
4.1 AESTHETICS, LIGHT AND GLARE

This section evaluates the aesthetic impacts that could result from the implementation of the Updated Plan. Aesthetics refers to the overall visual qualities of an area or within a given field of view. As quantitative standards are not available to analyze visual quality and individuals respond differently to changes in the visual environment, the evaluation of aesthetic impacts can be termed a subjective exercise due to widely varying personal perceptions. What may be considered an improved visual scene to one person may be considered an adverse visual condition to another. This section also includes an analysis of light and glare impacts that could result from implementation of the Updated Plan.

4.1.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1.1.1 Visual Characteristics of Mammoth Lakes

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is situated in a dramatic mountain valley surrounded by majestic peaks. The surrounding forest weaves through the town creating a unique, forested, rustic environment. The forests, mountains, and meadows in and around the town primarily define its character.

More specifically, the Town is nestled against a backdrop of snowcapped 11,000-foot peaks that dominate the visual field. The urbanized portions of the Town are generally located between 7,800 and 8,600 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Native vegetation includes pine forest and meadow. Barren rock outcrops and avalanche slopes, and chaparral and sagebrush all add texture and color. Surface waters, in the form of streams, lakes, seeps, and snow, are also contributing elements to the visual aesthetics of the landscape.

A viewshed (or viewpoint) is an area that can be seen from a particular position (i.e., viewed from various locations in the Town and along roadways to and within the community). The Sierra Nevada Mountain Range forms the backdrop of views to the west, north, and south of the Town. To the east are views of the Great Basin and high desert vegetation. The rugged terrain in portions of the community serves to provide both excellent viewpoints and also restrict views, depending upon the viewer's location. Included among the important viewpoints within the area are Mammoth Crest, Crystal Crag, Lake Mary Road, the ski slopes on Mammoth Mountain, Lincoln Mountain, Sherwin Mountain, SR 203 east of Old Mammoth Road, U.S. Highway 395 along its entire length in the Planning Area, the White Mountains, Old Mammoth Road south of Mammoth Creek, and many other striking features. Mammoth Mountain and

portions of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and White Mountains can be seen from nearly all points within the Town (Cover Photograph). The majority of the Town is forested with a mix of pine and fir. The southeast portion is open meadow and sagebrush.

Against this vast backdrop of dramatic natural landscapes, urban development in the Town provides a visual contrast (Figures 4.1-1, 4.1-2, 4.1-3 on pages 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7, respectively). Roads, buildings, utility poles, and other man made structures provide forms, textures, and colors that contrast with the natural environment and are often visible from distant vantage points (for example, the paved expanses of shopping center parking lots along Main Street and Old Mammoth Road are readily discernable from Mammoth Mountain, and the Town as a whole can be seen from long stretches of U.S. Highway 395, particularly at night). Visual contrast is somewhat reduced in residential areas, particularly the older established neighborhoods because of the use of natural materials and colors and the screening afforded by trees and vegetation. Figure 4.1-4 on page 4-8 depicts the major view corridors throughout the Town.

4.1.1.2 Light and Glare

There are primarily two sources of light intrusion: 1) light emanating from structural interiors and passing through windows; and 2) light from exterior sources, such as street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, event lighting in the resort areas, traffic headlights, slope grooming, and landscape lighting. Uses such as residences, hospitals, and hotels are considered light sensitive since they are typically occupied by persons who have expectations for privacy during evening hours and who are subject to disturbance by bright light sources. Glare results mainly from sunlight reflection off flat building surfaces with glass and reflective metal surfaces typically contributing to the highest degree of reflectivity. At night, lights from the Town illuminate the developed areas, providing contrast with the generally uninterrupted darkness of the surrounding mountains and NF lands. Preservation of dark night skies through appropriate lighting controls has been identified as an important community goal. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources, such as automobile headlights. Glare generation is typically related to either moving vehicles or sun angles, although glare resulting from reflected sunlight can occur regularly at certain times of the year. Glare-sensitive uses generally include residences and transportation corridors (i.e., roadways).

