

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study Background Report

Background Report

This background report provides a summary of the Framework, existing conditions, opportunities and constraints for the South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study. It also summarizes the alternatives that were reviewed during the NDP process, to arrive at the Preferred Concept and associated Recommendations.

A. Framework

The Framework was reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission on January 12, 2011, and by the Planning Commission on February 2, 2011. The Framework includes three major components which together define the scope of work for the planning study:

- Study Area Boundary and Sphere of Influence
- Guiding Principles
- Preliminary Issues

1. Study Area Boundaries

Figure 1 shows the SDNDP study areas for the South Old Mammoth Road, East OSSC and Sierra Star NDPs.

The “study area” boundary reflects the primary area of interest for the NDP. A separate sphere of influence, encompassing a more extensive area to be considered relative to the study area, is delineated to include land in the vicinity of each study area with related or common issues, and that may influence, or be influenced by the study area.

a. East OSSC

The study area for the East OSSC includes properties within the Open Space Stream Corridor Overlay Zone, extending west to include a portion of the Snowcreek VIII property west of Minaret Road, and east to include Mammoth Creek Park and the Hayden Cabin complex.

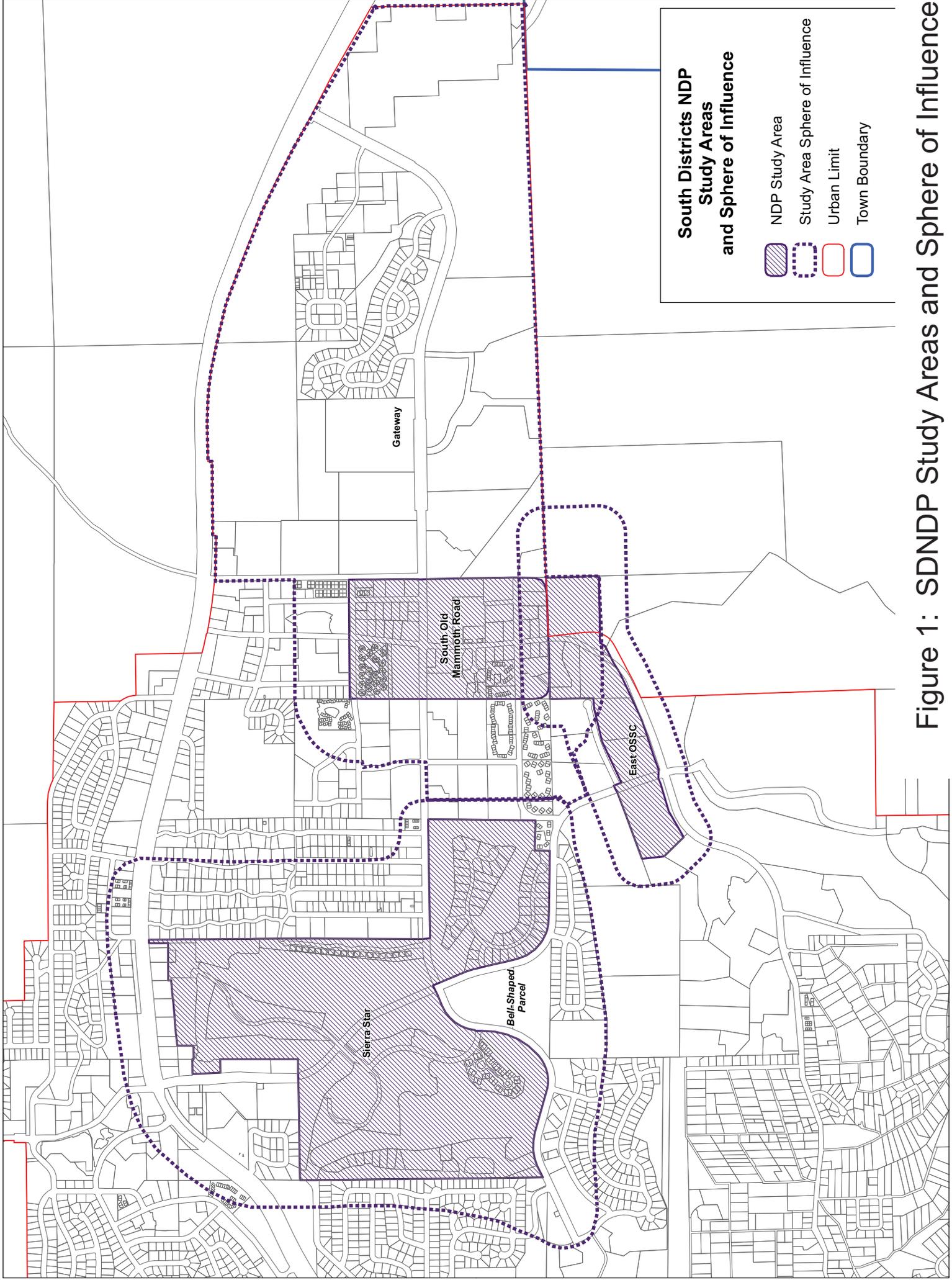


Figure 1: SDNDP Study Areas and Sphere of Influence

b. Sierra Star

The Sierra Star study area includes the entire area within the Lodestar Master Plan, extending north almost to Main Street, south to Meridian Boulevard, west to the Majestic Pines neighborhood, and east to the Sierra Valley neighborhood. The study area is bisected by Minaret Road, and includes areas already developed with the Sierra Star Golf Course and single family homes and condominiums.

c. South Old Mammoth Road

The South Old Mammoth Road study area boundary extends north to Sierra Nevada Road (to abut the south boundary of the North Old Mammoth Road study area); south to Mammoth Creek Park (to abut the north boundary of the East OSSC study area); and east and west to include the commercial-zoned properties east and west of Old Mammoth Road, as well as the Mammoth Sierra, Chateau Blanc and Chateau Sierra condominiums.

2. Sphere of Influence

a. Sierra Star

The Sphere of Influence for Sierra Star extends several blocks in all directions at the edge of the primary study area to encompass land within the Sierra Valley sites and Majestic Pines neighborhoods to the east and west, respectively; portions of the Main Street commercial corridor, and residential areas south of Meridian Boulevard. The Town-owned Bell-Shaped Parcel at the intersection of Meridian and Minaret is also included within the Sierra Star Sphere of Influence.

b. East OSSC

The Sphere of Influence for the EOSSC reflects a buffer of approximately 400 feet around the study area, encompassing residential uses north of Meadow Lane, US Forest Service managed land and portions of the Snowcreek property to the south, and commercial uses within the South Old Mammoth Road District to the north.

c. South Old Mammoth Road

The South Old Mammoth Road sphere of influence has been defined to be quite extensive, including portions of the North Old Mammoth Road and OSSC Districts to the north and south of the study area. To the east, the sphere has been drawn to include the entire Gateway district, which is the subject of a separate planning effort being undertaken by the various public

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

agency partners with property and facilities in this district. By including the Gateway area within the South Old Mammoth Road Sphere of Influence, key issues and opportunities specific to this area were able to be considered in the SDNDP process. At the same time, the ideas and information generated by the SDNDP process can be integrated into the future Gateway area planning effort.

B. 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.

The guiding principles for each study area within the SDNDP are listed below. In some cases where the General Plan provides characteristics for a broader study area than is the focus of the more specific NDP, the characteristics shown in the attachment reflect a tailored list of items that are relevant to that smaller geography. This is the case for the South Old Mammoth Road district, which in the General Plan is reflected in a set of broader characteristics defined for the "Main Street, Old Mammoth Road and Shady Rest" area; and for the East OSSC study area, which overlaps a portion of the Snowcreek district.

In addition, the General Plan does not include specific "characteristics" for either the East OSSC District or for the Bell-Shaped Parcel. However, the General Plan does include policy guidance for preparation of Special Studies for the Mammoth Creek Corridor and the Bell-Shaped parcel which are also relevant considerations for the NDP; relevant items from these policies are therefore cited below.

1. Sierra Star

The General Plan states the following characteristics for the Sierra Star District:

The Sierra Star District, a resort area within Mammoth Lakes, contains an 18-hole golf course and a residential component. Sierra Star should diversify its year-round recreational opportunities for the town's residents and visitors, and allow joint use amongst public and private entities. A variety of resort accommodations of differing intensities should be provided as well as a transit hub and parking facilities:

- *Full service four-season resort*
- *Landmark destination*
- *Special vistas to surrounding mountains*
- *Extensive open space and tree preservation*
- *Four-season recreation use; e.g. golf course and cross-country skiing, summer focus on open space and outdoor experiences*
- *Non-vehicular access options to the Eagle Lodge, North Village District, Main Street and Old Mammoth Road*

2. Bell-Shaped Parcel

Guiding principles for the Bell-Shaped Parcel are called out because it was the subject of special discussion in the SDNDP process. The General Plan does not include specific characteristics for the Bell-Shaped Parcel (BSP), but does specific criteria for a “Focused Special Study” for the BSP in Policy L.1.D.3. that inform planning for this property. Since the General Plan was adopted, the Bell-Shaped Parcel has been re-zoned from “Resort” to “Open Space” reinforcing the importance of protecting the key natural resources, including significant wetland areas, and open space values of this property:

- *Study benefits to the community as the Town's "central park" through implementation mechanisms such as zoning and conservation easements.*
- *Assess the existence and value of biological, scenic and aesthetic site resources.*
- *Determine areas suitable for preservation and those suitable for development consistent with maximizing recreational opportunities, preserving open space, and protecting sensitive environmental resources.*
- *Determine locations and limitations for buildings and facilities and transit, pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access.*
- *No disposition or development of the Bell may be made which is inconsistent with these Special Study objectives without further amendment to this General Plan to remove this condition.*
 - *A place to hold special events*
 - *Staging for Forest Service activities*

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

- *Concessions and facilities including parking and restrooms*
- *A connection with Forest Service lands and the historic museum site.*

3. East OSSC District

The General Plan identifies characteristics for the Snowcreek District and for the Mammoth Creek Corridor, both of which overlap the EOSSC Study Area, and which are appropriate to it. They include:

- *Western range and meadow; spacious setting and wide open with backdrop of Sherwin Range*
- *Anchor for and connection to the Old Mammoth Road District*
- *Stress stewardship of land and resources*
- *Provide access and staging areas to Sherwin Range and “community uses” accessible from Old Mammoth Road*
- *Landscape that reinforces sage, Manzanita and wet meadow*
- *Integrate Mammoth Creek Corridor with Mammoth Creek Park, including the historical museum site, equestrian center, parking, trails and snow play, and future possibilities such as a recreation center or amphitheater.*
- *Provide a variety of visitor lodging*

The following characteristics or attributes are noted as important for the Mammoth Creek Corridor:

- *Biological, scenic and aesthetic resources*
- *Water quality*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle trails, staging areas and vehicular access*
- *Resolve potential for neighborhood conflicts*
- *Create a significant community resource connecting Old Mammoth Road, Snowcreek, and Mammoth Creek Park around the stream and environment to provide:*
 - *Access to Mammoth Creek*
 - *Grand Views*
 - *Appropriate active recreation*
 - *Family recreation*

4. South Old Mammoth Road

The General Plan provides the following description and list of general characteristics for a broader area that includes Main Street, Old Mammoth Road, and Shady Rest, and which would therefore encompass the South Old Mammoth Road District:

The (Old Mammoth Road) area should invite pedestrian activity and provide gathering places and opportunities for interaction in a vibrant mix of retail, commercial, and workforce housing. Development should be attractive with a high level of detail and active storefront uses resulting in a pleasing pedestrian-oriented streetscape. Commercial corridors should be walkable year-round, vibrant, colorful, and accessible. Uses should be mixed to allow offices, residential housing and visitor accommodations above ground floor retail.

Buildings should have distinctive mountain architecture and varied roof forms with accentuating physical landmarks at intersections, street corners and other appropriate locations. The streetscape should be safe and designed for the pedestrian with the inclusion of street furniture, trees, flowers and planters, interesting sidewalk surfaces and public art.

New development should improve connectivity and circulation with bike and pedestrian paths, sidewalks and roads.

