

“The Mammoth Hotel Project”
Project Description, Scope, Requests and Findings
September 2019
452 Old Mammoth Road
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

I. Project Description

“The Mammoth Hotel Project” is the working title name for a proposed project that encompasses the complete renovation of the existing 3 story Sierra Center Mall (“SCM”) located at 452 Old Mammoth Road (the “Project Site”), Mammoth Lakes, California (the “City”). The Project’s Site is identified by parcel number of 035-200-019 containing approximately 84,491 square feet of land. The Project envisions creating a new, 164 room Boutique Luxury Hotel which would add to the current three story building a partially open fourth story featuring an open air roof top deck, pool, restaurants, and hotel suites to (the “Project”).

The Project is currently operated as the SCM, a 3-story, approximately 100,633 gross square foot office and retail building including surface parking and a underground garage currently striped with 197 parking spaces. SCM is classified as a legal-nonconforming structure, which was validly constructed under the original zoning code in 1981 under a Commercial General designation, now referred to as C-2 in the OMR District in the updated MLMC Zoning Table 17.16.030. The allowed Floor Area Ratio (“FAR”) for the Project Site under existing zoning is 2:1 or approximately 170,000 square feet of Floor Area based on the lot size and buildable area. The total floor area of the Project with proposed revisions would be 126,495 square feet, or an FAR of approximately 1.50:1. The current zoning permits the current uses of office, retail, restaurant and bar use and also permits the Project’s proposed uses of hotel and related hotel activities, including restaurant and food service uses.

II. Project Scope

The Project’s scope would entail the demolition of all existing interior improvements and mechanical systems down to the building’s basic structural components and the selective removal of exterior perimeter walls and windows in order to comply with code standards applicable to alterations of continued non-confirming uses under Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code (“MLMC”) Section 17.100.040. The Project would include structural upgrades in the garage and in other major structural components to meet code requirements and support the proposed fourth floor roof deck addition. The additional floor would allow the implementation of new restaurants, hotel suites, common areas and partially open air pool deck all with dramatic views of the Sherwins, Mammoth Mountain and down Valley towards Crowley Lake. Once the structural work has been completed, the entire Project would then be completely reconstructed with all new materials, mechanical systems and interiors, then closed in with new exterior windows and facades. The addition of the fourth floor hotel rooms, kitchen and common areas would add approximately 24,019 square feet of new area to the Project’s gross square footage. Parking for the Project would continue to be provided by the existing surface lot and the improved underground garage.

The Project would consist of a new, high quality boutique hotel that would have a variety of new amenities and improved features that would be available to the hotel guests as well as the community at large, creating vibrant and active new uses in the place of a dated and underutilized office building.

III. Applicant’s Requests

As part of its Application for Design Review, Applicant is requesting the approval of an Adjustment under MLMC § 17.76.040. This code provision allows a 10 percent adjustment in structure height to be approved where any one of two findings can be made: (1) a significant public benefit will result from the adjustment (e.g., protection of trees or other significant features, enhanced circulation, or improved landscaping or snow storage); **or** (2) increased safety of occupants or the public would result.

The Adjustment sought here is a height adjustment of the allowed 10 percent from the current building height of 45 feet to 49 feet, 6 inches. The 10 percent Adjustment of 4 feet 6 inches would allow sufficient height to construct the new proposed fourth floor, which would be partially open and provide a publically accessible roof deck, restaurant, and additional hotel suites. The adjusted height would not include additional mechanical structures above the 49 foot, 6 inch height, which include rooftop stairwells, elevator overruns and mechanical equipment, which are allowed and would conform to the requirements of MLMC Section 17.36.060.B.3.

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A sufficient basis exists for the City to find that the Project *both* provides significant public benefits and improves the safety of future occupants and the public at large, supporting the approval of the requested Adjustment. These benefits to the public and safety improvements include the following:

