

City of Calistoga

Staff Report

TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI & MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM: JAMES C. MCCANN, CITY MANAGER
CHARLENE GALLINA, PLANNING & BUILDING DIRECTOR**

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 13, 2008

SUBJECT: DRAFT URBAN DESIGN PLAN

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2 **REQUEST:**
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4 To resume the discussion and deliberation on the Draft Urban Design Plan and
5 develop a recommendation to the City Council.
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7 **BACKGROUND:**
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9 The Planning Commission held the public hearing on the Draft Urban Design
10 Plan at the September 15th special meeting. During this meeting, approximately
11 16 residents offered comment and suggestions on the Draft Plan. The
12 Commission closed the public hearing, offered very preliminary comments and
13 continued the matter to this meeting to permit sufficient time for Commission
14 comment and discussion.
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16 Many speakers at the September 15th meeting voiced their support for the
17 recommendations for modification offered by the UDP Oversight Committee in
18 response to earlier public comments. The Oversight Committee had suggested
19 approximately two dozen modifications and corrections to the Draft Plan to better
20 reflect concerns and suggestions by a variety of speakers. Public comments
21 offered at the September 15th meeting focused on three primary topic areas: the
22 Draft Urban Design Plan's consistency and relationship to the adopted General
23 Plan; concerns from land owners in the proposed Resort Character Area
24 regarding land use recommendations; and continued concern regarding road
25 extension suggestions.
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27 **DISCUSSION:**
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29 UDP General Plan Conformity: Kristin Casey and other speakers have
30 commented on a number of occasions that the UDP presents ideas which are

31 inconsistent with language and direction contained in the adopted General Plan.
32 It is suggested that no such inconsistency can be adopted and that the language
33 and policies of the General Plan must first be amended with the requisite
34 environmental review and public hearing before the ideas and concepts of the
35 UDP can have legitimate standing. In essence, it is suggested that it is not
36 possible, nor desirable to have two competing land use policy documents, the
37 General Plan and the Urban Design Plan, which present inconsistent or
38 contradictory policies. This argument is essentially correct.

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40 It is understood that the General Plan is the dominant land use policy document.
41 It establishes the City's long term view and direction for development and other
42 activities in the City. Other land use and regulatory policies and regulations must
43 be consistent with the various elements of the General Plan. The Draft Urban
44 Design Plan is intended to examine some aspects of the General Plan,
45 particularly the Land Use, Community Identity and Circulation Elements, to
46 identify areas for refinement, clarification, and amendment in order to establish
47 more strongly, the community's desired direction for redevelopment and new
48 development activities. The UDP report will serve as the Planning Commission's
49 and City Council's direction for future policy and regulatory work. Subsequent,
50 separate action will be necessary by the Planning Commission and City Council
51 to undertake amendments to the General Plan to reflect the direction contained
52 in the Urban Design Plan. These series of future General Plan amendments will
53 be subject to proposal specific environmental review and public hearings by the
54 Planning Commission and City Council. It should be noted that the elements and
55 ideas contained in the Urban Design Plan report do not have the legislative or
56 regulatory standing or authority that the General Plan has until such time as the
57 particular provisions are incorporated into the General Plan and companion
58 Municipal Code regulations through individual General Plan amendment and
59 Municipal Code amendment actions. The idea, through the Urban Design Plan
60 process, has been to examine the broad ideas contained in the General Plan,
61 present recommendations for refinement and change, gain public input on these
62 thoughts, refine the recommendations based on the public input and obtain
63 consensus from the Planning Commission and City Council on the bundle of
64 amendments and refinements so that subsequent focused action can be taken to
65 develop the individual amendments to the General Plan.

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67 These amendments will take different forms. Some may simply be additional
68 language added to elements of the current General Plan, such as new goals or
69 objectives or policies. Other actions will include modification of the General Plan
70 Land Use Map to reflect modification of boundaries. Still, other actions will
71 include the development of new land use designations (as recommended by the
72 Character Areas of the UDP) and the requisite accompanying land use
73 descriptions, goals, objectives, and policies. Again, as these come forward to the
74 Planning Commission for discussion and recommendation, specific
75 environmental review and noticed public hearings will be a part of the process.

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77 Resort Character Area Land Use Changes: In response to public comment on
78 the Draft Plan, the Oversight Committee suggested that the boundaries of the
79 proposed Resort Character Area be substantially reduced to limit the area
80 available for new visitor accommodation development. Two property owners on
81 the west side of Lincoln Avenue (Hemberger and Capri Development) voiced
82 their opposition to the recommended change. The Oversight Committee
83 recommended that these two properties which are presently designated
84 Community Commercial (allowing for a full range of retail, commercial, high
85 density housing, and visitor accommodation usage) have the range of available
86 uses reduced to high density residential with limited scale commercial uses near
87 Wappo Drive. The property owners indicated that they wish to retain the
88 potential for hotel and resort development.

89

90 Chris Canning, representing Calistoga Beverage Company, also spoke and
91 noted his appreciation for the recommended change to recognize Calistoga
92 Mineral Water as a conforming use. He noted the desire to allow as much
93 flexibility as possible on the vacant property, which Calistoga Beverage Company
94 owns. It should be noted that this vacant property is presently designated by the
95 General Plan as Community Commercial, which as noted above allows a full
96 range of retail, commercial, high density housing, and visitor accommodation
97 uses. However, this present designation does not allow industrial uses and
98 would not today accommodate an expansion of the Calistoga Mineral bottling
99 facility without an amendment to the General Plan Land Use designation.

