



Town of Mammoth Lakes

Planning & Economic Development Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 8, 2022

AGENDA TITLE: Public Hearing and consideration of Major Design Review (DR) 22-002 and Tentative Tract Map (TTM) 22-003, for approval of a twelve-unit multi-family residential townhome development project located in the Mixed Lodging/Residential zoning district at 3789 Main Street. The project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Guidelines §15332, *Infill Development Projects*.

Applicant/ Property Owner: TerraBlanca Group LLC (Applicant) / (Property Owner)

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

Community & Economic Development

Sandra Moberly, Director

Gina Montecallo, Planner

OBJECTIVE:

1. Hear Staff and Applicant presentations
2. Hold Public Hearing
3. Planning & Economic Development Commission (PEDC) discussion
4. PEDC action to either:
 - a. Adopt the attached Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution (the Resolution), making the required CEQA and Municipal Code findings, and approving Design Review #DR 22-002 and Tentative Tract Map #TTM 22-003, with conditions as recommended by staff;
 - b. Adopt the Resolution with modifications; or
 - c. Deny the Resolution

SUMMARY:

Proposal: Request for approval of a Design Review and Tentative Tract Map application, for the construction of a twelve-unit multi-family residential townhome development project located in the Mixed Lodging/Residential zoning district at 3789 Main Street. The Terra Blanca project consists of four 3-story tri-plex structures ranging in size from 10,571 square feet to 10,765 square feet. The units feature 3 bedrooms and a two-car garage.

Project Name: Terra Blanca

Location: 3789 Main Street

Size of Property: .96 acres

Zoning:	Mixed Lodging/Residential (MLR)
General Plan:	Commercial 1 (C-1)
Environmental Review:	The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, <i>Infill Development Projects</i> , because the project is consistent with the General Plan, the proposed development occurs within town limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses, the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality, and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

KEY ISSUES:

1. Can the findings be made for approval of a Design Review pursuant to Municipal Code (MC) Chapter 17.88?
2. Is the proposed project consistent with the State Subdivision Map Act?
3. Is the proposed project consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The subject property is a .96-acre parcel located at 3789 Main Street. The site was previously developed with a mixed-use structure and surface parking lot known as La Sierra's. The La Sierra's Building sat unoccupied and in disrepair for many years and was demolished in September 2020. The current zoning designation is Mixed Lodging/Residential (MLR), which the Zoning Code describes as an area intended to allow one or more of a variety of lodging, residential, and non-residential uses to encourage a mix of uses and emphasize transient occupancy.

In January 2022, a Tentative Tract Map and Design Review application was submitted by applicant and property owner, TerraBlanca Group LLC. In coordination with Town staff, the project has been modified in response to three rounds of review based on Town development standards.

A noticed PEDC Design Committee meeting was scheduled for October 31, 2022, but was rescheduled for November 4, 2022, to provide additional time for the public and the Design Committee to review the application materials. Because the Design Committee meeting is after the publication of the PEDC packet, a supplemental memo will be provided prior to the PEDC meeting scheduled for November 8, to summarize the Design Committee meeting discussion and recommendations.

The public notice for this item was published in The Sheet on Saturday, October 29th and November 5th. Notices were mailed on Wednesday, October 26th to a total of 128 property owners within a 300-foot radius of the project site. Staff has received two emails from residents of the San Joaquin Villas property. A response to comments section is included below to respond to the comments received.

Project Proposal:

The proposed 12 unit multi-family residential townhome development features four 3-story tri-plex structures ranging in size from 10,571 square feet to 10,765 square feet. Each tri-plex structure provides three separate 2-car garages on the first floor and includes three levels of living space with an overall building height of 40 feet. The first floor of the project sits below street level by an approximate 9-foot grade difference and is largely obscured from view at the property's Main Street frontage. The first floor of each unit is comprised of a single bedroom,

entryway, bathroom and 2-car garage. The second and third levels feature 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a multi-purpose room, kitchen and family space, along with private balconies. In addition to two private balconies, each unit also has a private exterior yard which is enclosed by fencing and tall shrubs. Additionally, an ADA accessible walkway that leads from the residential units to a Town-proposed multi-use path along the Main Street public right of way has been added in coordination with the Public Works Department.