General characteristics*:

1. *Maintain views of the Sherwin Range, the Knolls and Mammoth Mountain from public spaces*
2. *Landscaping reinforces Eastern Sierra native pine, fir, aspen, ground cover and wildflowers*
3. *Landscaping establishes scale and street edge*
4. *Pedestrian-oriented sidewalk/boardwalk with public art, centrally located parks, plazas, courtyards and pedestrian links that create a sense of exploration*
5. *Walk-to neighborhood or community parks in all districts*
6. *Mid-block pedestrian access*
7. *Occasional small plazas and courts visible from the public way that can be used as public event venues*
8. *Active day and evening and through all four seasons*
9. *Retail and services in storefront setting, located next to the sidewalk*

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

10. *District animation with retail oriented to the street*
11. *Higher lot coverage may be acceptable with pockets of effective landscaping and open space*
12. *Encourage transit-oriented development*
13. *Strip mall development pattern shifted to a pattern of commercial in front and parking in back*
14. *Convenient structured parking and small-scale surface parking*
15. *Shared and pooled parking*
16. *Alley and side street access for deliveries, service and emergency access and pedestrian connections appropriate to district character*

As a specific area, the General Plan identifies that Old Mammoth Road should have a “traditional small-scale mixed use "Main Street" development pattern”

During the Downtown NDP process, a refined list of characteristics was developed for that study area; many of these characteristics are relevant to the South Old Mammoth Road area, and are therefore listed here:

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. *Improve connectivity and circulation with bike and pedestrian paths, sidewalks, roads, and transit; emphasize connectivity. Incorporate suitable traffic calming measures and effective snow removal strategies (e.g. assessment districts).*
4. *Pedestrian-oriented streetscape that is walkable year-round, landscaped, accessible and safe.*
5. *Maintain views of the Sherwin Range and Mammoth Mountain from public spaces and include significant tree preservation.*
6. *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.

7. Provide public access to surrounding forest lands.

8. Energy efficient design and infrastructure and high quality architecture (i.e. site and Mammoth appropriate, quality materials and finishes, geothermal heating district).

9. 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).

C. General Plan and Zoning

This section outlines relevant General Plan and Zoning regulations for land within the study areas. **Figure 2** shows the General Plan Land Use designations, and **Figure 3** shows the Zoning designations for the three districts. Where relevant, Master Plans are described that apply to property within the study area and provide more specific development standards.

1. Sierra Star

a. General Plan and Zoning

The entire Sierra Star study area is designated Resort (R), in the General Plan, which allows commercial mixed uses including visitor lodging, amenities and services, as well as workforce housing. The General Plan describes this designation as being applied to “large parcels capable of providing a complete resort experience.”

The Zoning Code correspondingly designates this area as Resort (R), which provides for coordinated and large scale community planning for various types of land use such as single-family and multi-family residential, office uses, hotels, recreational facilities and public/quasi public uses. Specific uses are to be specified through a development plan which provides detailed land use, performance and environmental standards for the plan area.

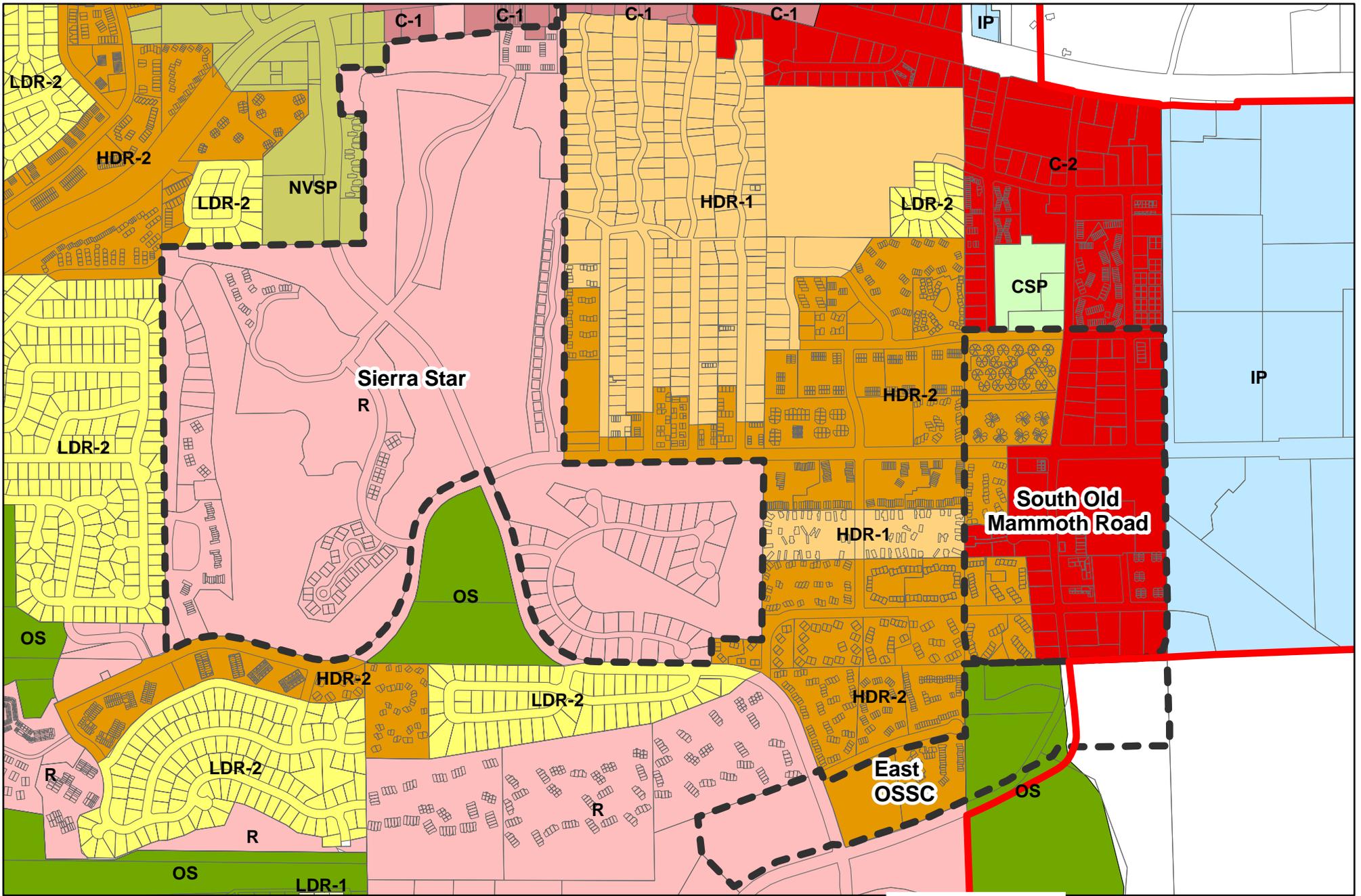
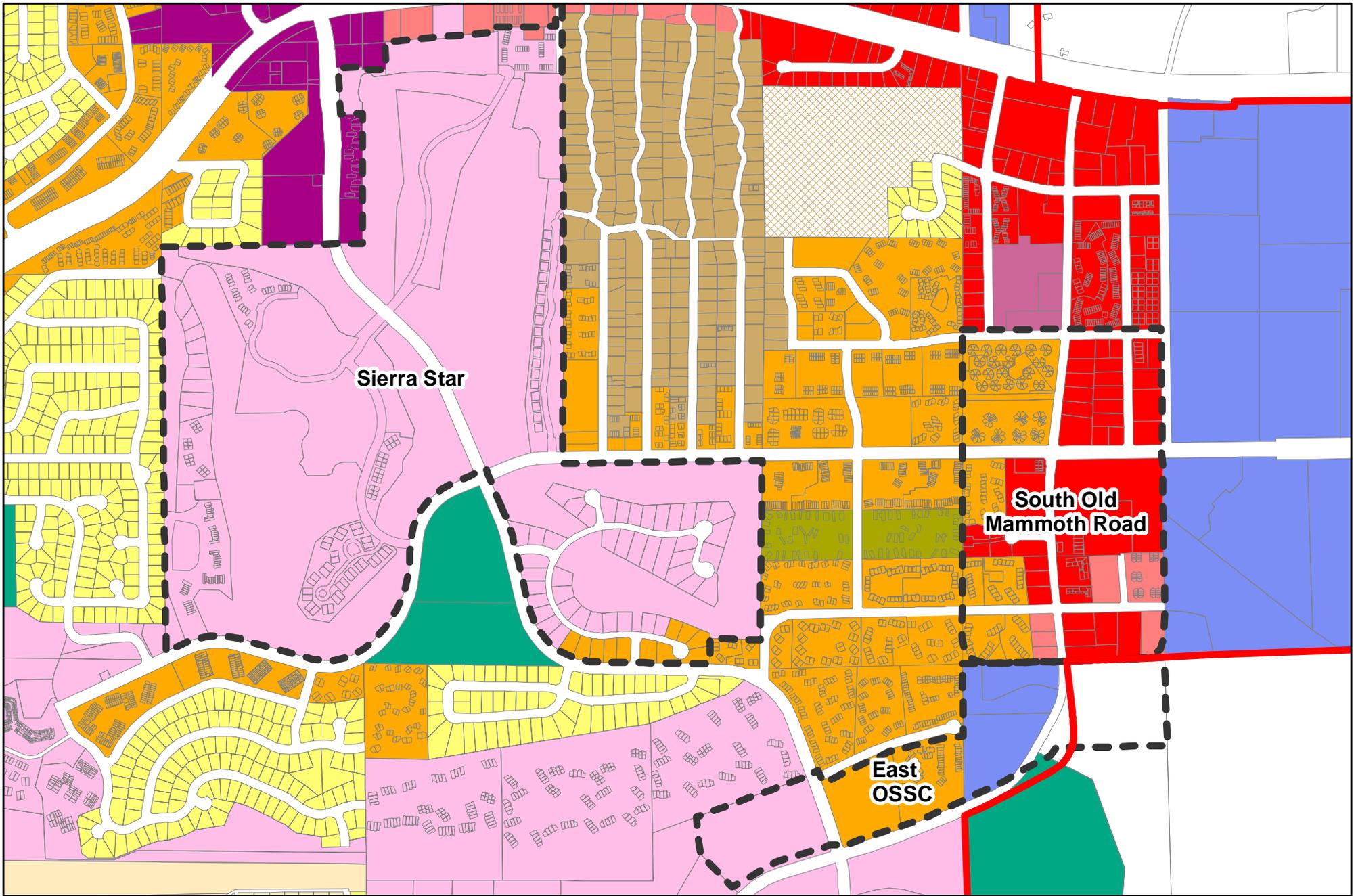


Figure 2: General Plan Designations



- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Urban Limit | Affordable Housing (overlay) | Mobile Home Park | Resort | Rural Residential (Equestrian overlay) |
| District_Areas | Commercial General | North Village Specific Plan | Residential Multi-Family 1 | Residential Single-Family |
| Commercial Lodging | Open Space | Residential Multi-Family 2 | Public and Quasi-public | Rural Residential |
| Clearwater Specific Plan | | | | |

Figure 3: Zoning Designations

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

b. Lodestar Master Plan

Land uses within the Sierra Star district study area are currently regulated by the 1991 Lodestar Master Plan. Permitted use allowed the 1991 Master Plan include golf course, commercial, hotel, and single- and multi family residential and affordable housing. The Master Plan permits a maximum of 1,236 dwelling units, of which approximately 460 were built as of 2011. The remaining buildout includes development of vacant single family parcels in the Lodestar Drive and Starwood Drive Areas, as well as buildout of larger areas designated in the Master Plan for multi-family, hotel and affordable housing uses.

2. East OSSC

a. General Plan and Zoning

Three different land use and zoning designation apply to parcels within the East OSSC study area.

