

CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

To: Calistoga Planning Commission
From: Zach Tusinger, Planning & Building Director
Meeting Date: October 28, 2020
Subject: **Lincoln Avenue Apartments – Renewal of Use Permit & Design Review**

ITEM

1 Consideration of design review and use permit renewal applications for a 78-unit
2 apartment building and off-site improvements on a 2.9-acre parcel on Lincoln Avenue
3 (APN 011-050-044), originally approved by the Planning Commission on December 12,
4 2018.

KEY ISSUES

- 6 • Two-year sunset on existing use permit and design review
- 7 • Valid affordable housing density bonus
- 8 • Substantially unchanged site conditions
- 9 • Only change to project is now it is 100% affordable

BACKGROUND

10
11 The vacant project site on northern Lincoln Avenue is comprised of approximately 2.9
12 acres. Uses in the vicinity include Calistoga Motor Lodge to the north, the former
13 Calistoga Mineral Water property to the east, Belkorp AG to the south, and the UpValley
14 Inn across Lincoln Avenue.

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

19 On December 12, 2018, after a duly noticed public hearing, the Planning Commission
20 adopted two resolutions (see Attachments 6 and 7), one approving a use permit and
21 design review application for a 78-unit market rate apartment project on the site, and the
22 other approving a density bonus and development standards concessions for the
23 project. Use Permits and Design Reviews are only good for one year under the
24 municipal code and they can be extended by one year by staff. Staff granted the one-
25 year extension in late 2019 (see Attachment 8).

26 The project has since changed hands and a new developer intends to build the same
27 project, with one key change: the project will be entirely affordable. In June of this year,
28 the City Council approved a \$2M fee deferral/subordinate loan for the project (see
29 Attachment 9). The project developer is actively seeking tax credits to make the project
30 financially viable to construct.

31 However, the project's land use entitlements will sunset at the end of December this
32 year, and the applicant has requested to come back to Planning Commission to renew
33 the use permit and design review. The density bonus does not expire as long as this is
34 substantially the same project from a design and unit count standpoint, and provided
35 that the project's number of affordable units *does not decrease* from what was initially
36 approved. If the attached draft resolution is approved, this would effectively be a brand-
37 new use permit and design review project entitlement.

38 **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

39 The project proposes the construction of 78 apartments. Originally, twelve (or 15%)
40 would be affordable to and restricted to occupancy by low-income households. As noted
41 above, all the units (except for the on-site manager's unit) would be restricted to various
42 affordability levels below market rate.

43 The development would consist
44 of four buildings. Two three-
45 story buildings would be located
46 along the Lincoln Avenue
47 frontage and one three-story
48 buildings would be sited on the
49 northern part of the parcel.
50 Between the two clusters of
51 apartment buildings would be a
52 one-story community building
53 with leasing offices and resident
54 amenities. In-unit laundry is
55 included for all 78 apartments.
56 The project would be managed
57 by on-site staff.



Proposed apartments from Lincoln Avenue

58 The site would be accessed via two two-way driveways from Lincoln Avenue. Drainage
59 would be collected in bioretention basins for filtration. The project would also construct
60 95 uncovered parking spaces, two of which would be accessible spaces, and another
61 two of which would be for electric vehicle charging. Thirty-nine covered garage spaces
62 would be provided within the first-floor footprints of the four apartment buildings.

63 Proposed exterior finishes include a mix of stucco and board and batt siding for the
64 body of the building, asphalt shingle roofs, and standing seam metal awnings. The
65 proposed color palette includes various tones of grey and white for the building and dark
66 grey and black for the roof. The project's plans are included as Attachment 5.

67 **CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

68 The project's consistency with the City's plans, policies and codes is evaluated below
69 and is unchanged from 2018.

70 Calistoga General Plan

71 • Land use designation

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

79 • Character area overlay

80 The General Plan pays particular attention to certain groups of properties to ensure that
81 the values and vision of the community are realized and that Calistoga's identity as a
82 unique historic small town is preserved by designating them with a character area
83 overlay. The project site is located within the Resort Character Area, an area comprised
84 of a variety of land uses that encompasses properties primarily along Lincoln Avenue
85 north of downtown. This area presents an opportunity to address a number of needs,
86 including affordable housing that is in close proximity to jobs and services.