The design of the units accomplishes a mountain modern aesthetic that is appropriate in the context of the surrounding neighborhood while providing a color palette composed of neutral earth tones that blends with the mountainous backdrop. The primary exterior building materials include vertical metal seam siding, horizontal wood plank siding, and natural stone veneer panels (AAA Natural Stone) accents. Black metal trim is used throughout the exterior to frame windows and architectural features. The proposed natural stone veneer provides a clear distinction between the building base and wall materials.

The proposed exterior light fixtures are fully screened and oriented downward. Site lighting poles used for accents and pedestrian safety are implemented with partial shielding by using fixtures with obscured glass and a maximum output of four hundred lumens.

The site plan indicates that three trees over 12 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) will be preserved while 16 trees over 12 inches DBH will be removed. A preliminary landscape plan includes tree plantings at strategic locations around the structure to help blend into the natural setting and buffer the visibility of the structures from Town.



FIGURE 1: BIRDS EYE RENDERING

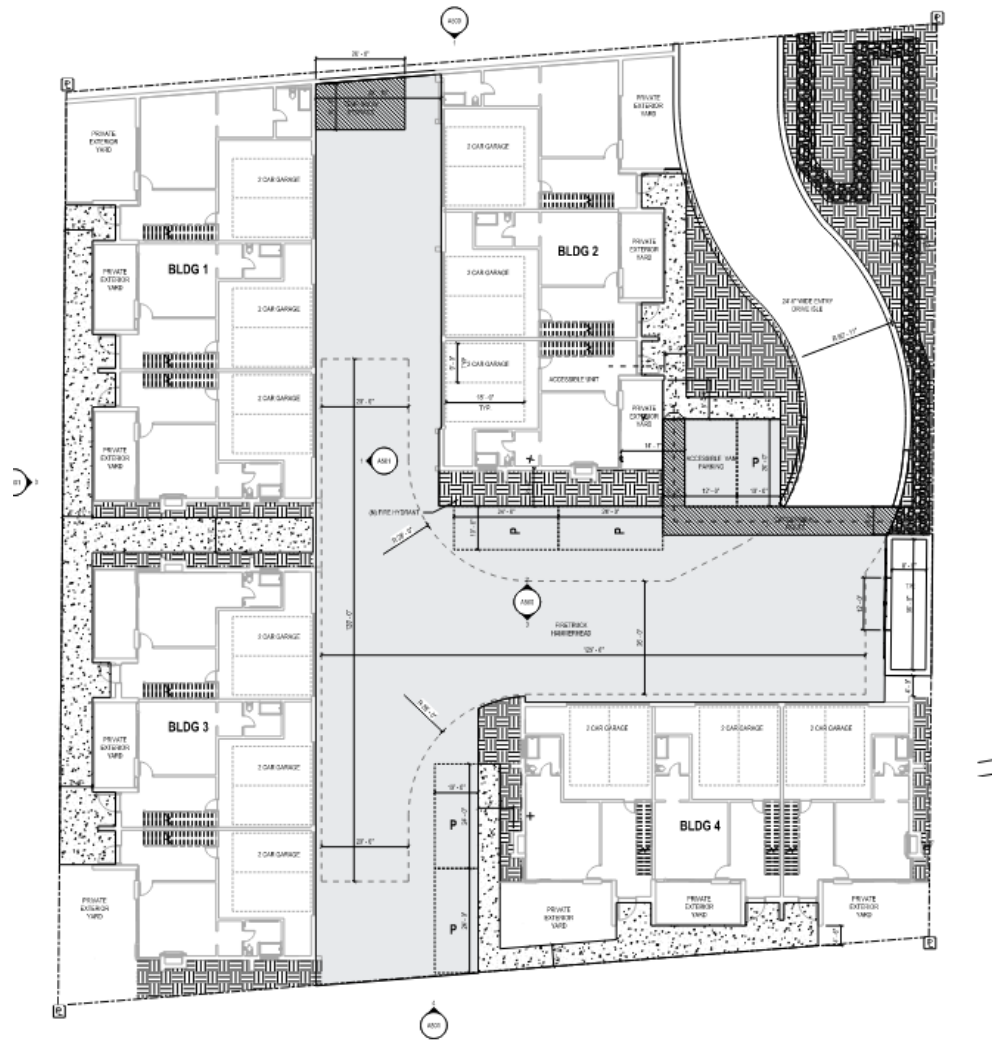


FIGURE 2: SITE PLAN



FIGURE 3: ELEVATIONS



FIGURE 4: VIEW FROM MAIN STREET

Existing Site and Surrounding Land Uses

The site is a .96-acre vacant lot, formerly occupied by an abandoned restaurant building known as “La Sierra’s”. The building was demolished in 2020, and the site was restored to its current state. Since the property was previously developed, the site is disturbed and lacks trees or vegetation within the central area of the site. Clusters of existing mature trees are located around the periphery of the property, and several of these trees will be preserved.

See **Figure 5** below for a map showing the site location and surrounding context. **Table 1** further describes the surrounding land uses and zoning.



FIGURE 5: SITE CONTEXT

Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning.

Location	Zoning*	Land Use	Special Considerations
North	MLR	Main Street and right-of-way	None
South	R	Gray Bear III Development	None
East	MLR	Multi-Family Residential (Gateway Village and San Joaquin Villas)	None
