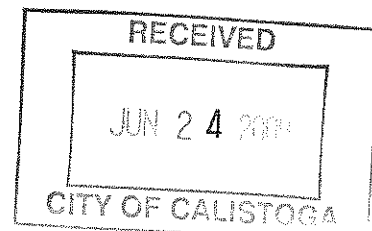


June 24, 2009

Ms. Charlene Gallina, Director  
Planning & Building Department  
City of Calistoga  
1232 Washington Street  
Calistoga, CA 94515

Mr. James McCann  
City Manager  
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Mr. Jeff Manfredi  
Chairperson, Calistoga Planning Commission  
c/o City of Calistoga  
1232 Washington Street  
Calistoga CA 94515



RE: Latest Set of Comments on Urban Design Plan  
(i.e., Draft Version Dated May 2009)  
Brannan Cottage Inn

Dear Charlene, Jim and Jeff:

Thank you once again for all your efforts in developing May 2009 version (i.e., recently released) Urban Design Plan (UDP) draft and making it available to the public. As I stated in an earlier email, I was "surprised" to find out it was available to the public via an email from the Planning Department inviting me to an "introductory" public meeting on June 9. I made some strong comments on my concerns re: lack of notice and time for review. I was corrected by Charlene as to the prior availability (i.e., before I discovered its availability). However, I have followed this issue closely since 2005 and I'm not the only one who was "surprised". I have taken advantage of the notice that I did receive and attended the public presentation on June 9, 2009, acquired a "loaner" copy, have read it thoroughly, and developed the enclosed comments.

I have also reviewed the comments I prepared based on the UDP of October 2006 (comments submitted November 12, 2006). Unfortunately, many of those comments apply today to the current version of the UDP. In November 2006 I stated: "...the UDP is a start on a very important plan for the future of Calistoga and deserves extensive review by all citizens, especially affected landowners and tenants, with all comments generated given careful consideration before finalization of the plan." It appears significant progress has been made on this issue. At least 7 months of effort/delay have occurred since the prior Planning Commission meetings (with extensive public and Commission input). I see evidence of your responsiveness to those comments, but I also see several new items/approaches that I don't recall were discussed or directed last September and October.

The following general comments (still in approximate order of importance, at least to me) were made in November 2006 (over two and one half years ago). Unfortunately, many (as listed below) still apply to the UDP and the process it is undergoing. More specific (and timely) comments are also provided following. In November, 2006 I also said: "I trust I will have many opportunities to participate in finalization of the plan in the near future." I still hope this is true and that the UDP is not being "forced" through the system.

My initial comments were (November 12, 2006 comments in italics)/are:

1. *"Given the importance and scope of the plan (and its potential impact on our City), I find it somewhat amazing that you have provided such a short turnaround time for comments from the public, and are proposing to move it to a "final draft" through the Planning Commission and have it to our newly elected Mayor and City Council (one Council Member short at the present time) in December 2006".* As of June 24, 2009 I can see that much input has been provided, and many changes to the UDP have been made, responsive to comments from many sectors. I continue to believe that the schedule for review by the public and the Planning Commission is too short and, as noted in the next comment, more input needs to be solicited from impacted public groups and landowners.
2. *Based on the concerns expressed in comment 1 above, I suggest that you schedule a series of public presentations on the existing UDP to all interested parties (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce, various service organizations, the affected landowners and tenants, etc.) over the next couple months. Scheduling such meetings/workshops will be difficult given the approaching holiday season, but... I'm sure the Chamber ... would be pleased to assist in hosting the "open" meetings and smaller meetings/ workshops with affected property owners/tenants and/or neighbors of critical properties could be arranged as well. Now that the UDP (or at least some graphical representations of the significant aspects) is in print and in public, and of great interest to the public, some two-way communication on the UDP is crucial. We need to get some significant portion of the public to "buy in" to the "Final" plan. The groups which need to be involved at present are those members of the public who are not already participating (e.g., the Hispanic community especially) and the affected landowners and lessees in the Gateways and Character Areas.*
3. *Especially important is to get input from the most affected property owners—especially in the so-called "Oasis District", the "Glider Port Overlay/Fair Way Extension", and the "Silverado Trail/Highway 29 entry" and the "Petrified Forest Road/Highway 128/Foothill Boulevard entry" areas. Based on several reported comments, I am amazed that certain of these property owners (by their own testimony) have not had any significant/detailed input to date on the UDP. In fact, existing significant plans for those areas are in significant disagreement with the UDP. See updated comment No. 2 as well. Although these geographical areas have been reduced and are now labeled differently, these "stakeholders" need to be encouraged to present their concerns and agreements with the UDP in "public" forums to that the public understands and can respond to same and that the final document truly represents a community plan.*
4. *Not much coverage was given to the problem of existing project proposals (and proposals to arrive before the UDP is finalized). As I understand the reality, City review/approval of some projects in affected areas is being held up pending a "final" UDP. This is of great concern to me if the proposals are fully compliant with the existing General Plan, current zoning, building regulations, etc. Let's continue to operate the Planning and Building Department process on current rules, regulations, zoning, ordinances, etc. I remain concerned that the "Draft" UDP has been/is continuing to be used as a guidance document for existing proposals.*
5. *The new "Oasis District" in particular focuses on expanding tourism based activities at the potential loss of other uses (e.g., light industrial/warehousing/office parks) that contribute to a balanced community and work opportunities for our citizens that may have more "value" than relatively low paying "service industry jobs"... I remain concerned about the focus on "resorts" (as this region is now re-named) and that our existing/potentially expanding/proposed new development in other Character Areas (e.g., the "Downtown Historic Area" and the "Gliderport Area") have not been fully considered as to the impacts on our small town. Can we really support all this visitor focused activity.*
6. *With respect to Comments 1 through 5 above, I have not seen evidence that the UDP has been evaluated for consistency/is consistent with the previously adopted "Calistoga General Plan" and the existing zoning maps. This issue is significant especially in the "Oasis District". This is still true; at the October 9 meeting, a member of the public reminded the City of this need and Charlene once again promised to perform a detailed evaluation of specific general plan and zoning changes needed to implement the UDP.*
7. *I agree with the need to enhance all entries to Calistoga and to facilitate improved transportation throughout the Calistoga region. Thus I support most of the planning "ideas" incorporated in the*

