granted by the Planning Commission if understructure parking is provided.
- **Commercial General (CG):** The CG zone corresponds to the General Plan C2 land use designation. It is intended for office uses, retail, commercial activities, and such other businesses and activities. The density and building height standards are the same as the CL zone; however, residential uses are not permitted as primary uses on properties fronting arterial streets in the CG zone (i.e. Main Street and Old Mammoth Road).
- **Residential Multi-Family 1/Affordable Housing (RMF-1/AH):** The RMF-1 zone allows for higher density non-transient residential uses. With the AH overlay zone that applies to the Shady Rest site only, residential units are required to be purchased or rented based on criteria and formula established by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for very low, low, and moderate income levels. The maximum density is twelve units per acre; however, the Shady Rest Master Plan is more restrictive allowing a maximum of 172 affordable housing units on the Shady Rest Tract.

¹ The zoning code reflects a previous standard that would allow this density increase in conjunction with the provision of underground parking. The 2007 General Plan established a new policy that supersedes this zoning code provision, only permitting the density increase where community benefits would be provided. A Community Benefits/Incentive Zoning Policy was adopted in August of 2009, which specifies more detailed requirements for the assessment of community benefits and incentives.



Downtown Neighborhood District Plan
Zoning

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Airport | Commercial (Lodging) | Mobile Home Park | Resort | Rural Residential | Specific Plan |
| Affordable Housing | CSP | Open Space | Residential Multi Family 1 | Rural Residential (Equestrian) | |
| Commercial (General) | Industrial | Public Space | Residential Multi Family 2 | Residential Single Family | |

Figure 3-4: Zoning Designations

- **Public and Quasi-Public Space (PS):** The PS zone corresponds to the IP General Plan land use designation. It provides for adequate areas reserved for the development and expansion of public uses such as government offices and facilities, schools, hospitals. Development standards are deferred to the use permit process, but cannot be less than standards prescribed for similar uses in other zones.
- **Open Space (OS):** The OS zone is intended to be applied where it is desirable and necessary to provide permanent open spaces to provide for preservation of scenic and recreational areas. Development standards are deferred to the use permit process, but cannot be less than standards prescribed for similar uses in other zones.

State law requires consistency between the Zoning Code and the General Plan. However, the adoption of the new General Plan resulted in a number of areas where the Zoning Code is not completely consistent with the General Plan. Because of this, and because a number of code sections do not reflect current thinking in planning and development standards, the Town is beginning a comprehensive update to the Zoning Code in 2010 that will correct many of these issues. The update will also provide an opportunity to incorporate revised standards and requirements to correspond to the recommendations of the various district planning processes that have been undertaken, including the DNDP.

E. Study Area Existing Conditions

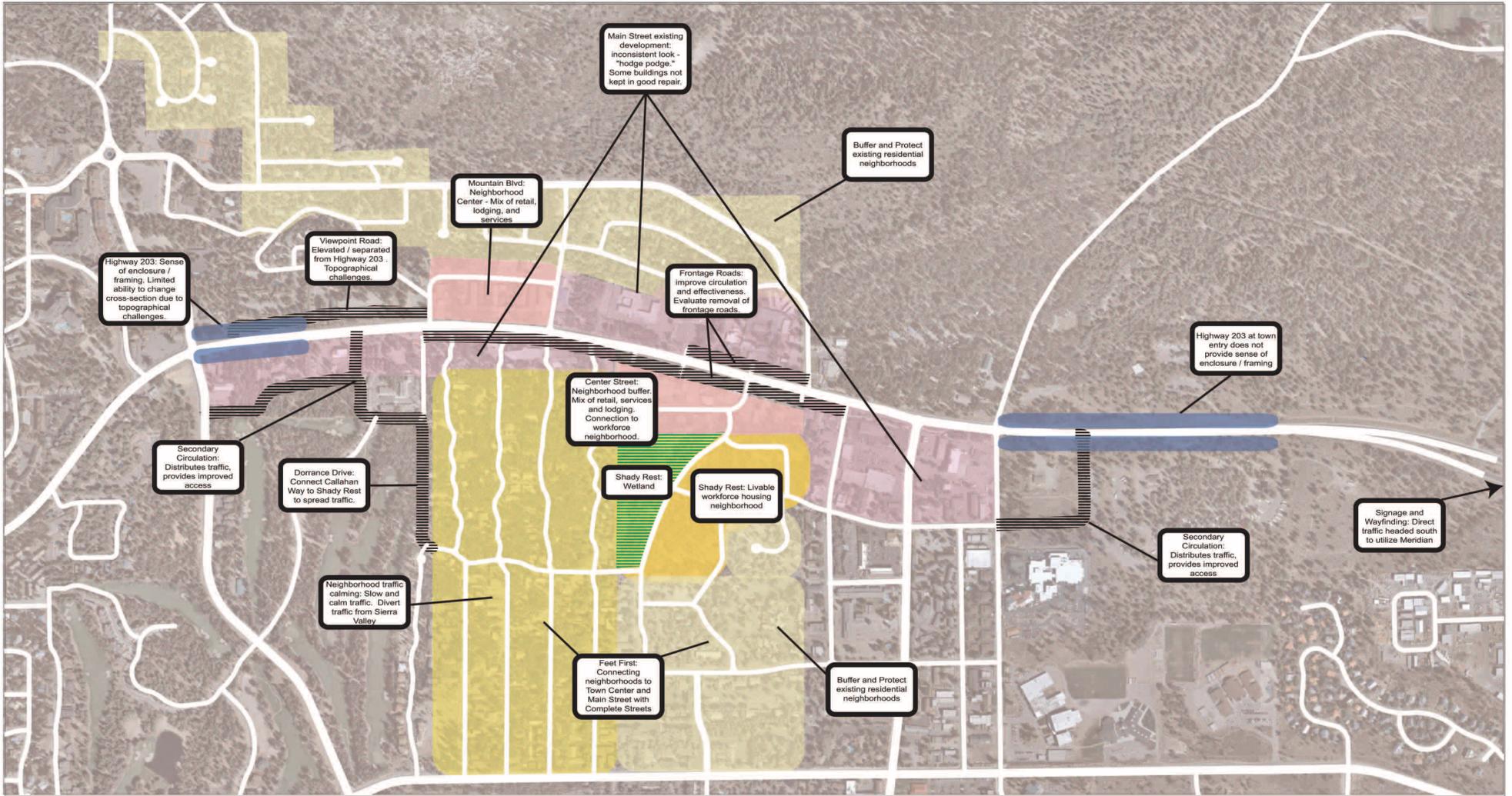
The DNDP study area is large, with significant variety in its characteristics, features and qualities. This section provides an overview and summary of the components of the existing built environment, including land use and circulation systems, urban design and topographical conditions. A graphic overview of existing conditions is provided in Figure 3-5. Figure 3-6 shows the current mobility network within the Study Area and Sphere of Influence.

