

Downtown Neighborhood District Plans (DNDPs)
Compiled Notes
Focus Group Meeting October 13, 2009
Community Workshops October 13 & November 5, 2009

The following reflect comments from participants during the Downtown NDPs focus group meeting and community workshops held on October 13 and November 5, 2009.

Good Experiences in the District

- First job working at Kittredge
- Staying at Travel Lodge in 1975
- Staying at Holiday Haus over Thanksgiving with great snow
- Purchase of the Footloose building
- Mammoth in the 1960's and 70's – magic, funky, old, extremely authentic and unpretentious
- Clean-up/demolition of old buildings (Tommy Ho's)
- Cervinos (unique dining experience; incredible view)
- Bears in Shady Rest
- Slocums, Wave Rave – shopping and convenient parking
- Ice cream at Crickets
- Trees and wildlife
- Desire to bring back the draw/enjoyment of Main Street
- Good traffic flow (i.e. street width)
- Walking in front of Footloose (multi-use path) and Quality Inn (new sidewalk improvements)
- Recreation (snowmobiling) off Sawmill Cutoff
- Street width is good; makes it comfortable for bikers; don't reduce width
- New Fire Station

What is already working? Where do you see evidence/examples of what we are trying to achieve?

- Main shopping area on south side of Main Street/street front retail works
- 4th of July block party – walkable
- Frontage roads with parking
- Flat topography makes it easier to walk
- Retail in Subarea 2 (south Main Street) works pretty well
- Convenient parking, and parking at a shop's front door
- Existing Main Street design appeals to southern Californians; it is difficult to change their dependency on cars
- Outlet stores are working well and are well-liked; there are certain businesses doing well

- Sidewalks (e.g. OMR to Laurel Mtn)
- Schat's architecture

What can be improved upon?

- So much asphalt on Main Street is distracting
- Large pavement barrier separates north and south sides of Main Street; need to focus on moving people along each side of Main Street (east/west) rather than crossing it (north/south)
- Safe crossings – signals, roundabouts, crosswalks, overpasses, bridges, etc? Need to slow vehicle speeds and have safe crossings at appropriate places (handicap ramp at Joaquin, but can't cross)
- Connect street crossings with existing and planned sidewalks, multi-use paths, etc
- Need for a pleasant walking experience/synergy and shared parking (feet first)
- Need to keep sidewalks along Main Street open year round (access/walking is an overall issue)
- Coordinate feet-first infrastructure with snow removal (Caltrans blows snow onto sidewalks)
- Nothing working in Subarea 1 (not utilizing the frontage along Main Street/Old Mammoth Road)
- Increase mid-block connectors
- Winter traffic congestion at the end of the day when the mountain closes
- Like the way Main Street is now; wide is nice, but upgrade properties (remodel buildings)
- Commercial is “strip-like” and we need to get away from that
- Increase mixed use with retail on first floor and residential or office uses above
- Topography in Subareas 4 and 5 make it difficult for retail uses; these subareas should be focused with lodging uses
- Define a theme/character to reduce hodgepodge
- Facades should tie together in theme/character
- People need a choice of housing types, which should be located appropriately in town
- Improve wayfinding in the district
- Integrate recreation activities (range of hike, bike, etc) in the design culture of the community – make it seamless and accessible from the point of arrival
- Create a “park once” destination for visitors (i.e. don't need cars after arrive to Mammoth) – commit to getting people out of their cars
- Need convenient parking
- Concern with auto-oriented visitors (visitors from Southern California will still use their cars)
- Create joint parking structures for employees that are close to transit

- Underground parking as mandatory for lodging and as much on-street parking as possible to support retail.
- Add a second supermarket to this district
- Make Main Street a pleasurable experience
- Establish a clear strategy to improve Main Street

What could the district and subareas feel like 20 years in to the future?

