

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Subject: South Districts Neighborhood District Planning
Framework

Initiated by: Ellen Clark, Senior Planner

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this staff report is for the Planning Commission to provide input and make a recommendation to the Town Council on the South Districts Neighborhood District Planning (SDNDP) Framework. The SDNDP process is intended to “close out” the NDP process for several key districts, including the Sierra Star District, East Open Space Stream Corridor (EOSSC) district, South Old Mammoth Road District, and for the Bell Shaped Parcel. The SDNDP process will also provide guidance for the Gateway District, for which a separate planning process by a series of agency partners is anticipated.

The Framework includes three major components which together provide the overall guidance for the SDNDP by defining the study areas and major issues to be addressed in greater detail. Specific items included in the Framework are:

1. Boundary and sphere of influence,
2. Guiding principles, and
3. Preliminary issues identification.

Town-wide District Planning

To complete the General Plan Update process in 2007, district planning was incorporated into the General Plan at the recommendation of the Community Stakeholders Group. This allowed some complex policy issues to be deferred in order to be ultimately resolved through more detailed and place-specific study. Neighborhood District Planning is a way to prepare more detailed community-based plans for certain areas in town. Neighborhood District Plans are prepared as "studies" to describe issues, opportunities, and constraints and to craft alternatives and recommendations that describe the desired character, program, facilities,

and catalyst sites for the study area. As studies, Neighborhood Districts Plans are not adopted, rather they provide information used in later master plans, design plans, facility plans as well as the zoning code.

Since 2007, several district plans or planning studies have been completed; and others are in draft form. At the direction of the Town Council, remaining NDPs identified as a priority will be completed this fiscal year. This latter group includes South Old Mammoth Road, Sierra Star and East OSSC Districts, which together will be addressed in the South Districts NDP. The other remaining priority NDP, for the Sierra Valley Sites, will be initiated as a separate process starting in early 2011.

District Planning Status

The status of district planning for various districts is listed below, and illustrated in Attachment 1. At this time, five NDPs or planning studies have been completed and accepted by the Town Council, two are in draft form, and three others are pending.

Completed and Accepted NDPs

Three District Planning studies, for the North Old Mammoth Road District, Snowcreek District, and North Village District were completed in conjunction with major development applications between 2007 and 2009. The Downtown Concept for Main Street, encompassing the Main Street and Shady Rest districts, was completed in 2010. Completed and accepted NDPs are in place for:

- North Old Mammoth Road,
- Snowcreek,
- North Village,
- Main Street (as part of the Downtown Concept for Main Street),
- Shady Rest (as part of the Downtown Concept for Main Street).

Draft NDPs

District planning was initiated for the Sierra Star and East OSSC Districts in conjunction with major development applications. Progress on these drafts included Town Council and Planning Commission approval of a framework, public workshops, focus group meetings, and delivery of draft planning studies. Ultimately, these processes were put on hold following the withdrawal of applications due to the economic downturn. All materials related to these NDPs, including the draft planning study documents, can be found on the Town's website.

Completion of the Sierra Star and East OSSC NDPs will be addressed in the SDNDP process.

NDPs not Yet Initiated:

Three key NDPs are pending:

- South Old Mammoth Road,
- Gateway,
- Sierra Valley Sites.

The South Old Mammoth Road NDP will be completed through the SDNDP process. The Sierra Valley Sites NDP will be initiated in early 2011.

As described in more detail below, the Gateway area is not formally included among the focused study areas to be addressed in the SDNDP process. However, this area will be considered as part of the broader “Sphere of Influence” for the South Old Mammoth Road District, allowing key issues to be identified, and input from the SDNDP process used to inform planning underway by the various public agency partners with land holdings in this area.

Stable Residential Districts

Finally, there are several other districts, not listed above, consisting of established residential neighborhoods that are generally stable, largely built out, and which do not face significant or complex planning issues. They include:

- Juniper Ridge,
- The Knolls,
- Majestic Pines,
- Mammoth Slopes,
- Old Mammoth.

These areas will not be subject to a dedicated NDP process, and instead will have any particular planning issues addressed through the zoning code update that is currently underway. It should be noted that substantial portions of these neighborhood have been considered to some extent in the completed and draft NDPs listed above, because they are included in the “Sphere of Influence” of those districts.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The proposed SDNDP Framework was prepared after a review of the General Plan, relevant accepted district studies (i.e. Downtown Concept for Main Street, North Old Mammoth Road District Special Study and

North Village District Planning Study), draft district studies for the East OSSC and Sierra Star districts, and other relevant planning documents.

In addition staff considered the existing conditions within each study area, and used input from a series of preliminary meetings of the “Resort Investment Committee,” comprising Planning Commissioners Tenney and Duggan. The Resort Investment Committee is focused on economic development strategies, placemaking and investment strategies to enhance the Town’s role as a destination resort and to “prepare for reinvestment.”

SDNDP Study Areas and Spheres of Influence

Proposed study area and sphere of influence boundaries for the Sierra Star, East OSSC, and South Old Mammoth Road Districts are shown in Attachment 2. 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.

East OSSC and Sierra Star

The study area and sphere of influence boundaries shown for East OSSC and Sierra Star reflect those that were previously approved by the Planning Commission and Town Council during their respective previous NDP processes, without any modifications. It should be noted that the Sierra Star sphere of influence encompasses the Bell-Shaped Parcel, for which more specific planning guidance will be developed as part of the SDNDP process.

