
3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.2 LAND USE

The section discusses the regulations and policies that are applicable to the project. Given that the site lies within the Town boundary and on USDA Forest Service (USFS) land, this section considers applicable plans for each agency. The section provides an analysis of the project's consistency with the Town's General Plan, the Town's 2005 Draft General Plan Update, the Juniper Ridge Master Plan, the Town's Zoning Code, the Inyo National Forest Land Resources Management Plan, and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) Development Plan. In addition, the section also provides an analysis of the project's compatibility with surrounding uses.

3.2.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The project site consists of private and public lands, which together comprise approximately 8.67 acres. As shown in Figure 5 on page 19, in Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives, the private land owned by MMSA, which includes Lot 5 and Lot 87, totals approximately 3.49 acres. The portion of Lot 5 planned for development is 3.03 acres and includes Well 16, which is 0.06 acres. The Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD) holds fee title to the Well 16 parcel. The portion of Lot 87 within the development area totals 0.38 acres. In addition, approximately 1.02 acres of the project site comprise portions of Meridian Boulevard and Majestic Pines Road.

Goals and policies contained in the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan (1987) are applicable to the project. In addition, the project site is also located within the Juniper Springs Master Plan Area, which contains development standards specific to that area. Finally, the project is subject to development regulations set forth in Title 17, the Zoning Code of the Town's Municipal Code.

Approximately 4.1 acres, which cover portions of Lot 1, Lot 6, and Lot 7, are lands located within the Inyo National Forest and are administered by the USDA Forest Service. As such, the project is subject to both the Land and Resource Management Plan of the Inyo National Forest and the Special Permit under which the existing recreational facility operates. The MMSA Development Plan provides the long-range plan for build out of the MMSA facilities, including Eagle Lodge.

Privately Owned Land

The project would be subject to goals and policies contained within the Land Use Element of the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan, which was adopted in 1987. The Town is currently in the process of revising its General Plan. While the 2005 Draft General Plan Update is underway, it has yet to be formally adopted. Both the 1987 General Plan and the Update are discussed below.

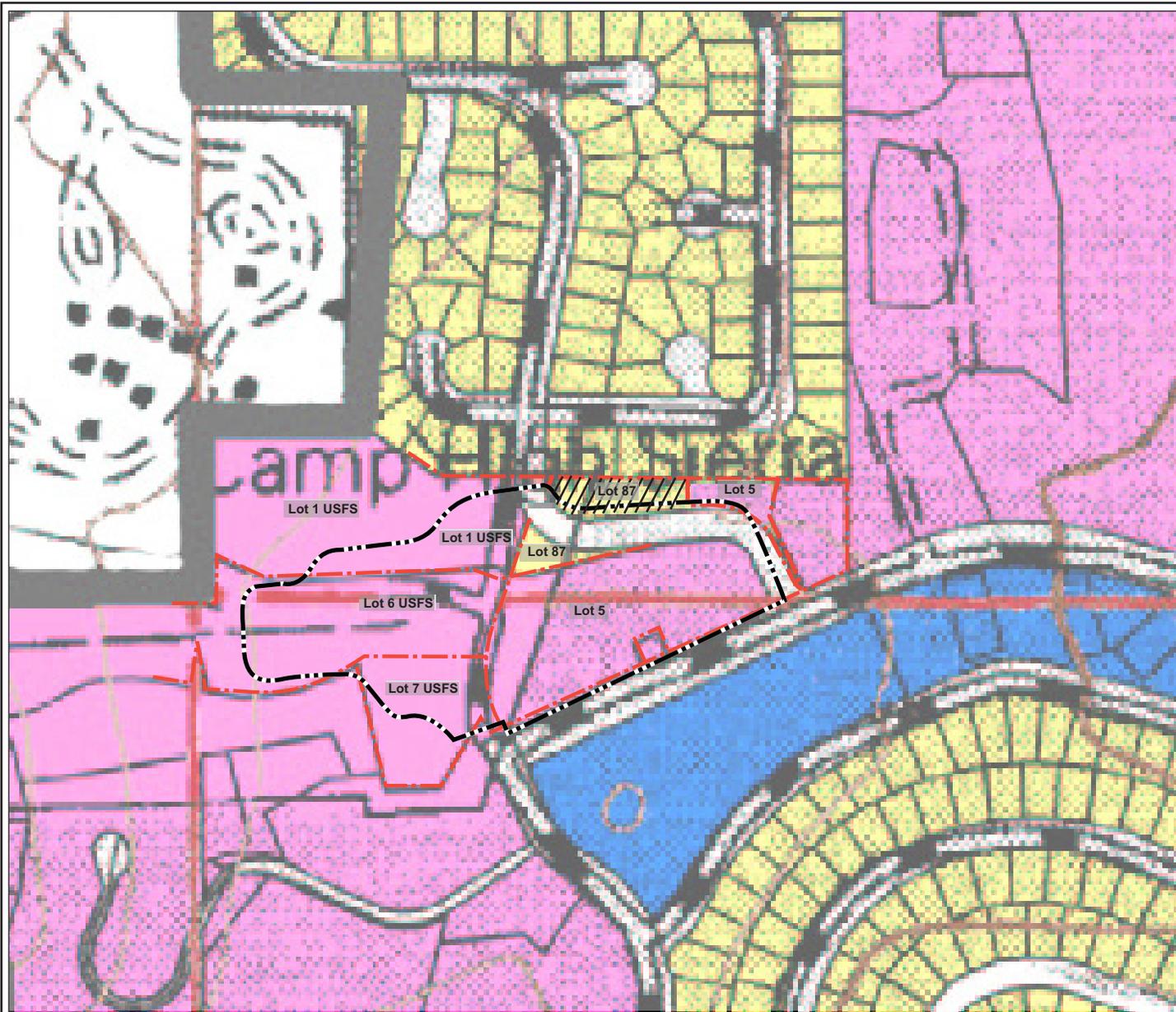
a. The Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan (1987)

The Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan, which was adopted in 1987, is intended to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The General Plan comprises an Introduction and seven elements that each address particular issue areas. The elements include: Land Use, Transportation and Circulation, Housing, Conservation and Open Space, Safety, Noise, and Parks and Recreation. The Town's General Plan contains the goals and policies that guide the community's growth and development. These goals and policies are implemented through the Town's Municipal Code. Goals and policies from the Land Use Element that are relevant to the proposed project are discussed in this section. For a discussion regarding other applicable General Plan policies, please see Section 3.3, Transportation; Section 3.4, Air Quality; Section 3.5, Noise; Section 3.6, Biological Resources; Section 3.7, Cultural Resources; Section 3.8, Population, Housing and Employment; Section 3.9, Aesthetics; Section 3.10, Hydrology; Section 3.11, Water Supply; Section 3.12, Wastewater; and Section 3.13, Stormwater of this Draft EA/EIR.

(1) Land Use Element

As shown in Figure 8 on page 65, the project includes a General Plan amendment that would change the designation of Lot 87 from Low-Density Residential to Resort. The Low-Density Residential designation allows residential uses with a density ranging from three to five dwelling units per acre. When Majestic Pines Road was realigned in the 1990s, Lot 87 was part of the Mammoth Vista I single family subdivision north of Majestic Pines Road. However, the land south of those homes was not developed following the realignment, and no changes were made to the General Plan designation of the property.

The Resort designation allows mixed visitor-oriented uses, such as visitor housing/lodging and tourist-oriented commercial and recreational uses. Housing densities within the Resort designation are allowed to range from six to eight units per acre, with one condominium unit being equivalent to two hotel/motel units. The General Plan defines a dwelling unit as three sleeping areas (bedrooms or lofts) in all multifamily designations. Commercial development is encouraged to support the residential uses within the same resort

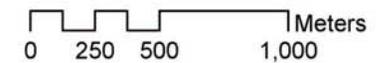


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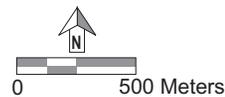
- · — · — Project Boundary
- - - Lot Lines

Explanation

- High Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Resort
- National Forest Lands
- Area of Proposed Redesignation for Low Density Residential & Resort



Base Maps: Old Mammoth, Mammoth Mountain, Crystal Crag & Bloody Mountain
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Source: Town of Mammoth Lakes, PCR Services Corporation, 2006

Figure 8
Existing Land Use Designations
(General Plan 1987)

complex. Amendment 97-2, Exhibit 1 of the General Plan limits the intensity of development through the use of floor area ratio (FAR).¹⁵ As it is applied by the Town, FAR of the support commercial cannot exceed 0.1 square feet of commercial floor area for each square foot of land area of resort development within the Juniper Springs Master Plan. The Juniper Springs Master Plan is discussed in further detail below. The amendment was approved to inhibit large shopping malls, yet allow for a balance of commercial development within the Town.