1. Main Street Corridor (Portions of Subarea 1, and Subareas 2, 4 and 5)

The most significant defining feature of the study area is the Main Street/Highway 203 corridor, which is the main corridor for residents and visitors arriving to Mammoth Lakes, and the route to Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA).

a. Street Characteristics

The right-of-way (the area reserved by Caltrans and/or the Town for public roadways and associated infrastructure) is close to 200 feet for most of Main Street's length; however, the actual primary roadway width and number of lanes



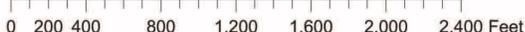
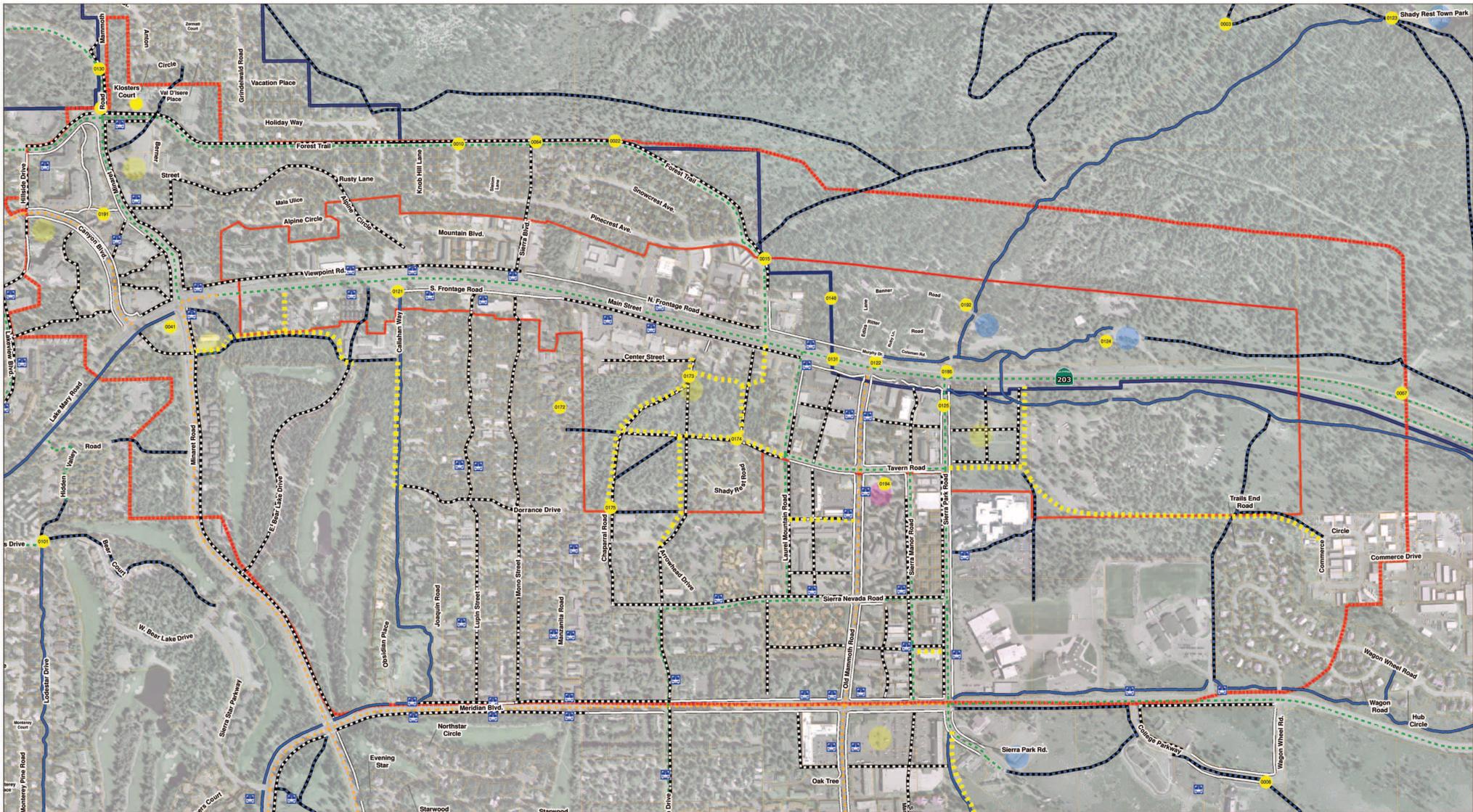
<p>Downtown Neighborhood District Plan</p> <p>Existing Conditions</p> <p>Opportunities, Issues, and Constraints</p>	<div style="text-align: right;">   </div>
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Figure 3-5: Existing Conditions, Issues, Opportunities and Constraints