4.1.1.3 Scenic Highways

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has designated U.S. Highway 395 as a scenic highway throughout the Planning Area (Figure 1.1.1). State Route 203 is eligible for designation as a scenic highway in its entirety but has not been formally established as a



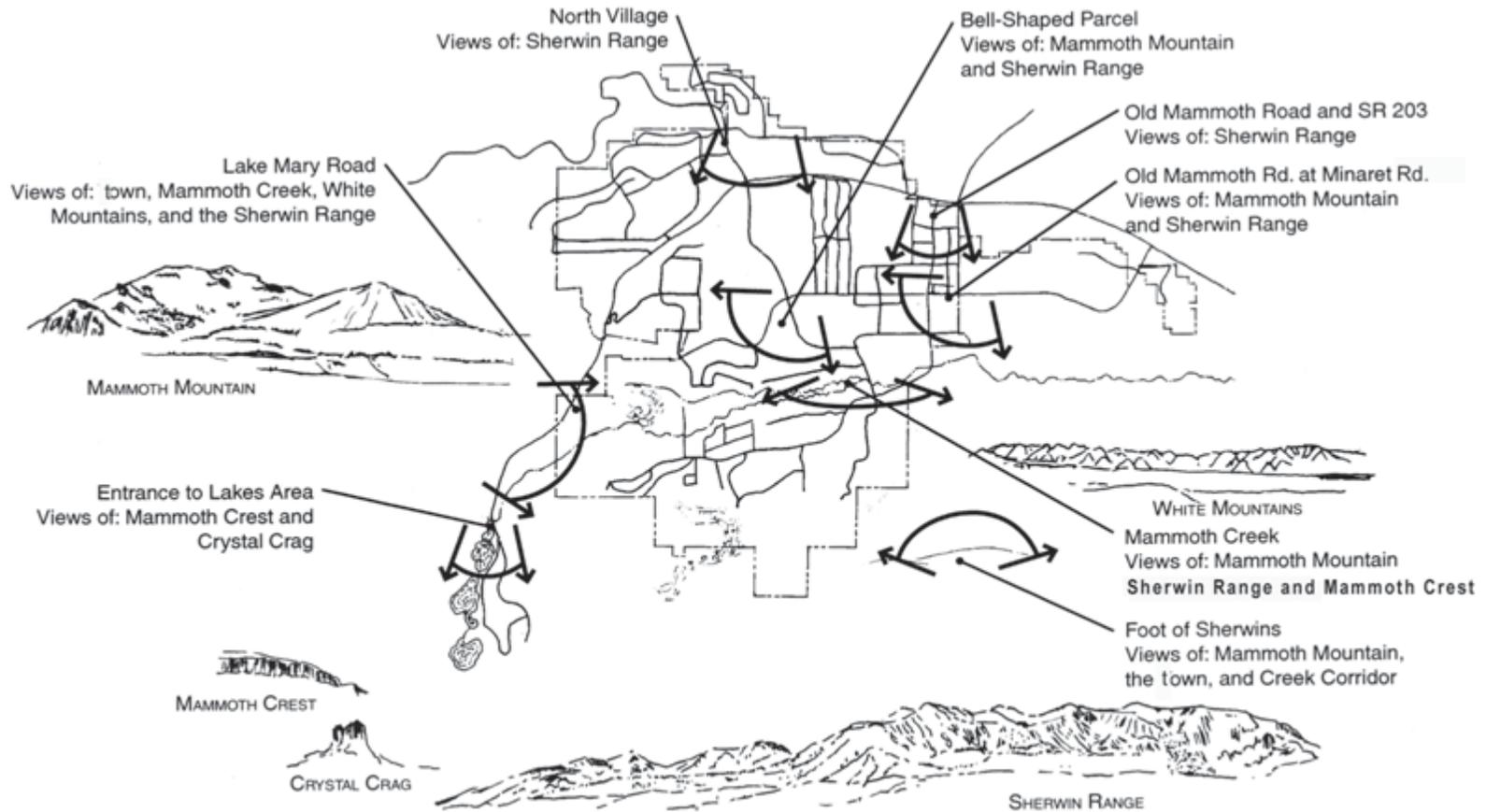
Figure 4.1-1 Typical Mountain Vista as Seen From Various Locations in the Town