- Resort (R): Properties located west of Minaret, located within the Snowcreek Master Plan area are designated Resort (R). Land uses are as outlined above.
- High Density Residential 2 (HDR-2): The Mammoth Creek Condominiums and adjacent vacant property to the west are designated as High Density Residential 2 (HDR-2) in the General Plan, with a corresponding zoning designation of RMF-2. This zone permits high density residential and lodging development, at a maximum density of 12 units per acre for residential uses, and 36 rooms per acre for lodging uses.
- Open Space (OS): Properties within Mammoth Creek Park are designated as Open Space in the General Plan. For portions west of Old Mammoth Road, which are within the Town's Urban Growth Boundary, a zoning designation of Public Space (PS) applies. This zoning designation permits a range of open space and public uses, including parks and recreation facilities, and public buildings and uses such as schools and transportation facilities.

b. Snowcreek Master Plan

The Snowcreek Master Plan Update was adopted in 2009. It provides development standards and outlines a program of development for the Snowcreek VIII area, which is the final phase of the Snowcreek Master Plan adopted in 1981. The Master Plan envisions an expanded 18-hole golf

course and up 990 unit equivalents including 790 residential units and 400 hotel and Private Residence Club units.¹ The Master Plan also includes a small commercial retail center for the convenient use of residents and resort guests. The property north of Old Mammoth Road (included within the East OSSC district) would be retained as a dedicated natural open space area.

3. South Old Mammoth Road

Parcels within the South Old Mammoth Road district encompass three zones:

- **Commercial 1 (C-1):** A small number of properties located along Chateau Road and Old Mammoth Road south of Chateau are designated C-1, with a corresponding zoning designation of Commercial Lodging. These designations permit a broad range of 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. General Plan 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 majority of properties along Old Mammoth Road are designated Commercial-1 (C-2) in the General Plan, and are correspondingly zoned Commercial General (CG). The C-2 designation allows medium and large scale commercial mixed uses. The C-2 density is the same as the C-1 density.
- **High Density Residential 2 (HDR-2):** The existing condominium developments located along Old Mammoth Road and adjacent to the commercial corridor are designated HDR-2, with a corresponding zoning designation of Residential Multi Family 2 (RMF-2). See description above.

D. Related Plans and Studies

A number of related documents, studies and plans were referenced during the preparation of the Downtown NDP. In addition to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, these include district planning studies developed for neighboring districts, as well as town-wide strategic planning documents.

¹ One hotel room or PRC unit is considered as one half unit of residential density, per the Master Plan.

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

1. Related District Studies

The SDNDP study area includes the South Old Mammoth Road District, Sierra Star District and East OSSC District, which encompasses a portion of the Snowcreek District. As noted above, draft district planning studies were developed for both the EOSSC and Sierra Star Districts in 2008. A district plan was accepted for Snowcreek, addressing the Snowcreek 8 Master Plan area, also in 2008. Finally, the Sphere of Influence for Sierra Star and South Old Mammoth Road overlap portions of the Main Street/Downtown district, and North Old Mammoth Road District, respectively; NDPs for both of these areas were previously completed and accepted.

These studies are outlined below:

a. East OSSC Planning Study

The East OSSC Draft Study was developed in 2007 and 2008, in conjunction with an application for a large condominium hotel at the corner of Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road. The study focused on resource conservation, aesthetic and trails issues for the area within the Open Space Stream Corridor Overlay Zone along Mammoth Creek, from Mammoth Creek Park, to just west of Minaret Road. The Draft Study made a number of recommendations focusing on protecting and enhancing the Mammoth Creek corridor, and improving trails connectivity. Because the hotel application was withdrawn, the Study was placed on hold. However, where relevant, key issues, existing conditions information and recommendations of the Draft Planning Study are considered and incorporated into this SDNDP study. Figure 4 shows the Draft Concept that was developed for the East OSSC NDP Study.

b. Downtown Concept for Main Street (DCMS)

The Downtown Concept for Main Street was accepted in September 2010. It addresses the entire Main Street corridor from east of Sierra Park Road to the North Village, as well as North Old Mammoth Road and the Shady Rest Tract.

The Preferred Concept presents a long-range vision for the downtown that includes significant change and improvement to physical and design conditions along the Main Street corridor; creation of a walkable, connected downtown focused around the east end of Main Street and North Old Mammoth Road; transportation system enhancements including additional

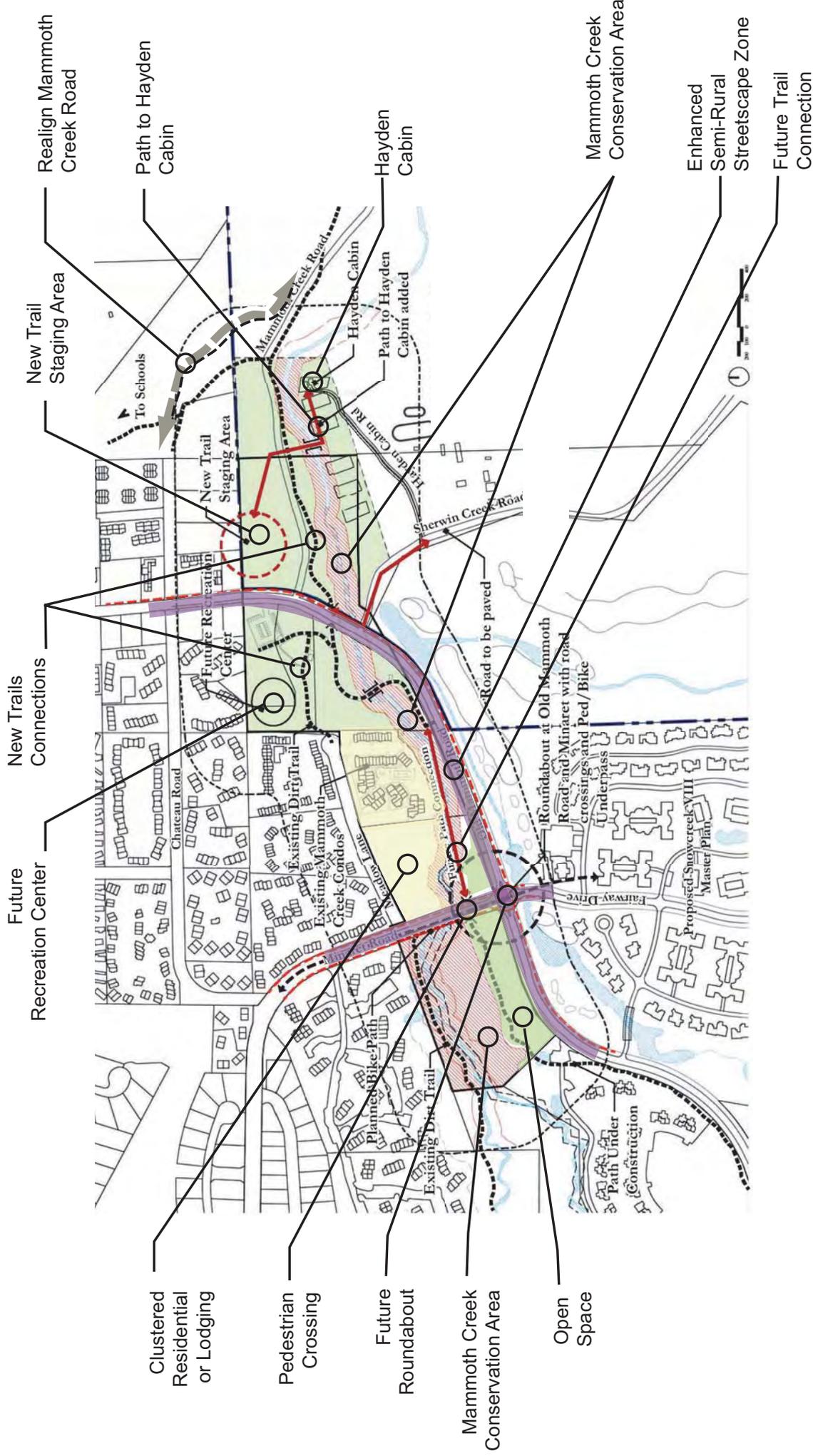


Figure 4: East OSSC Draft Study Concept

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

road network connections and an emphasis on alternate transportation modes; and focused concepts for major catalyst sites including the US Forest Service property north of Main Street, and Town/County property at Sierra Park Road/Main Street; and creation of a livable workforce neighborhood within the Shady Rest Site. Many of the ideas and concepts articulated in the DCMS, particularly those for Main Street and Old Mammoth Road, have some applicability to the South Old Mammoth Road district, and so are a useful point of reference in the development of the concept and recommendations for that area.

c. North Old Mammoth Road District Special Study (NOMRDSS)

The NOMRDSS encompasses approximately 48 acres along Old Mammoth Road from Main Street to Sierra Nevada Road. The northerly portion of the North Old Mammoth Road area (from Main Street to Tavern Road) is included in the DNDP study area. The recommendation of the NOMRDSS was for the NOMR area to remain as a mixed-use district with ground floor retail and residential above, public gathering spaces, and feet-first design. The NOMRDSS was accepted by Town Council in November. The SDNDP includes the southern portion of Old Mammoth Road, which has a number of similar attributes and characteristics to the study area considered in the NOMRDSS; therefore its guiding principles and recommendations were considered in developing the SDNDP.

d. Sierra Star Master Plan Planning Study (SSMPPS)

The SSMPPS was developed as a draft in conjunction with a proposed update to the Lodestar Master Plan. However, the process was placed on hold by the applicant in 2008, along with the Sierra Star Master Plan Update, due to the economic downturn. Relevant information, including existing conditions data, and recommendations from the SSMPPS was considered during the SDNDP process, and in many cases has been incorporated into the SDNDP. Figure 5 shows the Sierra Star NDP Draft Concept.

e. Snowcreek Neighborhood District Plan (Snowcreek NDP)

The Snowcreek NDP was prepared in conjunction with the Snowcreek Master Plan Update, and was completed and accepted in April 2009. The NDP focuses on the Snowcreek VIII development area, and identifying it as a major resort development with a landmark hotel and range of residential, recreational and open space uses integrated throughout the development. Residential uses are clustered and linked by paths and greenway corridors,

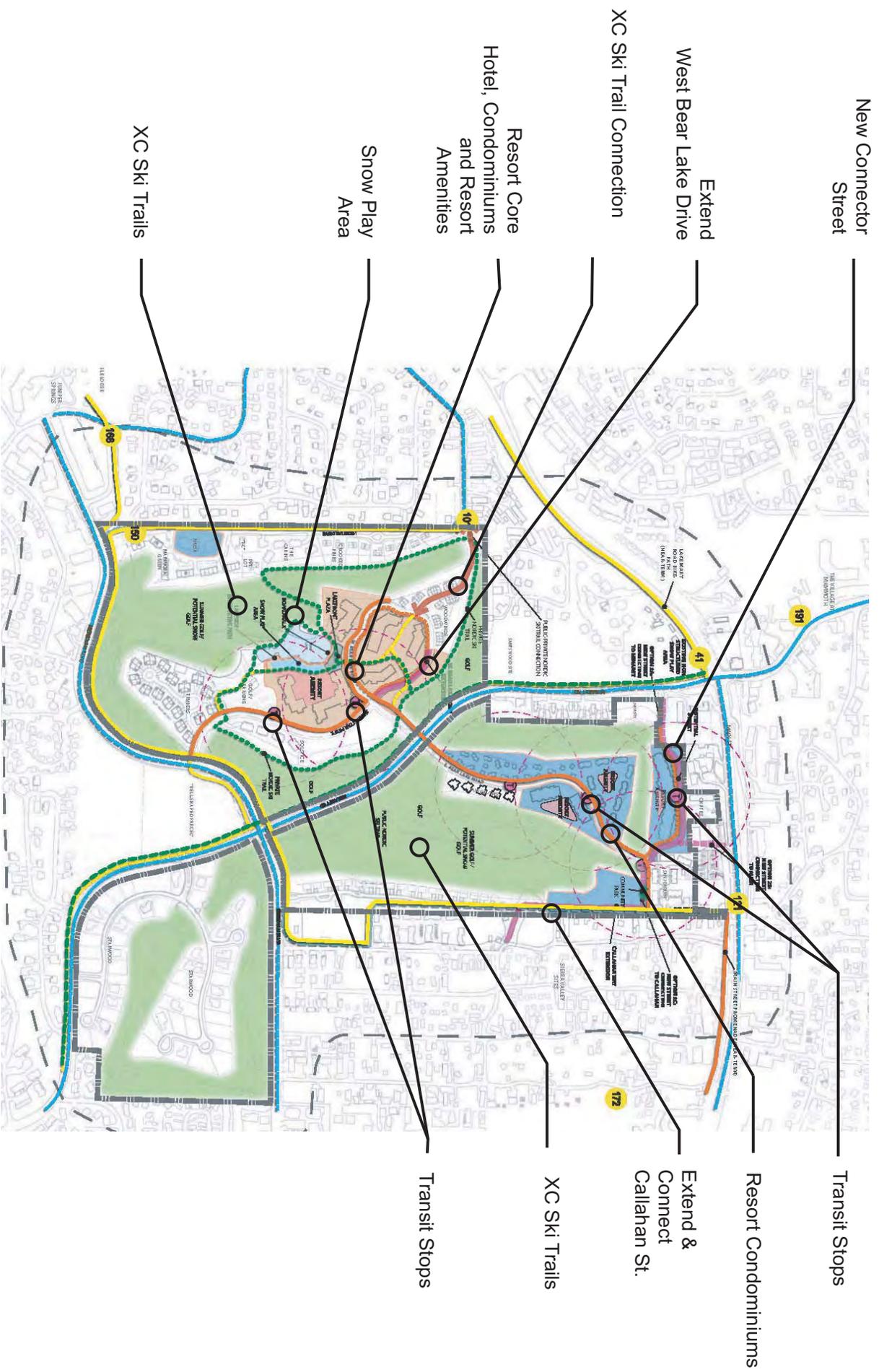


Figure 5: Sierra Star NDP Draft Concept

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

with connectivity to on-site and off-site activity nodes.