**Downtown Neighborhood District Plan
Existing & Proposed Mobility Diagram**



- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Main St District Plan Area | Existing MUP's | Existing Parking | Existing Bicycle Routes and Lanes |
| Main St District Plan SOI | Proposed MUP's * | Existing Park n Ride | Proposed Bicycle Routes and Lanes * |
| Urban Growth Boundary | Existing Sidewalks | Proposed Parking * | Proposed Roads* |
| GIC Points | Proposed Sidewalks * | Transit Stops | |

* As identified in various planning documents



Figure 3-6: Existing and Proposed Mobility Diagram

varies considerably within the study area. While the primary roadway includes four travel lanes, the eastern part of Main Street from Old Mammoth Road to Manzanita Road includes a two-way center turn lane. Discontinuous two way frontage roads parallel Main Street along much of its south side and parts of the north side. From Manzanita Road to Minaret Road, Main Street consists of four travel lanes with no center turn lane.

As a State Highway and arterial street, Main Street carries high volumes of traffic. Currently, an average of between 10,000 and 18,000 vehicles are carried daily on the section between Minaret Road and Old Mammoth Road; peak hour volumes

average between 1,000 and 1,600 vehicles.

Two signalized intersections are located at Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road. Additional pedestrian activated crossing signals are also in place at the Post Office and Laurel Mountain Road. Transit stops are placed at various locations on both sides of Main Street.



Pedestrian infrastructure, primarily consisting of sections of a

Transit shelter on Main Street without sidewalk access

pedestrian path or “promenade,” has been implemented over time, and while the promenade is fairly complete along the eastern end of Main Street, it is not completely connected, requires street crossings from north to south, and does not exist at all along the west end of Main Street.

Main Street ascends in elevation from east to west. Significant grade changes are found from north to south at the west end of Main Street, while the east portion is relatively flat. Spectacular views of Mammoth Mountain to the west and/or the Sherwin Range to the south are visible at certain vantage points along Main Street, as can be seen in the view sequence shown in Figure 3-7 and photos on the next page.