Figure 4.1-2 Resort Development-North Village



Figure 4.1-3 Urban Development in the Town
Against Dramatic Natural Landscape



Major View Corridors and Vistas

Figure 4.1-4 Major Viewpoints from the Town

scenic highway. The current conditions on State Route 203 within the UGB limit the views of the landscape because of the localized topography, tree canopy and existing development.

The Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963 to preserve and protect highway corridors located in areas of outstanding natural beauty from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of the adjacent lands (California Department of Transportation, Scenic Program Highway website, www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/scpr.htm). The scenic designation is based on how much of the landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which views are compromised by development.

The purpose of the scenic designation is to protect and enhance the visual environment in areas of important scenic value. The first step in the nomination process is a visual assessment based on Caltrans' guidelines, coupled with adoption by the local jurisdiction of a scenic corridor protection program. Step 2 is consultation with Caltrans; Step 3 is preparation of a scenic highway resolution package; Step 4 is Caltrans' review of the resolution; and Step 5 is a review of the resolution package by the Departmental Transportation Advisory Committee (DTAC).

4.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4.1.2.1 Undergrounding of Electric and Communication Distribution Facilities near State Scenic Highways

The state has adopted a policy (Public Utilities Code Division 1, Part 1, Chapter 2 Section 320) to locate all future electric and communication facilities underground whenever feasible and consistent with sound environmental planning, if such facilities are proposed to be built near a designated state scenic highway and would be visible from the scenic highways if erected above ground.⁶ Pursuant to this policy, which was adopted in 1972, the undergrounding of utilities must be coordinated with the local governments and planning commissions concerned. Above ground power lines are currently present within the UGB and along the U.S. Highway 395 Scenic Corridor.

4.1.2.2 Outdoor Advertising Act

Within the Town of Mammoth Lakes, signage is regulated by Chapter 17.40, Signs, of the Town's Municipal Code or other land management agency standards as applicable. Outside of the Mammoth Lakes Municipal Boundary, signage is regulated by the Mono County Sign

⁶ Note that this policy does not apply to facilities necessary to the operation of any railroad.

Ordinance or other land management agency standards as applicable. In addition, the U.S. Forest Service and California Department of Transportation have standards that would apply to land within their jurisdictions.

To protect scenic values along designated State Scenic Highways, outdoor advertising is strictly controlled by the provisions included in ~~along State Scenic Highways~~ (Section 5440.1 of the Business and Professions Code). In general, Section 5440.1 provides that no advertising display may be placed or maintained along any highway that has been officially designated as a scenic highway or scenic byway.

4.1.2.3 Town Design Review Ordinance and Guidelines

Town Municipal Code (Section 17.32.120 [Ord. 90-06 and 89-05]) regulates the aesthetic characteristics of all development in Mammoth Lakes other than single-family residences. These regulations are enforced through application of Design Guidelines. The purposes of Design Review are as follows:

- To implement the goals, policies and objectives of the General Plan;
- To regulate the design, coloration, materials, illumination and landscaping of new construction, renovations, and signage within the town in order to maintain and enhance the image, attractiveness and environmental qualities of the town;
- To ensure that property development or redevelopment and building construction or renovation do not detract from the value or utility of adjoining properties as a result of inappropriate, inharmonious, or inadequate design;
- To prevent indiscriminate destruction of trees and natural vegetation, excessive or unsightly grading, indiscriminate clearing of property, and destruction of natural significant landforms;
- To ensure that the architectural design of structures and their materials and colors are appropriate to the function of the project and are visually harmonious with surrounding development and natural landforms, trees, and vegetation; and
- To ensure that the location, size, design, and illumination of signs, their material, and colors are consistent with the scale and design of the building to which they are attached or which is located on the same site, and to assure that signs are visually harmonious with the surrounding environment.