- The Project would construct a new, protected 6' pedestrian pathway with no vehicle crossings running from the Old Mammoth Road frontage to the main building entry. This pedestrian pathway would significantly improve the availability and safety of public pedestrian access to the Project from Old Mammoth Road, improving the current condition in which there is no protected public access to the building.
- The Project would activate and beautify the primary Project Site frontage along Old Mammoth Road, including the addition of a new restaurant café with outdoor patio space. It would also include a new bus stop, new landscaping, public seating, and a new pocket park at the southeast corner of the Project Site. The improvements would activate approximately 83.7 percent of the Project Site's Old Mammoth Road Frontage, a substantial increase from the current condition where the site frontage is dominated by a surface parking lot. The pocket park area would also double as a snow storage area in the winter.
- The Project would add a new covered bus stop along the Old Mammoth Road Project frontage, promoting the use of public transit and providing the City a new bus stop in a location with numerous commercial uses that will benefit from increased access via public transportation.
- The Project would add additional new bicycle parking, including new racks along the Old Mammoth Road frontage, providing parking for existing bicycle users and promoting the use of bicycles and other forms of alternative transportation within the City.
- The Project would create new, safer curb cuts at the primary Old Mammoth Road access points that would increase both pedestrian and vehicle visibility at the primary vehicle entrances by creating improved turn radii and removing existing visual obstructions. The Project would also narrow the existing drive aisles to be code compliant and provide new and improved safety signage and wayfinding. These improved features would improve both pedestrian and vehicle safety.
- The Project would entail the revitalization and re-use of an underutilized site with a modernized, attractive renovated building that provides new and improved services available to the public. This would include visual improvements to the existing building, which include the removal and screening of building rooftop mechanical equipment, reducing the visual impact of such current features, and providing screening along the Meridian Boulevard frontage that would block the Project's new trash pickup areas from public view, moving the trash pickup from a highly visible location along Old Mammoth Road to fully screened in-building areas at the Project's secondary frontage along Meridian Boulevard.
- The new Project rooftop would provide an attractive, publically accessible open space that could also be made available at no or reduced costs for future public events. This space provides a new focal point for public activity and a new, unique feature providing new visual access to the City and surrounding area's natural beauty.
- The Project would provide significant additional revenues to the City, enabling the City to provide increased levels of public services and potentially new public services, with the provision of substantial increased revenues as compared to the current use, which would be derived from from the Transient Occupancy Tax, Tourism Business Improvement District funds and Sales Tax Revenue.
- The Project would provide new hotel, meeting, event and restaurant uses that would expand the hospitality offerings of City, providing opportunities and amenities for new and additional visitors to experience the wide variety of offerings and natural beauty the City has to offer its visitors, expanding the existing potential of the City's vital tourism industry.

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IV. Design Review Criteria

The Project complies with the City’s Design Review Criteria under MLMC Section 17.88.050, as follows:

- A. Cohesive Design Elements Consistent with the Character of the City
The New Hotel design uses natural colors inspired by the surrounding trees and boulders and raw Materials with earth tones. The Architecture focuses on indoor-outdoor connection with extended canopies and lots of outdoor seating in spirit of the Mountain resort community and surrounding natural landscape. Bike parking / Station and community park open to the neighborhood on the streetscape is created to promote interaction with the resort community and neighbors.
- B. Consistent Streetscape Design
The streetscape design extends the resort experienced to the public. New additions such as a new covered bus stop, pavers at the entry areas, and covered pedestrian pathways are designed to enhance the safety and comfort for everyone who visits the Hotel. Bike parking / Station and community park open to the neighborhood on the streetscape is created to promote interaction with the resort community and neighbors. The café, open park, bike station/ bike parking and outdoor seating, and new landscaping all create a sense of community and activates the street along Old Mammoth Rd.
- C. Parking Areas Designed to Foster the Planned Mobility System and Minimize Visibility and Conflict
The parking is combination of underground existing parking and surface parking. The surface parking are buffered my landscaping and site walls to minimize Pedestrian and Vehicle conflicts. Pavers are used to identify Pedestrian crossing zones.
- D. Complementary Lighting
Down-directed and shielding lighting and light fixtures will be used to complement the building and provide lighting over walkways and parking areas to enhance Pedestrian safety and minimize light pollution.
- E. Sustainable Landscaping
Current Trees and Landscape to be preserved that construction will allow. The Landscape includes additional trees and Landscape along Old Mammoth road to improve streetscape. Landscaping is designed to conserve water consumption and promote a natural aesthetic in spirit of the Mountain Resort Community.

September 9, 2019

Via Email and Hand Delivery

Chandler Van Schaack
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City of Mammoth Lakes
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**Re: Design Review (DR) 19-003: Highmark Mammoth – Sierra Center Mall
452 Old Mammoth Road.
Response to July 23, 2019 Letter**

Dear Chandler:

I write to provide formal responses to the issues raised in your letter dated July 23, 2019, following our meetings on July 30 and August 14, 2019 to discuss revisions and improvements to the Sierra Center Mall hotel project (Project), located at 452 Old Mammoth Road (Property), Mammoth Lakes, California (City).

With this letter, we are providing a revised plan set (Revised Plans) that implements and incorporates the comments in your July 23rd letter and further comments and issues addressed at our prior meetings. The Revised Plans are provided with this letter via a separate web link as **Attachment A**.

1. Adjustment Findings

We are providing with the package of materials submitted with this letter a single document that includes a revised project description, project scope, proposed Adjustment findings, and a Design Review Criteria consistency analysis that further address the issues raised in your 7/23/19 letter, which is attached to this letter as **Attachment B**. In line with the discussions at our meetings, we believe the findings for the sought-after Adjustment under Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code (MLMC) Section 17.76.040 for a 10 percent increase in allowed building height, allowing an additional 4'- 6" of height on the building, are well supported. In particular, the Project supports the required Adjustment findings under MLMC Sections 17.76.040.B and C, as the Project would provide both a significant public benefit from the adjustment and increased safety of occupants or the public would result, as further set forth in Attachment B.

2. Commercial District Standard Compliance

As recognized in your letter, the Project consists of the adaptive reuse of an existing, legal non-conforming building. Accordingly, adherence to all standards applicable to new construction under MLMC Chapter 17.24 cannot be adhered to, and the Project is not required to under the codes. However, in your letter, Planning has expressed a desire that the Project should seek to comply with those standards with which it is possible to comply. In particular, your letter references streetscape and parking area design, building entries, windows, and façade materials.