West	R	Multi-Family Residential (The Chutes)	None

*R = Resort, MLR = Mixed Lodging/Residential

Municipal Code Consistency

The project site is zoned Mixed Lodging/Residential (MLR). *“The Mixed Lodging/Residential (MLR) District is intended to allow one or more of a variety of lodging, residential, and non-residential uses to encourage a mix of uses and emphasize transient occupancy.”* The proposed project is classified as multi-family residential use, which is a permitted use in the MLR zone.

The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards as summarized in the following **Table 2**.

Table 2: Zoning Consistency.

General Information			
General Plan: Commercial 1 (C-1)		Specific Plan: N/A	
Zoning: Mixed Lodging/Residential		Overlay Zone/District: N/A	
Existing Land Use: Vacant .96-acre Lot		Permits Required: Design Review	
Commercial District Development Standards (17.24.030)			
Standard	Required/Allowed	Proposed/Provided	Complies?
Floor Area Ratio	2.0 max	1.22	Yes
Snow Storage	60%	4% (280 sq ft)	Yes, Snow Storage Management Plan Is Provided (Pursuant to M.C. §17.36.110.B.3.iii)
Setbacks			
Main Street and Frontage Road	0 feet	0 feet	Yes
Interior Side and Rear	0 feet	0 feet	Yes
Height Standards			
Building Height	45 feet	40 feet	Yes
Maximum Building Face Height Along All Streets and Adjacent to Residential Districts	25 feet for 60% of the building face; 35 for 20% of the building face; 45 for 20% of the building face	The maximum building face height, when measured from the top of the retaining wall to the roof line is 28 feet 6 inches for 10% and 25 feet for 90%	Yes
Stepback	Min. 10 feet	10 feet 6 inches	Yes

Ground Floor, Residential Uses	Min. 8 feet clear from floor to ceiling	10 feet	Yes
Upper Floors	Min. 8 feet clear from floor to ceiling	13 feet	Yes
Parking Standards			
Parking Spaces	24 spaces (12 enclosed) plus 6 guest spaces	24 enclosed spaces plus 6 exterior guest spaces	Yes
Bicycle Parking	8 spaces	8 spaces	Yes
Setback from Street Property Line	20 feet	86 feet	Yes
Setback from Buildings and Public Plazas	8 feet; 5 feet walkway plus 3 feet landscaping; Applicable only to above ground parking.	8 feet	Yes
Access Location	Side street, alley, or rear of property wherever possible.	Access is off of Main Street Frontage Road	Yes