2. Destination Resort Community and Economic Development Strategy (DRCEDS)

DRCEDS is a three year strategic and operational plan for the Town, directed toward implementation of the General Plan community vision of becoming a premier, year-round resort community. With an economic focus, the DRCEDS implements the 2007 General Plan, emphasizing the “triple-bottom line.” As stated in the General Plan: “The values of the community also encompass making decisions that benefit the community’s social, natural, and economic capital – the triple bottom line.” The DRCEDS establishes a blueprint to be used to guide actions and the allocation of Town resources toward destination resort goals, including the identification and refinement of place-specific urban design, facilities and economic investment opportunities through district planning.

3. Draft Facilities Planning Documents

Three draft Town of Mammoth Lakes planning documents are referenced in this report.

a. Draft Trail System Master Plan (TSMP) (February 2009)

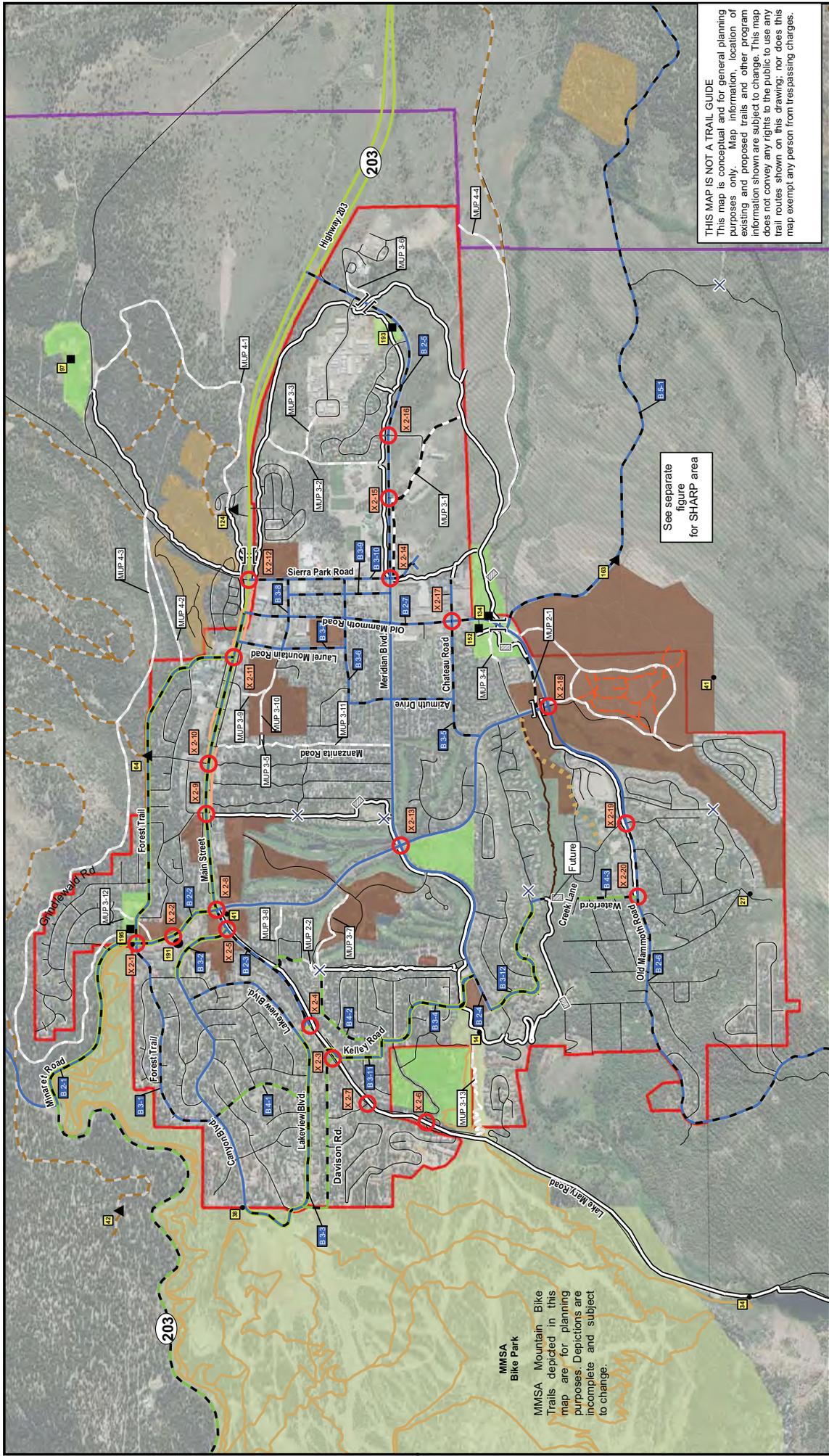
The Draft TSMP includes recommendations to achieve an integrated system of infrastructure and programs to support recreation and mobility while connecting various nodes throughout town. The Draft TSMP incorporates MLTPA’s GIC points, which are key public access and trail points. Trails planning for internal trails systems within specific districts are deferred to the district planning process. The Town will be undertaking CEQA review of the TSMP in 2010 and 2011, with a goal of adopting the Plan by late-2011. The trails network included in the TSMP is shown in Figure 6.

b. Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) (April 2008)

The Draft PRMP outlines the vision for developing parks and recreation within Mammoth Lakes for the next 18 years. Once adopted, the Draft PRMP will update the existing Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan.

c. Draft Mobility Diagram

The Draft Mobility Diagram was prepared in 2006 to start looking at opportunities to expand and improve the Town’s circulation system, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, parking, and automobile



THIS MAP IS NOT A TRAIL GUIDE
 This map is conceptual and for general planning purposes only. Map information, location of existing and proposed trails and other program information shown are subject to change. This map does not convey any rights to the public to use any trail routes shown on this drawing; nor does this map exempt any person from trespassing charges.

See separate figure for SHARP area

MMSA Mountain Bike Trails
 MMSA Mountain Bike Trails depicted in this map are for planning purposes. Depictions are incomplete and subject to change.

Existing and Future Trails System Summer

Summer Recreation Nodes

- PORTAL
- PARK
- ▲ TRAILHEAD
- ACCESS/EGRESS
- GIC POINT
- Intersection Improvements

Summer Recreation Nodes

- || Tunnel Proposed
- || Tunnel Existing
- || Bridges
- || Gates/Barriers/Closures

Soft-Surface Trails

- Existing Paved Multi-Use Paths (Class I)
- Planned MUP
- Planned MUPS - Long Term (Conceptual Alignment)
- Existing USFS System Trails
- Potential Trails
- Private Dirt Trail
- Recommended Boardwalk

Soft-Surface Trails

- Existing MMSA Mountain Bike Trails
- Existing Class III
- Existing Class II
- Existing Class I
- Planned Class III
- Planned Class II
- Planned Class I

Bicycle Facilities

- Existing Class II
- Existing Class III
- Existing Class I
- Planned Class III
- Planned Class II
- Planned Class I

Campgrounds

- Campgrounds
- Parks & Open Space
- Planned Developments
- Urban Limit
- SHARP Study Area

September 22, 2010

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Figure 6: Trails System

infrastructure. The Draft Mobility Diagram was considered in developing recommendations for the DNDP study area's circulation system.

E. Existing Conditions

The South District encompasses three distinct study areas, which have different existing conditions and characteristics. An overview of existing conditions for the South Districts is shown in Figure 7. More specific existing conditions are described below.

1. Sierra Star

a. Land Use

The Sierra Star Study Area is currently comprised of both developed and undeveloped

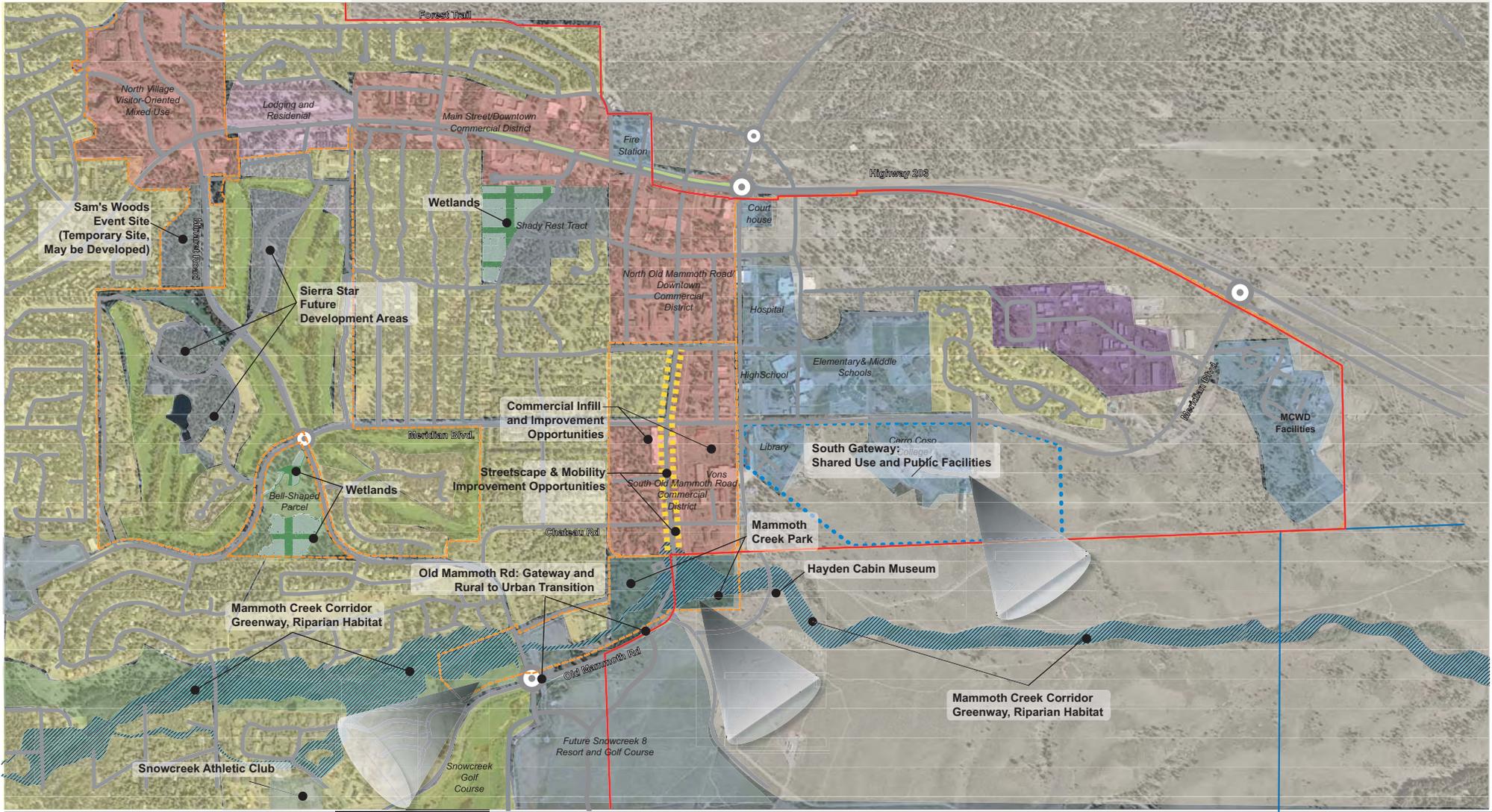
areas. Developed areas are currently characterized by a mix of open space and resort uses, including the 18-hole Sierra Star Golf Course and multifamily and single-family resort residential units built under the 1991 Lodestar Master Plan.

