

March 31, 2017

Sandra Moberly, Planning Manager
Town of Mammoth Lakes
P.O. Box 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Dear Sandra:

This letter describes my comments on the Alta Planning and Design "Walk, Bike, Ride" Draft 1.0 conceptual plan.

Operating under the assumption that this is merely a conceptual plan for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, one may be able to glean a few worthy ideas from Draft 1.0, but the vast majority of the concepts are based upon ill understood facets of our town, unworkable, unaffordable and many could actually worsen modalities that have proven to be successful.

On page 26, a concept for Main Street at Laurel Mountain Road is depicted. While conceptually, I like the idea of creating a lane for parallel parking of autos on the main road and a dedicated bike/walk paths on the other side of a strip with planted trees, I do wonder about snow storage. If this winter has highlighted anything, it's the vital importance of sufficient snow storage. In a year with heavy snowfall, I would imagine that the parking lane would become de-facto snow storage effectively eliminating the parking along Main Street. Customers of the businesses along Main Street would be left with nowhere to park.

On page 18, a concept for a major transit-trail hub is depicted overlooking Twin Lakes. Other than the addition of a restroom, which could be a welcome addition, the concept for this location reveals a lack of understanding regarding actual use patterns in this area. Assuming current road closure patterns, this area would likely see the heaviest use in winter when skiers and snowshoers access the Lakes Basin for winter touring. People typically park near the gate and depart for one to many hours before returning to their autos. Again, assuming current road closure patterns, this area sees little, transient use in summer and fall. People typically stop briefly for the view and move on. As for the bike station, how would this be utilized? Such a bike station would likely serve a vanishingly small number of visitors and thus represent a small value-add to mobility. To utilize a bike station at this location, one would have to drive or take the summer shuttle with the intention of securing a bike for a ride in the Lakes Basin. If the intent is to offer bike rentals as a visitor amenity in the summer months for Lakes Basin rides, then it would seem that a much larger program would be required. To encourage such an activity, perhaps a better plan would be to have visitors secure their rentals at the Village gondola shop and provide a public shuttle accommodating bicycles up into the Lakes Basin so that they don't have to bike up Lake Mary Road a long distance. Such a plan would reduce the number of autos going up Lake Mary Road and provide a fun activity for families. While I do see some families riding up Lake Mary Road along the bike path, it would likely prove challenging for many at 8K+ feet.

On page 14, Mobility Hubs are described. It's unclear to me what user group would indeed make use of these hubs. There are three main user groups to consider: 1) over-night visitors, 2) day visitors and 3) local residents. Most over-night and day visitors come with copious baggage, gear and food. I can't imagine any over-night visitor arriving with luggage, skis, fishing or other gear and food would ever park in a Mobility Hub and then transfer to public transit to get to their accommodations. Day visitors may arrive from other nearby locations to access the ski area in winter or trailheads in summer, but these would be the smallest user group and they also would arrive with the gear necessary for their outdoor adventures. I could perhaps see some members of this user group utilizing a Mobility Hub. Finally, local residents seem unlikely to utilize such an amenity. When I think about Mobility Hubs, I imagine that these might work very well in a large city such as San Francisco, which has many day visitors without a lot of gear. In conclusion, the concept of the Mobility Hub seems ill suited to the Town of Mammoth Lakes and seems tailor made for a large urban area. Please note that on page 56, the report states that "there are not yet any built examples of multi-modal smart mobility hubs" and provide Los Angeles as an example of a city moving in that direction, but only in that they have improved sidewalks and lighting etc.

Specifically on page 16, a Mobility Hub is depicted taking up a large portion of the Community Center Park. Even if one were to buy off on the idea of a Mobility Hub, or even a basic parking garage, this location is completely ill logical. If the idea is to provide an option for day users to park and ride to an alternate destination, then this location in the Community Center Park would only serve to exacerbate an already untenable traffic situation along Minaret Road. Having buses and autos piling into/out of a Mobility Hub entrance, wherever it is located, and navigating around people crossing Minaret to the Village, would create a traffic nightmare in the area. In addition, the location backs up to a residential neighborhood and the Community Center Park was specifically intended to act as a buffer from Village activity for residents of that neighborhood. There are two other locations that make much more sense as a location for some sort of parking center. The Hillside lot is already designed and ready to go as a 300-space parking garage that could serve the Village businesses. This location makes perfect sense for this purpose and is readily accessible to the Village without requiring patrons to cross Minaret Road. Alternatively, or in addition, if one buys the idea of a Mobility Hub, the most suitable location for such a structure is the southeast corner of Main and Minaret. There a Mobility Hub would work exceptionally well as a portal for skiers who want to access Eagle, Canyon, the Village gondola or Main Lodge. Traffic flows could be designed at that location to accommodate buses and autos in both summer and winter for transit to MMSA or other areas in summer. It would seem prudent for MMSA to build such a structure, especially if their plans including reduced parking at Eagle, Canyon and Main Lodge, as the Hart Howerton conceptual plan bears out.

It is important to note that MMSA is already providing insufficient parking for skiers in winter as observers have noted skiers parking in various places around town and taking public transportation to the ski area. Observers have noted skiers parking in the Park 'n Ride lot, next to the old Chart House restaurant, at the Sierra Center Mall (some of which

may be due to the new Tech Rec center), and in the lot for the Catholic Church. This is clear evidence that visitors are looking for public transit alternatives to driving to one of the current ski portals.

On page 9, the Mobility Hubs and major and minor transit-trails hubs are shown. A major hub is depicted in Reds Meadow with a minor hub at MMSA Main Lodge. This arrangement would upend a current arrangement that actually works fairly well. During peak summer use (and this is daily, not just on weekends), there can be hundreds of people standing around the lawn area waiting for their turn to board a bus to Reds Meadow. There are many, many buses lined up to pick up the next group of passengers. To locate the hub for these visitors anyplace other than its current location would create a problem that doesn't exist (the Draft 1.0 seems to propose locating it at a Mobility Hub depicted in the Community Center Park which would make the travel time to Reds Meadow much longer, requiring more buses etc). While there are certainly improvements that could be made to the Reds Meadow system as a whole, relocating the passenger pick up area need not be one of them). Also, the Draft 1.0 proposes no autos at all in Reds Meadow, which is completely unrealistic given the number of families who camp, fish and boat in Reds Meadow area.

On page 7, I don't see a transit hub near the hospital. If there were one place in town that should most definitely have a comfortable transit hub, it would be the hospital.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Karen L Fisher