- More attractive, walkable and people-friendly (topography in Subareas 4 and 5 may not be entirely walkable)
- Landscaping, bikes, walkways, and street frontage character
- Existing lodging uses are upgraded (concern that can't have high land cost and low end lodging); hotel uses at the Village (SOI)
- North and south sides of Main Street do not need to be the same (e.g. north Main Street may not be a retail district like the south side of Main Street)
- Banff – sidewalk cafes on frontage roads
- Transit accessible
- Transportation hub
- Free gondola: a gondola would need to have multiple stops (not just to the Village/mountain)
- Recreation on USFS lands north of Urban Growth Boundary is utilized and connected to Shady Rest Park (e.g. snowmobile, cross-country ski)
- Enhanced recreation node at Shady Rest Park
- Opportunity for an Olympic training center
- Add more landscaping along Main Street and incorporate Murphy Gulch
- Stable, diversified economy – more new businesses, support entrepreneurship
- General purpose retail located on south Old Mammoth Road (outside of DNDP SOI)
- Ice rink should be visible to visitors and animate (i.e. ice rink in the Village – outside SOI); it won't exist without a cover to preserve the ice
- Mammoth Creek Park East – ice rink/football/soccer (outside SOI)

Subarea 1

- Entry to town is a “perfect” place for a civic center, sports facility (mixed use civic center)
- Sports fields/event area at the entry to town (although not a sense of arrival, it is pleasing, active and fun)
- Visitor Center is “good” gateway use; RV park is not (needs to be better screened)
- Option to relocate RV park to north side of Main Street near Shady Rest group camping sites and develop a park where RV park is currently; park would be year round with soccer fields, snow play, biathlon, and connected to schools

- Create a gateway/sense of arrival/appeal at OMR/Main Street intersection (e.g. big sign “we are here”, sculpture, etc) - highlight the mining and skiing history
- Add usable roundabout or square-about at OMR/Main Street intersection to create entry statement
- A distinct gateway with historic theme; wayfinding
- Need for a visible events area (arts, performance, etc) near retail to create synergy; located at the entry to town seems appropriate
- East part of Subarea 1 should be T1-T3

USFS Site

- USFS has potential for land trade, but lacks infrastructure
- Sports park and events arena on USFS site
- Keep some USFS housing at rear of property
- Improve appearance of USFS buildings
- Include a park at USFS compound
- Should not be commercial or residential uses in this area
- Front with commercial
- Grocery store location

Civic Center Site

- Existing Civic Center site is appropriate (since we already own the site) and Town and County offices should move.
- Museum or cultural center included as part of civic center uses
- Connect to Shady Rest park, which is already a popular walk-to destination

North Old Mammoth Road Area

- Mixed use with walkable retail (pedestrian retail/restaurant mixed use)
- M1 (Medium Density Mixed Use) - 35 to 45 feet (2-4 stories)
- Parking requirements for retail should be more realistic
- Deal with parking first, as a priority
- A good location for a joint parking facility is near Center Street/Shady Rest

Subarea 2

- Mixed use with walkable retail (pedestrian retail/restaurant mixed use)
- Retail frontage along Main Street (not service type businesses; they should be concentrated elsewhere)
- Shopping and eating uses on the border of Subareas 2 and 4
- Move buildings closer to the street to achieve a better frontage
- Visitor focused
- Extend pedestrian connection and backage road south of Main Street
- Locals retail with housing above along Center Street

- Incorporate open space and housing off of Main Street
- M1 (Medium Density Mixed Use) - 35 to 45 feet (2-4 stories)
- Consider 3 story New York style lofts with views to the south (35 feet tall on north side of Main Street and 25 feet tall on south side of Main Street to preserve views)

North of Main Street

- Maintain mixed use commercial and residential east of the Post Office (daycare, service businesses), but provide transitions to neighborhoods
- North side of Main Street should be more retail and office uses than lodging
- Retail frontage along Main Street
- “Walk-to” neighborhood commercial
- Seems appropriate for smaller scale multi-family residential since it borders SFR
- “Iconic” hotels not appropriate in this area – but some lodging OK
- Locate parking structure (not fronting on Main)
- Post office should be in the Town Center since it is not a visitor use, and pocket parks added near existing post office
- Make Pinecrest one-way
- “Clean up” what’s there
- Concern re impacts adjoining residential neighborhoods
- Some redevelopment could occur with current zoning