4.1.2.4 Town Outdoor Lighting Regulations

Town Municipal Code Chapter 17.34, which was adopted in May 2003, regulates outdoor lighting within the Town. The ordinance provides rules and regulations for outdoor lighting within the Town in order to promote a safe and pleasant nighttime environment, to protect and

improve safe travel, to prevent nuisances caused by unnecessary light, to protect the ability to view the night sky, to phase out nonconforming fixtures, and to promote energy conservation. The ordinance implements requirements to utilize the most effective design standards for lighting to “address nuisances caused by improperly installed, unshielded, or misdirected fixtures, all existing outdoor lighting fixtures shall be adjusted or modified to the extent practical to reduce or eliminate glare, light trespass, and light pollution.”⁷

4.1.2.5 Specific Plans, Master Plans, and Area Plan Documents

Aesthetic and design standards for a number of parcels throughout Mammoth Lakes are governed by existing adopted Specific Plans and Area Plans, which are not being changed by this project. These documents effectively establish zoning standards for the development of particular areas. These plans are often used to ensure that multiple property owners and developers adhere to a unified development plan, and at the same time, these plans provide flexibility in development standards to address unique site conditions or achieve specific planning goals. The Town has utilized Specific Plans, Master Plans, and Area Plans (often in conjunction with Development Agreements) to define development standards for some of the most visually prominent lands in the Town including the North Village, Juniper Ridge, Snow Creek, and Sierra Star/Lodestar.

4.1.2.6 State Scenic Highway Regulations

The California Scenic Highway Program is governed by state laws found in Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. In order to obtain a scenic highway designation, preparation and adoption of a scenic corridor protection program must be completed by the local jurisdiction in the form of ordinances to apply to the area of land within the scenic corridor. Such regulations may already exist in various portions of local codes. They should, however, be assembled under an easy to read format that includes, at a minimum, the five legislatively required standards listed below. They should be written in sufficient detail to avoid broad discretionary interpretation. Scenic Corridor Protection Programs do not preclude development but ensure compatible development that is consistent with the community’s scenic values and goals of the California Scenic Highway Program.

The five minimum requirements under Section 261 of the Streets and Highways Code are as follows:

- Regulation of land use and density of development (i.e., density classifications and types of allowable land uses).
- Detailed land and site planning (i.e., permit or design review authority and regulations for the review of proposed developments).

⁷ 17.34 Outdoor Lighting

- Prohibition of off-site outdoor advertising and control of on-site outdoor advertising.
- Careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping (i.e., grading ordinances, grading permit requirements, design review authority, landscaping and vegetation requirements).
- The design and appearance of structures and equipment (i.e., placement of utility structures, microwave receptors, etc.).

4.1.3 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based upon CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, the project would be considered to have a significant impact on aesthetics, light, and glare if the project were to:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcrops, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; and/or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

As indicated previously, the standards used to evaluate the significance of impacts are qualitative rather than quantitative because appropriate quantitative standards are not available.

4.1.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Issue 4.1-1: Would development associated with implementation of the Updated Plan adversely affect scenic vistas within the Town?

Discussion: Continued development within the UGB would permanently replace some existing views and scenic vistas with more intensive urban type uses. Development of new structures may result in building heights, building mass, and building placement that obstruct view corridors from public spaces and ways, as well as protrude above the treeline in forested areas. Ridgeline development and development in other elevated or exposed areas may result in these structures intruding on important public views. Road, trail, sidewalk, and transit facilities, and related infrastructure such as lighting and signage may be developed in a manner that is inconsistent with the community character. Under the Updated Plan, the aesthetic impacts and intrusion upon scenic vistas would be most pronounced in and around the major resort nodes,

where development intensification (through density transfers and bonuses for community benefits and amenities) would occur.

The primary area of visual impact would be Snowcreek, because the Snowcreek Meadow, lacks screening by native trees. The proposed resort development in this area will be readily evident and will be a substantial change from the existing largely undeveloped view. Changes would also be evident in the vicinity of North Village, since this development surrounds a major town intersection through which a large number of residents and visitors regularly travel. Development of other resort nodes that are somewhat removed from major intersections and in the trees will result in less of an impact, based upon design and tree retention policies in the general plan.

