

CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

To: Calistoga Planning Commission
From: Zach Tusinger, Senior Planner
Meeting Date: December 12, 2018
Subject: Lincoln Avenue Apartments (Anton DevCo)

ITEM

Consideration of 1) use permit (UP 2018-9) and design review (DR 2018-7) applications for a 78-unit apartment project and associated on-site and off-site improvements at a parcel located on northern Lincoln Avenue (APN 011-050-044), and 2) a requested density bonus and affordable housing concessions/incentives.

BACKGROUND

The vacant project site on northern Lincoln Avenue is comprised of approximately 2.89 acres. Uses in the vicinity include visitor accommodations to the north (Calistoga Motor Lodge), a winery also to the north (Von Strasser), the former Calistoga Mineral Water property to the east, a small commercial development to the south (Belcorp AG), and the UpValley Inn & Hot Springs across Lincoln Avenue to the west. Approximately 33 trees are growing on the project site, generally located around the perimeter of the parcel.

The project site is split roughly in half into two different zoning designations: Community Commercial (CC) on the southern half and Multi-Family Residential/Office (R-3) on the northern half. Multi-family housing is allowed by use permit in the Community Commercial zoning district.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes the construction of 78 apartments. Twelve (or 15%) would be affordable to and restricted to occupancy by low-income households. The development would consist of four buildings. Two three-story buildings would be located along the Lincoln Avenue frontage and one three-story buildings would be sited on the northern part of the parcel. Between the two clusters of apartment buildings would be a one-story community building with leasing offices and resident amenities. Such project amenities would include a 750-square foot club room, a pet bathing area, indoor bicycle storage, and a 900-square foot fitness studio. A pool area is featured immediately adjacent to the community building. In-unit laundry is included for all 78 apartments. The project would be managed by on-site staff.

The site would be accessed via two two-way driveways from Lincoln Avenue. Drainage would be collected in bioretention basins for filtration. The project would also construct 95 uncovered parking spaces, two of which would be accessible spaces, and another two of which would be for electric vehicle charging. Thirty-nine covered garage spaces would be provided within the first-floor footprints of the four apartment buildings.

Proposed exterior finishes include a mix of stucco and board and batt siding for the body of the building, asphalt shingle roofs, and standing seam metal awnings. The proposed color palette includes various tones of grey and white for the building and dark gray and black for the roof.

Due to the location of the trees and saplings on the site, all 33 of the existing trees on the property would be removed. The loss of these trees would be mitigated through the planting of 109 new trees, including 23 maples, 6 crape myrtles, and 15 elms. The entire perimeter of the property, except for the Lincoln Avenue frontage, would be enclosed with a six-foot high tubular metal fence.

As allowed by state law, the applicant requests the approval of several concessions in order to maintain project rents for 12 units at levels that are affordable to low-income households. Those 12 units would be restricted to occupancy by households with a maximum of 80% of area median income (AMI) for a period of 55 years. The applicant has requested two concessions as part of the density bonus under state law. The first concession pertains to building heights. Currently within the Zoning Code, the maximum building height within the CC District is 30 feet, and within the R-3 district the maximum height is 25 feet. The applicant has requested that the maximum building height for this project be increased to 40 feet in order to allow for three-story buildings of a density necessary to make the project financially feasible. Additionally, the applicant has requested a two-foot reduction in the side yard setback from 12 feet to 10 feet for the single-story community clubhouse building.

CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

The project's consistency with the City's plans, policies and codes is evaluated below.

Calistoga General Plan

- Land use designation

The General Plan's Land Use Map designates the project site as High Density Residential/Office on the northern half of the parcel, which allows the development of multi-family housing at densities of 10-20 dwelling units per acre. The southern half of the project site is designated as Community Commercial, which similarly allows for the development of multi-family housing at densities of 10-20 dwelling units per acre. The applicant requests the approval of a 35 percent density bonus to allow a project density of 27 units per acre.

The General Plan's density standards do not differentiate between large single-family homes and small apartments. The very modest size of most of the project's units (as little as 500 square feet for studios and up to 1,200 square feet for three-bedroom units) and the fact that many of them are likely to be occupied primarily by one person mitigates the actual density of the project.

- Character area overlay

The General Plan pays particular attention to certain groups of properties to ensure that the values and vision of the community are realized and that Calistoga's identity as a

unique historic small town is preserved by designating them with a character area overlay. The project site is located within the Resort Character Area, an area comprised of a variety of land uses that encompasses properties primarily along Lincoln Avenue north of downtown and extending east along Silverado Trail. This area offers unique redevelopment potential and presents an opportunity to address a number of needs, including affordable housing that is in close proximity to jobs and services.