South of Main Street

- Stronger retail frontage on Main Street needed
- Mixed Use retail and residential (housing above commercial)
- Backside of Center Street is underutilized
- Integrate Center Street with Main Street; take advantage of southern exposure on Center Street by north/south connections to Main Street; connect Center Street to Sierra Valley Sites
- Location for joint parking facility
- Connect to Shady Rest

Subarea 3 (Shady Rest)

- A park and affordable housing (single family and townhouses) for professionals; not lowest income
- ½ park (to the north) and ½ housing (to the south)
- Definitely have housing; last best opportunity for workforce housing neighborhood
- Maintain the wetland area as open space/park, but include some play facilities
- Less private open space will require more public open space for Shady Rest residents

- Consider housing around perimeter of the site, surrounding a central open space area
- Characteristic T3 or T4
- Make sure housing is “high quality” and well designed
- Not McMansions; locals single family residential (like Pinecrest Area)
- Opportunity for locals (affordable) single family, could be duplex, zero lot line; all affordable housing so far seems to be multifamily
- Should be mixed locals housing, both affordable and some market rate
- Affordable and market rate housing should be indistinguishable
- A mix of high-quality units for permanent residents (some for-sale, some for rent – not lower quality apartment-type housing); no market rate, all deed-restricted
- Make all of Shady Rest joint parking
- Needs road connectivity to connect through Subarea 3 to surrounding areas; consider extension of Dorrance Dr to Chaparral
- Northeast corner may be mixed use with walkable retail (pedestrian retail/restaurant mixed use)
- Possibility for an events area on northwest corner? Or too close to existing and future residential uses?
- Consider a supermarket on northwest corner

Subarea 4

- Move buildings closer to the road to change from sea of parking and consider backage roads
- Needs pedestrian access, businesses fronting the street, and parking behind; landscaping and streetscaping would be an incremental change
- Residential/lodging; visitor focused
- Topography issues; can’t see Sierra Valley Sites intersections from Main Street – improve safety/visibility for turning
- Building heights could vary depending on topography (less or more than 35 feet)
- Subarea 4 is anticipated for big changes on both sides of Main Street (M1 – Medium Density Mixed Use)

North of Main Street

- Mixed motel/hotel and residential (i.e. residential and lodging)
- No retail frontage (topography)
- Run-down and needs a concept

South of Main Street

- Retail frontage with strong pedestrian connection and surface parking behind
- Backage road with back door entries to businesses
- Angled parking with through lane (parking off Main); alley parking (like Bishop)

- Parking visible (or well signed) from Main Street
- Pedestrian and backage road changes will require significant change to snow management
- Mixed use retail with housing (M1)
- Locals shopping/convenience market

Subarea 5

- Appropriate for residential housing and lodging; visitor focused
- Currently overbuilt with rental/visitor units – surplus, but should have lodging on west side; topography is a challenge
- Mixed use/small scale commercial and restaurants on east side (this area used to have successful retail) to support surrounding neighborhoods and Subarea 4
- Building heights could vary depending on topography (less or more than 35 feet)

North of Main Street

- Structured private parking for hotels (all lodging parking is underground)
- Market-rate residential/condos
- Smaller scale hotels (though larger structures may be possible depending on visibility from Main Street)

South of Main Street

- High density hotel and Lodging (L2-L3) – more height possible because of topography
- Restaurant
- Limited retail (mostly for hotel guests)

Transect: Land use and development characteristics

- M1 – Medium Density Mixed Use along Old Mammoth Road, Tavern Road and Laurel Mountain Road
- Views matter - consider views with building height and variation
- Building heights should be variable based on views (tall buildings on the north side of Main Street in Subareas 4 and 5 may not work)
- Transition heights to the North Village – taller to the west but consider topography and views
- Heights should consider trees, views, setbacks and setbacks
- Building heights should stepback with ~35 feet height at the street
- Bring the proximity of features closer to the roadway edge to slow and calm traffic as well as to create a presence
- Keep existing zoning density
- Form-based standards and aesthetics
- Look at Burlington, Vermont as an example

Mobility: Main Street/SR 203 and overall circulation, including feet-first

Main Street/SR 203 Design and Overall Circulation

- Need to account for commercial traffic and effects on neighborhood streets
- Consider diagonal streets intersecting with Main Street (improve solar access)
- Truck routes should be considered
- Mobility needs to support the district