General Plan

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Commercial 1 (C-1) which allows medium-scale, commercial mixed uses. The maximum floor area ratio is 2.0. This designation is located along Main Street between the North Village District and Mono Street and is intended to create a transition zone to the more intensive Commercial 2 and North Village designations. (General Plan, Pg. L-5).

Specific General Plan Vision Statements with which the proposed project is consistent are described in **Table 3:**

Table 3: General Plan Vision Statement Conformance

General Plan Vision Statement	Explanation of Project Conformance
<i>"Sustainability and continuity of our unique relationship with the natural environment"</i>	The site has been designed to minimize the need for excess grading and to utilize the existing topography as much as possible. Three of the 4 buildings have been positioned with the long facade running north to south to allow for sun penetration into the site to help melt snow and ice.
<i>"Exceptional standards for design and development that complement and are appropriate to the Eastern Sierra Nevada"</i>	The design of the condominium development evokes a modern alpine style architecture. The design incorporates natural materials such as warm wood paneling and natural

<i>mountain setting and our sense of a “village in the trees” with small town charm”</i>	stone, which is in keeping with the mountain resort community character.
<i>“Protecting the surrounding natural environment and supporting our small-town atmosphere by limiting the urbanized area.”</i>	The project is located within the Urban Growth Boundary and the density is consistent with that allowed by the C-1 land use designation.

The project is consistent with the following General Plan goals, policies, and actions as described in **Table 4**:

Table 4: General Plan Conformance with Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal, Policy, or Action	Explanation of Project Conformance with Goal, Policy, or Action
<i>Policy C.2.L: Create visually interesting and aesthetically pleasing built environment by requiring all development to incorporate the highest quality of architecture and thoughtful site design and planning.</i>	The project incorporates design features and architectural detail that provides a high-quality appearance and incorporates thoughtful site planning to provide a street-oriented property frontage featuring animated spaces with large picture windows and covered balconies.
<i>Policy C.2.T. Policy: Use natural, high quality building materials to reflect Mammoth Lakes’ character and mountain setting.</i>	The proposed materials are high quality and durable, and provide a good variation to achieve cohesive architectural detail and character to the design of the project.
<i>Policy C.2.V: Building height, massing and scale shall complement neighboring land uses and preserve views to the surrounding mountains.</i>	Building height and massing are similar to the heights and massing of surrounding structures in the neighborhood. The overall height of the structures is 40-feet, which is below the permitted building height of 45 feet in the MLR zone. The roof line of the triplex structures incorporates varying ridge height and adequate articulation to provide appropriate human scale to the appearance of the structure.
<i>C.2.F: Improve visual appearance as well as pedestrian access and activity by requiring infill development patterns. Encourage rehabilitation and reorientation of existing strip commercial development consistent with neighborhood and district character.</i>	The project is an infill project that improves the visual appearance of the site while enhancing pedestrian access and safety. The structures are oriented to face outward toward Main Street, thereby enhancing activity along the street.
<i>C.5. GOAL: Eliminate glare to improve public safety. Minimize light pollution to preserve views of stars and the night sky.”</i>	Lighting considerations on site is intended to create a safe path of travel for pedestrians while minimizing light pollution to all the surrounding areas. No up-lighting will be installed anywhere on site.
<i>L.1.C: Give preference to infill development.</i>	The project site is located on a previously developed vacant parcel and is considered an infill development.

KEY ISSUE #1: Can the findings be made for approval of a Design Review pursuant to Municipal Code (MC) Chapter 17.88?