The project is consistent with the land use and design considerations of this character area overlay by:

- Providing rental apartment housing clustered along Lincoln Avenue
 - Featuring a classic design that uses high-quality materials such as stucco, metal seam roofs, and board and batt siding
 - Being visually suitable for the location near the edge of town
 - Providing streetscape improvements, and building improved pedestrian and bicycle interconnectivity
- Housing Element

The Housing Element of the General Plan provides a long-term, comprehensive plan to address existing and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community. It includes strategies for meeting the City's share of region-wide housing need for the planning period between 2015 and 2023, as required by state law. The subject property is identified in Table H-33 of the housing element as an opportunity site for new housing.

As discussed in the Housing Element, low-income households have difficulty affording housing, especially in a market with high housing costs, as in Calistoga. The project's rents would be affordable to households with limited incomes. At the low-income levels at which 12 of the units will be restricted, a qualified household would pay no more than \$1,490 (less utilities) for a one-bedroom unit.

The Housing Element contains a number of policies and actions intended to address the housing needs of the low -income population group, including:

- P1.1-3 Encourage the development of housing where public services are available.*
- P1.2-1 Make the best use of available housing sites when they are developed.*
- A1.2-1 Encourage new residential development to be built with no less than 50 percent of the maximum number of dwelling units prescribed by the General Plan for specific properties, subject to conformance with the City's residential design guidelines and the General Plan's residential design policies.*
- A2.1-1 Provide for the approval of density bonuses and other incentives for projects that reserve units for extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households.*

Additionally, as the project would construct a segment of the Napa Valley Vine Trail along its immediate Lincoln Avenue frontage, as well as along the adjoining frontage immediately to the south, several Circulation Policies and Actions are satisfied by this project:

- P1.3-2 New development shall provide sidewalks as needed to close gaps in the city's active transportation network. These gap closures may include off-site locations if the closure improves pedestrian connectivity from the new development to schools or other activity centers.*
- P1.3-3 New development shall provide bicycle improvements called for in the Active Transportation Plan.*
- P1.4-4 "Complete streets" features shall be incorporated into existing streets to improve the safety and convenience of users, with the particular goal of creating a connected network of facilities accommodating each category of users, and increasing connectivity across jurisdictional boundaries and for existing and anticipated future areas of travel origination or destination.*
- A1.3-1 Require during the entitlement process that development projects that development projects conform to the plans and policies of the Circulation Element, including the construction of on- and off-site improvements and the payment of any transportation impact fee adopted by the City.*
- A3.2-1 Implement the sidewalk improvement program contained in the Active Transportation Plan.*
- A3.3-1 Implement the bicycle facility improvements included in the Active Transportation Plan*

Zoning Code

The project site is partially located within the Multi-Family Residential/Office (R-3) Zoning District. The intent of this district, in part, is to increase the diversity and affordability of housing stock in Calistoga by providing housing close to downtown services. Uses allowed in the R-3 District without a use permit include multifamily dwellings. The project is consistent with this intent by providing affordable apartments in close proximity to the downtown.

The R-3 District is further intended to ensure that care is taken to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods. The area in the vicinity of the project site is comprised of a wide variety of land uses, including commercial services, visitor accommodations, a winery, and an industrial property. The nearest residences are located on Brannan Street to the east and on View Road to the west. Buildings in the vicinity are one- and two-story, primarily clad in wood or stucco.

As discussed, the southern half of the project site is in the Community Commercial District. Multifamily housing is allowed with a conditional use permit in this district. The following table compares the project's design with the development standards of the R-3 and CC Zoning Districts.

Development Standard	R-3	CC	Project	Compliant
Minimum front yard	15 feet	10 feet	16 feet 6 inches	Yes
Minimum interior side yard adjacent to building	12 feet	0 feet	10 feet	No
Minimum rear yard	15 feet	0 feet	95 feet	Yes
Maximum lot coverage	40%	60%	30.5%	Yes
Maximum building height	25 feet	30 feet	40 feet	No
Minimum usable open space	23,400 sq. ft.	----	23,436 sq. ft. ¹	Yes
Minimum setback for parking	15 feet – front yard 5 feet – side yard	10 feet or 0 feet (with use permit)	16 feet (front yard) 5 feet (side yard)	Yes

The applicant has requested the above deviations from the Zoning Code's standards as the incentives/concessions allowed by state law for qualifying affordable housing projects. Staff does not believe that any of the requested deviations would result in negative impacts to surrounding properties and the general neighborhood. Although the height for the buildings would be increased above the maximum otherwise required, potential visual impacts would be mitigated by a substantial landscaped parkway along Lincoln Avenue. The other concession is the reduced side yard setback. This is only for the one-story community building and the setback reduction is no more than two feet. This reduction would occur adjacent to the industrial property to the south and would have no meaningful impact on privacy or views.

