
4.12 RECREATION

This section evaluates the potential impacts to parks and recreation facilities and programs that could result from implementation of the Updated Plan.

4.12.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Town provides public recreation facilities for use by the general public. As shown in Table 4.12-1, the existing park areas, which are owned and operated by the Town, equal 18 acres. (A discussion of these parks is provided below.) In addition, there are 4 acres at Mammoth Creek Park and 12.5 acres at Shady Rest Park that are not owned but are operated by the Town under a Special Use Permit from the USFS. In addition, Whitmore Park, which is 18.66 acres, is operated jointly by the Town and Mono County on land leased from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. As shown in Table 4.12-1 on page 4-296, there are over 53 acres of park and recreation land currently developed.

Mammoth Creek Park, located off of Old Mammoth Road near Meridian Boulevard, includes 4 acres on USFS-administered lands and 5 acres on property owned by the Town. The park includes Hayden Cabin museum, picnic tables, restroom facilities, children's play area, art sculpture, walking and biking trails, and paved parking.

Shady Rest Park, located at the end of Sawmill Cutoff Road, contains 12.5 acres and is the main active sports municipal park in the Town. It includes a soccer field, softball field, restrooms, two sand volleyball courts, picnic areas, a play area, and paved parking. This park is located on USFS-administered lands.

Community Center Park, located at 1000 Forest Trail, encompasses 4.5 acres owned by the Town and includes the Community Center, library, ~~children's daycare~~, children's play area, six tennis courts, picnic tables, walking paths, restrooms, and paved parking. The Community Center includes a kitchen, stages, and other facilities and is primarily used for public meetings including Town Council meetings.

Whitmore Park, located 10 miles south of the Town off of U.S. Highway 395 at Benton Crossing, contains three baseball/softball diamonds, restrooms, picnic facilities community swimming pool, and paved parking. As stated above, this 18.66-acre park is operated jointly by

Table 4.12-1

Existing and Planned Park Land Including Acres Owned by Town and Acres Developed

Active Parks	Acres Owned by Town	Acres Dev	Park Standard	5 acres/1,000 population
Community Center Park	4.52	4.52	Acres of developed parkland per 1,000 population	5
Mammoth Creek Park	4.97	8.97 ^a	Resident/Seasonal population at buildout	15,000
Shady Rest Park	0	12.52 ^b	Acres per 1,000 population	15
Trails Park	2.30	2.30	Acres needed at buildout	75
Whitmore Park	0	18.66 ^c		
Deed Restricted Open Space (Trails sub)	6.22	6.22		
Subtotal Acres	18.01	53.19		
Acres owned/developed		53.19		
Planned Parks				
Recreation Center (leased land)		15.00		
Festival/Cultural Sites	3.00	3.00		
Shady Rest Park Expansion				
Shady Rest Affordable HP	6.00	6.00		
Open Space/Park lands	3.78	3.78		
Winter Play area (parking)		0.25		
Total Acres Planned	12.78	28.03		
TOTAL PARKS		81.22		

^a Four acres owned by U.S. Forest Service.

^b Owned by U.S. Forest Service.

^c Owned by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Source: Town of Mammoth Lakes, 2005

the Town and Mono County on land leased from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Trails Park, located at Meridian Boulevard south of Commerce Drive, is currently being developed as Brothers Skate Park and encompasses approximately two acres owned by the Town.

In addition to parks, the Town has 7 miles of off road, Class A bike trail system totaling 6 acres. The Town also provides recreational programs including adult and youth sports leagues, enrichment classes and community service classes, swimming (swim lessons, swim team), and special events.

In addition to the facilities and programs provided by the Town, there are other public, private semi-public, and commercial recreation facilities in the area which are outlined in Table 4.12-2 on page 4-298.

Several recreation opportunities exist within and adjacent to the Planning Area and include such amenities as the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Lakes Basin, Devils' Postpile National Monument, Red's Meadow, Inyo National Forest, and the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness Areas. Downhill skiing and snowboarding are the focus of winter recreation. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area accommodates more than 20,000 SAOT. In 2004 and 2005, Mammoth Mountain accommodated 1.43 million skiers annually (1.46 million guests when Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center, Scenic Gondola Rides, and Snowmobile Adventures are included) and about 1,300,000 skiers' days annually. ~~Mammoth Mountain's MMSA's Development Plan, which guides the growth of MMSA's downhill facilities, provides for a Peak Design Capacity (PDC) of 24,000 skiers capacity as set in its permit from the Inyo National Forest is 24,000 SAOT.~~ Mammoth Mountain Ski Area also owns the Tamarack Lodge at Twin Lakes, the major cross-country ski area in the Town, Mammoth Snowmobile Adventures, and June Mountain Ski Area.