Policies and Implementation Measures in the Updated Plan

The Updated Plan proposes the adoption of policies and implementation measures to reduce potential impacts to scenic vistas. These policies and measures are described below.

- I.1.B.d.1 Site design shall make every effort as feasible to save large specimen trees and pursue aggressive replanting with native trees to retain the forested character of the Town; site development adjustments may be offered to achieve this.
- I.2.A.a.2 Through the review of discretionary projects, the Town, consistent with any limitations imposed by State law, shall encourage the protection, planting, restoration, and regeneration of native trees in new development.
- I.2.A.a.4 New development shall utilize clustering as feasible to retain and preserve existing trees and open space.
- I.5.A.a.1 The Town shall enforce its Design Guidelines and zoning regulations to ensure that building height, massing, and placement maintain view corridors from public spaces and ways.
- I.5.A.a.2 The Town shall ensure through zoning regulations and development review that new construction is at a scale appropriate to the use designation and lot area, and compatible with adjacent land uses including preservation of existing views, light and solar access.
- I.5.B.b.2 The Town shall develop a plan that identifies areas suitable for the undergrounding of utilities based on a review of overall costs and benefits and coordinate with

- service providers and land developers in areas where undergrounding is recommended.
- I.5.B.b.3 The Town shall encourage through the design review process that all new development shall be zoned, located, sited, and designed to be subordinate to and/or complement on site and surrounding land features.
- II.3.B.a The Town shall limit the creation of new parcels on slopes over 30 percent.
- I.5.B.b.4 No new development shall be permitted on prominent ridgelines and bluffs. Discretionary actions for lands previously developed on prominent areas shall incorporate measures to minimize visual intrusion and to ensure that these primary scenic areas are protected and/or enhanced.
- I.5.B.b.5 Building heights shall remain below the average tree tops in the forested portions of the community. For single-family designations building heights shall be 35 feet. (17.16 Residential Zones) For other designations, the heights may generally not be more than 55 feet including concessions for understructure parking and affordable housing. (This is consistent with Resort but not commercial 10 feet higher than existing height limits)
- VI.1.A.a.2 The Town will continue to enforce the site planning standards outlined in the Town Design Guidelines.
- VI.4.B.a.2 Through development review and approval, the Town shall ensure that new construction is at a scale appropriate to the use designation and lot area, and is compatible with adjacent land uses including preservation of existing views, light, and solar access.
- VII.3.C.a.1 The Town shall work with Caltrans and other jurisdictions to implement Scenic Highway status for the US 395 and State Route 203 corridors.

In addition, Implementation Measure VI.1.A.c.1~~I.5.b.3~~ would allow exemptions to height limitations for development projects. However, this implementation measure further states that any such exemption would be subject to rigorous visual analysis acceptable to the Town, showing that the exception is warranted in light of other community goals and benefits and does not significantly impact views. Thus, this implementation measure would not result in significant impacts regarding effects to scenic vistas.

All major development projects would undergo environmental and design review on a site-specific basis, per CEQA, the Town's Municipal Code and all applicable regulatory requirements, to ensure that facilities and structures would be sited in a way that would not have substantial adverse effects to scenic vistas. In addition, Policies and Implementation Measures are contained in the General Plan to ensure that no new development is permitted on prominent ridgelines and bluffs (I.5.B.b.4), building heights remain below average tree tops in the forested portions of the community (I.5.B.b.5), and new construction is determined through the development review process to ensure that the scale is appropriate and appropriate with adjacent land uses, including preservation of existing views, light and solar access. The maintenance of the existing UGB will further assist in limiting development from additional areas of the Town that could have an effect on a scenic vista. Therefore, the Updated Plan's policies and implementation measures, along with project-specific environmental and design review by the City, would reduce impacts to scenic vistas to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

The Updated Plan would not result in impacts to scenic vistas. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation Measures

Impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

***Issue 4.1-2:** Would development associated with implementation of the Updated Plan damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcrops, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

Discussion: The Updated Plan would provide the opportunity for new development in the Urban Growth Boundary, which could result in the loss of scenic resources such as trees and rock outcrops. Development consistent with Updated Plan standards and designations would result in similar land uses in and around Mammoth Creek, and along the Lake Mary Road corridor leading to the Lakes Basin. New developments would be required to meet design review requirements and thereby be subject to codes and policies intended to blend with established architectural themes and aesthetic standards. Additionally, goals, policies and implementation measures contained within the Updated Plan would contribute to enhanced scenic qualities within the community along SR 203, which is recognized in the Updated Plan as a major gateway corridor. The Updated Plan proposes the adoption of several implementation measures to reduce potential impacts to scenic resources. These implementation measures are described below.

Implementation Measures in the Updated Plan:

- I.1.B.d.1 Site design shall make every effort as feasible to save large specimen trees and pursue aggressive replanting with native trees to retain the forested character of the Town, site development adjustments may be offered to achieve this.
- I.2.A.a.2 Through the review of discretionary projects, the Town, consistent with any limitations imposed by State law, shall encourage the protection, planting, restoration, and regeneration of native trees in new development.
- I.2.A.a.4 New development shall utilize clustering as feasible to retain and preserve existing trees and open space.
- I.2.A.a.5 A tree survey, preservation, and replacement plan may be required to be filed with the Town prior to issuance of a grading permit for discretionary development applications.
- I.5.B.b.3 The Town shall encourage through the design review process that all new development shall be zoned, located, sited, and designed to be subordinate to and/or complement on site and surrounding land features.
- VI.1.A.a.2 The Town will continue to enforce the site planning standards outlined in the Town Design Guidelines.
- VI.1.A.d.1 The Town shall preserve the alpine resort character of Mammoth Lakes through the adoption of tree preservation standards that promote the general health of the forest.
- VII.3.C.a.1 The Town shall work with Caltrans and other jurisdictions to implement Scenic Highway status for the US 395 and State Route 203 corridors.

The Town has already secured an easement along most of Mammoth Creek within the Urban Growth Boundary in order to protect this important environmental, scenic and recreational corridor, and a mitigation measure is included below that would extend this easement to the remaining unsecured parcels. Additionally, to ensure that public and private facilities in the vicinity of the Main Street (SR203) and the Old Mammoth Road intersection are designed to present an attractive face to the road, mitigation has been recommended that the Town design review guidelines be revised accordingly.

As stated in this Section, Policies and Implementation Measures are contained in the General Plan, that require site plan review to make every feasible effort to save large specimen

trees (I.1.B.d.1), to cluster development so as to retain and preserve existing trees and open space (I.2.A.a.4), that no new development is permitted on prominent ridgelines and bluffs (I.5.B.b.4), building heights remain below average tree tops in the forested portions of the community (I.5.B.b.5) and for the Town to work with Caltrans to implement Scenic Highway status for US 395 and State Route 203 Corridors (VII.3.C.a.1). Implementation of the Town design review requirements, along with the Updated Plan implementation measures and recommended mitigation measures, would reduce impacts to scenic resources, including views from U.S. Highway 203, and local trees and rock outcrops to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

In addition to the implementation measures stated above, the following mitigation measures are recommended to ensure that impacts to scenic resources are reduced to a less than significant level.

- 4.1-1 ~~The Town shall extend the existing easement along Mammoth Creek to the remaining undeveloped parcels to protect scenic resources along this corridor. The Town shall enforce the existing setback requirements along Mammoth Creek as they apply to the remaining undeveloped parcels to protect this important biological and scenic corridor. While necessary to protect the resources, the Town shall secure easements as the remaining parcels develop to ensure that the corridor is permanently protected.~~
- 4.1-2 The Town shall amend the Design Review Guidelines to include standards to assure that public and private facilities in the vicinity of the Main Street (SR203) and the Old Mammoth Road intersection shall be designed to present an attractive face to the road. The standards shall address such issues as building height and massing, tree preservation, and lighting to ensure that public and private development in proximity to SR203, which is eligible for designation as a scenic highway, do not detract from scenic resources.
- 4.1-3 The Town through its environmental and design review process shall ensure that development at the Mammoth Yosemite Airport that is visible from Highway 395 is consistent with State scenic highway regulations for Highway 395.