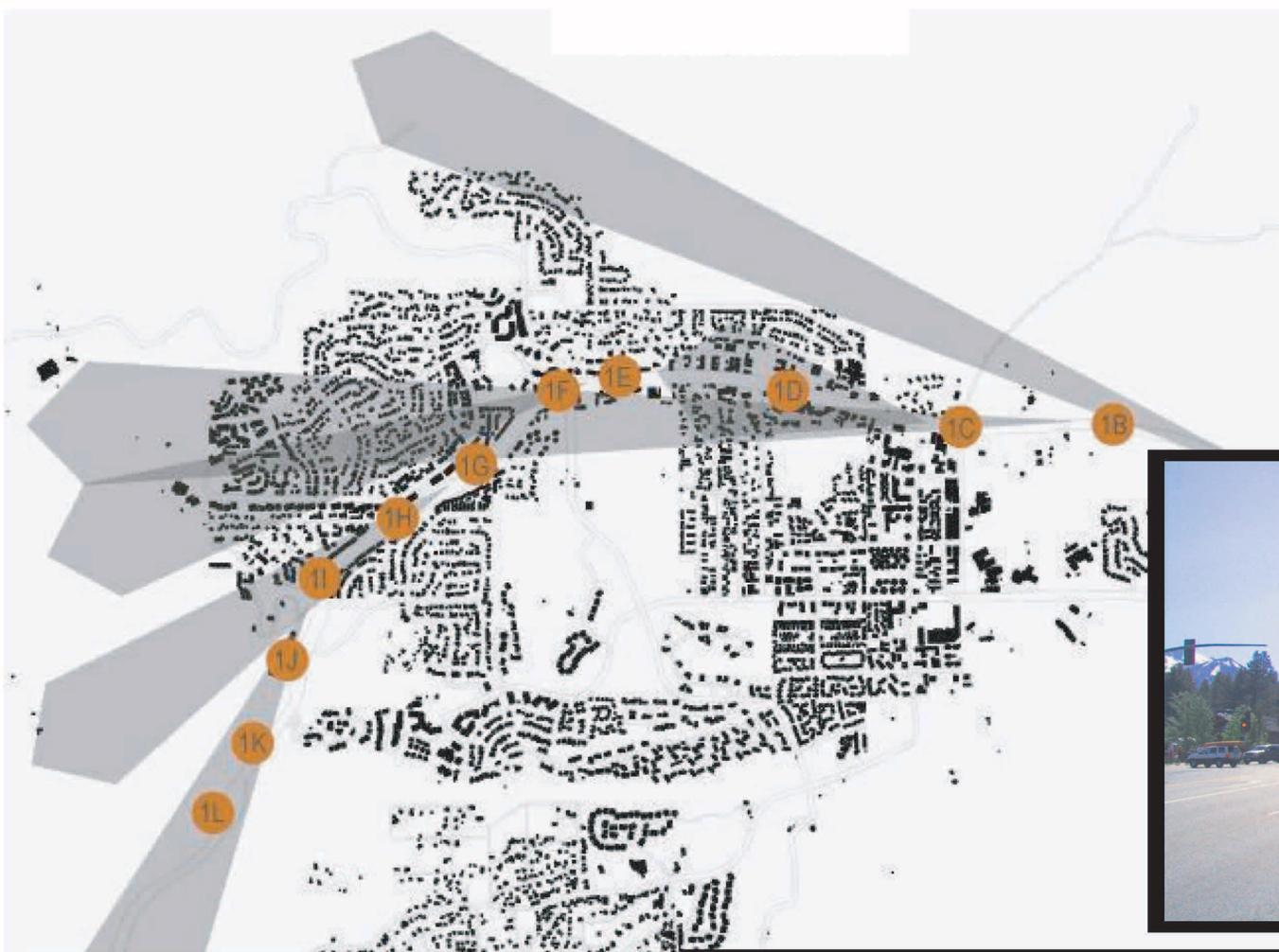


Figure 3-7: Main Street View Sequence



The significant grade change seen from the north to the south side of Main Street can be seen in this photo

b. Visual Character

In terms of visual character and use, Main Street does not present a particularly coherent appearance. The overall characteristic of developed properties is of low-rise one to three-story buildings, set back behind surface parking lots. A mix of architectural styles are seen, including alpine-inspired pitched roofs and A-frame style buildings, and buildings representing the aesthetics of the 1970's and 1980's when those commercial and lodging projects were developed. Uses are varied, and include medium scale strip-commercial developments, standalone single-use commercial and office uses, motels and some residential uses



Typical buildings and street character along the central portion of Main Street

some forested areas remain along Main Street, particularly the section east of Old Mammoth Road, on the USFS property, and on some of the street's undeveloped parcels. Tree cover in other areas is intermittent, and on developed parcels often limited to single specimen trees or small tree clusters.

2. North Old Mammoth Road Area (Portions of Subarea 1)

After Main Street, Old Mammoth Road is a key commercial corridor in Mammoth Lakes. The three-lane arterial (two lanes plus center turn lane), extends to the south from its intersection with Main Street, with sidewalks along its length through most of the commercial district.

A street narrowing and streetscape improvement project in the 1990's added sidewalks, lighting and landscaping along Old Mammoth Road from Main Street to Chateau Road. The corridor is largely developed with commercial uses such as retail, restaurants, and other services; some residential, lodging, and mixed-use projects are interspersed along Old Mammoth Road. Secondary commercial and residential uses are found along neighboring streets. Existing buildings are generally between one and two stories in height. The majority of parking is provided by surface lots, although more of these lots are oriented to the side or rear of commercial buildings, compared to Main Street.