Design Review is required per MC Section 17.88.020. The purpose of Design Review is to implement the General Plan policies related to community design and character, to promote excellence in site planning and design to complement the natural environment and enhance the image of the town as a mountain resort community, and to ensure that the architectural design of structures and their materials and colors are appropriate to the function of the project and visually harmonious with surrounding development.

Staff finds that the proposed site layout and building design has met the overall intent of the Design Review criteria. Below is staff's analysis of the project's consistency with the Design Review criteria.

Design Review Findings:

A. The project is consistent with the applicable standards and requirements of the Municipal Code.

The project is consistent with the applicable standards and requirements of the Mammoth Lakes Zoning Code because the project is located within the Mixed Lodging/Residential (MLR) zone, intended to allow one or more of a variety of lodging, residential, and non-residential uses to encourage a mix of uses and emphasize transient occupancy. The project complies with all of the development standards applicable to the MLR zone including standards for floor area ratio, lot coverage, setbacks, building height, parking, and snow storage.

B. The project is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan or master plan.

The proposed construction of a 12-unit multi-family residential townhome development located within the Mixed Lodging/Residential zone is consistent with the General Plan in that the applicable land use designation is Commercial-1 (C-1), and the General Plan states that this land use designation allows medium-scale, commercial mixed uses, and is intended to create a transition zone to the more intensive Commercial 2 and North Village designations. Additionally, the General Plan identifies the subject property as being in the Main Street Neighborhood District, and states that new development in the district should improve connectivity and circulation with bike and pedestrian paths, sidewalks and roads. The development incorporates a handicap accessible walkway/ramp connection to the Main Street frontage which will tie into future pedestrian circulation improvements located on the south side of Main Street.

C. The project is consistent with the Town of Mammoth Lakes Design Guidelines.

The project is consistent with the Town's Design Guidelines because the building design works with the topography of the .96-acre site in that the structures are located directly south of a 9-foot-tall retaining wall along the north edge of the property, which reduces the silhouette of the building façade fronting onto Main Street and gives the appearance of a two-story structure at street level. The design of the project accomplishes a mountain modern aesthetic that is appropriate in the context of the surrounding neighborhood while providing a color palette composed of neutral earth tones that blends with the mountainous backdrop.

The use of natural wood siding is accented with stone veneer and architectural details such as metal trim, which combines with the proposed natural stone veneer around the base of the building to provides a clear distinction between the building base and wall material.

The site plan design, and the architectural form of the building all conform to the Design Review Guidelines in that the project compliments the existing topography and is compatible with the site surroundings. The project preserves mature trees where possible and proposes ten new replacement trees throughout the site. The proposed structure adheres to the required setbacks, building height and lot coverage limitations as well as snow management requirements for the Mixed Lodging/Residential zoning district.

D. The project is consistent with the following additional Design Criteria (Zoning Code §17.88.050):

- a. The site design and building design elements including the architectural style, size, design quality, use of building materials, and similar elements, combine together in an attractive and visually cohesive manner that is compatible with and complements the desired architectural and/or aesthetic character of the area and a mountain resort community, encourages increased pedestrian activity, and promotes compatibility among neighboring land uses.**

The proposed 12-unit residential townhome development and site layout combine together in an attractive and visually cohesive manner that is compatible with and complements the character of the surrounding multi-family and single-family developments. The architectural design of the structure provides a modern aesthetic with a pitched roof and articulation throughout the façade to distinguish each unit. The modern aesthetic fits within the context of the mountain resort community in that the design provides appropriate scale, architectural detail, and durable exterior building materials as recommended in the Town Design Guidelines. The structures have architectural characteristics such as roof lines, window styles and materials that complement the architecture and fit within the context of the surrounding neighborhood. Deeply recessed balconies and first floor living areas are sheltered by roof overhangs and side walls which provide an engaging architectural rhythm when combined with recessed entryways and material changes on the upper floors. Balconies feature large picture windows which provide active spaces and maximize view potential.