Level of Significance After Mitigation Measures

With the incorporation of mitigation measures above, impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

Issue 4.1-3: *Would development associated with implementation of the Updated Plan degrade the existing visual character or quality within the Town?*

Discussion: The Updated Plan would provide the opportunity for new development in the Urban Growth Boundary. As new development occurs, temporary exposed graded surfaces, construction debris, the presence of construction equipment, construction cranes, truck traffic, and stockpiled equipment resulting from future construction may impact views of individual sites from surrounding uses and roadways. However, these impacts are short term and would cease upon completion of an individual project.

New development would result in the construction of structures that are consistent with the designs and materials that have been previously determined appropriate to Mammoth Lakes, its setting, and history through the adopted Design Guidelines. As new development would be subject to design review requirements of the Town, the new development or redevelopment would result in a quality of development that is consistent with the community character. The Updated Plan proposes the adoption of policies and implementation measures to reduce potential impacts regarding the visual quality and character of the Town. These policies are described below.

Policies and Implementation Measures in the Updated Plan:

- I.1.B.d.1 Site design shall make every effort as feasible to save large specimen trees and pursue aggressive replanting with native trees to retain the forested character of the Town; site development adjustments may be offered to achieve this.
- I.2.A.a.2 Through the review of discretionary projects, the Town, consistent with any limitations imposed by State law, shall encourage the protection, planting, restoration, and regeneration of native trees in new development.
- I.2.A.a.4 New development shall utilize clustering as feasible to retain and preserve existing trees and open space.
- I.5.A.a.1 The Town shall enforce its Design Guidelines and zoning regulations to ensure that building height, massing, and placement maintain view corridors from public spaces and ways.
- I.5.A.a.2 The Town shall ensure through zoning regulations and development review that new construction is at a scale appropriate to the use designation and lot area, and compatible with adjacent land uses including preservation of existing views, light and solar access.

- I.5.B.b.1 The Town shall control the scale and mass of single- and multi-story buildings through design review. Use flexible guidelines to ensure that buildings do not look alike, and to recognize that the absence of setbacks may add to the character of Mammoth Lakes in designated mixed use areas.
- I.5.B.b.2 The Town shall develop a plan that identifies areas suitable for the undergrounding of utilities based on a review of overall costs and benefits and coordinate with service providers and land developers in areas where undergrounding is recommended.
- I.5.B.b.3 The Town shall encourage through the design review process that all new development shall be located, sited, and designed to be subordinate to and/or complement on site and surrounding land features.
- II.3.B.a The Town shall limit the creation of new parcels on slopes over 30 percent.
- I.5.B.b.4 No new development shall be permitted on prominent ridgelines and bluffs. Discretionary actions for lands previously developed on prominent areas shall incorporate measures to minimize visual intrusion and to ensure that these primary scenic areas are protected and/or enhanced.
- I.5.B.b.5 Building heights shall remain below the average tree tops in the forested portions of the community. For single-family designations, building heights shall be 35 feet. (17.16 Residential Zones) For other designations, the heights may generally not be more than 55 feet including concessions for understructure parking and affordable housing.
- V.1.A.a Maintain the Urban Growth Boundary to prevent sprawl and to maintain access to public lands and a compact urban area.
- VI.1.A.a.2 The Town will continue to enforce the site planning standards outlined in the Town Design Guidelines.
- VI.1.A.d.1 The Town shall preserve the alpine resort character of Mammoth Lakes through the adoption of tree preservation standards that promote the general health of the forest.
- VI.4.B.a.2 Through development review and approval, the Town shall ensure that new construction is at a scale appropriate to the use designation and lot area, and is compatible with adjacent land uses including preservation of existing views, light, and solar access.