100

101 Circulation System Comments: Speakers raised concerns regarding two
102 circulation system recommendations. The first recommendation reiterates the
103 long standing General Plan policy of extending Washington Street to Dunawear
104 Lane. Concerns around this recommendation focus on the potential need for
105 land outside of the City limits as well as a general suggestion that such a
106 connection is unnecessary to alleviate congestion or to enhance overall
107 circulation. It is important to note that this extension is not a new idea, nor is it an
108 amendment or modification of existing policy in the current General Plan.
109 Further, no preliminary design has been prepared for this extension over the
110 many years that it has been contemplated. However, it is expected that the
111 existing land within the City limit boundary will be sufficient to allow a suitable
112 small scale road to be designed, respectful of the existing conditions and
113 constraints. Such a future road project will be subject to public review and
114 environmental analysis at such time that it is proposed. It should also be noted
115 that the construction of such a facility will require substantial public funding which
116 is not presently identified in short or long term planning efforts.

117

118 Concern has also been consistently expressed consistently regarding the
119 proposed establishment of a "plan line" for a new road connection between
120 Foothill Blvd. and Grant Street. Such a connection is envisioned to be a minor,

121 local serving road to enhance area-wide access and circulation. Residents have
122 expressed significant concern that such a connection would function as a
123 commute bypass for traffic moving between Sonoma and Lake Counties.
124 Neighbors have expressed their strong opposition to the establishment of such a
125 connection.

126
127 Establishing a plan line in the Circulation Element of the General Plan is helpful
128 to make clear the long term desires for public road alignments. Should a plan
129 line be established, the affected property owners would be expected to reflect the
130 connection in future development plans. It is important to note that a connection
131 of this nature had been considered in the past as a part of the Riverlea
132 Subdivision wherein Mitzi Drive was stubbed to the Napa River, anticipating a
133 future crossing. That crossing, however, was opposed by residents and
134 abandoned by the City. Also, in the mid '80's, a public road alignment and river
135 crossing was required in conjunction with the Arroyo Subdivision on Grant Street.
136 That subdivision was, however, abandoned by the property owner. Given the
137 current land use designations in this portion of the City which call for low and
138 very low density development, the number of new homes anticipated is limited.
139 Therefore, no significant increase in traffic volume is anticipated through the build
140 out of the General Plan. The benefit that would be derived from any new
141 connection is isolated to an enhancement in the ease of circulation for residents.
142 Should a plan line for a public road crossing not be established in this area,
143 Commission and Council discussion of circulation needs will still be available in
144 conjunction with individual development proposals in the area. Additionally, a
145 River Trail and a pedestrian or bicycle bridge crossing can also be considered to
146 enhance circulation facilities in conjunction with development proposals.

147
148 General Plan Conformity: In response to Commission and public comments, we
149 have reviewed the Draft Urban Design Plan to identify those areas and ideas
150 which would, if adopted, require future General Plan amendments. We have
151 attached for Commission review a summary of those topic areas.

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153 Amended Document: Once the Commission finishes with their review and
154 provides a final recommendation to the City Council on the Draft Urban Design
155 Plan, staff proposes to modify the Draft Urban Design Plan to reflect the various
156 modifications and amendments discussed over the past several weeks through
157 use of a word document absent of the photos and graphs for public and City
158 Council ease of review.

159
160 In response to Commission comments, staff is proposing that language be added
161 to the Draft Urban Design Plan under the "Development Character & Objectives"
162 section for each Character Area to give a greater understanding regarding the
163 intended rationale behind each Area. Attachment 2 provides preliminary
164 introductory vision statements developed by staff for Commission review and
165 consideration. It should be noted that more expansion on these statements is

166 needed to clearly articulate the relevancy for each Character Area with respect to
167 land use, connectivity, and architecture development character objectives.

168

169 Environmental Analysis: It has been suggested that the Draft Urban Design Plan
170 requires environmental review through the preparation of an Initial Study. The
171 City Attorney and staff believe that such environmental review is not necessary
172 given the nature of the Urban Design Plan. As noted above, the Plan is intended
173 to serve as a report summarizing recommendations for change and amendment
174 of the General Plan and regulatory codes. As such, the report itself is not binding
175 nor is it a project under the terms of the California Environmental Quality Act
176 (CEQA). Once adopted, a series of actions flowing from the direction will occur.
177 Each of these actions will require public review and environmental analysis
178 pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

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180 **RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Planning Commission resume
181 their discussion on the Draft Urban Design Plan and offer a recommendation for
182 action to the City Council.

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184 **SUGGESTED MOTION:**

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186 I move that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council adoption of
187 the Draft Urban Design Plan, as amended.

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189 **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 190 1. Listing of Potential Future General Plan/Zoning Map and Text
- 191 Amendments
- 192 2. Proposed Character Area Vision Statements
- 193 3. Written Public Comments Received since the September 15th Meeting

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195 *** NOTE: Draft Minutes from the September 15, 2008 Planning Commission*
196 *meeting have been included as part of the October 13, 2008 meeting packet.*