The Land Use Element designates particular areas in the Town as “activity nodes.” The purpose of designating activity nodes is to plan development around these nodes “with activities appropriate for the area [that] may include hotel and motel room development, with recreational amenities, appropriate tourist commercial space, overhead and surface transit facilities and interconnection to the community’s trail system.”¹⁶ In other words, these activity nodes are intended to be the focal points around which resort and related tourist activities are concentrated. MMSA Chair 15 is indicated as one of five activity nodes of the Town as shown in Figure 17 of the General Plan.

The following are the goals and policies contained in the adopted Land Use Element of the Town’s General Plan that are applicable to the proposed project. The numbers provided are the goal or policy number contained in the Element.

(a) Overall Goals and General Policies

Goals

1. To protect and enhance the natural environment, resources and wildlife habitat of the Mammoth Lakes area.
2. To improve the economic stability of Mammoth Lakes by establishing the community as a year-round destination resort, while preserving the unique natural setting of the community and wildlife habitat which attracts both visitors and residents.
3. To address the needs of the permanent residents of Mammoth Lakes, including the provision of: public facilities and services, improved retail and service commercial development, and adequate housing opportunities.

¹⁵ Floor area ratio is the relationship of square feet of floor area to square feet of land area. A 0.1:1 FAR means that the building would contain 0.1 square feet of floor area for each square foot of land area; or floor area 0.1 times greater than land area.

¹⁶ *Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan (1987)*, p. 60.

General Policies

1. In furtherance of the Overall Goals set forth above, and the General Goals of the General Plan listed on Page 6,¹⁷ it is the policy of the Town that the developable land area designations (all areas not designated Open Space) set forth in this plan and the overall development intensity described herein are to be the ultimate size and intensity for the community and no intensive development (housing, commercial, or industrial) shall take place outside the area designated for such development in this plan.

(b) Recreation and Resort Land Uses

As previously discussed, Lot 5 is designated Resort. While Lot 87 is currently designated Low-Density Residential, policies from that designation are not included since the project would include a General Plan amendment from Low-Density Residential to Resort. Therefore, the following are the applicable goals and policies with regard to recreation and resort land uses that are contained in the Land Use Element of the General Plan:

Goals

1. To develop the Mammoth Lakes community as a quality year-round recreation destination resort.
2. To encourage recreation related development to locate near designated recreation activity [sic] nodes.
3. To increase expenditures per visitor in order to improve and maintain the Mammoth Lakes economy.
4. To support future ski area development in a manner which minimizes impacts on the Town and its natural resources.
5. To support Nordic skiing and winter play developments and activities [sic].
6. To encourage recreation visitor-related commercial to locate or relocate near recreational activity nodes or the transit hub.
7. To encourage more family-oriented recreational activities.

¹⁷ Note: Denotes page 6 in the General Plan, not in this Draft EA/EIR.

Policies

1. Each recreation activity node and related development shall have an architectural theme, and a well integrated design plan which encourages visitors to stay in the designated resort nodes.

(2) Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Plan

The Town of Mammoth Lakes adopted a Parks and Recreation Element in 1990 as part of the Town's General Plan. The importance of developing a trails system is emphasized in the Parks and Recreation Element, and following extensive public input, the Town adopted the Mammoth Lakes Trail System Plan in May 1991. While the Plan is a separate document from the General Plan, it is considered an outgrowth of the goals and policies contained within the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to provide potential routing locations of the Main Path and associated trails of the system, and to identify challenges, opportunities, and costs involved with implementation of the system. As such, the Plan provides for the conceptual development of a continuous trail system traversing the Town.

Under the Plan, the trails would connect parks and open space areas, and would offer several access points to schools, business hubs, recreation areas, and residential communities. Intended for multi-seasonal use, the trails system could be used for such activities as walking, jogging, biking, and skiing. Some of the trails would pass through public land administered by the Forest Service, and a future loop of the trail, the Mammoth Mountain Trail, was planned for the westernmost portion of the system that would occur on lands associated with MMSA. The Mammoth Mountain Trail would be extended from the point at which the Main Path would end at Meridian Boulevard and Majestic Pines Road.

b. Town of Mammoth Lakes Draft General Plan Update (2005)

The 2005 Draft General Plan Update proposes the adoption of numerous policies and implementation measures to reduce potential impacts associated with land use. The following policies and implementation measures from the 2005 Draft Update would be applicable to the project:

- 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.

- I.3.A.1.a The Town will work with the Inyo National Forest, BLM, LADWP, Mono County, and other regional land management agencies to ensure that surrounding public lands are protected while remaining readily accessible to residents and visitors on a year-round basis, and where feasible trails shall be connected to the larger regional network.
- I.3.A.1.b All new development along adjacent to National Forest Lands shall be required to provide pedestrian access routes.
- I.7.B.a.4 Higher density residential and mixed-use development shall be encouraged adjacent to commercial centers, mountain portals, and transit corridors to reduce vehicle trips.
- VI.1.D.a.1 The Town, through development approvals and other Town programs shall support the development of land use patterns and mixed use developments that integrate residential and non-residential land uses, such that residents and visitors may easily walk or bike to shopping, services, and employment and leisure activities.
- VI.1.D.a.2 Require that new developments are linked to communitywide facilities (open space resources, parks, libraries, etc.) through road networks, public transit systems, open space systems, bicycle, and pedestrian routes.
- VII.1.A.a.6 The Town, through the development approval process, shall require developers to finance and install pedestrian walkways, and multi-use trails in new development, consistent with adopted plans and policies, or as appropriate and necessary to address circulation needs.

c. Juniper Ridge Master Plan

The project site is located in the Juniper Ridge Master Plan (the Master Plan) Area. The Master Plan Area is generally located in the westernmost portion of the Town and within the Town's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The Master Plan was originally adopted in March 1990 and establishes permitted uses and development standards for proposed projects within the Master Plan Area, which comprises approximately 44.45 acres. A district zoning change that amended the boundaries and conditions of approval of the document was adopted by the Town in February 1999.

The Master Plan divides the acreage into five areas. As shown in Figure 9 on page 70, the privately owned portion of the project site is located primarily in Area 4 of the Master Plan. The Master Plan designates Area 4 for parking that would accommodate up to 566 vehicles and 35,000 square feet of support commercial retail space. In addition, the Master Plan limits the

