

CITY OF CALISTOGA

STAFF REPORT

TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KEN MACNAB, SENIOR PLANNER

MEETING DATE: APRIL 9, 2008

SUBJECT: ZONING ORDINANCE (ZO 2008-02) AMENDMENT –
GENERAL PROVISION FOR ALLOWING A LIMITED
INCREASE IN LOT COVERAGE WITHIN RESIDENTIAL
ZONING DISTRICTS

1 **REQUEST:**

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3 **ZO 2008-02:** Consideration of a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment, initiated by
4 the City of Calistoga, amending Chapter 17.38 General Provisions and
5 Exceptions of the Calistoga Municipal Code to allow limited increases in lot
6 coverage within residential zoning districts. This proposed action is exempt from
7 the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15061(b)(3) of
8 the CEQA Guidelines.

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10 **BACKGROUND:**

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12 At the February 13, 2008, Planning Commission meeting the Planning
13 Commission reviewed the purpose, definition and application of lot coverage
14 standards for buildings and structures within residential zoning districts. The
15 Commission also received oral and written comments regarding the lot coverage
16 standard, including specific suggestions for revision. The Planning Commission
17 concurred with staff's interpretation and application of the lot coverage standard
18 but recognized a need for some flexibility in applying the standard to secondary
19 or ancillary structures. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Planning
20 Commission directed staff to prepare several alternatives for amending the
21 Zoning Ordinance to allow for limited increases in lot coverage for such
22 structures. This report presents three possible approaches for an amendment.
23 With final direction from the Commission, staff will prepare a draft text
24 amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for the Commission to review and
25 recommend to the City Council for consideration.

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28 **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

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30 The discussion of alternatives is presented in three parts. Part 1 outlines three
31 alternatives for regulating additional lot coverage. Part 2 presents a range of
32 percentage increases and suggestions for application. Part 3 reviews additional
33 "credit" provisions discussed by the Planning Commission at the February 13,
34 2008 meeting and suggests an alternative for addressing/providing credit.

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36 **Part 1: Regulatory Alternatives**

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38 The alternatives for allowing additional lot coverage for certain structures have
39 been developed based on the following interests (as identified by staff from the
40 Planning Commission's discussion on February 13, 2008):

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- 42 a. The base lot coverage standard specified for each residential zoning
43 district is generally appropriate and should be retained.
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 - 45 b. There is a need to accommodate construction of accessory structures
46 that enhance the use and enjoyment of residential property and that
47 have limited physical or visual presence/impact.
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 - 49 c. Unlimited lot coverage would be detrimental to achieving and/or
50 maintaining the desired character of an area as defined by the City's
51 General Plan.
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53 To achieve these interests, staff suggests adding provisions to Chapter 17.38
54 General Provisions and Exceptions of the Zoning Ordinance that would allow
55 additional lot coverage for accessory structures with certain limitations. This
56 approach, as opposed to amending the standards of each individual residential
57 zoning district, is being recommended because accessory structures are
58 permitted in all residential zoning districts and can be collectively regulated as a
59 "class" of improvement.

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61 **Alternative 1: Allow a Limited Increase in Lot Coverage for Shade
62 Structures¹ Only.**

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64 Discussion

65 In this alternative a provision would be added to Chapter 17.38 that allows a
66 percentage increase in lot coverage for shade structures meeting the following
67 criteria:

¹ A shade structure is generally defined as a permanent structure built above patios or decks, usually of posts, roof or trellis, to provide a shaded area on the patio or deck. This alternative would require that a formal definition of shade structure be added to the Zoning Ordinance.

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1. The proposed structure is open on at least three of its sides.
2. The height of the proposed structure does not exceed ten feet.

This alternative is the most restrictive of the three being presented because it allows an increase for shade structures only. Accessory structures or buildings other than a shade structure (such as a shed, carport, detached or guest room) would be counted against the base lot coverage standard for the zoning district.

Alternative 2: Allow a Limited Increase in Lot Coverage for All Accessory Buildings or Structures

Discussion:

In this alternative a provision would be added to Chapter 17.38 that allows a percentage increase in lot coverage for any accessory building or structure. No additional criteria (other than compliance with applicable zoning regulations such as height and setbacks) would be required.

