

Shady Rest/“Hidden Creek Crossing” Concept Brief

Setting and Community

The Shady Rest site (“Hidden Creek Crossing”) is centrally located in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, one block south of Main Street and two blocks west of Old Mammoth Road. The site encompasses just under 25-acres and includes a wetland on the northwest portion of the property. The property is heavily forested and the overall terrain is relatively flat.

Properties adjacent to the Shady Rest site include both commercial and residential properties. Commercial areas exist north and northeast of the site. Properties west and south of the site are residential. There is limited frontage to existing public rights-of-way from the property and; therefore there is limited access to surrounding streets. The site is commonly used by the residential communities to the west and south as a pedestrian “cut-through” to the commercial areas. The site is also used as a small bike jump area in the summer.

Chronology

Since the 1920’s the Shady Rest Tract was occupied by National Forest Summer Homes administered by the United States Forest Service. The cabins on the site were removed and relocated in the 1980’s, when the Town designated Shady Rest as High Density Residential (HDR-1) and identified it for Affordable Housing (AH). The site was zoned as Affordable Housing (AH) in 1989.

In 1990, Town Council adopted a Negative Declaration for up to 172 units on the site. The Council also directed that a Master Plan for the site include rental units for low and very-low income households and open space and park area. A Master Plan for the Shady Rest site was approved by Town Council in 1991 (DZA 90-5). The Master Plan established the land use pattern, density and development standards for the property. DZA 90-5 sets a maximum of 172 units with a mix of 120 low and very low-income apartments and 52 moderate-income homes. A vote initiative in 1996 proposed revising the master plan. The initiative was defeated by a substantial majority.

A land exchange with the USFS for the Shady Rest property was completed in 2002, making the Shady Rest Tract private land. The current property owners, Mammoth Land Development Group, began discussing development direction for the property with Town staff.

Current Planning Status

The Hidden Creek Crossing concept is in the pre-application process. A Planning Commission workshop is scheduled for April 25th, 2006. Afterwards, the applicant is expected to submit a full application.

“Hidden Creek Crossing” Concept

The Hidden Creek Crossing concept (selected exhibits from “Hidden Creek Crossing Master Plan 2006” attached) proposes a total of 460 residential units and 31,000 s.f of commercial space within the site. The residential units are proposed to include 100 “affordable units” targeted to 80-120% of median income; 100 “workforce units” targeted to 120-200% median income; and 260 “resident market rate units” that are intended to provide housing options for people who are permanent, full time residents of Mammoth Lakes, and/or full-time employees within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The residential building types proposed include condominium and/or apartments and stacked townhomes. The townhomes proposed are approximately 50 feet in height and the larger buildings proposed are a maximum of approximately 75 feet. The parking proposed includes covered ground level parking and a single level understructure parking garage. The concept proposes to leave the wetland area on site undisturbed and maintain the 50-foot stream setback. A day care facility is also proposed on site.

Site Density and Design

The Shady Rest Master Plan sets a maximum of 172 units with a mix of 120 low and very low-income apartments and 52 moderate-income housing on site. Recommendation 2H of the Master Plan recommends that at least a third of the units be very-low income, a third low income and the rest moderate income units.

The site is designated High Density Residential in the General Plan. This designation allows for up to 12 dwelling units per acre. The General Plan also identifies the site for Affordable Housing. The zoning for the site is Residential Multiple Family-1 with an AH (Affordable Housing) overlay. This overlay allows for adoption of site-specific development standards subject to a master plan. The adoption of a master plan becomes the governing zoning for the site. Pursuant to the State Density Bonus Law, the existing Master Plan may qualify for up to a 35% density bonus (61 additional units) for a total of 233 units.

The Master Plan is now more restrictive on density than the General Plan for the site. Under the current General Plan, the Town could amend the Master Plan to allow up to 12 units per acre, approximately 300 units, plus a density bonus.

Pursuant to State Density Bonus Law, a density bonus of 20-35% shall be approved according to the percentage of units that are restricted to very low, low,

and moderate-income households. Low-income households are defined by the State of California as 30-80% of median income and moderate households are defined as 80-120% of area median income (California Health and Safety Code). The “Hidden Creek Crossing” concept is proposing 22% of the total units to be targeted to 80-120% of median income or moderate households. A project with 22% moderate-income units is granted a density bonus of 17% pursuant to State law. This would allow for a total density of 351 units if the Master Plan were amended to allow for 300 units.