State law limits the amount of parking that the City may require for affordable housing projects to one space per one-bedroom unit and two spaces per two-bedroom unit. The 134 proposed on-site parking spaces meets this requirement. Furthermore, parking impacts to the neighborhood are not anticipated because many of the units will be occupied by a single person. The project is located within walking distance of downtown and is in close proximity to a bus stop along Brannan Street. Twenty-six bike parking stalls are required and 34 are planned to be provided.

The City may deny a requested incentive or concession only if it makes one of the following findings. Staff does not believe that the basis exists for making any of them, as noted:

¹ 1 sq. ft. of private space = 2 sq. ft. of group space

- The concession or incentive is not required in order to provide for affordable rents for the targeted units.
The requested deviations from the Code's development standards are necessary in order to construct 78 units on the project site and provide affordable rents for the 12 targeted units.
- The concession or incentive would have a specific adverse impact upon public health and safety or the physical environment or on any real property that is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources and for which there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact without rendering the development unaffordable to low-income households.
There are no adverse impacts expected from the concessions that would have an adverse impact upon public health and safety or the physical environment or any real property listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.
- The concession or incentive would be contrary to state or federal law.
None of the deviations from the Code's development standards would be contrary to state or federal law.

The proposed project would comply with the open space requirement by providing a minimum of 300 square feet of usable open space per unit. The 78 units require 23,400 square feet of usable open space. A combination of private open space (which counts as two square feet for every one actual square foot) and common open space would result in the project providing 23,436 square feet of open space.

Residential Design Guidelines

Staff believes that the project is consistent with the City's Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines because of the following project design features:

- Views of the hillsides will be preserved.
- Parking and vehicular circulation will be separated from pedestrian circulation.
- Upper stories will be articulated to reduce the scale of facades that face a street.
- The perceived height and bulk of the building will be reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components and incorporating details such as projecting eaves, balconies and awnings; and roofline articulation in a manner that is consistent with the building's architecture.
- Massing offsets, varied textures, openings, recesses and design accents would provide visual interest.
- Varying ridgeline heights and alignments will provide visual interest, consistent with neighborhood character.
- Roof overhangs will be appropriately-sized to the mass and design of the building.
- Window types, materials, shapes and proportions will complement the architectural style of the building.

- Materials, finishes, and colors will be consistent with the desired architectural style and sensitive to the neighborhood.
- The parking areas will be located within the project's interior and generally not along its street frontage.
- The width of the driveways and its curb cuts will be as narrow as possible.
- A variety of height, textures and colors will be used in the project's landscape palette.
- Plantings will be used to soften building lines.
- Trees will be used to create canopies and shade along walkways, in parking areas and open space areas, and will provide a transitional buffer between neighboring properties.
- Attractive open-work fencing will allow public views into the site from adjoining properties while providing security.
- No mechanical equipment or trash enclosures will be viewable from residences, common areas, or the street.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The project would connect to public water and sewer. Based on the Standardized Use Table for the Resource Management System, the total estimated annual demand for this project is 17.6 acre feet of water and 9.8 acre feet of wastewater. A Growth Management Allocation must be awarded for the project, and the developer will be required to pay water and wastewater service connection fees.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project has been reviewed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City has determined that CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, In-Fill Development Project Exemption applies as the project:

- Is consistent with the applicable General Plan designations and all applicable General Plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- The proposed project 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.
- The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

A Traffic Impact Analysis was prepared for this project. It determined that with the project, service levels at existing intersections would remain unchanged, and that both the short-term and long-term impacts of the project on traffic operations would be less than significant. As part of the project, the applicant will construct the Vine Trail along its

Lincoln Avenue frontage as well as along the frontages of the two properties to the south as far as Stevenson Manor. In the event that Caltrans encroachment permits or other required permissions become infeasible, the applicant will build a 4' pathway along the properties to the south within the Caltrans Highway 29 right of way.

FINDINGS

To reduce repetition, the bases for making the required findings to approve the project's use permit and design review applications, the project's density bonus and affordable housing incentives are contained in the attached draft resolutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information and analysis contained in this report, staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt a resolution approving use permit application UP 2018-9 and design review application DR 2018-7
2. Adopt a resolution approving a density bonus and affordable housing concessions/incentives

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity map
2. Draft resolution approving use permit application UP 2018-10 and design review application DR 2018-7
3. Draft resolution approving a density bonus and affordable housing concessions
4. Project description received October 29, 2018
5. Request for density bonus and concessions/incentives dated October 29, 2018
6. Arborist report and field exhibit
7. Traffic Impact Analysis from W-Trans received November 7, 2018
8. Project plans