The buildings are situated within the previously developed areas of the site, with the structures oriented north towards Main Street and desirable views looking towards Mammoth Mountain. The building orientation maximizes sun exposure for passive solar heating.

The trash area will match the design palette of the overall project and the final design and alignment of the trash enclosure will be reviewed by Mammoth Disposal as well as the Public Works and Community and Economic Development Departments to ensure that it will comply with Mammoth Disposal operational requirements as well as Municipal Code section 17.36.130.

Overall, the proposed building and site improvements combine in an attractive and visually cohesive manner that is compatible with and complements the desired aesthetic character of a mountain resort community, encourages increased pedestrian activity, and improves compatibility with neighboring land uses.

- b. The design of streetscapes, including street trees, lighting, and pedestrian furniture, is consistent with the character of commercial districts and nearby residential neighborhoods.**

The street network in this area is already established however the applicant has incorporated a handicap accessible walkway/ramp to provide a dedicated pedestrian connection to the street frontage where future connection to the Town proposed multi-use path along Main Street will be possible.

- c. **Parking areas are located, designed and developed to foster and implement the planned mobility system for the area; buffer surrounding land uses; minimize visibility; prevent conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists; minimize stormwater run-off and the heat-island effect; and achieve a safe, efficient, and harmonious development.**

Parking for the proposed townhome development consists of an enclosed two-car garage for each unit and six exterior guest parking spaces. The amount of parking provided meets the applicable standard for twelve, three-bedroom units. Additionally, the design and color of the two-car garage doors are compatible with the architecture of the home and the driveway configuration provides good visibility and ease of pulling out to the street, which prevents conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

- d. **Down-directed and shielded lighting and lighting fixtures are designed to complement buildings, be of appropriate scale, provide adequate light over walkways and parking areas to create a sense of pedestrian safety, minimize light pollution and trespass, and avoid creating glare.**

The Project would propose illumination around building entrances through the use of bollards, wall, and step lighting. Proposed light fixtures located throughout the pedestrian areas would be subtle, and include only downward lit fixtures to create enough light for safety and navigation through the site. Proposed lighting that is unshielded will use obscured glass to control light output and ensure no glare is created. While the proposed light fixtures appear to comply with the applicable standards, Condition of Approval #16 is included in the attached Resolution to require all exterior lighting to comply with Chapter 17.36.030 of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code, and verification prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy. All lighting for the project will therefore be consistent with existing Municipal Code lighting requirements.

- e. **Landscaping is designed to conserve water resources, promotes a natural aesthetic, and be compatible with and enhance the architectural character and features of the buildings on site, and help relate the building to the surrounding landscape.**

Three trees over 12 inches DBH will be preserved along the south property line which will help to screen the rear of the project from the adjacent properties to the south. Ten trees will be planted in order to replace the removal of other trees on site. The preliminary landscape plan proposes to revegetate disturbed areas with native tree varieties as well as shrubs and native seed mix. The proposed landscaped materials include primarily native species that are appropriate to the local climate and achieve a natural aesthetic. The design achieves an effective landscape screen between units through layering of shrubs and ground covers with native tree species.

E. The project is consistent with any approved tentative map, use permit, variance, or other planning or zoning approval that the project required.

The proposed project is consistent with Tentative Tract Map 22-003, which is included with the entitlement application.

KEY ISSUE #2: Is the proposed project consistent State Subdivision Map Act?

Pursuant to the State Subdivision Map Act, the project requires approval of a Tentative Tract Map since the project is a common interest subdivision that includes residential condominium units that can be individually owned and sold. Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for any of the units, a final map, CC&Rs, and a condominium plan

will require approval by staff and must be recorded on the property Title. Staff has reviewed the tentative map and finds that it is in conformance with the Town's Subdivision Ordinance and the State Subdivision Map Act. Tentative Tract Map 22-003 is included in **Attachment C**.