Typical conditions along Old Mammoth Road

3. Shady Rest (Subarea 3)

The Shady Rest area, shown in Figure 3-1 as Subarea 3, encompasses the vacant 25-acre Shady Rest Site (sometimes referred to as the Shady Rest Tract) and an adjacent single family neighborhood on Shady Rest Road. The Shady Rest Site is heavily forested and includes a wetland on the northwest portion of the property.

Limited access to surrounding streets and existing public right-of-way exists to and from Shady Rest, but pedestrians use an informal network of paths to cut-through from Sierra Valley Sites and surrounding residential neighborhoods to Main Street and Old Mammoth Road. The Shady Rest site is the subject of a Master Plan, adopted in 1991, that designated the site for 172 units of affordable housing, along with open space areas that include the preserved wetlands.

Given its size and designation for affordable housing development, Shady Rest provides a significant opportunity site within the study area. It is the largest vacant parcel zoned for development in the DNDP study area, and is convenient to amenities, services, and transit. The site is also large enough to accommodate, with appropriate planning, a substantial number of workforce housing units, while also allowing for a significant open space area that is convenient and accessible for the community.



The Shady Rest site is forested, and crossed by numerous informal paths

F. Sphere of Influence Existing Conditions

The DNDP sphere of influence (SOI) includes an area bounded by Meridian Boulevard to the south and Forest Trail to the north. Uses within the SOI include single family residential along Forest Trail and multi-family residential south and west of the Shady Rest Tract (e.g. Sierra Valley Sites). The residents on Forest Trail have complained of high speed drivers and cut-through traffic. In the Sierra Valley Sites there have been flooding issues associated with the storm drain system. These residential neighborhoods are important to consider in terms of conveniences such as restaurants, retail and services, as well as traffic and noise impacts.

The west portion of the SOI includes the North Village Specific Plan (NVSP) and Sierra Star Master Plan areas, which are designated as resort areas. The NVSP area is a higher intensity mixed use district, transit hub, and resort node with a gondola to the ski area. Providing appropriate transitions and access from the DNDP study area to these districts is important.

The east portion of the SOI includes the hospital, schools, and USFS lands. Recreational activities are available on USFS lands, including Shady Rest Park, several campgrounds, and winter and summer trails. The industrial park and Trails residential subdivision are located at the southeast corner of the SOI. These uses provide opportunities for the siting of complementary public uses and facilities in proximity to existing, similar uses.

G. Opportunity Sites

Figure 3-8 shows the pattern of land ownership within the study area, used as a means to indicate locations where change or redevelopment opportunities are most significant. In particular, larger, vacant properties with a common ownership, or multiple single properties under one ownership that may allow for land assembly, are considered to have a higher likelihood of redeveloping. The DNDP study treats some of these as “opportunity” or catalyst sites, since they have the greatest potential for change, on a large scale, that can set the stage for broader changes within the study area.

Two important “opportunity sites” are located within Subarea 1 along Main Street. The first of these is the Town/County owned property at the southeast corner of Main Street and Sierra Park Road. While this site is the location of the new State Court facility which began construction in 2010, the majority of the property remains vacant.

The second major opportunity site is the USFS housing and maintenance facility, which is located within a wooded property north of Main Street between Sawmill Road and the Fire Station. The site currently accommodates USFS employee housing