Existing resort residential uses in the Study Area are predominantly multi-family, and consist of the Timbers, Woodwinds, Solstice (partially completed), Mammoth Green, and the Cabins. Existing single-family resort uses include Tallus, Starwood, and Crooked Pines. Multi-family workforce housing uses in the Study Area consist of the Chutes and the San Joaquin project. Currently approved, but unbuilt, multi-family resort projects in the Study Area include the Bungalows on E. Bear Lake Road, Solstice Phase II on Sierra Star Parkway, and Tanavista on Minaret Road.

South of Sierra Star, the Bell-Shaped parcel is a large undeveloped site that includes two major wetland areas; sagebrush vegetation, pine and fir trees characterize the landscape of this site. Existing conditions on that parcel are shown in Figure 8.

b. Urban Design

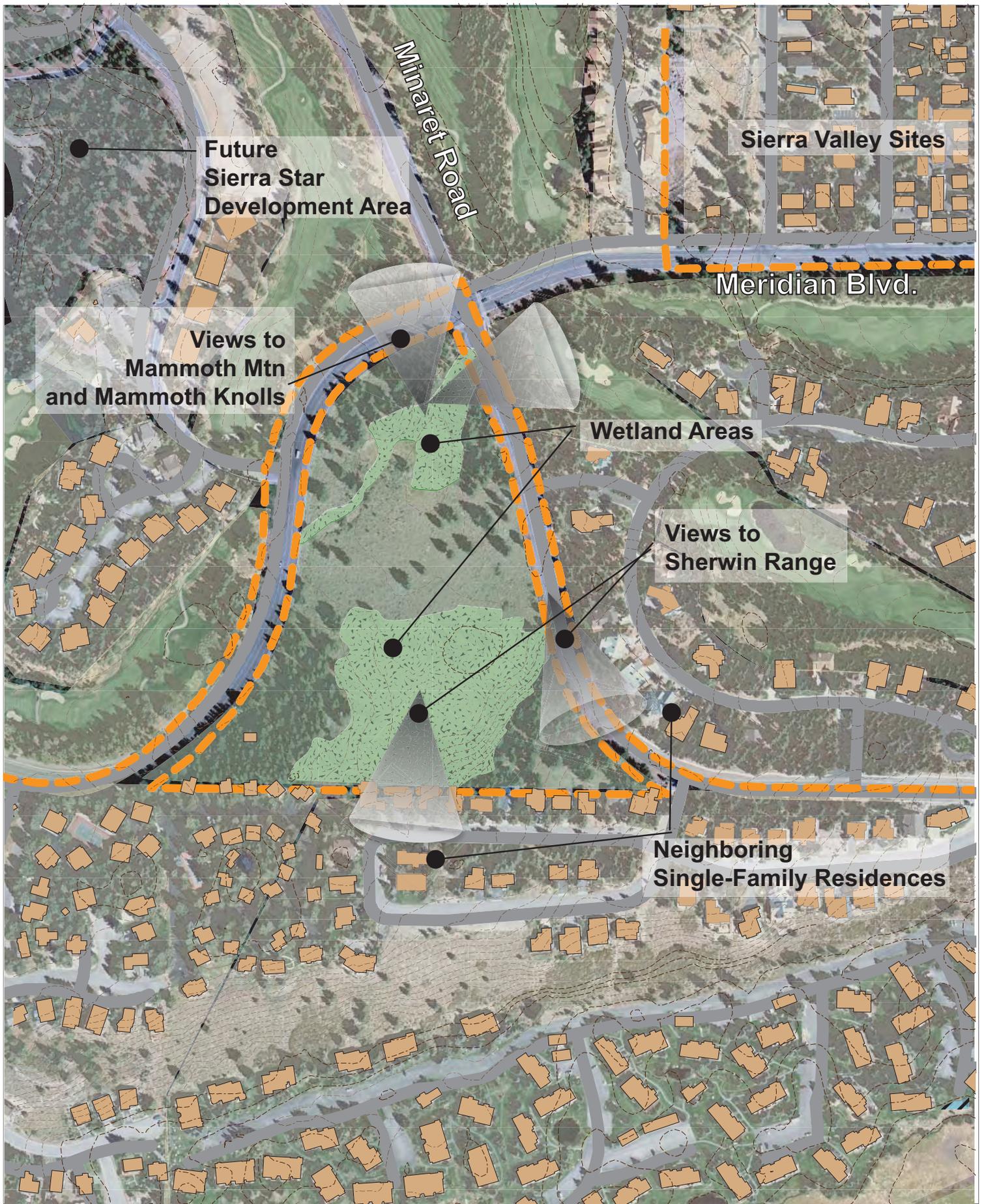
The urban design of the Study Area consists of clusters of newer resort units, built around the existing Sierra Star Golf Course. Due to topographical changes and perimeter trees, much of the site is visually buffered from major roadways.



South Districts NDP
Existing Conditions & Opportunities

	Existing & Future Streets		Future Development Site		USFS/Other Agency Land		Riparian Wetland
	Potential Roundabout		Residential		Public Facilities		
	NDP Study Area		Commercial/Mixed Use		Industrial		
	Urban Growth Boundary		Open Space		Golf Course		

Figure 7: Existing Conditions Overview



South Districts NDP
**Existing Conditions:
 Bell-Shaped Parcel**

January 2011

- Existing & Future Streets
- Potential Roundabout
- NDP Study Area
- Urban Growth Boundary

**Figure 8: Bell-Shaped Parcel
 Existing Conditions**

Major connective elements that define the Study Area include Minaret Road, which serves as a gateway to the Study Area from the north, and Meridian Boulevard which enters the Study Area from the east and west. The streetscapes along these roadways can be described as rural, characterized by groves of perimeter trees and occasional glimpses of golf course fairway. The intersection of these arterials is a significant public node, serving as a defining visual transition from the single-family and condo uses of Snowcreek and Starwood to the south and multifamily uses along Meridian to the east, to the wooded golf setting of the central Study Area. There are several defining edges of the Study Area. First, the eastern Study Area boundary anchors the transition from the older, mixed residences of Sierra Valley sites, to the wooded golf course and new condominiums of the Study Area.

Second, the northern Study Area Boundary follows the transition from large, mixed commercial and multi-family uses along Main Street, to the wooded golf-course setting of the Study Area. Meridian Boulevard (west of Minaret Road) also acts as an edge, separating the more managed setting of the golf and condominium uses to the north from the more open, wild character of the Bell-Shaped Parcel to the South. The western portion of the Study Area is set by the edge of the Main Path segment running parallel to Lodestar Drive. The Study Area is not currently defined by any significant landmarks; however, some elements that could serve as landmarks to those more familiar with the Study Area include the golf course and Bear Lake.

c. Mobility & Circulation

Road Network

- **Arterials.** The Study Area is located at the intersection of two major arterial streets: Minaret Road (running north-south) and Meridian Boulevard (running east-west). The Study Area is also a block south of Main Street (State Highway 203), the main east-west artery of Mammoth Lakes (see Exhibit H: Existing Motorized Circulation). Minaret Road connects the Study Area to the Village at Mammoth, a major activity node in the community, and to several portals to recreation at Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA or Ski Area), including the Village Gondola and Main Lodge.
- **Local Streets.** A network of local streets already serve the golf course and existing resort uses on the site. Local streets in the Study Area include Sierra Star Parkway, Lodestar Drive, Starwood Drive, Callahan Way, W. Bear Lake Road and E. Bear Lake Road. In

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

addition, Obsidian Drive is a private street gated from public access at its southern entrance on Meridian Boulevard.

Non-Motorized and Trails Circulation

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is served by a network of public trails, several of which pass through the Study Area. The Sierra Star neighborhood is ringed by a segment of the paved Main Path along its eastern and southern sides. This paved path runs from Main Street along the eastern Study Area boundary then follows Meridian Boulevard westward to Juniper Springs along the northern side of the street. Another paved segment of the Main Path runs along Lodestar Drive, linking the Main Path along Meridian Boulevard to Majestic Pines Drive and the Woodwinds emergency vehicle access driveway.

Several of the existing local streets in the Study Area feature 6-8 foot sidewalks. These include the west side of Sierra Star Parkway, the west side of E. Bear Lake Road, the east side of Callahan Way, and the south and west side of West Bear Lake Road.

Non-motorized traffic through the Sierra Star site also enjoys travel across various emergency vehicle access (EVA) driveways. These include the EVA connection between East Bear Lake Road and the San Joaquin project parking lot, and the EVA connection between the Woodwinds driveway and Majestic Pines Drive.

d. Natural Setting

The Study Area is comprised of undeveloped area interspersed around the existing golf course. Features defining the natural character of the Study Area include Bear Lake and swaths of alpine forest.

Numerous patches of alpine forest remain in the Study Area, which are largely divided into small islands by the golf course and existing development. The Study Area is crossed by a series of surface drainages trending from west to east. These courses collect runoff from the Study Area and points to the west. This runoff then flows east to Mammoth Creek, which ultimately drains to the Owens River. Following development of parts of the Study Area, much of the runoff formerly directed into the Study Area's surface drainages has been diverted to the Town's municipal storm drain system. This system ultimately discharges to Mammoth Creek. Three man-made lakes also exist on the golf course; these serve both for storm water retention and as water hazards for the golf course.

2. East OSSC

Existing Conditions in the East OSSC Study Area are shown in Figure 9.

a. Land Use

The study area includes developed, vacant and open space land uses.