This alternative would be the least restrictive of the three as it would permit an increase for all accessory buildings or structures without additional regulation.

Alternative 3: Allow a Limited Increase in Lot Coverage for All Accessory Buildings or Structures Subject to Performance Criteria

Discussion:

In this alternative a provision would be added to Chapter 17.38 that allows a percentage increase in lot coverage for any accessory building or structure meeting the following criteria:

1. The building or structure is integrated with the primary building on the property or will not be visible from a public right-of-way.
2. The building or structure has been designed to minimize physical and visual intrusion on adjacent properties.

This alternative would provide the public with some guidance for designing and siting accessory buildings and structures and would also allow staff to exercise some discretion in determining whether a proposed increase in lot coverage is consistent with the purpose and objectives of the standard.

112 **Part 2: Range of Percentage Increase**

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Table 1 below lists the City’s residential zoning districts, average lot sizes and base lot coverage standards. The table also quantifies the average amount of coverage allowed by the base zone standard and the additional amount of coverage that would be allowed at varying percentage increases.

TABLE 1 – SUMMARY OF LOT COVERAGE BY ZONING DISTRICT

Zone	Base Zone Maximum Coverage (%)	Average Lot Size ²	Average Coverage Allowed by Base Zone Standard	Additional Increase for Accessory Structures		
				3%	5%	7%
RR-H	40	142,000	56,800	4,260	7,100	9,940
RR	30	131,000 ³	39,300	3,930	6,550	9,170
R-1-10	30	18,500 ³	5,550	555	925	1,295
R-1	30	7,200 ⁴	2,160	216	360	504
R-2	none	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
R-3	40	12,000	4,800	360	600	840
MHP	75 ⁵	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

NOTES

¹ Unless noted otherwise, all figures shown in square feet; ² Based on Data from Napa County Assessor’s Office; ³ Includes parcels with potential for subdivision; ⁴ Average developed based on typical single-family lot; ⁵ State standard supercedes local zoning

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For reference in comparing/correlating the amount of additional square footage that would be permitted by the ranges identified in Table 1 above, a list of common accessory structures and their associated square footage is provided in Table 2 on the following page.

Discussion

Table 1 above shows that there is a broad range in allowable coverage among the City’s residential zoning districts. The relatively large size of parcels located in the Rural Residential (RR) and Rural Residential-Hillside (RR-H) zoning districts allows for what appears to be an ample amount of coverage for both primary uses (residence) and secondary uses (outbuildings). In consideration of the purpose and intent these districts, staff recommends that both zoning districts be excluded from any provision allowing an additional increase in lot coverage.

137 The Mobile Home Park (MHP) zoning district allows for the greatest percentage
138 of lot coverage (75%). Because lot coverage (and other siting and development
139 standards for lots in mobile home parks) is regulated by State law, staff
140 recommends that the Mobile Home Park (MHP) zoning district also be excluded
141 from provisions allowing additional coverage.
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143 The zoning districts in which additional lot coverage could have the greatest
144 potential to impact character and livability are the Single Family Residential (R-1)
145 and Residential/Professional Office (R-3) districts. These districts are located /
146 applied in more traditional neighborhood areas and are characterized by smaller
147 lot sizes. To assist with the evaluation of what an appropriate percentage
148 increase in lot coverage might be staff has prepared a list of common accessory
149 structures and their associated square footage (Table 2) to help the Commission
150 equate / visualize potential increases in square footage with structural mass.
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153 **TABLE 2 – SQUARE FEET OF COMMON ACCESSORY STRUCTURES**

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Structure	Square Feet	% Coverage of R-1 Lot ¹
Garden Shed	120	1.7%
Patio (10' x 15')	150	2.1%
Spa Gazebo	196	2.7%
Car Port (single car)	200	2.8%
Two Car Garage	484	6.7%

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¹ An "R-1 Lot" is 7,200 square foot lot located in a single-family residential zoning district.