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--- Project Boundary

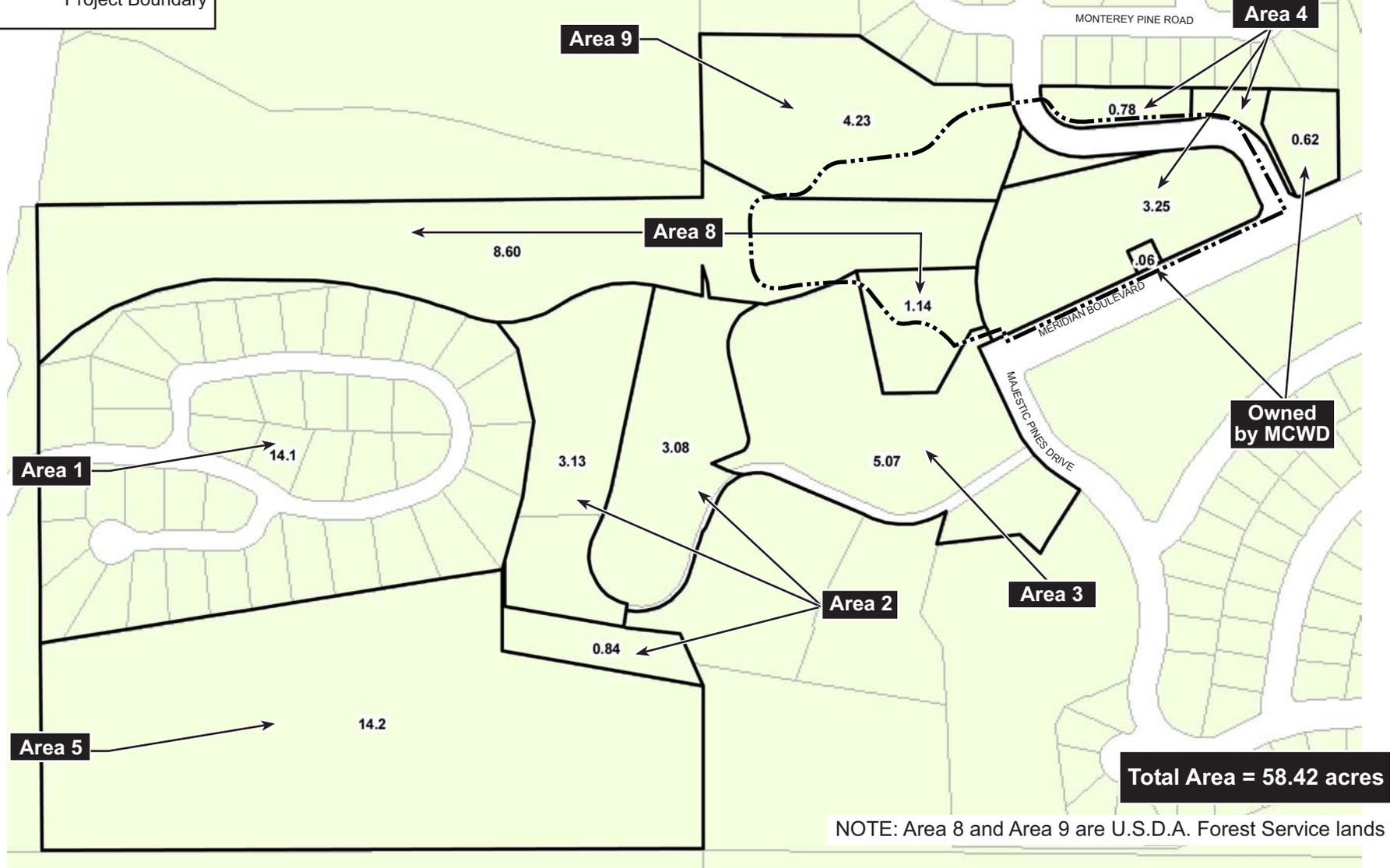


Figure 9
Juniper Ridge Master Plan Area

height of a parking structure to 35 feet and limits commercial buildings to 45 feet as measured from street grade. The Master Plan requires that commercial buildings maintain a minimum setback of 20 feet from Meridian Boulevard and/or Majestic Pines Road. In addition, the Master Plan requires a minimum of 25 feet between buildings if the buildings are oriented any way other than side to side.¹⁸

In addition to uses, heights, and setbacks, the Master Plan contains various development requirements. Under the Master Plan visitor and customer vehicular access is restricted to Meridian Boulevard. With regard to parking, the Master Plan requires that all off-street parking be provided for all uses in accordance with the requirements and design standards of Title 17, the Zoning Code of the Town's Municipal Code. The Master Plan also requires the provision of a trail easement consistent with the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan and the Master Trail System Plan, which are discussed above. The Master Plan requires an easement of 14 feet in width in non-steep areas and 12 feet in steep areas are to be provided for a recreational trail. The project would be required to provide a 14-foot-wide easement to comply with the Master Plan requirement. Overall design of the project would be subject to the provisions of Section 17.32, Special Uses and Conditions, of Title 17 of the Municipal Code.

The majority of the Master Plan Area has been developed and includes the 40-lot Juniper Ridge single-family subdivision, the Juniper Springs Lodge resort condominiums with 174 units, and the Sunstone and Eagle Run Condominiums with approximately 120 residential units. Area 4, which is the project site, is the remaining undeveloped parcel.

d. Zoning Code

Title 17, the Zoning Code of the Municipal Code, regulates development within the Town. Lot 5 and Lot 87 are zoned Resort (R) (see Figure 10 on page 72). Section 17.28.220 of the Zoning Code, the Resort Zone, is designed to classify parcels of land as comprehensive projects, to provide for a diversification of land uses, and to allow for a zone classification that would include a variety of land use types, including but not limited to hotels with related support commercial facilities, recreational amenities, and public uses. While the Master Plan provides the majority of development guidelines under which the project would be built and would operate, portions of Title 17 would be applicable, including those sections relevant to parking and project design.

¹⁸ *The Master Plan provides setbacks specific to side to side orientation, which are linked to building heights. For buildings oriented side to side, 10 feet between buildings is required for buildings up to 35 feet in height; 20 feet between buildings up to 45 feet in height; and, 25 feet between buildings in excess of 45 feet in height.*

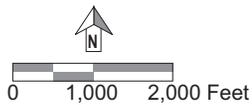
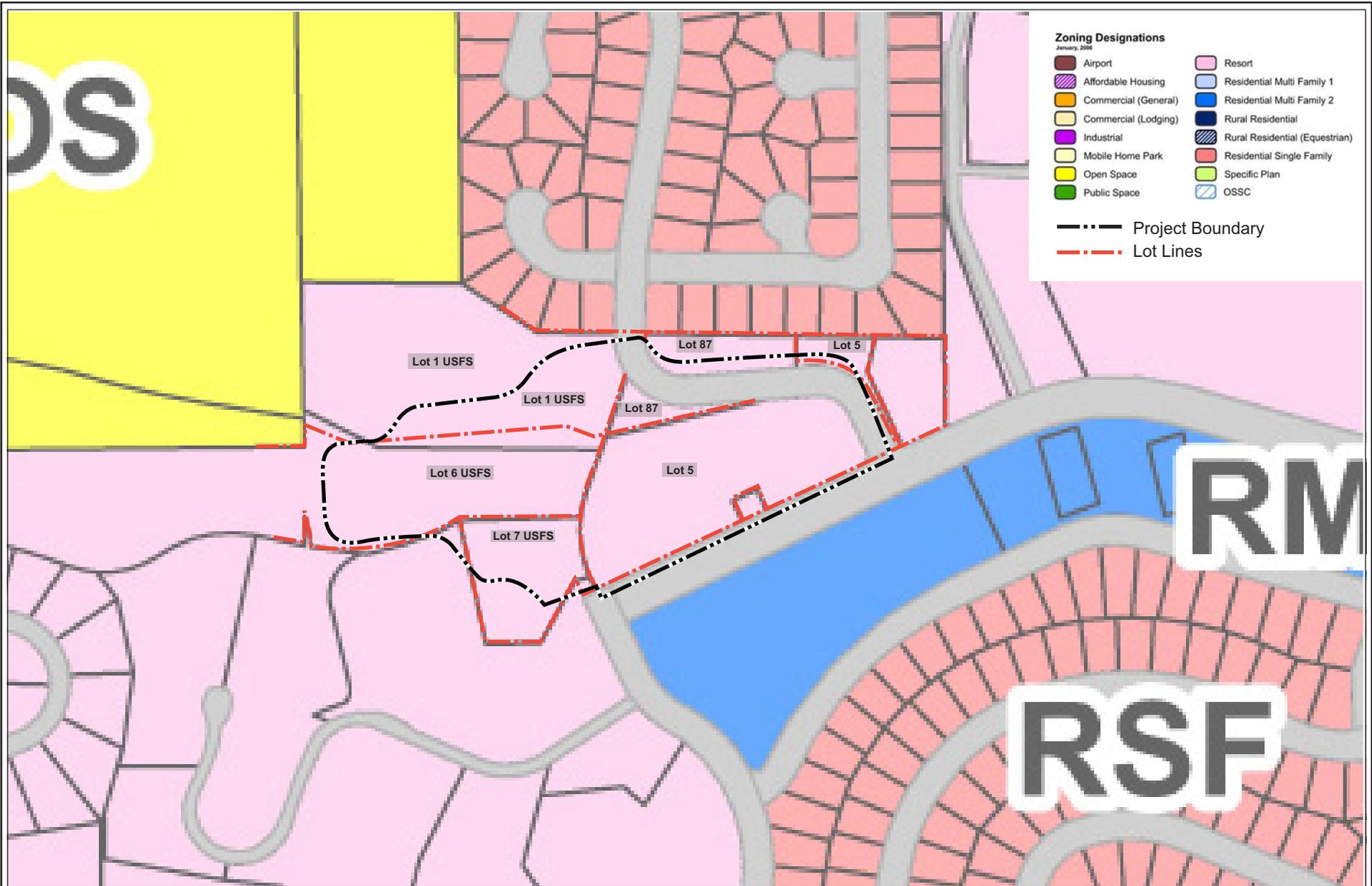


Figure 10
Zoning Map

Source: Town of Mammoth Lakes, PCR Services Corporation, 2006

The Zoning Code provides for the establishment of fractional use projects, which Section 17.30.210 defines as “any project where a purchaser receives the right in perpetuity, for life, or for a term of years to the recurrent, exclusive use or occupancy of a lot, parcel, unit rooms, or segment of a real property, annually or on some other periodic basis, for a period of time that has been or will be allotted from the use or occupancy periods into which the fractional-use project has been divided.” New fractional-use projects are intended to achieve the following purposes: to increase vitality; preserve and enhance the Town’s lodging inventory; upgrade the quality of accommodations; and maintain community character.