Summer recreation is dispersed throughout the Town with fishing, hiking, mountain biking, and golfing among the more popular activities. Devils' Postpile/Red's Meadow and the Mammoth Lakes Basin are popular day-use destinations. Because of high demand, limited parking, and a narrow road, the Devils' Postpile/Red's Meadow area is accessible only by shuttle bus during most of the summer season.

According to the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final EIS (USDA 2001d), the Inyo National Forest is one of the top five national forests for recreation use nationally and within the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment study area, which includes 11 national forests; it has the most motorized and non-motorized trails and the greatest number of wilderness acres. In addition, more visits were recorded in the Ansel Adams Wilderness than any of the other wilderness areas in that study area (USDA 2001d).

The Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final EIS (USDA 2001d) examined future recreation trends for the Pacific Coast Range, which includes California, Oregon, and Washington and for the nation as a whole. The projected change (increase) in participants from 1995 to 2050 for the Pacific Coast Range was greatest for snowmobiling and downhill skiing. On the national level, the trend showed the greatest change (increase) in participants from 1995 to 2050 in cross-country skiing.

Table 4.12-2
Recreational Facilities in Mammoth Lakes

Type of Facility	Number	Location(s)
Gymnasium	3	Mammoth Elementary School, Mammoth High School, Snowcreek Athletic Club
Baseball/Softball Fields	5	Mammoth Elementary School, Mammoth High School, Shady Rest Park, Whitmore Recreation Area (2 fields)
Tennis Courts	17+	Snowcreek Athletic Club (9 courts), Community Center Park (6 courts), Mammoth High School (2 courts), plus others in private developments
Swimming Pools	2+	Snowcreek Athletic Club, Whitmore Pool, plus others in private developments
Hot Springs	2	Hot Creek, Red's Meadow
Meeting Facilities	7	Community Center (only Town Facility), Mammoth Mountain Inn, Sierra Nevada Inn, <u>Shilo Inn</u> , Canyon Lodge, <u>Village's Grand Sierra Lodge</u> , <u>Eagle Lodge</u> , <u>Main Lodge Mountainside Conference Center</u> , Sierra Holiday Trailer Park, Snowcreek Athletic Club, Fire Station, <u>Ski Museum</u> , USFS Visitor Center, Mammoth Mall
Handball/Racquetball Courts	8	Snowcreek Athletic Club (8 courts)
Boating/Fishing	3	Lakes Basin, Crowley Lake, Convict Lake
Cross Country Skiing	3	Tamarack Ski Center (Lakes Basin), Sierra Meadows, Shady Rest
Downhill skiing	2	Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, June Mountain Ski Area
Snowmobiling	3	Sierra Meadows, Shady Rest, Smokey Bear Flat
Dog Sledding	1	Sierra Meadows, Shady Rest
Moto Cross	1	Mammoth Moto Cross Track
Volleyball Courts	8	Mammoth Elementary School, Mammoth High School, Shady Rest Park, Grumpy's
Golf	2	Snowcreek, Sierra Star
Equestrian Facilities	4	Agnew Meadows Park Station, Mammoth Pack Outfit, Sierra Meadow Equestrian Center, Red's Meadow Pack Station
Hiking/Backpacking Trailheads	5	Agnew Meadow, Red's Meadow/Devil's Postpile, Lakes Basin (several), Sherwin Lakes, Convict Lake
Camping	16	Shady Rest, Pine Glen, Sherwin Creek, Lake Mary, Lake George, Coldwater, Horseshoe Lake, Agnew Meadows (group), Agnew Meadows, Upper Soda Springs, Pumice Flat (group), Pumice Flat, Minaret Falls, Devils Postpile, Red's Meadow, Convict Lake, Camp High Sierra, Mammoth Mountain RV Park
Picnic Areas	6	Shady Rest, Mammoth Creek, Community Center, Minaret Vista, Lakes Basin, Earthquake Fault
Historic Sites	4	Hayden Cabin/Museum, Mill City, Mammoth City and Mammoth Consolidated Mine
Interpretive Centers	1	Mammoth City Rangers Station and Visitors Center
Natural Reserves	1	Valentine Natural Reserve

Source: Town of Mammoth Lakes, 2005

4.12.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4.12.2.1 Quimby Act

The Quimby Act (GC 66477) is state legislation that allows the legislative body of cities, towns, and counties to adopt, by ordinance, requirements for the dedication of land, payment of fees in lieu of dedication, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes as a condition to the approval of a subdivision at a rate of three to five acres per 1,000 population.⁶³ Several conditions must be met in order to apply the Quimby Act to land development. These include the preparation of a Parks and Recreation Element within the General Plan and standards that indicate how much land is needed for parks in the particular jurisdiction.