The Town has an additional provision in the Municipal Code that allows Planning Commission, subject to a conditional use permit, to increase density for projects with a higher percentage of qualifying affordable units, up to a maximum of twice the permitted density if all units are restricted to low or very low-income households (Municipal Code 17.16.040). However, the “Hidden Creek Crossing” concept is not proposing all units to be restricted to low or very low-income housing.

The final permissible density range for the “Hidden Creek Crossing” concept as submitted is approximately 172 - 351 units. However, the appropriate density for Shady Rest also relates to the site design. A design that provides community benefits would earn a higher density than a design providing little or no community benefit, due to the provision of on-site amenities. Community benefits could include neighborhood pedestrian connections, trails, public access to open space, childcare facilities, transit connections, joint-use public parking, etc.

Issues and Opportunities

Staff has been working to identify the key issues and opportunities that may be presented through the development of the Shady Rest site. The key questions that we have framed are:

1. What are the program and design characteristics of an in-town local’s workforce neighborhood, including public amenities, accessible open space and attractive common areas?
2. How can the program and design create a positive economic and physical influence to the Main Street/Center Street, and the Laurel Mountain/Old Mammoth Road areas?
3. How is the site designed to protect surrounding neighborhoods?
4. What are the special attributes of the site and how should the site be designed?

Staff has also framed some objectives for the Shady Rest site, and has shared them with the applicant in design workshop meetings.

Shady Rest Objectives

1. Develop a livable in-town workforce residential neighborhood
 - a. Not fractional, not market rate, not second homes
 - b. Mechanisms to ensure units remain at determined rates in perpetuity
 - c. Diversity of income - very low, low and moderate
 - d. Variety of unit size and scale
2. Preserve and restore unique site features
3. Protect surrounding neighborhoods
4. Create a future catalyst to surrounding commercial areas
5. Phase implementation
 - a. High quality of living through out (no disparity, grouping or phasing by income)
 - b. Reasonable product absorption rate (no flip to market rate)
6. Achieve long-term affordability
 - a. Durability of materials and design
 - b. Low operating and maintenance costs
 - c. Low HOA fees (public right-of-way maintenance)
 - d. Transit accessibility
7. Provide key resident amenities
 - a. Day care
 - b. Active and passive recreation
8. Create a community oriented design
 - a. Neighborhood context
 - i. Connection, orientation and amenity to and for adjoining areas and neighborhoods (e.g. Sierra Valley, Tavern Road, Main Street and Center Street)
 - ii. Traffic management and calming with adjoining neighborhoods
 - iii. Trail and pedestrian emphasis
 - iv. Transit accessible
 - b. Sustainable site planning and architectural design
 - i. Accessible wetlands and community park
 - ii. Significant tree preservation
 - iii. Unobtrusive, articulated buildings
 - iv. Minimum paving, maximum permeable surface
 - v. High quality materials
 - vi. Covered parking
 - v. Green building technology
 - vi. Low level, non-glare lighting
 - vii. Snow management innovation

In the context of the Draft General Plan Update and Shady Rest Master Plan, staff expects to achieve community benefits through performance zoning. For example, Breckenridge, Colorado has a points system to evaluate projects. The Town of Breckenridge must approve a project when it has a score of zero points or above. Points are awarded for compliance with codes and deducted for nonconformance. Projects are also awarded points when the development addresses community needs and/or social services. So a project can go over maximum density if the project provides substantial community benefits.

In order to fully understand the “Hidden Creek Crossing” concept in the context of Mammoth Lakes the following information is required:

- A housing market study to demonstrate the demand for the proposed units and their demand-based absorption by the community over time.
- A description of the workforce housing by unit mix and income, as well as the methods of securing affordability over time.
- The project’s development pro forma to demonstrate the financial reasons as to why any proposed increase in density or other adjustment from Town standards may be justified.



Main Street

Shady Rest Parcel

Center Street

Manzanita

Sierra Nevada Road

Old Mammoth Road