Forest Service Land

e. Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The California Wilderness Act of 1984 transferred the administration of approximately 23,000 acres of land within the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area from the Bureau of Land Management to the Inyo National Forest. The boundary of the Inyo National Forest includes 2,046,346 acres, 116,591 acres of which are in non-federal ownership. The portion of the site that is located on Lots 1, 6, and 7 are administered by the Forest Service and would be subject to the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (the Forest Plan) of 1988.

Generally, Resource Management Plans link the requirements of laws, regulations, executive orders, policies, and the Forest Service National Strategic Plan to specific National Forests. Resource Management Plans are required under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), and by law must be updated at least once every 15 years. The Forest Plan for the Inyo National Forest provides management direction, sets objectives, and provides a framework to address major public issues and management concerns. Objectives of the Forest Plan were intended to provide multiple resource management direction for the 10-year period from 1988 to 1997

In January 2001, the Pacific Southwest Region of the USDA Forest Service adopted the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) for managing 11 national forests and 11.5 million acres of national forest land, which includes the Inyo National Forest. The amendment serves to reduce the use of fuels that cause wildfires and improve the protection of older forests and wildlife habitats. A Record of Decision was signed in January 2004 that improved upon the management approach of the 2001 document.

Chapter 2 of the Forest Plan includes the public issues (p) and management concerns (m) that were identified in the original public involvement process for the Plan. The following are issues/concerns that are related to recreation and are also directly associated with Forest lands

administration. These issues/concerns are based upon what would be considered by the public to be the “best recreational opportunity program for the Inyo (considering supply, demand, other resource management and development opportunities, and environmental protection needs).”

- The public is collectively interested in the entire range of development options. (p)
- The public is dissatisfied with the reduced use seasons and deteriorating facilities they have encountered in recent years. (p & m)
- The supply of overnight facilities is falling behind demand. (m)
- Day use facilities, such as trails and interpretive sites, are insufficient to meet demands. (m)
- Should more land be made available immediately for added alpine ski area capacity? (p)

Chapter 3 of the Forest Plan provides a summary analysis of the management situation for each of the resources within the region. As noted within this chapter, “Land is made available under special use permit if the proposed use is compatible with the established multiple-use objectives of the affected area and if no suitable private land as [sic] reasonably available for the use.” Chapter 3 also indicates that “the major source of demand for Inyo National Forest land is the rapid expansion of communities associated with alpine skiing, several of which are within or adjacent to the Forest boundary. These communities are interested both in land exchange so that more private land as available for development and in land uses under permit to accommodate community service facilities.”

Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan discusses the ways in which the Inyo National Forest will be managed. Applicable lands-related management goals for the Inyo National Forest include:

LANDS

The Forest has a land and resource management structure and program with compatible relationships between National Forest System lands and adjacent non-federal lands. Specific activities to accomplish this goal are: special use administration, electronic site¹⁹ management, utility corridor management, rights-of-way management, withdrawal, landownership adjustment, and property boundary resurvey and monumentation.

¹⁹ *An electronic site is a parcel of National Forest System land on which buildings, antenna towers, and other electronic equipment designed for communication are located.*

RECREATION

A broad range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities in balance with identified existing and future demand is provided.

Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines provide specific guidelines for the management of each resource to ensure its enhancement and protection. Applicable Standards and Guidelines include the following:

Lands

Special Uses

- Issue special use permits only if private land suitable for the use is not reasonably available and if the use is compatible with established Forest goals and objectives.
- Apply the following priority when evaluating special use permit application:
 1. public uses (governmental)
 2. semi-public uses
 3. private (exclusive) uses.

Recreation

Developed Recreation: Private

- Encourage the updating of master development plans for existing commercial developments. Require master development plans for new developments or before allowing any new major construction on existing developments. Require the permittee to submit these plans for Forest Service approval.

Management Prescriptions identify the ways in which all Forest resources will be managed with specific resource emphasis. The project site is located within the “Alpine Ski Area” (Management Prescription Area #13). The purpose of this prescription is to maintain and manage downhill ski areas for public use. The management direction relating to recreational land use is as follows:

Permit further expansion of areas already developed for alpine skiing. Expansion may include runs, lifts, base areas, and access to a degree that is often not compatible with other resource management options.

Allow limited day use and interpretive developments if compatible with ski area development.

f. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area Master Development Plan

The MMSA Development Plan (the Development Plan) is the conceptual guide for buildout of MMSA's facilities and provides the foundation for the Forest Service Special Use Permit under which MMSA operates. Originally approved by the Forest Service in September 1981, the Development Plan applies only to lands administered by the Forest Service. The Development Plan is a requirement of both the Special Use Permit and Section 2700 of the Forest Service Manual, and is based on the Forest Service "Environmental Analysis for Expansion of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area," which was approved in June 1980. The Forest Service approved an update of the Development Plan in 1984.

The Development Plan guides the growth of MMSA's capacity to 24,000 Peak Design Capacity (PDC) in four flexible phases of development. More specifically, the Development Plan guides the expansion of the MMSA with regard to new ski runs, ski lifts, utilities, base lodges, hotel expansion, employee housing, snow making, summer recreation, and other facilities that would allow MMSA to expand to 24,000 PDC. Phase III of the Development Plan included an upgrade of the capacity of Chair 15, which was partially completed in 2000 with the installation of the Eagle Express Chairlift. While the Development Plan focuses on development goals for specific base areas, the Plan is intended to guide the overall direction of the MMSA while also addressing the ultimate limits to development.

Toward achieving 24,000 PDC, the Development Plan provides for eight key elements that identify improvements to be implemented to meet skier demand while also increasing the quality of skiing within the MMSA. A number of the improvements discussed in the following elements have been implemented since 1981, when the plan was initially approved. The eight elements are as follows: (1) Spread skier peak demand; (2) Additional lifts, trails and maintenance; (3) Base lodges; (4) Balance summer and winter economics; (5) Employee Housing; (6) Transportation; (7) Snow making; and (8) Minaret Area facilities. The Development Plan also provides a more general discussion of issue areas that include avalanches, erosion prevention, electrical power, communications, road systems, water systems, and sewer systems.

As discussed in the 1984 update, a permanent ski facility, Base VII, located immediately west of the intersection of Meridian Boulevard and Majestic Pines Road, has been envisioned as part of the overall development of the MMSA. As such, the 1984 update provides for an expedited schedule to develop ski facilities on the east side of the ski area and to increase the

skier capacity of Base VII to 7,900 PDC.²⁰ Capacity increases were expected to result from: (1) walk-ins from new housing developments in the vicinity; (2) construction of overhead transport; (3) development of public or private shuttle bus transport; (4) tour bus drop offs; and (5) increased capacity of access roads.

3.2.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The project site is located within the Town of Mammoth Lakes, a destination resort community located in southwestern Mono County, on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The Town lies approximately three miles west of U.S. Highway 395, along State Route 203.

The project site is situated at the eastern base of Mammoth Mountain, and is specifically located on the southwestern side of the developed part of the Town, west of the intersection of Meridian Boulevard and Majestic Pines Road. The area in which the project site is located is locally referred to as the Juniper Springs area, or more recently the Eagle Base Area. The Eagle Base Area is one of four key access portals to the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

The site is located within a primarily residential and resort area. Within the immediate project area, Mammoth Vista I single family subdivision is located to the north of the project site. The Summit Condominiums are located to the south of the site across Meridian Boulevard. Southwest of the site is the Juniper Springs Lodge. To the west of the Juniper Springs Lodge is multi-family residential development. Currently, there are no grocery stores, convenience markets, or general retail uses in the immediate vicinity of the project site. In terms of non-residential uses in the immediate area, Camp High Sierra is located to the northeast. Camp High Sierra, which is owned and operated by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Park, is open during summer months, and provides camping grounds for trailers, campers, cabin and tent camping. The Mammoth Loop Trail is located to the north of the Treatment Plan and runs to the west, ending at Majestic Pines Road directly across from the project site. Immediately to the east of the site across Majestic Pines Road is the Mammoth Community Water District Ground Water Treatment Plant No. 2.

²⁰ According to the Mammoth Mountain Master Plan Update 2000 Technical Summary, Peak Design Capacity is determined by evaluating all of MMSA's ski facilities in terms of ski lift and trail capacity, capacity of skier services, accommodation capacity of the Town, parking capacity, and a number of other factors. The 1981 Development Plan had envisioned a PDC of 5,960. According to the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area Base VII Expansion Project Environmental Assessment, the 1984 Update increased the PDC to 7,900 with the expectation that additional facilities at Base VII would be constructed, such as a second Lake Mary Bridge, two gondolas, and a base lodge. As these facilities have not been constructed, portal capacity is assumed to be 5,960 PDC, which is considered by the Town to be the maximum allowable capacity for the portal.