4.12.2.2 Development Impact Fee

Chapter 15.16 of the Municipal Code provides for the creation of special funds, which includes funds for recreation as outlined in Section 15.16.085 part E, which states that:

A parks and recreation facilities fund is established. The parks and recreation facilities fund is a fund for payment of the actual or estimated costs of constructing and improving parks and recreation facilities, including any required acquisition of land, as well as grading, irrigation, and landscaping costs associated therewith.

Table 4.12-1 shows the planned parks. It is estimated that all planned parks would cost approximately \$72,624 million dollars with new development responsible for 59 percent of the overall costs. Development Impact Fees (DIF) are collected from all new residential development. DIF fees per unit are collected by the Town prior to building permit and range from \$5,020 per unit to \$8,366 per unit

⁶³ The dedication of land, or payment of fees, or both, shall not exceed the proportionate amount necessary to provide three acres of park area per 1,000 persons residing within a subdivision subject to Section 66477, unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community park area, as calculated pursuant to this subdivision, exceeds that limit, in which case the legislative body may adopt the calculated amount as a higher standard not to exceed five acres per 1,000 persons residing within a subdivision subject to Section 66477 (Government Code Section 66477).

4.12.3 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based upon CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, the Project would be considered to have a significant impact on recreation if the project were to:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for parks; or
- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.

4.12.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Issue 4.12-1: *Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for parks?*

Discussion: The project proposes to redesignate Mammoth Creek Park as IP, which would permit the development of facilities such as schools, hospitals, government offices and facilities, and museums. The proposed change would support project objectives for expanded resort and recreational development including efforts to provide enhanced cultural opportunities, as well as joint use of facilities, including athletic fields. Even though redesignation of the 5 acres of Mammoth Creek Park owned by the town would decrease the projected amount of developed parkland to 76.22 acres at buildout, the redesignation would not impact the Town's ability to meet the Town's performance objectives for parks of 5 acres per 1,000 permanent and seasonal residents. On an interim basis, the redesignation of Mammoth Creek Park would reduce the park facilities by 5 acres, which would reduce existing facilities to 48 acres. Based on a current permanent and seasonal population of approximately 9,000 people, 45 acres of park facilities are required and would increase incrementally as population increases. Therefore, the redesignation would not impact the existing provision of parkland in compliance with the performance standard of 5 acres per 1,000 permanent and seasonal residents and is anticipated to be provided by planned parks as population increases. However, while the facilities at Mammoth Creek Park would remain with the redesignation, the redesignation would provide the potential loss of that park. If the park were redeveloped, the loss of the park would be significant

and unavoidable. In addition, at buildout development of all planned parks which are needed to maintain performance objectives for parks may have adverse environmental impacts. Site specific environmental analysis would be undertaken prior to development of each of the proposed projects.

Policies and Implementation Measures in the Updated Plan

The Updated Plan proposes the adoption of the following implementation measures to reduce potential impacts parks and recreation facilities and programs:

- II.1.A.b.3 The Town shall maximize the joint use of facilities, including athletic fields, community meeting facilities, child care facilities, and park sites, where feasible.
- IV.2.A.a.3 The Town shall maintain an up to date Master Facility Plan to ensure that park development and acquisition is prioritized and planned in concurrence with development.
- II.1.C.a: Ensure that new development densities do not exceed the capacity of public service infrastructure and utility systems. Require new development to upgrade or fund facilities to meet increased demand or require reduced density or project redesign for any project that would result in deterioration of service levels or cause available capacity to be exceeded if capacity expansion is infeasible.

While Policies and Implementation Measures contained in the Updated Plan ensure that park development and acquisition is prioritized and planned in concurrence with development (IV.2.A.a.3), and that establishment of joint-use facilities is maximized. An additional 22 acres of park and recreation facilities would be needed at buildout of the Updated Plan to maintain existing performance objectives of parkland per population. The Town would need to construct or expand facilities in order to maintain the stated performance objective. Although additional parks and recreation related policies have been added to the 2005 General Plan, the 1990 Parks and Recreation Element is not being updated at this time. The Town of Mammoth Lakes anticipates adoption of a revised Parks and Recreation Element in ~~2006~~2008. Because it is uncertain at this time where these additional acres would be provided, this impact to existing recreation uses is considered significant and unavoidable. In addition, while the facilities at Mammoth Creek Park would remain with the redesignation, the redesignation would provide the potential loss of that park. If the park were redeveloped, the loss of the park would be significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures beyond the policies and/or implementation measures identified in the Updated Plan and the Development Impact Fees are feasible to reduce the potential impact on existing parks and recreation.

Level of Significance After Mitigation Measures

Since it is uncertain at this time where the additional park acres would be provided, the impacts to recreation would be significant and unavoidable.