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.

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 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 can be considered in the SDNDP process. At the same time, the ideas and information generated by the SDNDP process can be integrated into the Gateway area planning effort.

SDNDP Guiding Principles

The list of guiding principles included in Attachment 3 reflects applicable Neighborhood and District Character descriptions in the General Plan, and may include any other guiding principles suggested by the Planning Commission and/or Town Council. The guiding principles define 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 separately in the attachment. 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 in the attachment.

SDNDP Process and Public Participation

As specified in the approved NDP process, preparation of the SDNDP will include analysis of issues, opportunities and constraints (existing conditions), development and analysis of plan options and alternatives, and development of plan recommendations, including specific items that would be codified. The content of the report will reflect the various checklist items listed in Attachment 5, including:

- Land Use,
- Mobility,
- Place-making (character, function and program),

- Parks, Open Space and Recreation,
- Sustainability,
- Community Benefits,
- PAOT and PIEC evaluation,
- Phasing and Implementation, and
- Financial Considerations.

During the Downtown NDP process, the Planning Commission expressed a desire to see NDP reports presented in a concise and accessible format that clearly conveys the most important ideas and concepts. Staff will take this approach in developing the report and other materials for the SDNDP.

The NDP is intended to provide a “mid-level” of analysis and recommendations that are more detailed than the broad policy guidance of the General Plan, but not as detailed or specific as a zoning requirements might be. The recommendations of the NDP will, however, provide an adequate basis to inform codification of relevant recommendations through the zoning code update.

One of the important purposes of district planning is to ensure that the general public and key stakeholders of a district are involved throughout the process. The proposed process SDNDP process will include the following public meetings (tentative dates are identified):

- Planning Commission review of the SDNDP Framework (January 12, 2011).
- Town Council approval of the SDNDP Framework (February 2, 2011).
- Focus Group Meeting and Public Workshop #1 (February, 2011)
- Focus Group Meeting and Public Workshop #2 (March 2011)
- Planning Commission review of the draft SDNDP report including options and recommendations (April 2011).
- Planning Commission recommends acceptance of the MSNDP to Town Council (May 2011).
- Town Council accepts the MSNDP (June 2011).

These meetings will follow the NDP process, and will be conducted in an efficient manner to meet the target schedule. As directed by the Town Council, there will be two week advanced notification of public meetings to ensure a broad and inclusive public process.

The schedule outlined above includes public workshops to develop the draft NDP in February and March (exact dates and format of these workshops has yet to be determined). Focus group meetings will also be integrated into this tentative schedule. The Focus Group includes representatives of different interests within the study area, representatives of Town Commissions, business and property owners, non-profit groups, and members of recreation interest groups.

SDNDP Preliminary Issues

A list of preliminary issues was prepared (Attachment 5) and is organized based on the table of contents approved by the Town Council on July 15th 2010. The issues analysis is based on the General Plan, and other relevant planning documents and studies including the Trails System and Parks and Recreation System Master Plans, completed and draft NDPs, review of existing conditions, and preliminary discussions with the Planning Commission Resort Investment Committee. The Framework issues summary is quite broadly focused, with the expectation that more specific and detailed issues, opportunities and constraints analyses will be generated during the SDNDP process, which will be the basis for the SDNDP's recommendations.

It should be noted both the application for the proposed Sherwin Hotel project, and for the Sierra Star Master Plan Update have been withdrawn. Because these legislative amendments are no longer being pursued, the SDNDP process does not need to consider the issues of modified height or building envelope that were included in the previous Draft Sierra Star and East OSSC NDPs.

The Town has recently been in discussion with the Events Organizers Group, as well as local recreational interests as part of the recently formed Mammoth Sports Council, to consider needs and prioritization for facilities within Mammoth Lakes. An important focus of the SDNDP process will be to consider the facilities, amenities, infrastructure and "catalyst sites" that support the broader program goals for the district and the town as a whole.

OPTIONS ANALYSIS:

1. Recommend to Town Council approval of the South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Framework, consisting of the boundary, sphere of influence, guiding principles, and preliminary issues identification as proposed or as modified by the Planning Commission.

2. Continue the South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Framework discussion until the Planning Commission is comfortable with the Framework.

VISION CONSIDERATIONS:

Successful implementation of District Planning will further emphasize the goals of the General Plan and provide an understanding of the contribution of each neighborhood and district toward the social, economic and environmental success of the entire community. Establishing clear and unambiguous policies and regulations through district planning will maintain high standards for development and design and will implement the Vision Statement.

STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS:

This work effort is included in the Community Development Department FY 2010-2011 Budget Work Program, and will be staffed entirely by the Community Development and Public Works Departments.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

See Staffing Considerations.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The conclusion of the SDNDP will describe the needed level of CEQA analysis and compliance necessary to implement and codify its planning recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend to Town Council approval of the South Districts Neighborhood District Planning Framework, consisting of the boundary, sphere of influence, guiding principles, and preliminary issues identification as proposed or as modified by the Planning Commission.

Attachments:

1. NDP Status Summary Diagram
2. SDNDP Study Area Boundaries and Spheres of Influence
3. SDNDP Guiding Principles
4. NDP Content Checklist
5. SDNDP Preliminary Issues