Generally, the project site is developed with uses that support skiing activities at Mammoth Mountain, but also includes undeveloped land in the western portion of the site. More specifically, Lot 5, located in the central portion of the site, is developed with a paved, surface parking lot that serves the temporary ski facility, the Little Eagle Base Lodge. The parking lot can accommodate approximately 225 vehicles, inclusive of day-skier and temporary/drop-off parking. The northern portion of Lot 5 consists primarily of disturbed area, while the southern perimeter of Lot 5 supports vegetation. The Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD) owns a well site parcel that is located adjacent to Meridian Boulevard within the southern portion of Lot 5. Circulation improvements associated with the project would occur on an approximately 0.04-acre portion of Lot 5 and a 0.13-acre portion of Lot 87, both located north of Majestic Pines Road.

As discussed earlier, Majestic Pines Road was realigned in the mid-1990s. Previously, the alignment ran along the western boundary of Lot 5. The realignment was completed to eliminate the separation by a roadway of the parking area and the ski facility. Currently, Majestic Pines Road is a dedicated right of way of the Town that crosses Lot 5 and Lot 87. As part of the realignment project, a berm and landscaping were developed on Lot 87 to screen single-family homes located north of Majestic Pines Road from vehicle headlights.

The western part of the project site consists of portions of Lot 1, Lot 6, and Lot 7, which are administered by the Forest Service. Lot 1 is largely undeveloped; however, there is a developed area (roadway/walkway) along the eastern portion of Lot 1. The eastern portion of Lot 6 comprises primarily developed and/or disturbed areas, which includes a maintenance structure adjacent to the western perimeter of the parking lot. Just beyond the proposed project boundaries, but also within Lot 6, is the temporary Little Eagle Base Lodge, situated adjacent to the Eagle Express. The Little Eagle Base Lodge is approximately 12,000 square feet of interior space, which includes a tent facility and attached trailers. The Little Eagle Base Lodge currently provides basic amenities to day-skiers such as ticketing, a restaurant, and a bar/coffee bar area, limited retail, and public restrooms. An exterior barbeque and dining deck comprises approximately 3,000 square feet. The Eagle Express chairlift (Chair 15) is located on Lot 6, which is administered by the Inyo National Forest. A pathway connecting the parking lot and the temporary lodge traverses the Lot 6 and the northern portion of Lot 7. Lot 7 occupies the southwestern portion of the project site and consists of developed area, including the existing detention basins.

3.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

a. CEQA Significance Criteria

The project would result in a significant land use impact if the project would:

- Result in substantial conflicts with surrounding land uses due to an incompatible interface between such uses and the physical and/or operational characteristics of the proposed uses; or
- Conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact.

Impacts on the environment pursuant to CEQA ordinarily focus on changes in the physical environment. In itself, an inconsistency between a project and a plan is a legal determination rather than a physical impact on the environment. Where a plan is adopted for the sole purpose of avoiding or mitigating a physical impact on the environment, an inconsistency may be evidence that the project may result in a significant effect on the environment.²¹

b. Methodology

The evaluation of land use impacts is based on site visits conducted in September 2005 and January 2006, as well as a review of the regulations and policies contained within relevant planning documents. As such, the analysis addresses the compatibility of the project with surrounding uses in the project vicinity. Additionally, the consistency of the proposed project with adopted plans, policies and ordinances is discussed. The lodging component of the project that is discussed in the analysis addresses the two options: (1) condominium/hotel and fractional ownership units and (2) hotel units.

c. Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

(1) Land Use Compatibility

The proposed project would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. A permanent facility offering skier and other recreational and commercial amenities, along with a hospitality component, would be constructed on the site. The proposed facility would replace the temporary tent facility, which would be removed. The proposed project reflects a long-range plan by the Town, the Forest Service, and MMSA to expand resort facilities in the project area. The project site is primarily surrounded by single- and multi-family residential, resort, and recreational uses. Consistent with the residential uses surrounding the site, the project would provide for on-site lodging, either with condominium/hotel units and fractional ownership units or a hotel option.

²¹ *Stephen L. Kosta and Michael H. Zischke, Practice Under the California Environmental Quality Act, Continuing Education of the Bar, Chapter 12, Section 12.36, p. 496.4, January 2002.*

The neighborhood convenience market, day spa, and full-service restaurant proposed as part of the project would support the on-site lodging, as well as patronage by neighboring residents. The project would create pedestrian linkages within the resort facility, as well as between adjacent neighborhoods and the facility such that amenities could be accessed easily by residents of the surrounding single- and multi-family residences. The provision of a neighborhood market would provide a convenient food market within proximity of a number of residences and would serve to eliminate vehicle trips to the existing supermarket that serves the Town. In addition, the project proposes to extend the Mammoth Loop Trail through the site. This extension would serve as an additional pedestrian link to and from the site. It also would complement other recreational amenities proposed under the project, including the outdoor skating rink, the summer stage and the climbing wall. In addition, by virtue of its being a resort facility, the project would be compatible with the Juniper Springs resort directly to the west of the site.

While not a complementary use per se, the Mammoth Community Ground Water District Treatment Plant No. 2, located just east of the site, would not disrupt the operation of the project, nor would the project affect the operation of the treatment plant. As such, the two uses would not be incompatible.

(2) Consistency with Adopted Plans, Policies, and Ordinances

(a) Privately Owned Land

(i) Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan (1987)

The proposed project reflects a long-range plan by the Town, the Forest Service, and MMSA to expand resort facilities in the project area, as evidenced by policies contained within the General Plan, the Forest Plan, and the Development Plan. The realignment of Majestic Pines Road, which occurred in the mid-1990s, provided a situation in which the proposed project would not be separated from the ski facilities by a roadway. The realignment was consistent with the long-range vision for the area.

The project would be consistent with the types of uses allowed in the Resort designation, as the project would provide mixed visitor-oriented uses. The project proposes a year-round resort complex, which would offer a range of recreational and commercial opportunities to visitors, along with lodging facilities. The project would provide for an array of winter recreational activities, including direct access to MMSA Chair 15, which is designated as a recreation activity node in the General Plan Land Use Element. Other winter-weather amenities include a 5,000-square-foot outdoor ice-skating rink and a ski school. The project also proposes warm-weather facilities that include a rock-climbing wall and performance stage. The project

would also provide access to the Mammoth Loop Trail and the summer mountain bike park. As such, the project would contribute to developing the community as a year-round recreation destination resort that is situated near a designated activity node, which would be consistent with Recreation and Resort Land Use Goals 1, 2, and 5. Furthermore, due to the type and mix of the proposed amenities, particularly the ice-skating rink, the ski school, associated day care, direct access to Chair 15, and spa the project would be consistent with Recreation and Resort Land Uses Goal 7, which encourages family-oriented recreational activities.

In addition to recreational activities, the project would provide for approximately 80,000 square feet of visitor-related commercial space. Commercial amenities targeted to visitors include a rental/demo/repair shop, retail shop, a ski school with associated day care, and food and beverage services. A Locker Club, a day spa, and a convenience market are also proposed by the project. In addition, an approximately 4,000 square foot meeting/conference facility that would accommodate up to 200 people would be provided to support the hospitality functions of the lodge. The meeting/conference facility would be available to the general public on an as-available commercial basis. As such, the project would be consistent with Recreation and Resort Goal 6, which encourages recreation visitor-related commercial facilities to locate near activity nodes.

Consistent with Overall Goals and General Policies Goal 4 of the Land Use Element, the project would address the needs of the Town's permanent residents by providing commercial and retail uses, a restaurant, and a convenience market that would be within close proximity to the surrounding single- and multi-family residences. As discussed above, pedestrian linkages would be incorporated to provide easy access for adjacent residents to the commercial uses. These commercial facilities would also be accessible to visitors lodging in the transient housing provided under the project.

In addition, consistent with General Policy 1 of the Land Use Element, the project would not exceed the density allowed under the General Plan, and implementation of the project would occur in an area designated for development. Table 6 on page 82 provides the allowed, existing and proposed number of units within the Master Plan area. As can be seen in Table 6, based on the maximum allowable density of eight units per acre, the Master Plan area could have 467 units. The project in addition to the existing development in the Master Plan area would not exceed the allowable density.