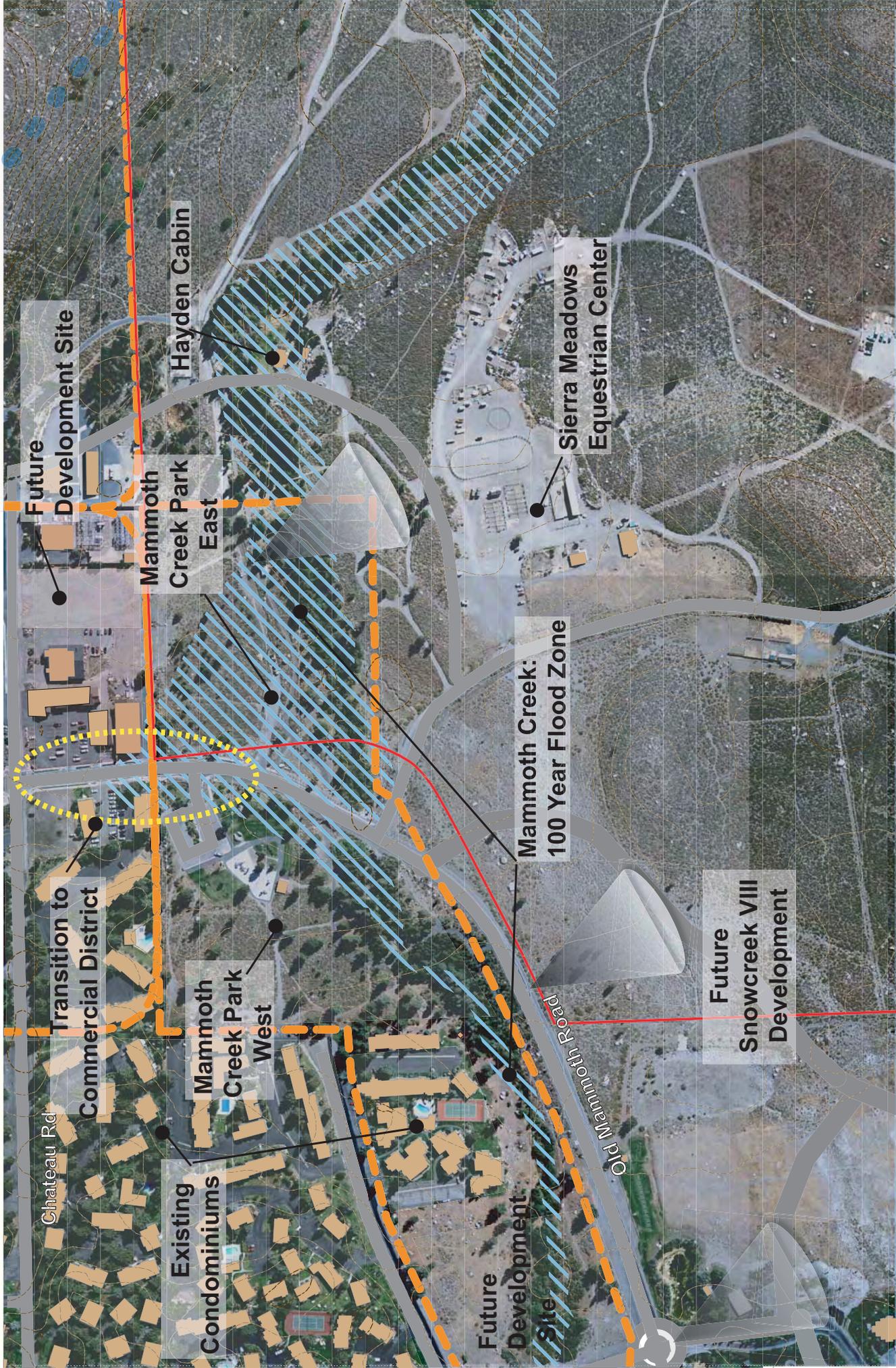
The currently undeveloped 9.1 acre Snowcreek VIII Parcel is in the westernmost part of the study area, northwest of the intersection of Minaret and Old Mammoth Roads. A number of sensitive biological and cultural resources have been identified on this property. As noted above, the Snowcreek Master Plan designates this area to remain as open space. East of Minaret Road lies a 5.2 acre property which is currently vacant; adjacent to this is the Mammoth Creek Condominiums, a 61 unit condominium development consisting of two and three story buildings with surface parking lots located to the north of Mammoth Creek.

Mammoth Creek Park East and West (9.1 and 11.4 acres, respectively) comprise the remainder of the Study Area. A portion of Mammoth Creek park west is owned by the Town of Mammoth Lakes, with another portion under lease to the Town by the U.S. Forest Service. The western portion of Mammoth Creek Park is developed by the Town and includes a parking lot, lawn area and trail access, children's play area and restrooms.

b. Urban Design

The defining feature of the East OSSC district is Mammoth Creek and its adjacent open space and trail corridor. Mammoth Creek is a defining natural feature of the Study Area, bisecting it from north to south and providing a natural open space corridor or "spine". Mammoth Creek, trails, paths and major roads are also major connectivity elements uniting the Study Area with resort development on the west to commercial and school destinations on the east.

Another significant urban design characteristic of the Study Area is the visual landscape relationship composed of the riparian stream corridor vegetation, upland conifer canopy and creek meadows. Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road are also major form-giving urban design elements of the Study Area. The intersection of Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road is a visually significant roadway junction as it forms a gateway to the planned Snowcreek VIII development, and serves as a visual transition area



South Districts NDP Existing Conditions: Mammoth Creek Park Area

Figure 9: East OSSC Existing Conditions

Legend:

- Existing & Future Streets
- NDP Study Area
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Residential
- Commercial
- Open Space
- USFS Lands

between the existing residential and commercial areas to the north and the planned resort area to the south. The existing streetscapes including Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road may be described as having a rural character.

Mammoth Creek Park anchors the eastern end of the Study Area. It provides a transition area between the more intensive commercial uses found to the west and north along Old Mammoth Road to the more rural and open space character of areas to the south and east.

Within the northern part of the Study Area and Sphere of Influence, existing residential development occurs in clusters of attached two to three story tall condominiums with surface parking lots. The more developed Town character transitions to open space at the Town's urban edge south of Mammoth Creek and Old Mammoth Road and east of Sherman Creek Road. Sweeping views are available to the south across the foreground composed of U. S. Forest Service lands and Snowcreek property to the Sherwin Range in the background.

c. Mobility and Circulation

Road Network

- **Arterials:** The East OSSC Study Area is served by two intersecting arterials, Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road. Both arterials have two lanes plus two bike lanes. Parking is not permitted on these roads. In addition there are no curbs and limited gravel shoulders. Culverts under Old Mammoth Road at Mammoth Creek Park and under Minaret Road north of Old Mammoth Road convey Mammoth Creek. The arterials' intersections are controlled by 4-way stop signs. A roundabout is planned for the Minaret and Old Mammoth Road intersection in conjunction with the proposed Snowcreek VIII development.
- **Local Roads** The Study Area includes three paved local roads and three local gravel roads.
 - Meadow Lane, Chateau Road, and Fairway Drive are paved. Meadow Lane extends east from Minaret Road and terminates at a cul-desac adjacent to Mammoth Creek Park West. Chateau Road connects Minaret Road and Old Mammoth

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

Road and terminates east of Old Mammoth Road. Fairway Drive provides access to Snowcreek V and the Golf Course.

- Sherwin Creek Road, Mammoth Creek Road and Hayden Cabin Access Road are gravel roads. Mammoth Creek Road is a U.S. Forest Service gravel road that extends from an intersection on the east side of Old Mammoth Road north of Mammoth Creek. Sherwin Creek Road is also a U.S. Forest Service gravel road extending from Old Mammoth Road in a southerly direction. Hayden Cabin Access Road is a narrow gravel driveway that connects from Sherwin Creek Road to the Hayden Cabin.

Non-Motorized and Trails Circulation

The Town's multi-use Main Path* passes through the Study Area, although there is a significant gap west of Mammoth Creek Park and Minaret Road. Where it does exist the Main Path is an 8' wide asphalt multi-purpose trail with 2' decomposed granite shoulders, designed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The Main Path traverses Mammoth Creek Park, with connections to the east to Forest Service Lands and north to the Town Center and schools. Public access easements for trails currently exist adjacent to Mammoth Creek over private property but no formal trails are in place.

The only existing sidewalks in the Study Area are on both sides of Old Mammoth Road, extending north of the Mammoth Creek Park parking lot. Bike lanes are provided on Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road.

d. Natural Conditions

The principal natural feature of the study area is Mammoth Creek which traverses the Study Area from west to east and bisects the study area north and south. This watercourse is the principle drainage course within the Mammoth Lakes basin, flowing from east of the Mammoth Crest and the Lakes Basin through the southern part of the Town, fed by a series of tributaries. Within the Study Area, Mammoth Creek is a well-established drainage, with boulder cobble streambeds and banks. While occurring in a natural channel along most of its length, portions of the creek are contained within concrete culverts, including at the undercrossing of Minaret Road and of Old Mammoth Road within the Study Area.

Mammoth Creek's riparian habitat and waters serve as a wildlife corridor and important habitat for common fish, reptiles and amphibians, mammals

and birds. Meadows and wetland areas occur in association with the creek drainage, notably on the Snowcreek parcel north of Old Mammoth Road.

The primary plant communities that are found in the undeveloped portions of the site include: upland mountain shrub, dry meadow, aspen-willow riparian woodland, and small stands of Jeffrey and Lodgepole Pines. Previous biological surveys did not identify any special status plant or wildlife species, nor were there sightings of special status migratory birds or raptors.

The undeveloped portion of the Study Area are an expansion of the neighboring migration corridor and holding areas for Mule Deer to congregate and forage until mountain passes are free of snow. The holding areas are considered a critical component to the Round Valley Deer herd life cycle as the area provides an abundance of high quality forage that is generally not available in the herd's winter range. A number of areas of degraded habitat areas exist along the creek, particularly at roadside edges and informal trails. Unmanaged trail systems have jeopardized the creek bank and caused erosion along portions of the creek bed. At the Snowcreek property, multiple use in the area north of the creek, has caused disturbance to the meadow habitat.

3. South Old Mammoth Road

Existing conditions in the South Old Mammoth Road are summarized in Figure 10.

a. Land Use

Land uses in the South Old Mammoth Road study area include a mixture of commercial and high density residential uses. Commercial uses are concentrated along Old Mammoth Road and Chateau Road, predominantly in the form of one to three story commercial buildings with surface parking. Larger multi-tenant commercial developments are concentrated in the southern part of the district between Meridian Boulevard and Chateau Road.

A number of condominium and multi-family uses are found within the study area, including the Chateau Blanc, Chateau Sierra, Mammoth Sierra, and Forest Creek condominiums. One affordable housing project, the Bristlecone Apartments is located along Chateau Road.



South Districts NDP
**Existing Conditions:
 South Old
 Mammoth Rd**

-  Existing & Future Streets
-  NDP Study Area
-  Urban Growth Boundary

**Figure 10:
 South Old Mammoth Road
 Existing Conditions**

b. Urban Design

Old Mammoth Road is the primary feature of the district and one of the town's major commercial corridors. In general, the district has a somewhat non-descript urban design character, although compared to Main Street, the narrow street width, sidewalks and positioning of some buildings closer to the street edge provide a more pleasing street feel.

Features like the spire of the Lutheran Church on the corner of Old Mammoth Road and Meridian also provide a visual focal point for the district.

Commercial development has generally followed a strip commercial pattern with buildings set back from the street with surface parking in front. Residential development is in the form of large condominium projects with surface parking, house in clustered blocks of four to six units.

The district also benefits from sweeping views to the south and west to the Sherwin range. (See Figure 11)

c. Mobility and Circulation

Road Network

The road network in this study area includes:

- **Arterials:** Old Mammoth Road and Meridian Boulevard are intersecting arterials within the study area. Old Mammoth Road in this area includes one travel lane in each direction, plus a two way center lane. Currently, there are no bike lanes and on-street parking is not permitted. Meridian Boulevard has two travel lanes, plus bike lanes; no Town-maintained sidewalks existing along this roadway.
- **Local and Collector Streets:** Collector streets within the district include Chateau Road and Sierra Park Road. Sierra Manor Road is considered a local street. Sidewalks are provided along a portion of Sierra Park Road, as far as the hospital. There are no sidewalks on either Chateau or Sierra Manor Road.

Non-Motorized and Trails Circulation

As noted above, sidewalks exist along both sides of the Old Mammoth Road in this district, which generally terminate at Mammoth Creek park. The sidewalk treatment is not uniform, and includes concrete sidewalks in some areas and a narrower asphalt path in others.

OLD MAMMOTH ROAD VIEW SEQUENCE



5B



5C



5D



5E



5F



5G



5L



5K



5J



5I



5H

Figure 11: Old Mammoth Road View Sequence

Trails in this area include a connector Multi-Use Path from the Main Path that travels east of the Minaret Village shopping center to connect with the Meridian Path (alongside Meridian Boulevard) and Sierra Park Road sidewalks.

d. Natural Environment

South Old Mammoth Road within the study area is highly urbanized, with most property developed with buildings and parking, and therefore providing relatively limited natural resources. As noted above, this district benefits from extensive views of the Sherwin Range to the south and east. Limited tree cover remains within the district itself, but the tops of the tree canopy still present in neighboring areas are visible beyond the foreground of buildings along major streets.

F. Key Issues

Key issues for the SDNDP 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.