Downtown NDP

Size and Ownership Assembly > 1 Acre

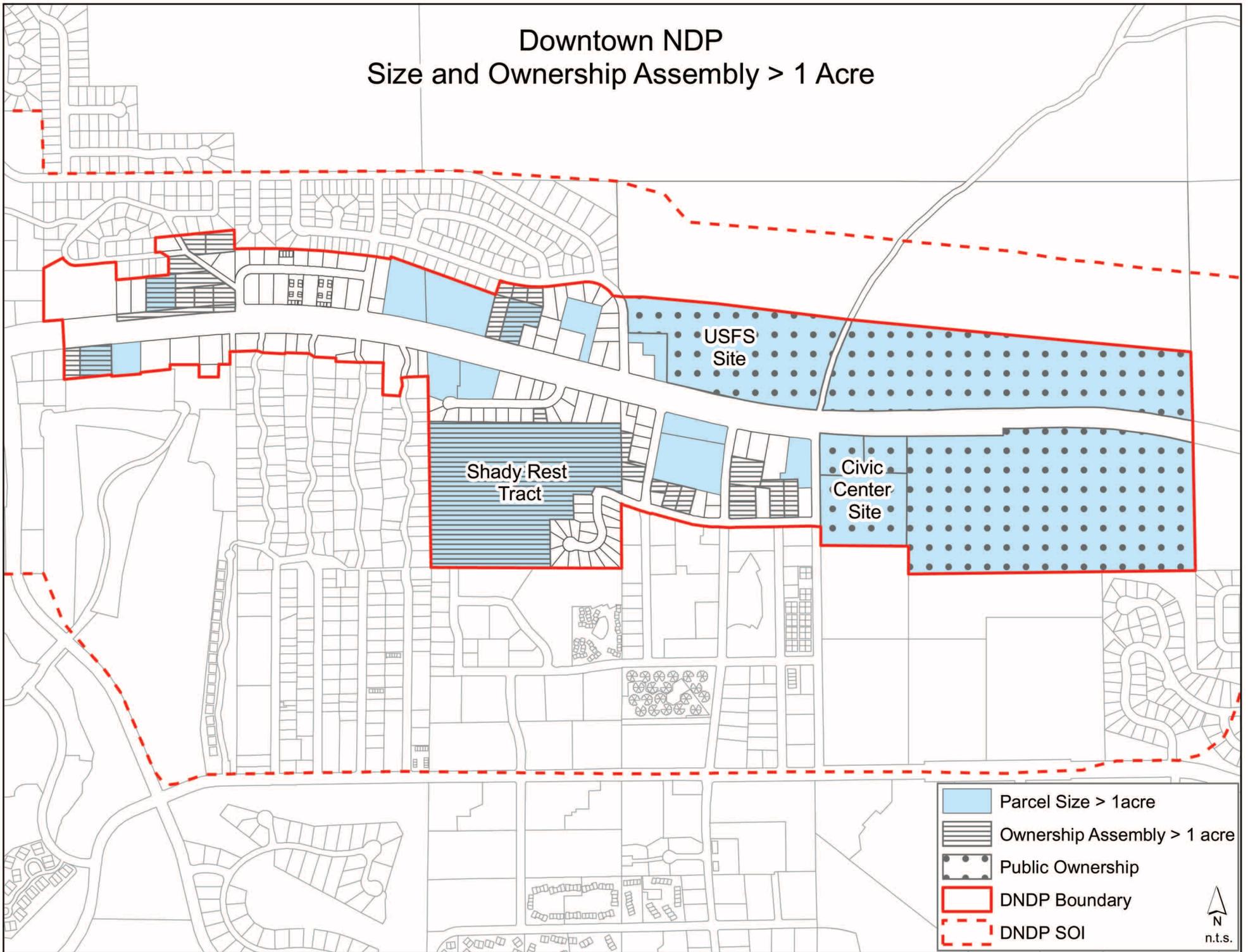


Figure 3-8: Land Ownership

in a series of one-story buildings, as well as maintenance sheds used for equipment storage, and other buildings. The USFS has expressed an interest in finding ways to utilize this property more effectively, particularly in ways that may allow for upgrade to the existing employee housing stock, and provide more employee housing opportunities.

As noted above, the 25-acre Shady Rest Site is also a key opportunity site for workforce housing within the Study Area.

H. Key Issues

Key issues for the DNDP were identified through the Framework process, and were supplemented by input during the early meetings of the Focus Group and public. This process was useful in focusing the scope of the study and in identifying items to be addressed in greater detail. The complete list of issues identified during the Framework is included in Appendix B, organized by a series of topics that correspond to the elements of the General Plan.

To help organize the issues list and help focus the development of ideas and strategies in the alternatives process, the issues list was framed under four overarching themes:

1. Distinctive Places

This group of issues focused on the need to improve the character, appearance and function of the downtown area to achieve the characteristics defined in the General Plan. Issues under this theme include:

- Lack of a sense of arrival at the town entry and lack of a sense of place (no “there there”).
- Lack of suitable gathering spaces for activities and special events.
- Incoherent visual character, with a “hodgepodge” of uses, building types and development styles.
- Lack of a strong streetscape because buildings are set far back from the street and behind surface parking.
- Poor visibility for local business due to berming of snow along Main Street.
- The need to incorporate green spaces within the district, and to preserve a certain amount of open space areas within the Shady Rest site.

2. Mountain Character

This group of issues is most concerned with preserving the unique natural and scenic environment of Mammoth Lakes, and with being responsive to local climatic conditions, particularly during the winter. Issues under this theme include:

- Need to ensure that future development continues to provide a sense of the “Village in the Trees” while noting that this is a generally urbanized area where significant tree cover on-site is not necessarily a primary characteristic.
- Protection of significant public views of Mammoth Mountain and the Sherwin Range, which are a signature feature of the district.
- Potential for shade/shadow and snow and ice impacts if buildings are not properly situated.
- Blocked visibility for businesses and an unattractive visual impression caused by current snow management practices.

3. Walkable, Feet-First Environment

This theme addresses the need for a district that is well-connected for all modes of transportation, including a pedestrian-scale and pedestrian-oriented environment conducive to safe “feet first” transportation, as well as well managed parking solutions. Relevant issues under this theme include:

- Poor connectivity and challenging pedestrian environment, particularly for pedestrians. High vehicle speeds, high peak traffic volumes, and width of Main Street make pedestrians feel unsafe.
- Existing surface parking is inefficient, unattractive, and is not the best use of land.
- Cut-through traffic, which is perceived as a problem by residents of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Need for better signage and wayfinding, and for the mobility/circulation plan to be better integrated with recreation nodes and the trail system components within and beyond the district.