With regard to the commercial portion of the property, the project would provide approximately 80,000 square feet of publicly available commercial area. As discussed earlier, the General Plan restricts FAR for commercial uses to 0.1. FAR for the Town's commercial uses is determined by using the total area of the Juniper Ridge Master Plan, which is 44.45 acres, or 1,936,242 square feet. Existing commercial within the Juniper Springs Master Plan Area is located in the Juniper Ridge Resort development adjacent to the project site, and totals

Table 6
Existing and Proposed Number of Units in Juniper Springs Master Plan Area

| Area | Acres | Development | Number of Units Proposed/Developed |
|---|--------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | 14.1 | Juniper Ridge Subdivision | 40 |
| 2 | 7.05 | Sunstone Condo-Hotel | 65 |
| | | Eagle Run Townhomes | 36 |
| 3 | 5.07 | Juniper Springs Lodge | 125 |
| 4 | 4.03 | Eagle Lodge (Project) | 83 ^a |
| 5 | 14.2 | Dedicated Open Space | 0 |
| 8 | 9.74 | Open Space | 0 |
| 9 | 4.23 | Open Space | 0 |
| TOTAL | 58.42 | | 349 |
| Allowed Density Based on 8 Units Per Acre | | | 467 |

^a The 213 hotel room option would convert to 107 units, and as such, the number of units proposed or developed would total 373, which is within the maximum allowable density based on eight units per acre.

Source: Town of Mammoth Lakes and PCR Services Corporation, 2006

approximately 3,100 square feet. Adding the project's square footage to the existing commercial square footage and dividing the total by 1,936,242 would result in an FAR of 0.04. As such, the amount of proposed commercial floor area within the project would be compatible with the General Plan.

The project would expand the economic base of the Town through the development of a year-round resort complex, which, as discussed above, would offer recreational, commercial, and housing opportunities to visitors. With regard to increasing expenditures per visitor, the project would include the removal of the temporary tent ski facility that currently exists on the site, and the construction of a substantially larger, permanent resort complex that would include a mix of uses. In addition to the approximately 80,000 square feet of commercial uses, the project also proposes approximately 135,150 gross square feet of residential/hospitality uses. The mix of uses would be incorporated into a single resort facility, facilitating access to basic amenities and thus encouraging visitors to remain within the project area. Given the scope of development relative to existing conditions, as well as the expanded amenities proposed, the project is anticipated to result in an increase in expenditures per visitor. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Overall Goals and General Policies 3, Recreation and Resort Land Uses Goal 3, and Recreation and Resort Land Uses Policy 4 of the Land Use Element.

The project is designed to evoke a mountain lodge style with the incorporation of natural materials such as wood and stone that would be consistent with other development in the project area. The structures would be articulated to break up the massing of the resort complex. Trash enclosures would use bear-proofing devices. Lighting would be shielded and directed downward in accordance with Title 17 of the Municipal Code. While some trees and shrubs would be removed during project construction, replacement landscaping would include native plantings. Nesting birds could be impacted by the project; however, a mitigation measure would reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Overall, project implementation would not result in significant impacts to biological resources, and as such, wildlife habitats would be protected. In addition, the project would not impact water quality or runoff, as discussed in Section 3.10, Hydrology. (Refer to Section 3.6, Biological Resources, Section 3.9, Aesthetics, and Section 3.10, Hydrology, for a more detailed discussion of the project's effects on the natural environment and visual resources.)

Given the above, the project would be consistent with the Overall Goals and General Policies 2, Recreation and Resort Land Uses Goal 4, and Recreation and Resort Land Uses Policy 4 of the Land Use Element. For a more detailed discussion of potential impacts of the project please see Section 3.3, Transportation; Section 3.4, Air Quality; Section 3.5, Noise; Section 3.7, Cultural Resources; Section 3.8, Population, Housing and Employment; Section 3.10, Hydrology; Section 3.12, Water Supply; Section 3.13, Wastewater; and Section 3.14, Stormwater.

(ii) Town of Mammoth Lakes Draft General Plan Update (2005)

The project site is situated adjacent to a key mountain portal, a community-wide facility. As previously stated, the project involves the development of a mixed-use facility that includes both commercial and hospitality components. The project is situated proximate to the Eagle Base Area, which is one of four key access portals to the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area. As such, the project would be consistent with policy and implementation measure I.7.B.a.4, which encourages mixed-use development to be located adjacent to mountain portals.

The project would create pedestrian links within the resort facility, as well as between adjacent neighborhoods and the facility, such that residents of the surrounding single- and multi-family residences could access amenities easily. In addition, the project proposes to extend the Mammoth Loop Trail through the site. Therefore, the project would be consistent with policy and implementation measures II.1.B.b.1, I.3.A.1.a, I.3.A.1.b, VI.1.D.a.2, and VII.1.A.a.6, which support pedestrian linkages.

The project also would be consistent with policy and implementation measures II.1.B.b.1 and VI.1.D.a.2, which encourage new development to integrate with existing community facilities. The provision of a neighborhood market would provide a convenient food market

within proximity of a number of residences and would serve to eliminate vehicle trips to the existing supermarket that serves the Town, consistent with policy and implementation measure VVI.1.D.a.1.

The 2005 Draft General Plan Update proposes to rezone the southwestern portion of the Juniper Springs Master Plan area (Area 5 on Figure 9) to Open Space (OS), which would result in a reduction from the developable area of the Juniper Springs Master Plan. Therefore, the 2005 Draft General Plan Update would decrease the permitted density with the Juniper Springs Master Plan from 467 to 354 units. Therefore, the project density for the condominium/hotel and fractional ownership unit scenario would be consistent with the 2005 Draft General Plan Update. However, the hotel scenario would not be consistent with the 2005 Draft General Plan Update relative to density.

(iii) Juniper Ridge Master Plan

The project would not be consistent with the Juniper Ridge Master Plan and would require various amendments. As previously indicated, the Master Plan designates Area 4 for parking and 35,000 square feet of commercial retail uses. As such, the Master Plan would require an amendment of the permitted uses of Area 4 to accommodate the mix of uses proposed for the site, which would include approximately 80,000 square feet of commercial uses and residential units.

Further, the Master Plan requires that all off-street parking shall be provided for all uses in accordance with the requirements and design standards of Title 17 of the Municipal Code. The project includes an amendment to this language to allow for parking to be determined through a needs-based analysis, rather than an hours-of-use analysis. The parking study has been completed as part of the environmental analysis. Please see Section 3.3, Transportation, for a more detailed discussion of parking as it relates to the proposed project.

The project proposes an average building height above existing grade of 64 feet for the Skier Services Building, with a peak building height of approximately 71 feet above the Meridian Boulevard street grade (8065 feet above mean sea level). The primary structure, the Lodge, would have an average building height of 61 feet and a peak building height of approximately 87 feet above the Majestic Pines Road street grade (8065 feet above mean sea level). As the project would not comply with the allowed heights, an amendment to the Master Plan with regard to building heights would be required to accommodate the proposed heights of the structures. Refer to Section 3.9, Aesthetics, for a more detailed discussion of height as it relates to the proposed project and impacts to visual resources.

The Master Plan requires a minimum setback of 20 feet from Meridian Boulevard and/or Majestic Pines Road. The project as proposed would maintain a 20-foot setback from both Meridian Boulevard and Majestic Pines Road. The proposed building would maintain a 0-foot setback on Lot 5 and would cross the property line between Lot 5 and Lots 6 and 7, which are administered by the U.S. Forest Service. In addition, the parking structure would maintain a 0-foot setback from the Well 16 property. As such, the project includes an amendment to the setback provisions of the Master Plan.

The project would provide 40 feet between the two buildings and therefore, would comply with the requirement of 25 feet between buildings that are oriented in a non-side by side configuration.

In addition, the project as proposed does not comply with the Master Plan restriction regarding vehicular access. The Master Plan limits vehicular access to Meridian Boulevard. As proposed, the main driveway and entry for the lodge would be located on Majestic Pines Road. The parking garage for hotel guests and residents would be from Majestic Pines Road. However, skier parking access as well as auto and bus drop-off would be from Meridian Boulevard. The project includes an amendment to the Master Plan regarding access.

In accordance with the Master Plan, the project would obtain a Use Permit from the Town prior to development. The discussion above addresses the amendments to the Master Plan that are included as part of the project. With the approval of the amendments discussed above, the project would be consistent with the Master Plan.

(iv) Zoning Code

The project and the proposed uses would be consistent with the zoning of the site, which is Resort, as the project would include transient lodging with related support commercial facilities, recreational amenities, and public uses.