1. Sierra Star

An assessment of key issues was made as part of the framework process and during the early meetings for the Sierra Star NDP held in 2008. This assessment looked at comments from past planning efforts in Sierra Star, as well as the impact analysis in the 2007 Sierra Star Master Plan Project DEIR. The current standards of the 1991 Lodestar Master Plan were also examined. The following issues were identified:

a. 1991 Lodestar Master Plan Deficiencies

- Lacks vision/comprehensive approach
- No vision or goals stated
- No objective of interrelating parcels
- No plan for trail connections or cohesive mobility
- Golf and development areas changed from original plan
- Changing economy
- Tree preservation/defensible space (fire safe)
- Site isolated by limited connections from resort core to recreation

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

- portals, rest of Town
- Golf management and water use
- Parking
- Impacts on Adjacent Areas
 - Sierra Valley -drainage
 - Majestic Pines

This list served as a springboard for public discussion of issues at the first District Planning presentation for Sierra Star, conducted on July 22, 2008. Public discussion and feedback further refined the issues listed, and introduced several others for consideration. The following list summarizes the key issues identified during discussion at the first focus group and joint Commissions workshop:

b. Other Issues

- Trails and Access
 - Connections –existing and proposed
 - Easements
 - Transit mobility
- Recreation and Community amenities
 - Year-round resort amenities
 - Winter Golf (golf over snow)
 - Arts and culture
- Drainage (Sierra Valley sites –existing and potential drainage issues)
- Visual impacts
 - Building heights and placement (if amendments to current Lodestar MP are proposed)
 - Loss of tree cover
- Workforce housing
 - Siting, unit-types
 - Sustainability

2. Bell-Shaped Parcel

The Bell-Shaped Parcel was a subject of discussion for the South Districts NDP Framework. Issues identified included:

- Protection of wetland resources

- Proximity to single-family residential uses
- Lack of connectivity and easy access to major residential and commercial areas.

3. East OSSC

The East OSSC Draft NDP process included an analysis of key issues; these were reviewed and amended during the South Districts NDP Framework process. Issues of building height and land use for the Sherwin/Cardinal property were of significant concern during that initial process, but are not included here since there is no active development application for that property.

a. Mammoth Creek Corridor

- Protection of natural, cultural and aesthetic values of Mammoth Creek.
- Creek corridor maintenance and stewardship
- Enforcement of protective standards (e.g. unauthorized vegetation thinning)
- Adequacy of existing setbacks

b. Trails and Access

- Maintenance of existing and proposed trails
- Gaps in existing trails network
- Unauthorized use trails
- Need for connectivity to recreation resources in Sherwins area
- Snow deposition on trails

c. Recreation and Events

- Hayden Cabin is an underutilized resource
- Appropriate planning for Mammoth Creek Park is needed
- Town lacks event venues; existing venues are informal or at risk of being lost

4. South Old Mammoth Road

- Existing retail is not functional or well-organized
- Lack of a clear district identity
- Need to protect views to Sherwin Range
- Unattractive streetscape
- Lack of connectivity and walkability between shopping areas and to other neighborhood

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

- Existing messaging/signage program inadequate
- Lack of pedestrian access through parking lots
- District lacks an anchor to encourage people to move through district

G. Opportunities and Constraints

1. Sierra Star

a. Land Use and Placemaking

Sierra Star enjoys a combination of defining elements, including natural scenery, the golf course, and Bear Lake. Unfortunately, current development in the Study Area has failed to establish a unified sense of place. Establishing a sense of place in Sierra Star is a challenge that must focus on both the unique character of the Study Area, the context of surrounding uses, the “Resort Corridor”, and the greater community of Mammoth Lakes.

Opportunity: Bear Lake. Located in the center of the resort core area West of Minaret, Bear Lake is a scenic asset, well-placed to define future development. Future uses might capitalize on exposure to this feature, and draw upon its beauty to establish a connection to the natural environment. The lakefront along Bear Lake is an opportunity for siting a small outdoor event space or plaza, which would allow access to this natural feature and provide a scenic venue for a variety of functions.

Constraint: Lake Preservation. While man-made, Bear Lake is subject to natural processes, and requires careful management to avoid unsightly evaporation drawdown, eutrophication or invasive aquatic species.

Opportunity: Wayfinding and interpretive signage. To date, wooden bears and the Sierra Star logo with the flag have defined the golf course and neighborhood. The addition of further signage presents the opportunity to rejuvenate the neighborhood character while providing valuable information and direction for visitors. Interpretive signage could include information on local natural history and other topics relevant to the Study Area.

Opportunity: Public Art. Numerous sites, highly visible from the resort core, might provide staging for either periodically-rotating or permanent art installations. The inclusion of public art presents an opportunity for

establishing Sierra Star as a high-end, yet community oriented destination

Constraint: Site Context. It may prove difficult to find suitable locations for public art. Public art may or may not be compatible with surrounding uses and the environment. It may be challenging to find both artwork and settings that meet the needs of resort users and the community.

b. Resort Amenities

The undeveloped resort core area presents a unique opportunity to enhance the mix of attractions in Town, in addition to the overall viability of Mammoth Lakes as a resort destination. The program of new amenities should be an appropriate addition to the existing mix in Town, and be suited to the anticipated quantity of users and intensity of use.

Opportunity: Conference space. The resort core area envisioned to the West of Minaret Road provides for a concentration of hot beds and amenities, including a possible conference space. The site's central location in Town and close proximity to other visitor-oriented uses further supports the possibility of a conference space. In a July, 2008 report titled *Feasibility Study for the Mammoth Lakes Conference Center*, hotel and entertainment analysts HVS evaluate the suitability of the Sierra Star resort core, among other sites, for housing a conference space. HVS saw some potential in the site, including the proximity to the golf course, secluded setting, and anticipated future resort lodging uses.

Constraint: Feasibility issues. Even with the addition of new resort uses, the HVS Feasibility Study (see above) saw serious complications to the feasibility of a conference space in Sierra Star, including the site's limited visibility from major streets and distance from existing amenities.

c. Recreation

The Study Area is endowed with a range of recreational activities and opportunities. Additional recreational activities could enhance the year-round appeal of the Study Area.

Opportunity: Sierra Star Golf Course –winter use. Currently, recreational use of the Sierra Star Golf Course stops when the snow falls. Potential winter uses have been suggested, including Nordic skiing, snowshoeing and even snow golf. These possible recreational activities present the opportunity to attract visitors and enhance the Study Area as a winter destination.

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

Constraint: Compatibility Issues. Winter uses on the Sierra Star Golf Course might compromise its primary function as a summer golf course. The risk of damage and degradation stemming from recreational winter use would need to be reviewed during the Master Plan process.

Opportunity: Snow play area. The undeveloped resort core is an opportunity to create a node of activity for surrounding resort users. The addition of a snow play area in this plaza might provide a welcome opportunity for visitors to enjoy playing in the snow in the scenic setting of the resort core. Possible activities may include ice sculpture and sledding among others.

Constraint: Terrain. While the resort core area features some sloped terrain, it may still be too flat to be a suitable venue for sledding. This may limit the range of snow play activities that would be provided in the area.

d. Affordable Housing

Land Use in the Study Area is primarily intended for resort uses, as is reflected in the 2007 General Plan, the Zoning Code and the current standards under the 1991 Lodestar Master Plan. Within this designation is the opportunity for hotel, condominium hotel, multi-family, single-family, resort commercial and affordable housing uses. While it can already be anticipated that the majority of future development will be resort-oriented, concern was expressed at the first public meeting about the exact nature and placement of affordable housing uses.

Opportunity: Undeveloped land. The undeveloped land in the Study Area presents potential sites for placing affordable housing.

Constraint: Disconnect from the Community. Much of the Study Area is in a secluded setting, making it “prime” for resort uses, but a poor choice for year-round residents –especially those with children or limited mobility.

e. Mobility and Trails

Opportunity: Street network is in place. The local streets through the Study Area provide direct access to undeveloped sites. These streets can easily accommodate a range of travel modes.

Constraint: Street network is in place. The street network through the Study

Area is largely established. There is limited room for tailoring roadway connections, alignments and patterns to suit future development. The undeveloped portions suitable for development are already bisected by stretches of E. and W. Bear Lake Road.

Opportunity: Looping West Bear Lake Drive. The current dead-end of West Bear Lake Drive at Woodwinds might be extended to intersect with itself at, or near the intersection with Sierra Star Parkway. This would provide more direct connectivity for travel of all modes, enhance fire safety, and ensure better access to future resort uses.

Constraint: Issues with Looping West Bear Lake Drive. Looping West Bear Lake Drive adds additional hardscape to the Study Area, while establishing a redundant, parallel right-of-way to an already existing street. It also creates additional potential for pedestrian and vehicular conflict at the corner with Sierra Star Parkway.

Opportunity: Northern connector. Extending a roadway from the current northern terminus of East Bear Lake Road has the potential to not only serve future uses on the undeveloped parcel north of Fairway 7, but would provide better connectivity for surrounding uses. Roadway connections to Callahan Way to the east, Main Street to the north and Minaret Road to the west could be possible.

Constraint: Conflicting Uses. Extending a new roadway westward from the current northern terminus of East Bear Lake Road would require a tight corner to avoid disturbing existing golf uses. Extending a roadway eastward to Callahan would disturb existing golf uses. Additionally, establishing connections to existing driveways and rights-of-way would require successful coordination among multiple property owners.

Opportunity: Paved Main Path Linkages. Sierra Star is encompassed on three sides by the existing Main Path. These paths present great opportunities for non-vehicular travel to other parts of the community along scenic routes. Establishing connections to these paths from points throughout the Study Area is an important means of facilitating non-motorized circulation.

Constraints: Existing development. Existing development in the Study Area, including the golf course, greatly limits opportunities for establishing connections.

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

Opportunity: Overhead transit. The Study Area is located in close proximity to several mountain portals, but does not currently have direct access to MMSA. It has been suggested in the past that close proximity of the Eagle Express chair lift to the west at Juniper Springs could present an opportunity to link resort uses in the Study Area to MMSA.

Constraint: Feasibility of overhead transit. Overhead transit from the proposed resort core area by Bear Lake to Eagle Express has been studied in the past. To date, engineers have indicated that there are insurmountable issues with possible alignments between the two locations. Further research or technological advances might determine if other non-motorized transport options are viable.

f. Aesthetics

Participants at the first Sierra Star public workshop in July 2008 expressed concern about the visual impacts of new development in the Study Area in relation to building height and views. This concern was principally raised in conjunction with the then active proposal to modify building heights permitted by the 1991 Lodestar Master Plan. Although this proposal has since been withdrawn, some general principles are still relevant with regard to views and visual impacts for development within the district remain relevant.

Opportunity: Public views. The Study Area is surrounded by views of the surrounding Mountains, especially the Sherwins to the south, Mammoth Mountain to the west, and Mammoth Knoll to the north. The linear expanses of existing arterial streets afford scenic view corridors across the site to the surrounding mountains.

Opportunity: Perimeter trees. The Study Area is uniquely set apart by perimeter trees lining public rights-of-way and running between fairways. These wooded areas provide a canopy screen that shields interior areas from view from public roadways. The high canopy of trees in the study area may provide screening of buildings that might be well shielded within the trees.

Constraint: Challenges of Tree Preservation. In addition to tree loss from natural causes, the provision of adequate defensible space (per fire code) around all new development may require thinning. The construction of various improvements, including trails, drainage, street improvements, and

utilities (whether related to new development or otherwise) may require further tree removal.

g. Drainage/Infrastructure

Drainage and hydrology must be addressed. Concern has been expressed about flow of water across the Study Area into the Sierra Valley sites neighborhood. Located downstream from the natural watershed area, this neighborhood features a shallow, seasonal drainage course, which has flooded surrounding homes and structures on several occasions in recent years. Remediation of drainage issues in Sierra Valley sites will require a management effort among property owners, the Town, and other relevant agencies that does not currently exist.

Opportunity: Mitigation. The effective management of Study Area runoff may include a program of voluntary enhanced best management practices, beyond those specified in the original Lodestar Master Plan and CEQA mitigation measures, developed in conjunction with the State Water Resources Control Board, and may include improvements to local drainage infrastructure

2. East OSSC

a. Land Use and Placemaking

Opportunity: Mammoth Creek Park is a significant opportunity for new and improved facilities, due to the fact that the Town owns a portion of the park and has a permit for use of another significant area. This factor, the proximity of the park to the South Old Mammoth Road commercial area and to transit, existing recreation facilities, expansive views and a unique natural setting could make this a logical location to site one or several event venues, including both indoor and outdoor venues.