Although the above polices and implementation measures would ensure that new development would be consistent with the existing character of the Town, development associated with implementation of the Updated Plan would involve the replacement of undeveloped vacant areas with building structures, landscaping, fuel modification zones, etc. As stated in the General Plan, the forests, mountains, and meadows in and around the Town define its character. Therefore, the replacement of undeveloped areas with urbanized uses would result in impacts to the visual character and/or quality of the Town. Despite that all development projects would be subject to project-specific environmental and design review, and the applicable Updated Plan policies and implementation measures would be implemented, which would reduce the overall visual impacts resulting from development within the Town, the existing visual character of the Town would still be permanently changed with implementation of the Updated Plan. Thus, due to the permanent change in visual character of newly developed areas of the Town, it is concluded that impacts to the Town's visual character and quality are significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are feasible to reduce the potential impacts from development on visual quality and character.

Level of Significance After Mitigation Measures

Impacts to the Town's visual character and quality would be significant and unavoidable.

***Issue 4.1-4:** Would development associated with implementation of the Updated Plan create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the Town?*

Discussion: Given the isolated mountain setting, some fugitive light and glare impacts already exist in the Planning Area due to existing developments and land uses that do not meet the current requirements of the lighting ordinance. These impacts reduce the quality of stargazing for residents and visitors. The intensification of development would incrementally contribute to the existing built environment. The Updated Plan proposes the adoption of several implementation measures to reduce potential light and glare impacts. These implementation measures are described below.

Implementation Measures in the Updated Plan:

- I.6.B.a.1 The Town shall educate the public on and enforce the design standards and lighting ordinance during the design review process.

- I.6.B.a.2 The Town shall work with other agencies such as Southern California Edison to expedite the implementation of the lighting ordinance.
- I.6.A.a.2 The Town will require all exterior lighting to conform to the Lighting Ordinance to eliminate glare. Temporary exceptions may be permitted for special events.

Development projects would be subject to environmental and design review on a site-specific basis to ensure that light and glare impacts do not substantially increase the amount and intensity of nighttime lighting nor cause light spillover onto adjoining properties, do not reduce night sky visibility, and do not increase the potential for glare onto adjacent areas including the U.S. Highway 395 Scenic Corridor. Additionally, all new development would be required to comply with the requirements of the Town's Lighting Ordinance (17.34). While the Town has policies and regulations regarding lighting, given the increase in development that would occur under the Updated Plan compared with existing conditions, the Update Plan would result in an increase in lights at night which would impact the night sky. Therefore, the Updated Plan would result in a significant impact with regard to night lighting and a reduction in the quality of star-gazing for residents and visitors, ~~that would result.~~

Mitigation Measures

~~Even with the policies and measures regarding lighting in the Updated Plan as well as the Town's lighting regulations, development~~ Development associated with the Updated Plan would result in a significant impact with regard to night lighting due to the impacts to the night sky and a reduction in the quality of star-gazing. ~~However, no feasible mitigation measures have been identified to reduce the impact.~~ In addition to the implementation measures stated above, the following mitigation measure is recommended to further reduce potential impacts to night lighting:

4.1-4 The Town shall review the existing Lighting Ordinance and revise the ordinance, where feasible, to protect views of the night sky and to ensure that the intent of the Lighting Ordinance is met. The Lighting Ordinance shall be amended to consider the feasibility of restrictions on lighting that include, but are not limited to: unshielded bulbs wattage restrictions, complete shielding on fixtures, shielding of all lights on buildings over approximately 35 feet tall, cumulative wattage limits, and holiday lighting timing limits.

Level of Significance After Mitigation Measures

Even with the policies and measures regarding lighting in the Updated Plan as well as the Town's lighting regulations and Mitigation Measure 4.1-4, development associated with the Updated Plan would result in a significant impact with regard to night lighting due to the impacts

to the night sky and a reduction in the quality of star-gazing. This impact would remain significant and unavoidable.