As discussed earlier, the project includes two lodging options, one of which is condo/hotel and fractional ownership units. Under the condo/hotel and fractional units option, the project proposes the development of 21 fractional ownership units. The project would meet the purposes of fractional units by increasing the Town's lodging inventory and upgrading the quality of accommodations. The project would also maintain community character as the building has been designed to be compatible with the area. As discussed above, the project would develop a high-quality, destination resort for visitors that would include expanded amenities and fractional-use and condo/hotel units. If the hotel option, rather than the condo/hotel and fractional ownership units option, were implemented, Section 17.30.210 of Title 17 would not apply to the project.

(b) Forest Service Land**(i) Forest Plan**

The proposed project would reflect a long-range plan by the Forest Service and MMSA to expand resort facilities in the project area, as evidenced by policies contained within the Forest Plan and the Development Plan. An Environmental Assessment (EA) under NEPA was prepared for a resort complex that would have expanded the Base VII facility on Forest Service lands in 1997. The adequacy of the document was legally challenged and the Forest Service lost on appeal due to inadequate analysis of visual quality impacts. Ultimately, the EA was not approved.

The project responds to public issues and management concerns contained in Chapter 2 of the Forest Plan relative to land use and recreational land uses through the development of a permanent, year-round resort complex that is open for public use. The development of a resort facility in this area had been envisioned as part of a long-range plan by the Forest Service.

The project comprises a mix of uses designed to meet the recreational needs of the community, including overnight lodging facilities, access to Chair 15 and associated ski services, an ice-skating rink, and a climbing wall. The project would provide specifically for day-use ski facilities, food and beverage amenities for day skiers, as well as the expansion of the Mammoth Loop Trail through the site on Lots 1, 6 and 7 of Forest Service land. Potential increases in alpine ski capacity demand also would be addressed through the implementation of the project.

The project would include the removal of the temporary tent facility on Lot 6 of Forest Service lands. The proposed permanent resort facility would be located primarily on private property but a portion of the facility would cross on to Forest Service lands. As such, while implementation of the project would result in only a small portion of development on Forest Service lands, the components of the project could not occur separately, absent the whole development. As such, the project on Forest Service lands would be considered new development.

Given the above, the project would result in the expansion of existing development on Lots 1, 6, and 7 that would be compatible with other recreational and resort uses in the immediate vicinity of the site. As the portion of the site administered by the Forest Service is already under Special Use Permit, the project would be compatible with regard to Special Uses under the Standards and Guidelines. As such, the project would be compatible with Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan relative to Special Uses.

With regard to Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines as they relate to Recreation, master development plans are required for new commercial developments on lands administered by the Forest Service. As the conceptual guide for future development, the MMSA Development Plan would undergo an administrative change to reflect project implementation. Please see the following section regarding the MMSA Development Plan for a more detailed discussion regarding the project relative to the Development Plan.

The Forest Plan would be compatible with the Management Prescriptions identified for the Alpine Ski Area (#13). The site is already developed as a temporary ski facility in an area that is generally considered the largest alpine resort in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains. As such, further expansion of the site for alpine ski purposes would be considered acceptable under the Forest Plan. Expansion of the site would include the development of a permanent resort facility within the base area adjacent to Chair 15. In addition, the project would be compatible with the Management Prescription concerning day-use development in ski areas. As discussed above, the proposed resort facility provides day-use amenities that include access to Chair 15 and related amenities for day skiers. Given the above, the project would be consistent with the Forest Service Plan.

(ii) MMSA Development Plan

The project would be consistent with the Development Plan since the project would provide for the development of a resort facility with ski-related amenities that are anticipated to support the existing ski facility associated with Chair 15, which is an identified goal of Phase III. The 1981 Development Plan had envisioned a PDC of 5,960. According to the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area Base VII Expansion Project Environmental Assessment, the 1984 update increased the PDC to 7,900 with the expectation that additional facilities at Base VII would be constructed, such as a second Lake Mary Bridge, two gondolas, and a base lodge. As these facilities have not been constructed, portal capacity is assumed to be 5,960 PDC, which is considered by the Town to be the maximum allowable capacity for the portal. As such, the Development Plan would undergo an administrative change to reflect the maximum 5,960 PDC and to account for project implementation.

In addition, the 1984 update indicates that the development of Base VII would result in all planned ski facilities, with the exception of parking, to be built on Forest Service lands. Since the project proposes development on only a portion of Forest Service lands, with the remainder to be built on privately owned land, the Development Plan would require an amendment that would clarify the extent of development at Base VII. Given the above, the project would be compatible with the Development Plan, provided that the necessary amendments would be applied for and approved.

d. Mitigation Measures

As analyzed in this section, the project as proposed would be compatible with surrounding land uses, as the project is the development of a resort facility that would be located in an area that is adjacent to another resort and residential communities. With the proposed amendment to the General Plan land use designation for Lot 87, the project would comply with the 1987 General Plan²². With the proposed amendments to the Juniper Springs Master Plan regarding access, height, parking, and setbacks, the project would comply with the Master Plan. The project would also be consistent with the Forest Service Plan. Following an administrative change to reflect project implementation and a maximum PDC of 5,960 at Base VII, the project would be compatible with the Development Plan. Therefore, under CEQA, the project would result in a less than significant impact with regard to land use and no mitigation measures are necessary. Additionally, since the Proposed Action would be consistent with applicable plans, there would be no impact on Forest Service lands and, therefore, no land use impacts under NEPA.

e. Environmental Consequences of Alternative 1 - Development in Accordance with Existing Regulations Alternative

Alternative 1 would be located on approximately 8.67 acres, immediately adjacent to a major ski portal. The majority of the site lies within Area 4 of the Juniper Ridge Master Plan. Area 4 is designated for the development of a parking structure comprising 566 spaces and 35,000 square feet of commercial space, consistent with the Juniper Ridge Master Plan. Also consistent with the plan, the Alternative would provide an easement of 14 feet in width in non-steep areas of the site and 12 feet in steep areas for a recreational trail, facilitating pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

The site is surrounded by resort, recreational, and residential uses. As such, Alternative 1 would provide commercial amenities and parking to day skiers served by Chair 15 and transient occupants of the lodging units in the vicinity of the site. While Alternative 1 would not provide accommodations within close proximity to the ski slope, the Alternative would provide day-skier uses. As such, Alternative 1 would be compatible with Goal 3 of the General Plan's Overall

²² *Although the project would generally comply with the 2005 General Plan Update except in the case of density for the hotel scenario, the General Plan Update has not been adopted by the Town. As indicated previously, the hotel scenario would not comply with the maximum allowable density given that the Draft General Plan Update would rezone the southwestern portion of the Juniper Springs Master Plan area to Open Space (OS), which would result in a reduction from the developable area of the Juniper Springs Master Plan. As such, if the 2005 Draft General Plan were adopted, the hotel scenario would require a reduction in density or a General Plan amendment for the proposed density. The condominium/hotel and fractional ownership unit scenario would be consistent with the density allowed in the 2005 Draft General Plan.*

Goals and Policies, which encourages the provision of commercial development to address the needs of Town residents. The Alternative would also be compatible with goal and policy measure VVI.1.D.a.1 of the 2005 Draft General Plan Update, which encourages development located within easy walking or biking distance to residents and visitor lodging. In addition, Alternative 1 would provide for a recreational trail for pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the area. Therefore, Alternative 1 would be consistent with policies and implementation measures contained in the 2005 Draft General Plan Update requiring linkages between new development and existing developed areas of the community, Forest Service lands, as well as community-wide facilities.

As Alternative 1 would provide commercial facilities for day skiers and other visitors, the Alternative would be compatible with the Management Prescriptions relating to Area #13 of the Forest Plan. Specifically, the prescription permits expansion of areas already developed for alpine skiing and allows limited day use consistent with ski area development. As the MMSA Development Plan envisions the development of a permanent ski-related facility at the site, an administrative change to the 1984 Update would be required to reflect implementation of the Alternative.

Under the General Plan, the allowable FAR for commercial uses is 0.1. Alternative 1 would have an FAR of 0.01, and as such, would comply with the General Plan. The Alternative would require a General Plan amendment to redesignate Lot 87 to Resort, which allows mixed visitor-oriented uses, such as tourist-oriented commercial uses. Under Section 17.28 of the Town's Code, the Alternative would be limited to a maximum site coverage of 50 percent.