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

- 89 - Providing rental apartment housing clustered along Lincoln Avenue
- 90 - Featuring a classic design that uses high-quality materials such as stucco, metal
91 seam roofs, and board and batt siding
- 92 - Providing streetscape improvements, and building improved pedestrian and
93 bicycle interconnectivity

94 • Housing Element

95 The Housing Element of the General Plan provides a long-term, comprehensive plan to
96 address existing and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the
97 community. It includes strategies for meeting the City's share of region-wide housing
98 need for the planning period between 2015 and 2022, as required by state law. While
99 the City has satisfied the current round of region-wide housing obligations, the next
100 round is already being planned and the obligations are expected to be significantly
101 higher. This project, should construction start in 2021 or after, would count towards this
102 next round of housing obligations.

103 As discussed in the Housing Element, low-income households have difficulty affording
104 housing, especially in a market with high housing costs like Calistoga. The project's
105 rents would be affordable to households with limited incomes. The Housing Element
106 contains a number of policies and actions intended to address the housing needs of the
107 low-income population group, including:

108 *P1.1-3 Encourage the development of housing where public services are*
109 *available.*

110 *P1.2-1 Make the best use of available housing sites when they are*
111 *developed.*

112 *A1.2-1 Encourage new residential development to be built with no less*
113 *than 50 percent of the maximum number of dwelling units*
114 *prescribed by the General Plan for specific properties, subject to*
115 *conformance with the City's residential design guidelines and the*
116 *General Plan's residential design policies.*

117 *A2.1-1 Provide for the approval of density bonuses and other incentives*
118 *for projects that reserve units for extremely low-, low-, and*
119 *moderate-income households.*

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

124 *P1.3-2 New development shall provide sidewalks as needed to close*
125 *gaps in the city's active transportation network. These gap*
126 *closures may include off-site locations if the closure improves*
127 *pedestrian connectivity from the new development to schools or*
128 *other activity centers.*

129 *P1.3-3 New development shall provide bicycle improvements called for in*
130 *the Active Transportation Plan.*

131 *P1.4-4 "Complete streets" features shall be incorporated into existing*
132 *streets to improve the safety and convenience of users, with the*
133 *particular goal of creating a connected network of facilities*
134 *accommodating each category of users, and increasing*
135 *connectivity across jurisdictional boundaries and for existing and*
136 *anticipated future areas of travel origination or destination.*

137 *A1.3-1 Require during the entitlement process that development projects*
138 *conform to the plans and policies of the Circulation Element,*
139 *including the construction of on- and off-site improvements and*
140 *the payment of any transportation impact fee adopted by the City.*

141 *A3.2-1 Implement the sidewalk improvement program contained in the*
142 *Active Transportation Plan.*

143 *A3.3-1 Implement the bicycle facility improvements included in the Active*
144 *Transportation Plan*

145 Zoning Code

146 The project's zoning code consistency is discussed thoroughly in the staff report from
147 2018 (see Attachment 4).

149 **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

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

- 153 • Is consistent with the applicable General Plan designations and all applicable
154 General Plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and
155 regulations.
- 156 • The proposed project occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than
157 five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- 158 • The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened
159 species.
- 160 • Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic,
161 noise, air quality, or water quality.
- 162 • The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

163 **FINDINGS**

164 To reduce repetition, the bases for making the required findings to approve the project's
165 use permit and design review renewal applications are in the draft resolution. Based on
166 the information and analysis contained in this report and attached documents, staff
167 recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution approving use permit
168 application UP 2020-10 and design review application 2020-8 renewing UP 2018-9 and
169 DR 2018-7. Note that all conditions from previous entitlements would remain in effect.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Applicant Request Letter - September 17, 2020
4. PC Staff Report – December 12, 2018
5. Project Plans
6. PC Resolution 2018-23
7. PC Resolution 2018-24
8. Time Extension Approval - October 14, 2019
9. CC Resolution 2020-55