

First, a word of appreciation to the Planning Commission, Senior Planner Ken McNab, Richard Spitler, and the City Council for bringing this long process this far and providing our city with some appropriate long range planning to help us obtain a more vibrant and neighborly oriented community.

As I read the various segments of the General Plan Amendment, a statement and concept keep appearing "retaining our town's small town character and atmosphere." Throughout the Amendment document, the themes of "Character Areas" and "Gateways" are used repeatedly. And the author has done a good job of describing a sense of what it means to have a "small town" character. My remarks tonight are certainly not against these themes, but I want to make sure that I, and the CAH board correctly understands the overall objectives presented. Naturally, we would assume that these themes should be presented visually in our community so that the message is visual seen in our housing and businesses structures. The architecture styles and crafted landscaping can do a lot to paint a picture of what Calistoga represents. However, CAH believes that another powerful method of retaining the "small town" character is to continue to enhance the ability of those who work within our city, those who teach our children, those who protect our property and safety, those who fight our fires, and all those who help us function in our daily lives, to have the opportunity to also become a full time Calistogan--a full time resident. The basic fabric of a vibrant caring community is based upon the quality of the human element of neighborliness. We, as a community, work, play, and pray together as a community family. CAH is convinced that the strength of Calistoga's small town character is its ability to fuse together all the diversity elements of it citizens into a vibrant working community. We are California's version of Andy Griffith's famous TV town of "Mayberry". CAH's mission statement states it this way: **Neighborhoods are more than clusters of houses. Calistoga's neighborhoods embody both its roots and its cultural, commercial, spiritual and recreational opportunities. CAH advocates for financially attainable housing and builds neighborhoods in the upper Napa Valley that encourage residents to engage in a vibrant vision of their own, and Calistoga's, future**

However, we have a large challenge in preserving our small town character, especially **housing-** basic, average, attainable, affordable housing. Historically, CAH has been called Calistoga Affordable Housing, an advocate and developer of affordable housing. Well, our economy and community has shifted and changed and CAH discovered that is needed to also change and shift. Instead of Calistoga AFFORDABLE Housing, maybe we need to be called Calistoga Attainable Housing, or Calistoga Achievable, or Calistoga Available Housing. Calistoga's biggest challenge is that we don't have adequate housing period. This fact is easily recognized by those who work here but don't live here. Long-time residents don't experience this on a daily basis. They don't have to experience the long commute each day.

The General Plan Amendment document states, "Calistoga currently has a relatively healthy jobs/housing balance." Amendment 4, LU-10 CAH is not satisfied that this is an accurate statement. The document states that the basis of this statement is there is a 1.3 jobs to household ratio. ABAG documents state that the Bay Area averages range between 1.7-2.1. A lower ratio of 1.3 indicates more jobs are being filled by people outside of Calistoga. ABAG indicates they expect a regional average to fall below 1.7. From my research as well as various surveys that CAH has conducted, our findings indicate that Calistoga's work force is currently not able to handle the city's work needs, and many of our core jobs are handled by people living outside of Calistoga. This is especially true for city employees, and the resort industry. This fact is exacerbated by the city's need of additional resorts/spa facilities for their TOT payments. These new ventures will require over 300 new employees. These are employees that need to be part of our community. This new business growth is going to place housing in our community in an even deeper hole.

One of the methods that the General Plan Amendment suggests to promote more housing is "By reducing the level of density allowed on the outskirts of the city, infill development is encouraged and density is feathered downward in intensity from the downtown to the city's edge." LU-10 However, CAH's research indicates that: 1) there are very few building sites available for infill in the center of town, 2) the list of available vacant land options that the Amendment doc lists are vacant because the owners do not want to build, or sell for whatever reason. The majority of this parcels are not attainable, and 3) because Napa County is an "Ag preserve" county, buildable vacant land can only be found inside the city limits and it is extremely expensive. This all makes it almost impossible to build housing for attainable or achievable housing. (please note I didn't use the word affordable). Please consider the fact that in the last ten years there have been very few housing units built and CAH's has contributed about 50% of those units. Calistoga has talented skilled contractors, yet they are not able to build a sufficient number of housing units to keep pace with our community's need and it is mainly for the reasons just stated.

The points that I want to make are: 1) Calistoga's General Plan, including Amendments, must be used as a guideline and not a prescriptive law. In order to resolve our housing challenge, we all will need to be flexible, taking each situation and flexing it to meet our overriding objectives and goals. I believe this is also stated in the Executive Summary, Attachment 3, p. 11., 2) we all must change our outlook on the topic of affordable housing and consider it as housing for our core community workforce—families that keep our community alive and well, 3) we must find financial methods to overcome the Ag preserve situation that not likely to change. At a time when State and Federal financial sources are drying up, our local non-profit foundations are downsizing their support of housing, and our own city finances have been drained, we as a community need to work together to resolve our housing issues, and 4) we must adopt resolutions and policies that will provide the flexibility and framework for our community to provide and encourage our working force to become an official part of our neighborhood community. The General Plan Amendment is a good start but in its current form, it is

adequate to addressing our city's housing needs. I believe this is a first step. This is not a criticism of your work but rather a plea that you continue the work of advocating and planning for a vibrant working community that all who work within our city have the opportunity of our labor force to enjoy the benefits of a vibrant community for which they are already a contributing member.