

ADDITION AND RESPONSE TO COMMENTS
INITIAL STUDY/NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Town of Mammoth Lakes
Housing Element Update 2014-2019

SCH# 2014032067

LEAD AGENCY:

Town of Mammoth Lakes
437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite R
PO Box 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Contact: Jen Daugherty, Senior Planner
760 934-8989 ext. 260

June 18, 2014

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Mammoth Lakes Draft Housing Element Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) see Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21177, as well as the State CEQA Guidelines, see Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 15063.

The IS/ND was made available for public review and comment pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070. The public review and comment period commenced on March 24, 2014, and expired on April 22, 2014.

The IS/ND and supporting documents were available for review by the general public at the Town of Mammoth lakes Community & Economic Development Department, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite R, Mammoth Lakes, CA, and on-line at <http://ca-mammothlakes.civicplus.com/index.aspx?nid=586>. A Notice of Intent to Adopt/Notice of Availability was printed in the local newspaper and sent to agencies of interest.

During the public review and comment period, one comment was received on the IS/ND from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), on April 7, 2014 (attached).

Even though CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines do not require a Lead Agency to prepare written responses to comments received on a IS/ND, the Town of Mammoth Lakes has elected to prepare the following written response with the intent of conducting a comprehensive and meaningful evaluation of the proposed project.

2.0 CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT INITIAL STUDY

The Draft Initial Study was published on March 24, 2014. Since that time, minor revisions have been made to the Draft Housing Element in response to comments provided to the Town during a Public Workshop of the Planning and Economic Development Commission, held on April 9, 2014, and by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) as part of their required review. None of the revisions result in any new or different impacts from those that were analyzed in the Draft Initial Study. The minor revisions include the following:

1.4 General Plan Consistency

HCD requested that the Town provide additional information on how it will ensure consistency with the General Plan over the planning period. Therefore, the following sentence has been added:

“To ensure consistency, the Town will review all General Plan elements during the Annual Planning Report process.”

5.2 Housing Policies and Programs

The California Department of Transportation District 9 provided a comment on Goal H.4 regarding a re-assessment of development impact fees to adequately fund transportation facilities necessitated by additional residential units that generate travel trips.

The following sentence has been added to Policy H.4.B:

“Consider waiving development impact fees only when significant impacts (e.g. circulation) can be avoided.”

The following sentence has been added to Policy H.4.E:

“...while ensuring development impacts are adequately mitigated through development impact fees and/or other appropriate measure(s).”

The following was added to Policy H.6.A in response to a comment received during the Public Workshop of the Planning and Economic Development Commission, held on April 9, 2014:

“...and solar. Encourage energy efficient programs such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) and others.”

3.0 RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

This section includes responses to comments received on the Initial Study/Negative Declaration during the period of public comment.

1. RESPONSE TO COMMENT FROM CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION APRIL 7, 2014.

This comment pertains to Goal H.4 and policies related to reducing governmental restraints. It stated that any re-assessment of development impact fee amounts should consider the need to fund transportation facilities necessitated by additional residential units that generate travel trips.

Policies H.4.B. and H.4.E. have been slightly modified to address the comment. Please see the above section for the specific changes to these policies. Additionally, the proposed policies suggest that the Town consider such reductions or waivers, and does not require or mandate that they be granted. Consideration of the ability of the project to mitigate impacts to facilities and infrastructure would be a consideration prior to granting such waivers, as would the Town’s ability to alternately fund the improvements. In addition, it should be

noted that the Town's Municipal Code currently permits the Town Council to grant a waiver or reduction of Development Impact Fees under certain conditions; thus, the policy does not represent a significant change or departure from the existing Code. Finally, where a CEQA-required analysis shows that a future project would have significant environmental impacts, mitigation of those impacts is required, regardless of any waiver or reduction of Development Impact Fees.

4.0 CONCLUSION

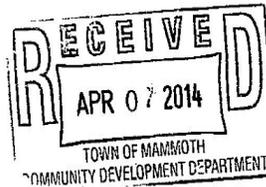
The Draft Housing Element 2014-2019 CEQA public review and comment period has provided an opportunity to obtain additional information that could be used to revise or modify the proposal. The information received, and the revisions made to the Housing Element since publication of the Draft Initial Study, did not warrant any substantial change or revision to the project that would alter the conclusions of the Initial Study or lead to a significant impact to the environment.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 9
 500 SOUTH MAIN STREET
 BISHOP, CA 93514
 PHONE (760) 872-0785
 FAX (760) 872-0754
 TTY 711
 www.dot.ca.gov



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April 4, 2014

Ms. Jen Daugherty, Senior Planner
 Town of Mammoth Lakes
 P.O. Box 1609
 Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546-1609

File: Mno-203
 IS/ND
 SCH#: 2014032067

Mammoth Lakes Draft Housing Element 2014-2019/General Plan Amendment 13-002

Dear Ms. Daugherty:

Thank you for giving the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 9 the opportunity to comment on the Draft Housing Element items. We have the following comment:

- For Goal H.4 and related policies for reducing governmental constraints, please be judicious during Town re-assessment of development impact fee amounts, especially re: transportation facilities. Assuming units are built for occupancy, additional units inherently generate trips for some sort of travel mode. Such impact fees are a proportional method to ensure that funding would not fall short for transportation facilities (roadways, pedestrian/bike paths, transit) necessitated by the additional users.

Caltrans appreciates working with the Town during the Local Development Review process as the Town continues to preserve and improve the transportation system by requiring housing projects to provide right-of-way dedications, transportation facility construction, drainage systems, and snow removal. Feel free to contact me at (760) 872-0785, with any questions.

Sincerely,

GAYLE J. ROSANDER
 IGR/CEQA Coordinator

c: State Clearinghouse