Constraint: There are a number of residential uses near to the park, especially to the north and west of Mammoth Creek Park West. Sensitivity to these uses is a constraint to having very intensive uses and activities in Mammoth Creek West. Intensification or introduction of new facilities or amenities would need to consider compatibility with adjacent residential uses, including possible issues related to noise and parking. Funding for construction, management and maintenance of such facilities would need to be assured. In addition, creek setbacks, wind, and impacts to sensitive

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

natural resources and views need to be considered in design and siting of any new facilities within Mammothn Creek Park.

Opportunity: The existing Hayden Cabin is already an asset for the Town, and includes a small museum and creekside lawn area that is a venue for small events. The Hayden Cabin has traditionally been under-resourced, but provided a unique opportunity to develop an enhanced area for cultural and historic interpretive facilities and activities.

b. Trails and Mobility

Concerns for trails connectivity and mobility are critical within the Study Area. These concerns reflect the desire to extend and connect components of the existing multi-use Main Path system, promote feet-first transportation, expand trail-based recreation opportunities, and provide better links to public lands and open space.

Opportunity: The Mammoth Creek Corridor represents a key locational opportunity to extend and connect the Town's multi-use Main Path system, particularly from east to west. The existing improved trails and multi-use paths have some significant gaps within the Study Area. However, existing public right of way, public access easements, and future development projects provide the opportunity to expand and connect the trail network.

Constraint: Although connectivity is an important goal, potential conflicts exist that require thoughtful planning of trail alignments. For example, extending the Main Path along the Mammoth Creek corridor may introduce additional public use and impacts to the sensitive stream corridor resources. Providing public access, particularly to public lands is important, but trail alignments should be sensitively designed and located to minimize conflicts with adjacent development and uses.

Opportunity: Creek and road crossings are provided at Mammoth Creek Park and under Old Mammoth Road. Sidewalks along Old Mammoth Road and Minaret Road are envisioned in Town plans where none currently exist. The future development of the Sherwin/Cardinal site could provide an additional opportunity to provide a pedestrian bridge/trail crossing the creek from north to south. The future development of Snowcreek may include a pedestrian underpass of Minaret Road associated with the construction of the planned roundabout at the intersection of Minaret and Old Mammoth Roads.

Constraint: While east-west connectivity offers a number of options, connections north and south are more constrained. Crossings of Mammoth Creek, Minaret Road, and Old Mammoth Road need to be successfully negotiated without impacting safety or sensitive creek resources, and by working with private property owners and developers.

Constraint: Winter conditions and snow management presents a challenge to maintaining an accessible pedestrian network in the winter. Snow removed from streets and parking lots is deposited nearby and may block pedestrian access during the winter and damage plants. These concerns must be addressed with proper management solutions.

c. Natural Resources

Mammoth Creek is a critical resource in the Study Area and its importance is clearly expressed through goals and policies of the General Plan. However, restoration and management of the creek has historically occurred in an ad hoc manner. Habitat and vegetation health is dependent on management efforts that are currently do not exist in the Study Area.

Opportunity: Mammoth Creek is a major “form giver”, amenity and signature feature for the Study Area. Accordingly, any enhancement to the Creek should improve the visual landscape identity and natural resource value of the Study Area and Mammoth Creek respectively.

Constraint: Management and coordination of restoration efforts is a challenge due to the disparity of property ownership along this part of the corridor, variation in development plans and schedules, and patterns of existing development. Although public access easements exist through two private properties adjacent to the creek, the lack of management of access through these easements has degraded habitat and introduced use conflicts with neighboring private property.

Opportunity: The existing tree canopy is an important visual asset and possesses natural resource values worthy of conservation. The existing background conifer tree canopy grows to a average height of approximately 65'. This canopy provides an important backdrop to development, as development below this height fades into the existing tree canopy. Existing trees should be retained, if at all possible. Additional riparian and conifer trees should be planted in the Study Area.

Constraint: Preservation of existing mature and specimen trees is an important goal of the Town. Specimen Tree removal should be minimized

and mitigated when allowed. Snow storage along the Mammoth Creek corridor has impacted the riparian vegetation. Effective setbacks for snow storage from the creek should be maintained to protect sensitive vegetation.

3. South Old Mammoth Road

a. Land Use and Placemaking

Opportunity: South Old Mammoth Road is an existing commercial district with a number of successful local restaurants and stores, government offices, and the Vons grocery store, an essential destination for most residents and visitors. Because of these existing attractions, Old Mammoth Road is a natural location for new investment in placemaking improvements and changes.

Constraint: The district is largely built out, with existing development on most properties, and few large vacant sites. The existing pattern of strip malls with large seas of surface parking along the street discourages walking and “feet first,” activity. Bringing about change in this area will require property owners to have a greater motivation to make change, and more creative planning and programs to encourage upgrade and infill of existing properties, potentially through public-private partnerships.

Opportunity: The South Old Mammoth District contains the existing Mammoth Lakes Art Center, Minaret Twin Cinema, and is proximate to the existing Edison Theater at Cerro Coso College. Small community events like "Pops in the Park" and Kidapalooza have been held at nearby Mammoth Creek Park, contributing to the idea of this as a potential focus for arts and culture.

Constraint: Existing venues are small, and are unsuitable for events with more than a few hundred people. In addition, the town has historically lacked a coordinated approach to events planning and marketing that could actively seek to develop a major indoor or outdoor events venue, or publicize and coordinate a year-round program of events needed to make that venue successful.

Opportunity: Mammoth benefits from a high proportion of sunny days. The north-south orientation of the street means that it gets a high degree of sun exposure throughout the year, which is advantageous for use of public spaces and street amenities like outdoor dining . Using setbacks and

appropriate massing can help to provide sun exposure at the street level and reduce shade and shadow impacts on adjacent buildings.

Constraint: Existing properties surrounding and within the district also enjoy a pattern of sun and shade now, which should be reasonably maintained. Height, setback, and step-backs will be critical to preserving existing solar access.

Opportunity: South Old Mammoth Road has spectacular views to the Sherwins to the south, in the area south of Meridian.. New developments should retain these public views and highlight them as part of their mountain character.

Constraint: Public views and view corridors must be respected and enhanced, including building setbacks and building stepbacks to increase or retain the viewsheds. North/south and east/west streets should not be blocked to maintain these mountain views.

b. Mobility and Trails

Opportunity: Old Mammoth Road is close to many residential communities and services, with generally flat topography, and proximity to some components of the trails system. New development could promote a walkable community and serve as a catalyst for further revitalization. Mid block connectors, be they pedestrian corridors or streets, could promote more walkability.

Constraint: While advantageous in terms of geography and proximity to a mixture of uses, South Old Mammoth Road does not offer a continuous sidewalk network; numerous driveways and backout parking create a less safe walking environment. The majority of the housing and retail frontages sit far from any sidewalk and is oriented to large surface parking lots. Future building orientation should reinforce the pedestrian character and be geared to the streetscape and sidewalks instead.

Opportunity: The South Old Mammoth Road commercial district is relatively compact, and there are a mixture of commercial uses including retail shops, restaurants, office and public uses in proximity. Where some businesses have a parking shortage, some have a surplus of parking almost year-round (although snow storage can reduce the amount of surface parking at certain times). These conditions suggest the possibility of some

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

alternative parking solutions, including shared or pooled public parking, reconfiguration of the Old Mammoth Road cross-section to allow for on-street parking, and lease of vacant lots to provide public parking.

Constraint: A revised approach to parking will require revisions to the Town's existing parking codes, or implementation of concepts such as a parking management district to allow for comprehensive planning and management of parking solutions

Opportunity: The relatively narrow width of Old Mammoth Road and existence of sidewalks creates a more pleasing sense of scale than other roads in town, such as Main Street.

Constraint: The current street configuration does not allow for on-street parking or bike lanes, and includes narrow mow-strips that are hard to maintain, require irrigation and do not contribute to the attractiveness of the street.

H. Alternatives

The approach to alternatives was somewhat different for the South Districts NDP compared to previous district planning efforts, being considerably less detailed and extensive. This was in part because of the significant work previously completed to develop and refine alternatives for the Sierra Star and East OSSC Draft NDPs, each of which had resulted in a preferred concept and recommendations that could be reviewed by the study participants, rather than starting afresh.² Although no similar previous study had been completed for South Old Mammoth Road, considerable momentum and a broad body of ideas had been developed for Main Street and North Old Mammoth Road, areas which share many of the same characteristics and challenges as South Old Mammoth Road. Participants felt able to draw from these ideas, and arrive more quickly at a consensus on the preferred option for each area described in the following chapter.

Nonetheless, the process did consider a range of ideas for the various study areas. In particular, concepts were posed for both the Bell-Shaped Parcel,

² Please refer to the Draft Sierra Star NDP, and Draft East OSSC Study for complete details of the alternatives that were considered and reviewed for those study areas.

which was a subject of concern to participants in the study, for Mammoth Creek Park, which was not looked at in detail in the East OSSC Study, and for South Old Mammoth Road. Ultimately, these were not combined into a specific set of concepts that were compared against each other, but instead were discussed, and a consensus developed around those ideas that were felt to be most viable, and to best address key issues and meet the objectives and principles established in the framework discussion.

Certain key ideas were a constant throughout the discussion. These included the townwide mobility concepts articulated first through the Downtown Concept for Main Street; an enhanced townwide program of municipal signage and wayfinding; and implementation of the trails network articulated in the Trails System Master Plan.

Key ideas and options discussed are outlined below:

1. Bell-Shaped Parcel

Because of the constraints posed by current zoning, the existing wetlands, and lack of connectivity to other areas of town, participants felt that there were a limited range of options that could be considered for the Bell-Shaped Parcel.

Ideas ranged from the lowest level of change "Do Nothing" to more extensive improvements and active uses.

- "Do Nothing" would include leaving the property as an undeveloped open space area, with no changes or improvements. Some consideration could be given to selling or transferring density to other properties.
- A low-intensity open space approach would implement modest improvements such as trails connections, interpretive signage, and benches for passive enjoyment of the property's natural setting.
- A more intensive set of uses might include active open space uses like ball-fields, or a medium sized event venue. Both of these would likely be limited to the non-wetland portion of the site.

2. Mammoth Creek Park

Ideas for Mammoth Creek Park mostly focused on the sorts of facilities that could be included there, improvements that might enhance the park's role

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

as an event location, and improvements related to enhancing the existing creek environment and the Hayden Cabin as an historic resource.

Options discussed included:

- A "Do Nothing" approach, where the existing playground and restroom would be maintained, with modest improvements to close trail gaps and connect to planned future trails.
- Providing opportunities for low-key community events and recreation on the west side of the park, adjacent to the existing developed facilities. Modest clearing and grubbing of existing vegetation in Mammoth Creek Park East could provide an informal summer event venue.
- A more complete event complex, involving improvements to Mammoth Creek Park East and West, and including in the long-term, and indoor event venue south of Mammoth Creek.

The ideas of stewardship and preservation of Mammoth Creek, of enhancing the Hayden Cabin, and of providing better trails connectivity to and through Mammoth Creek Park were emphasized as important ideas in all options discussed.

3. South Old Mammoth Road

Options for South Old Mammoth Road focused on the ways that the district could be revitalized, made more pedestrian-friendly, and be a place where local businesses could thrive. Participants felt that it was important to think of Mammoth Creek as an integral part of the district, acting as a catalyst site and anchor for the "South Mammoth" area as a whole. As noted above, many of the themes and ideas discussed during for the Main Street and North Old Mammoth Road were seen to apply to South Old Mammoth Road, and there was not extensive debate or a wide range of options seen as viable.

Options discussed included:

- A limited change alternative, representing a low level of investment in minimal investment in public improvements and facilities, and correspondingly limited change.

South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Study

Background Report

- A more extensive program of investment and change, including streetscape and other improvements, strategies to encourage infill development and revitalization, and investment in existing properties and businesses.