Reduce Main Street/SR 203 to two lanes:

- Consider reducing Main Street to 2 lanes – concern with how to deal with snow management; however, would benefit pedestrians (North Village has only 2 lanes and it is a congestion problem in the winter)
- No two lane road on Main Street but should be less than 200’
- Two lane Main Street will increase cut through traffic (Knolls, Sierra Valley Sites, etc)

Backage roads:

- Backage concept should be explored; need more ways to move people 7 days a week and year-round - this may be difficult for visitors
- Move frontage roads to “backage” roads to create less of an asphalt barrier
- “Backage” Road on north side of Main Street may not “fit”
- Pull traffic off Main Street (narrow Main Street and add “backage” roads)

Greenway:

- Design Main Street with a wide center median that has native trees, a pedestrian path and bike lanes (landscaped boulevard), with minimal street crossings; snow would be trucked

Re-design frontage roads:

- Re-design frontage roads (4 land Main Street is okay; fix frontage roads)
- Re-position the frontage road area to create parking (Aspen, Co)
- Keep some parking on frontage roads – option to keep one lane of parking and one lane for walkway (this may not work with topography around Sierra Valley Sites)

Roundabouts and traffic calming:

- Traffic calming at Town entry
- Roundabout or Town Square at OMR and Main
- A roundabout at Forest Trail/Minaret could be a safety issue with snow

Other Streets:

- Can Meridian Boulevard (SOI) help solve for Main Street?
- Keep Meridian as 4-lanes to move more traffic east west
- Put Old Mammoth Rd back to four lanes

Feet-first

- Complete/fill in the gaps for sidewalks, paths, bike lanes, and MUPs. Connectivity of walking is critical
- Support walking in the winter (e.g. add feet-first infrastructure along the length of Main Street with appropriate crossings, snow removal, etc)
- Minimal crossings across Main Street (it is difficult for pedestrians to cross arterials - Main Street, Old Mammoth Road)
- Keep a buffer adjacent to road for sidewalks/multi-use paths and stormwater management
- SOI connectivity – Shady Rest Park, USFS lands and trails

Transit

- Increase transit funding
- Encourage transit; get people out of their cars
- Non-motorized/buses on Main Street

Gondola

- Gondola could serve as an anchor; it's fun, exciting and predictable (not affected by traffic)
- How would a gondola affect the design of Main Street?
- How/who pays for a gondola?
- Why gondola? Is it an amenity or essential?
- Does gondola move enough people to be a practical option (does it pull enough trips off Main Street)? Gondola impact is high (visual blight), it is fixed/inflexible/static and expensive
- Gondola discussions need to include parking structures
- Non-consensus on gondola: pros – gets people out of cars, with flights less people will have cars, connects Main Street to Village, attractive to visitors, may be cost effective over time vs bus system; cons – bypasses businesses on Main Street, will need to connect where people are staying (potentially lots of stops), concerns with aesthetics, eyesore, height of towers

General/Other Comments & Concerns

- Housing at the ground floor on Main Street is not good
- Use top floor residential for high-end penthouses
- Concern about mixed-use – who wants to live above retail? Consider offices above retail
- We don't need more lodging units; coordinate with visitation – seasonal and weekly fluctuations
- Existing housing is in the Sierra Valley Sites (SVS) and do not want to increase density in the SVS, but would like to diversity housing options
- Need to manage snow throughout – some snow storage necessary
- People only walk ~500 feet in the snow/ski boots

- Need a parking district
- Existing recreational amenities can't absorb amount of development proposed
- Sierra Center Mall and Minaret Mall will suffer when Town and County offices move
- New commercial shouldn't cannibalize existing commercial
- Segregate or mix visitor and locals serving retail and restaurants? Village appears to have higher price point
- Concern with the design of the Courthouse that will be built soon
- Concern about incorporating existing gas stations
- Existing development and circulation system are a limitation
- A lot can be accomplished within our existing zoning codes and standards
- Significant changes to housing and properties is a concern and is very expensive
- Need redevelopment agency
- Need to fully commit to reinvestment of all properties on Main Street
- Concern about unintended consequences