Issue 4.12-2: *Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

Discussion: The Project would increase demands for, as well as demands upon, recreational facilities and areas, necessitating construction of additional facilities in order to maintain adequate service levels and to prevent overuse and the resultant physical deterioration of existing facilities. The Updated Plan would result in a total resident and seasonal population of approximately 15,000 people. As shown in Table 4.12-1, with a total resident and seasonal population of 15,000 people a total of 75 acres of park land would be required to maintain the Town's performance objective of 5 acres of park land per 1,000 people. There are currently only 53 acres of developed park land. Thus, the Updated Plan would require an additional 22 acres to maintain the stated performance objectives. Therefore, the Project would create more demand upon recreational opportunities and facilities. As discussed above, Development Impact Fees (DIF) are collected from all new residential development for recreation to meet the future demand for parks.

With respect to winter recreation, the MMSA has indicated in remarks to the Mammoth Lakes Planning Commission that the ski facilities are now operating at maximum capacity on peak weekends, and that MMSA is not planning to expand facilities to accommodate additional skiers.⁶⁴ The focus would instead be on increasing the number of skiers visiting MMSA during mid-week, when utilization of facilities is low. In this respect, the carrying capacity of a primary recreational attraction has already been reached. This indicates that the General Plan elements would need to successfully increase destination (i.e., mid-week) visitation, or the spill-over demands may adversely impact other recreational facilities in Town. MMSA has identified

⁶⁴ Excerpt of comments by Rusty Gregory, Chairman and CEO of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, to the Mammoth Lakes Planning Commission, 8 September 2004.

implementation of airport improvement plans as a key element of achieving the mid-week visitation goals.

Implementation Measures in the Updated Plan

The Updated Plan proposes the adoption of the following policies and implementation measures to reduce potential impacts to parks and recreation:

- II.1.B.b.1 Require that new development areas and associated community-wide facilities (open space resources, parks, libraries, etc.) be linked and oriented to existing developed areas of the community through road networks, public transit systems, open space systems, bicycle, and pedestrian systems.
- II.1.C.a.1 The Town shall ensure service providers are involved in development review process.
- II.1.C.a: Ensure that new development densities do not exceed the capacity of public service infrastructure and utility systems. Require new development to upgrade or fund facilities to meet increased demand or require reduced density or project redesign for any project that would result in deterioration of service levels or cause available capacity to be exceeded if capacity expansion is infeasible.
- IV.1.A.c.1 The Town shall maintain and update the existing Masters Facility Plan, Development Impact Fee Schedule, and/or participate in public- private partnerships to support the development of facilities and services that enhance mid-week visitation.
- IV.1.A.c.2 Development regulations shall require resort visitor developments provide on-site and off-site amenities for their guests' benefit and enjoyment. These amenities should be available to the public as appropriate.
- IV.1.D.c.1 The Town shall develop a Development Incentive and Exactions Program. The program may offer resort development incentives (including density bonuses, modified standards, development entitlements, and agreement) in exchange for specified community benefits.
- IV.2.A.a.1 The Town shall ensure that parkland dedicated under the Quimby Act is suitable for active recreation uses with a maximum slope of ten percent, appropriate community access, and free of significant constraints.
- IV.2.A.a.2 The Town shall ensure the provision of parkland dedications or payment of in lieu fees through Development Impact Fees or Subdivision approvals.

- IV.2.A.a.3 The Town shall maintain and update the existing Master Facility Plan to ensure that park development and acquisition is prioritized and planned in concurrence with development.
- V.1.A.a.1 Development of recreational facilities, public facilities, and public utility installations outside of the Urban Growth Boundary are not a violation of the UGB.

Policies and Implementation Measures are contained in the Updated Plan to ensure that park development and acquisition is prioritized and planned in concurrence with development (IV.2.A.a.3), resort visitor developments provide on-site and off-site amenities for their guests' benefit and enjoyment (IV.1.A.c.2), and appropriate parkland dedications or payment of in lieu fees through Development Impact Fees or Subdivision approvals are enforced (IV.2.A.a.2). These measures assist in reducing potential impact to existing parks, and recreation facilities and programs that would occur due to continued growth associated with the Updated Plan. Therefore, the Updated Plan's policies and implementation measures, along with project-specific environmental review by the ~~City~~Town, would reduce impacts to existing neighborhood and regional parks to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

While the current park demand is met and parks are maintained, the demand for parks based on the adopted performance objective would increase as population increases. The Updated Plan contains policies and/or implementation measures and the Town collects development impact fees to reduce potential impacts to parks. However, based on the increased demand, and the uncertainty of the location of additional park lands, impacts to recreation are considered significant and unavoidable. No mitigation measures beyond the policies and/or implementation measures identified in the Update Plan are feasible.

Level of Significance After Mitigation Measures

Due to the projected increase in demand based on the performance objective, impacts to existing parks and recreation due to increased use of existing parks and facilities would be significant and unavoidable.