4. Sustainable, Successful Economy

This theme relates to the development of a successful destination resort economy that functions year-round, to economic diversification that serves visitor and community needs, and to providing a range of housing opportunities, particularly for the local workforce. Relevant issues raised under this theme include:

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- The need to create additional visitor opportunities to stabilize and diversify the economy mid-week and at shoulder seasons.
- The fact that some local services, like grocery stores are “maxed out” at peak times.
- Potential need for a broader range of services and amenities within the district.
- The need to create a diversity of livable housing opportunities, for a range of income levels, particularly on the Shady Rest site.

5. Other Issues

In addition to the above issues, a number of other issues were raised that were related to the implementation and feasibility of planning for the DNDP Study Areas. These include:

- Concern about property “takings” or down-zoning leading to loss of existing development rights.
- Concern that existing businesses should be allowed to continue and function if land use regulations and requirements change. (i.e. not creating non-conforming uses).
- Caltrans control of Main Street will continue to limit the ability to make significant changes to the street’s function and operations.
- Many of the property ownerships within the district are fragmented, making change more difficult to achieve.
- Need to create appropriate transitions and buffers between more intensively developed areas and surrounding neighborhoods.

I. Opportunities and Constraints

Based on the existing conditions and issues information gathered during the first phase of the DNDP process, a list of opportunities and constraints was created:

Opportunity: Gateway. There is a significant opportunity to create a memorable and distinctive welcome statement at the town’s entry along Highway 203, in the vicinity of Sierra Park Road and Old Mammoth Road.

Opportunity: Develop Traditional Main Street Character. Main Street and Old Mammoth Road are Mammoth Lakes’ primary commercial streets, with significant potential to be re-oriented towards a more pedestrian-friendly “main street” feel, similar to that seen in other small mountain towns and Sierra communities.

Constraint: Caltrans Ownership. Caltrans owns the majority of the Main Street right-of-way and is required to operate and maintain it consistent with State highway standards, which may not always be compatible with other community goals. However, in recent years, Caltrans' perspective on how facilities like Main Street can and should operate has evolved. Throughout the NDP process, the agency has engaged in numerous discussions with the Town about feasible solutions for Main Street that would be consistent with State highway standards as well as serve community goals. The Town and Caltrans have also had discussions regarding the feasibility and implications of transferring ownership of Highway 203 to the Town.

Constraint: Topography. Main Street has extremely varied topography, most particularly at its west end, where there are significant grade changes from north to south. This makes the installation of facilities like sidewalks very challenging because of the amount of grading and earthwork required. In addition, the fact that properties sit well above the grade of Main Street to the north, and below it to the south, makes it difficult to create a strong street edge defined by building faces, as is typically seen in a traditional main street environment.

Constraint: Outdated Zoning Code. The existing Zoning Code is yet to be revised to reflect the updated General Plan, and includes development standards (such as building setbacks and parking requirements) that may not result in the most desirable urban design outcomes for the Downtown district, and may not incorporate more flexible regulations and incentives to encourage needed reinvestment.

Opportunity: Special Events Venues. Mammoth's calendar of special events and activities has continued to grow over recent years, adding new and larger events that draw thousands of visitors. The Downtown district also contains a significant portion of the town's hotel rooms and retail businesses, providing an opportunity for a range of new event venues to be developed close to existing lodging and services.

Opportunity: Publicly-Owned Sites. There are two large publicly-owned properties within the study area; the USFS property north of Main Street, and the Town/County owned property located near the corner of Main Street and Sierra Park Road. Both of these large sites offer potential opportunities to be developed with public facilities and uses. The MUSD parcel south of the RV Park and adjacent to the DNDP study area also offers potential opportunities for future development.

Constraint: Historic Development Patterns and Uses. The existing development and circulation patterns within the study area have been formed over many years, with many long-established and historic uses. Given the Town's commitment to avoid property takings, it will be important to work with private and public property owners to find creative solutions and create appropriate incentives to stimulate change.

Opportunity: Views and Trees. Like most parts of Mammoth, the Downtown area offers a number of views, particularly along the Main Street corridor to Mammoth Mountain and to the Sherwin Range. While many properties have limited trees, the sense of a forest can be seen in the tree-covered hillsides and neighborhoods north of Main Street, and backdrop of tree-tops rising behind buildings and rooflines. These contribute a sense of place and character to the district, and the views, in particular, are one of its key assets.

Constraint: Winter Conditions. Mammoth’s winter climate presents challenges for site design, safety and operation. Snow must be removed and stored to keep roadways clear, and ice tends to build up, particularly on the north sides of buildings that receive limited sun exposure, creating safety hazards. When snow is piled up, it looks unattractive and can block views of storefronts. While snow is a constraint, there are also opportunities to improve snow management methods, as has been seen along Old Mammoth Road, where business owners and the Town both contribute to funding an efficient snow removal program.