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166 **Part 3: Additional "Credit" Provisions**

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168 During discussion of the lot coverage issue at the February 13, 2008 meeting,
169 the Planning Commission expressed an interest in giving coverage "credit" for
170 structures attached to a building that has eaves and for structures that discharge
171 roof-collected storm water on-site (as opposed to conveying it to public storm
172 system). An analysis of each is provided below based on staff's understanding
173 of the Commission's interest.

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175 **Credit for Eave Area**

176 The eave area credit would be given to structures without eaves that are
177 attached to a building or structure with eaves. The rationale for this credit is that
178 the first two feet (or 24 inches) of eave for the building is not counted as
179 coverage for the building and therefore should not be counted as coverage for
180 the structure. The additional amount of lot coverage that would be gained /

181 allowed will of course vary from lot to lot. Staff estimates a range between 40
182 and 80 square feet total on average depending on building orientation. A
183 hypothetical example of how this credit could factor into the total coverage
184 allowed for a 7,200 square foot single-family lot is provided below:

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186	Permitted Base Zone Coverage (30%)	: 2,160 sf
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188	Additional Coverage for Shade Structure (5%)	: 360 sf
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190	Credit for Attachment to Building w/Eaves	: 60 sf
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192		TOTAL LOT COVERAGE : 2,580 sf (35.8%)
193		

194 In the example above, 420 square feet of additional lot area would be allowed
195 under the additional coverage provision and eave credit, close to the equivalent
196 of a two car garage.

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198 Credit for On-Site Discharge of Storm Water

199 One benefit of limiting lot coverage is that it helps to limit the amount of
200 impervious surface area on a lot. Limiting impervious surface area, or ensuring a
201 minimal amount of pervious surface area allows for natural infiltration and
202 cleansing of storm water. While the City does not require that a minimum
203 amount of pervious surface area be provided, the Commission discussed the
204 possibility of acknowledging the benefits of natural infiltration by granting
205 additional coverage allowance for structures with a pervious ground surface or
206 for structures/sites that do not convey collected storm water into a public storm
207 system.

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209 Staff has no specific recommendation on what an appropriate level of credit
210 would be for a structure with a pervious ground surfaces. Staff would advise
211 that any amount of credit given here should be considered in the context of other
212 lot coverage allowances and total permitted coverage.

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214 Alternative to "Credit" Provision

215 In consideration of the potential challenges to administering a "credit" provision,
216 staff would like to suggest an alternative for the Commission's consideration.
217 Instead of allowing a "per square foot" credit for existing eave area or for
218 pervious ground surface area, staff proposes that credit for these conditions be
219 addressed by establishing a two-tier system for granting additional lot coverage.
220 The tiers would consist of a base level percentage that would be granted
221 administratively and an additional or secondary percentage that would be
222 granted through a notice and hearing procedure similar to the process used for
223 approving second dwelling units (refer to Section 17.37.040 of the Zoning
224 Ordinance). The base level tier would be set at a percentage increase that the

225 Planning Commission believes is generally appropriate for accessory structures.
226 The secondary tier would allow an additional percentage increase above the
227 base level tier but would require notification of neighboring property owners prior
228 to approval. If substantial concern was raised by the neighborhood, the request
229 for additional coverage would be scheduled for a public hearing before the
230 Planning Commission. It should be noted that any proposed additions beyond
231 the requested tier requirements would require the processing of a Variance by
232 the Planning Commission.

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234 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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236 To date, only one written public comment has been received on this proposed
237 text amendment. Staff has attached comments received by Mr. Paul Knoblich
238 dated March 28, 2008. (Refer to Attachment 1)

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240 **RECOMMENDATION**

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242 Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the alternatives
243 presented in this staff report, identify a preferred alternative, and direct staff to
244 prepare a draft text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for Commission review
245 and recommendation to the City Council for at the April 23, 2008 Planning
246 Commission meeting.

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248 **SUGGESTED MOTION:**

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250 I move that the Planning Commission continue the public hearing for item Zoning
251 Ordinance Amendment (ZO 2008-02) to the meeting of April 23, 2008.

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253 **ATTACHMENTS**

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- 255 1. Correspondence from Paul Knoblich dated March 28, 2008
- 256 2. Minutes from February 13, 2008 Planning Commission meeting.
- 257 3. Staff Report from February 13, 2008 Planning Commission meeting.