Given the above, Alternative 1 would generally comply with the plans analyzed in this section and would allow for an expansion of uses beyond what currently exists. However, the Alternative would not provide for the same level of recreational opportunities, nor a hospitality component, as envisioned for the site by both the Town and the Forest Service.

f. Environmental Consequences of Alternative 2 - Reduced Intensity Alternative

Alternative 2 would be compatible with surrounding land uses. Under this Alternative, a permanent lodge facility offering recreation-related and commercial amenities, along with a hospitality component, would be developed on the site. Single- and multi-family residential, resort, and recreational uses surround the site. Consistent with the residential uses in the vicinity of the site, Alternative 2 would provide for on-site lodging, either with condominium/hotel units and fractional ownership units or a hotel option. In addition, the neighborhood convenience market, retail uses, and full-service restaurant proposed under Alternative 2 would support the on-site lodging, as well as some patronage by neighboring residents. As a resort facility, Alternative 2 would be compatible with the Juniper Springs resort adjacent to the site.

Alternative 2 would be compatible with the design of surrounding uses. Natural materials such as wood and stone evoking a resort lodge style are incorporated into land uses surrounding the site. Under Alternative 2, the site would be constructed with heavy timbers and natural stone. For a discussion of height under this Alternative, refer to Section 3.9, Aesthetics, in this Draft EA/EIR.

As a year-round resort facility located adjacent to Chair 15, Alternative 2 would provide a mix of uses comprising commercial and recreational amenities, as well as a hospitality component. As such, Alternative 2 would be compatible with the long-range vision of the Town, the Forest Service, and MMSA to expand resort facilities in the project area. However, the commercial square footage would be less than that of the Proposed Action and therefore, Alternative 2 would not provide as much in terms of mix and amount of amenities for the surrounding neighborhood. Also under Alternative 2, pedestrian linkages would be incorporated into the site and the Mammoth Loop Trail would be extended through the site. Given the above, Alternative 2 would generally be consistent with the goals and policies contained within the Town's 1987 General Plan, the 2005 Draft General Plan Update, and Title 17 of the Town's Municipal Code.

Alternative 2 would not be consistent with the Juniper Ridge Master Plan and would require amendments in the areas of parking, height, density, setbacks, access, and land use. In addition, Alternative 2 would include a General Plan amendment to redesignate Lot 87 to Resort, which allows mixed visitor-oriented uses, such as tourist-oriented commercial uses.

Alternative 2 would reflect a long-range plan by the Forest Service and MMSA to enhance resort facilities in the area. Therefore, Alternative 2 would be consistent with the policies contained in the Inyo Forest Plan. In addition, Alternative 2 would be consistent with the Development Plan since it would provide for the development of a resort facility with ski-related amenities that are expected to support the capacity of Chair 15, an identified goal of Phase III of the Development Plan. The Development Plan would require an administrative change in accordance with existing conditions of a maximum 5,960 Peak Design Capacity (PDC) and to account for project implementation.

g. Environmental Consequences of Alternative 3 - Alternate Design Alternative

Alternative 3 would be compatible with surrounding land uses. A permanent lodge facility offering recreation-related and commercial amenities, along with a hospitality component, would be developed on the site under this Alternative. The site is primarily surrounded by single- and multi-family residential, resort, and recreational uses. Consistent with the residential uses surrounding the site, Alternative 3 would provide for on-site lodging, either with condominium/hotel units and fractional ownership units or a hotel option. In addition, the

neighborhood convenience market, day spa, and full-service restaurant proposed as part of Alternative 3 would support the on-site lodging, as well as patronage by neighboring residents. By virtue of its being a resort facility, Alternative 3 would be compatible with the Juniper Springs resort located directly to the west of the site.

Alternative 3 would also be compatible with the design of surrounding uses. Land uses surrounding the site incorporate natural materials such as wood and stone that evoke a resort lodge style, consistent with the mountain character of the area. Alternative 3 would be constructed with heavy timbers and natural stone, and would range from two to seven stories in height. For a detailed discussion of height under this Alternative, refer to Section 3.9, Aesthetics, in this Draft EA/EIR.

As a mixed-use, year-round resort facility located adjacent to Chair 15, Alternative 3 would include a program of uses that would be the same as the project. As such, Alternative 3 would be compatible with the long-range vision of the Town, the Forest Service, and MMSA to expand resort facilities in the project area. Specifically, Alternative 3 would provide ski-related and other recreational amenities to visitors while also addressing the needs of the Town's permanent residents by providing commercial and retail uses, a restaurant, and a convenience market. Pedestrian linkages would be incorporated into the site, and under Alternative 3, the Mammoth Loop Trail would be extended through the site. Given the above, Alternative 3 would be generally consistent with the goals and policies contained within the Town's 1987 General Plan, the 2005 Draft General Plan Update, and Title 17 of the Town's Municipal Code.

Alternative 3 would not, however, be consistent with the Juniper Ridge Master Plan and would require amendments in the areas of parking, height, density, setbacks, access, and land use. In addition, Alternative 3 would include a General Plan amendment to redesignate Lot 87 to Resort, which allows mixed visitor-oriented uses, such as tourist-oriented commercial uses.

Alternative 3 would reflect a long-range plan by the Forest Service and MMSA to expand resort facilities in the project area. As such, Alternative 3 would be consistent with the policies contained within the Inyo Forest Plan. In addition, the Alternative would be consistent with the Development Plan since it would provide for the development of a resort facility with ski-related amenities that are anticipated to support the capacity of Chair 15, an identified goal of Phase III of the Development Plan. The Development Plan would undergo an administrative change in accordance with existing conditions of a maximum 5,960 PDC, and to account for project implementation.

h. Environmental Consequences of Alternative 4- No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative assumes that the project would not be developed and that no other development of the site would occur. The temporary Little Eagle Base Lodge would be

removed and surface parking lot would remain. As the project would not be developed, the land use designation of Lot 87 would not be amended from Low-Density Residential to Resort. Further, no amendments to the Juniper Ridge Master Plan would be needed.

The No Action Alternative would not comply with the plans analyzed in this section, since the plans envision an expansion of resort facilities beyond what currently exists at the time of the respective plans' approval, as evidenced by the goals and policies contained within the plans. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not provide for the same level of benefits to the Town nor would the project provide for an increase in recreational opportunities.

More specifically on a local level, the No Action Alternative would not support a number of the goals and policies contained within the Land Use Element of the Town's General Plan. For example, given the removal of the basic, winter-time amenities currently offered by the Little Eagle Base, the No Action Alternative would not be compatible with Goal 2 of Overall Goals and General Policies or Recreation and Resort Land Use Goal 1, which encourages establishing the community as a year-round resort. The No Action Alternative would not be compatible with Goal 4 of Overall Goals and General Policies, which seeks to address the needs of permanent residents, since no neighborhood commercial services would be introduced into the area.

The No Action Alternative would not meet the Recreation and Resort Land Use Goal 2, since the Little Eagle Base Lodge would be removed. The No Action Alternative would not create a year-round destination point at a designated activity node. With regard to expenditures per visitor, under the No Action Alternative it is likely that expenditures per visitor would decline. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not fulfill Recreation and Resort Land Use Goal 3, to increase expenditures per visitor to improve and maintain the Town's economy.

The No Action Alternative would not implement Recreation and Resort Land Use Goal 7, which encourages more family-oriented recreational activities. Recreation and Resort Land Use Policy 4 encourages designated activity nodes and related development to have both an architectural theme and an integrated design plan that invites visitors to remain within the designated resort node. Under the No Action Alternative, a facility would not be developed at a designated resort node. The No Action Alternative would not provide the mix of visitor-oriented amenities, such as a ski school, Day Spa, a range of dining facilities, and on-site lodging, in one facility. Given the above, the No Action Alternative would not fulfill Recreation and Resort Land Use Policy 4.

With regard to the Forest Plan, the No Action Alternative would not adequately respond to the issues/concerns indicated in Chapter 2 in the areas of reduced-use seasons and the supply of overnight facilities. Also under the No Action Alternative, the Mammoth Loop Trail would not be extended, and as such, would not address management concerns that day-use facilities such as trails are insufficient to meet demands.

Based on the analysis above, land use impacts associated with the No Action Alternative would be greater, in the case of overall consistency with the Town's General Plan, than those projected for the Proposed Action. More specifically, the No Action Alternative would not fulfill the goals and policies of the General Plan, or would not fulfill those goals and policies to the same extent as would occur under the proposed project. Land use impacts under the No Action Alternative would be generally equivalent to the project with regard to the Juniper Ridge Master Plan, the Forest Plan, and the MMSA Development Plan. As indicated previously, the applicable plans analyzed in this section envisioned an expansion of resort facilities beyond what currently existed at the time of the respective plans' approval, as evidenced by the goals and policies contained within each plan. The No Action Alternative would not ultimately fulfill the long-range vision of the Town, the Forest Service, and the MMSA to develop a year-round resort facility encompassing a mix of uses in the project area and enhancing the capacity of ski-related facilities.