Snow pushed into piles along Main Street blocks sightlines to businesses

Opportunity: Solar Access. While Mammoth receives significant winter snowfall, it tends to occur in the form of winter storms, with lengthy periods of calm and sunny weather. Because of the high number of clear days, businesses and residential uses can take advantage of solar exposure, creating sunny and welcoming outdoor spaces, even during winter months.

Opportunity: Revitalized Business District. Traditional downtowns combining a mixture of land uses (retail, housing, office, and public spaces), with relatively compact blocks, sidewalks, and pedestrian-scaled environments have been a recipe for the nation’s most successful commercial districts, in towns and cities of all sizes. Mammoth’s downtown has an opportunity to take the lessons learned from these other places, and use them to redefine the character of its existing commercial areas.

Constraint: Emergency Access. Although smaller scale streets and “calmed” traffic may contribute to a better pedestrian environment, it will be important to ensure that emergency access is planned for and that response times are maintained.

Opportunity: Trails and Feet-First Mobility Systems. The Town has drafted a Trails System Master Plan that defines a comprehensive network of facilities within the UGB and beyond. The draft TSMP, Sidewalk Master Plan, Bicycle Plan and Draft Mobility Diagram also contribute components of the feet first network. Completion and expansion of the feet-first system to safely connect recreation access points, trails, residential areas, and businesses is a key opportunity for the Downtown NDP.

Opportunity: Transit. Providing transit as an alternative to private automobile use is an important opportunity. Mammoth Lakes has seen transit ridership rise steadily over the past five years, indicating that many residents and visitors find it to be an attractive and convenient alternative to driving. The North Village gondola has also proven to be an extremely popular facility, carrying thousands of skiers during the winter, and supporting the North Village as a pedestrian-oriented visitor hub. As a rule, higher intensity development is more conducive to an efficient and cost effective transit system, since it maximizes ridership and access to key transit destinations.

Opportunity: Parking. Most parking in the Downtown area consists of private, surface parking lots. Some properties provide more parking than necessary, while others find it difficult to provide sufficient parking given their site constraints. Strategies such as shared parking, on-street parking, and pooled public parking, which are currently limited in the Downtown, represent opportunities to increase the efficiency and convenience of parking to support land uses and transit.

Constraint: Funding. Shortfalls in funding, and public and private sector financial limits are a potential constraint to significant change in the Downtown area. This is also an uncertain economic climate, and the Town has no redevelopment agency or plan in place that could channel financial resources to large scale public improvements. Any large scale plan or project must recognize the real-world constraints of funding and financing for desired improvements, and must be realistic in terms of the scale and phasing of improvements.

Constraint: Seasonal, Remote Location. The existing visitor attractions in Mammoth Lakes are most strongly oriented towards winter recreation, and are therefore subject to seasonal variation and year-to-year snowfall patterns. In addition, the town is remote from major population centers, requiring a strong draw for visitors to invest time and money to visit here. While year-round air service has helped to bridge the gap, there is a need to expand the range of year-round recreation opportunities and visitor attractions, and to offer new and different reasons for visitors to choose to visit Mammoth Lakes, and when here, to stay for longer periods.

Opportunity: Re-Investment in Underutilized Properties. Many opportunities exist within the Downtown that may provide a catalyst for revitalization. As the Town has become increasingly built out and vacant land for development becomes more scarce, attention has begun to turn to properties that are considered underutilized in terms of the quality and amount of development they currently contain. This has been seen in the recent approvals of redevelopment on the Holiday Haus and Swiss Chalet sites, both built during Mammoth Lakes' earlier periods of growth. Main Street, as one of the earliest development areas within Mammoth, contains a disproportionate share of older lodging and commercial properties that may provide opportunities for reinvestment and change.

Constraint: Fragmented Property Ownerships and Interests. Many properties on Main Street are small, with different owners and interests, which can make redevelopment and larger scale change much more challenging.

Opportunity: Workforce and Market Rate Housing. Although housing prices have dropped in recent months, much of the housing stock in Mammoth Lakes remains unaffordable to local residents. Increasing the number of mixed-use projects (e.g. ground floor retail with housing above) and redeveloping Shady Rest as a livable workforce neighborhood, provide significant opportunities to build new housing, of a range of types and affordability levels.

Constraint: Neighboring Residential Uses. Development patterns and zoning within and surrounding the Study Area present some unique challenges, particularly where residential neighborhoods (such as Sierra Valley Sites and the Forest Trail neighborhoods) abut commercial areas. It will be important for the DNDP to provide for appropriate transitions to these neighborhoods, and to consider and mitigate potential impacts such as neighborhood traffic.