In response, as further set forth in Attachments A and B, revisions have been implemented into the Revised Plans to address these issues. In regard to streetscape and parking area design, the Project has been revised to further activate and beautify the primary Project Site frontage along Old Mammoth Road. Planned features include the addition of a new restaurant café with outdoor patio space, and a new bus stop, and revised features include new landscaping, public seating, and a new pocket park at the

southeast corner of the Project Site. Taken together, the improvements would activate approximately 87 percent of the Project Site's Old Mammoth Road Frontage.

To improve parking area design, the Project has been further revised to create new, safer curb cuts at the primary Old Mammoth Road access points that would increase both pedestrian and vehicle visibility at the primary vehicle entrances by creating improved turn radii and removing existing visual obstructions. The Project would also add a new covered bus stop along the Old Mammoth Road Project frontage.

The aforementioned addition of a new restaurant café with outdoor patio space includes a lighted awning and ample public seating and provide open access to the new street-facing restaurant space with transparent facades at the street level. The Project also includes a new Porte Cochère entry and drive with new landscaping along in the parking area. The primary building entrance is covered by an awning, and would include hanging lights, recessed entries, and landscaping.

The Project also added additional new bicycle parking, including new racks along the Old Mammoth Road frontage, providing parking for existing bicycle users and promoting the use of bicycles and other forms of alternative transportation within the City. The building also proposes to be constructed with durable, high quality façade materials, as set forth in the Revised Plans.

3. Design Review Criteria Compliance

Pursuant to your request, the revised project description, scope and proposed Adjustment findings provide a narrative explanation explaining how the Project complies with City's Design Review Criteria under MLMC Section 17.88.050. (See Attachment B.)

4. Parking Requirements

The current Revised Plans include either 185 spaces with the ability to use valet parking and 161 spaces otherwise. The applicant has engaged LSA Associates, Inc., an expert transportation consultant, to prepare a parking demand study and parking plan to supplement the materials provided with this letter response that we anticipate will demonstrate that the parking proposed for the project is code compliant. The current proposed parking is indicated in the Revised Plans, which information will be supplemented with a forthcoming parking demand study, which is anticipated to include recommendations for alternative parking provisions for the City's consideration as part of the approval of the Project.

5. Parking Deficits and Alternative Parking Provisions

See response to issue no. 4, above.

6. Ski-Shop Locker

Your letter requests more information about the "ski shop/locker" indicated in the plans. At this stage in the development of the Project, in-building programming has not progressed to a highly detailed point. The inclusion of ski-shop locker on the plans is largely a placeholder for a potential future use. In Project amenities and facilities will be further refined following construction working with the future hotel operator.

7. Screening of Parking Area

To respond to your request for a screened parking area, the Project has been revised to provide screening along the Meridian Boulevard frontage that would block the Project's new trash pickup areas from public view, which trash area is accessible from the entry at that Meridian frontage. This design also entails moving the trash pickup from a highly visible current pickup location along Old Mammoth Road to the fully screened in-building areas indicated in the Revised Plans provided with this letter.

8. Upper Story Stepback

As we previously discussed at our August 14th meeting, it is not feasible for the Project, as an adaptive reuse of an existing building with no stepbacks, to be redesigned to provide stepbacks. As of this time, we therefore consider this issue resolved.

9. Pedestrian Accessible Entries

With respect to building entries and the improvement of pedestrian-friendly design, as depicted in Attachment A, the Project has now been improved with plans to construct a new, protected, well-lit six foot pedestrian pathway with no vehicle crossings running from the Old Mammoth Road frontage (which includes new bike parking areas) that leads to the main building entry, which would “prevent conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists... and achieve a safe, efficient, and harmonious development.” This pedestrian pathway would significantly improve the availability and safety of public pedestrian access to the Project from Old Mammoth Road, improving the current condition in which there is no protected public access to the building.

In addition, a street entrance has been added to the restaurant fronting onto Old Mammoth Road, connecting and providing building access along the Project’s primary frontage.

10. Pedestrian Access

See response to issue 9, above.

11. Curb Cut Redesign

As stated above and set forth in the Revised Plans, the Project has been revised to implement, safer curb cuts at the primary Old Mammoth Road access points that would increase both pedestrian and vehicle visibility at the primary vehicle entrances by creating improved turn radii and removing existing visual obstructions.

12. Window Design

As set forth in the revised elevations and renderings in the Revised Plans, the Project windows have been redesigned to include outset black [vinyl/anodized aluminum] framing to add articulation and visual variation to the window design in accordance with the City’s Commercial Development District Design Standards.

13. Materials Board

The applicant is in the process of preparing the requested materials board. It will be provided as soon as possible.

Regarding technical engineering, water, and fire plan comment nos. 14 through 24, please see Attachment A, which includes revisions and clarifications that address each comment.

We thank for you time, efforts and professionalism in processing the Project. We look forward to continuing to work with you and to moving forward toward a hearing before the Advisory Design Panel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drew Hild', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Drew Cameron Hild
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