KEY ISSUE #3: Is the proposed project consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?

Staff has determined that the Project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15332, *Infill Development Projects*. The Project qualifies for this exemption because the project is consistent with the general plan, the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses, the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality, and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

None of the exceptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 are present, which would disqualify the project from using a categorical exemption. Therefore, since the project meets all the criteria pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, no additional environmental review is warranted or necessary and the CEQA exemption is appropriate.

Agency/Public Comments

Staff routed the application to the following local agencies for review: Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District (MLFPD), Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD), and Mammoth Disposal. Comments received from MCWD, Mammoth Disposal and the Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District have been incorporated into the conditions of approval in the attached resolution (**Attachment A**).

Notice of the public hearing, including a project description, was mailed to the 128 property owners within 300 feet of the subject property and a Public Notice was published in The Sheet on October 29th and November 5th.

At the time that the staff report was published, staff has received comments from two members of the public. The comments are included in **Attachment D** and are discussed below.

- *Comments were received regarding the snow storage and drainage flowing onto the San Joaquin Villas property.*

The project proposes 280 square feet of temporary snow storage and will also implement a snow storage management plan which will ensure snow is hauled off-site within five days of a snowstorm.

- *Comments were received asking the project to adhere to all setback and height requirements*

The project as proposed complies with all setback requirements in the MLR zoning of a zero-foot interior side and rear setback. Per Municipal Code Section 17.24.020, there shall be a zero-foot setback, but if the property is "adjacent to a residential district", there shall be a 15-foot setback. When considering the adjacent properties, although the use is residential, the zoning district is designated as Resort. Additionally, the Lodestar Master Plan does not designate the adjacent rear property as a residential district. Therefore, a zero-foot setback is required for the 3789 Main Street parcel. The project is setback 4'6" from the rear property line, 1'3" from the east property line and 7'5" from the west property line, therefore meeting the zoning requirements. The overall height of the proposed structures is 40 feet, which falls under the maximum allowable height of 45 feet in the MLR zoning district.

- *Comments were received requesting trees between the properties be preserved for visual separation.*

Three trees along the property line will be protected. A Tree Resources Assessment was performed by a licensed ISA Certified Arborist and determined that the majority of trees are growing in high density, crowded clusters and would be candidates for thinning and fuels reduction. In addition, the report noted that several trees had evidence of damage from large equipment. A tree replacement plan was prepared by a licensed ISA Certified Arborist in order to mitigate the removal of trees on site which will result in the planting of ten additional trees.

- *Comments were received asking for no lights on the exterior of the project.*

The proposed exterior light fixtures comply with the applicable standards of the existing Municipal Code. Exterior lighting is concentrated on the interior of the site and along pedestrian pathways. Condition of Approval #16 is included in the attached Resolution to require all exterior lighting to comply with Chapter 17.36.030 of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code, and verification prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

- *Comments were received regarding the concern that patios, decks, and large windows facing outward toward surrounding properties would result in noise and light pollution.*

Balconies are recessed into the building façade along with side walls to provide privacy and shelter. All units will be required to adhere to the Town's Quality of Life Ordinance, which contains standards and conditions of operation related to health, safety, and noise.

- *Comments were received requesting the architectural style is in keeping with surrounding buildings.*

The design of the project accomplishes a mountain modern aesthetic that is appropriate in the context of the surrounding neighborhood while providing a color palette composed of neutral earth tones that blends with the mountainous backdrop.

II. STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the proposed project meets the applicable requirements and recommends that the Planning and Economic Development Commission adopt the attached Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution, making the required CEQA and Municipal Code findings, and approving Tentative Tract Map #TTM 22-003 and Design Review #DR 22-002 with conditions as recommended by staff or with modifications.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Planning and Economic Development Commission Resolution

Attachment B: Project Plans

Attachment C: Tentative Tract Map 22-003

Attachment D: Public Comments

Attachment E: Design Committee Meeting Minutes