UDP regarding that subject (e.g., the entries and the "Fair Way Extension/Southern Entry" concepts), if the suggested discussions with affected property owners are consummated. However, I didn't see (or hear) any discussion of potential routing changes for Highway 29 (at least for truck and commercial traffic; i.e., Dunaweal Lane and/or Tubbs Lane) in the UDP/presentation. I am glad this issue is now being addressed, but am concerned about the internal conflicts in the UDP over rerouting 1) via Dunaweal Lane to Silverado Trail to Highway 29 north (vs. stated desire to minimize traffic in the "Resort" Character Area along Silverado) and 2) via Highway 128/Foothill Boulevard to Tubbs Lane to Highway 29 north (vs. desire to reduce congestion along Foothill Boulevard and at the Highway 128/Petrified Forest Gateway). See also detailed comments below.

8. How can the other "elephant in the room" (e.g., the largest single developable, privately held property in Calistoga—the Glider Port) be so incompletely included in the UDP? Perhaps the suggested discussions with the landowner can help fill in that portion of the UDP. Although this area has been divided into two Character Areas ("Downtown"—along Lincoln Avenue—and the further southeast portion now labeled "Gliderport"), and more detailed discussion of potential uses of the property have been included, it still seems incomplete and probably in significant conflict with plans preferred by the current landowner. This conflict should be addressed and publicized, and discussed by the public.
9. I support the inclusion of "live/work townhouses" and mixed use communities in the Lower Washington corridor as a proven way to upgrade (with landowner cooperation/involvement) existing low to medium income housing, bring jobs to the portion of our population that needs them the most, etc. We should also include that aspect of future growth in the Glider Port plan. I continue to support this approach. Inclusion of "locals serving" businesses is also a plus. Transportation/congestion, with or without the Washington Street extension to Dunaweal Lane should be discussed in more detail.
10. Future copies of the graphics for the UDP (for distribution at future meetings and on request) should be reformatted and "blown up" to a size (11X17?) that would improve readability and clarity. The graphics included with the May 2009 version were of generally poor quality and need to be upgraded dramatically for future edition(s).

Based on the limited time I had for review of the May 2009 Draft UDP, I also have developed additional general and specific comments. All page references are to the "edited" (showing deletions, additions, reorganizations, etc.) version in the "Public Copy".

#### General/Overview Comments:

1. At several locations in the document, Wapoo/Wappo Avenue (west from Lincoln Avenue on the north side of town in the newly revised Downtown Character Area, Stevenson/Grant Area) is incorrectly referred to as Wappo Drive. Please correct; that's my street!
2. There are several internal inconsistencies/conflicts in the UDP that need to be identified (at least) and resolved. I mentioned a few above regarding rerouting Highway 29 vs. desired reduction in traffic along Silverado Trail (in the Resort Area) and Foothill Boulevard/Highway 128. Others that struck me are a) with regard to potential future parking structures, the desire to minimize visual impact (potentially including semi-undergrounding of the first floor or "camouflaging"/low impact) vs. the potential inclusion of retail uses (which need to "stand out"), b) the desire for significant new "public space" (especially on the Merchant property and along the Napa River) with no plan for public funding/an apparent expectation that private landowners will pay for same, and c) the elimination of references to upgrading Tubbs Lane (and failure to include same recommendation for Dunaweal Lane, Silverado Trail, and Foothill Boulevard) to CalTrans requirements while recommending rerouting of Highway 29
3. There is a general failure to include any specifics on "easy to implement" improvements for both residents and visitors—e.g., crosswalks along Highway 29/128 and Silverado Trail, a new and much improved "Wayfinding System" (including signage for wineries, natural attractions, retail, restaurants, lodging, etc.—not mentioned until nearly the very last page (page 58)), new public restrooms, etc.
4. Similarly, there is a general failure to include discussion of public/private funding mechanisms and/or estimated anticipated costs for UDP recommendations (e.g., undergrounding utilities, additional crosswalks/signals, street extensions and parking/parking structures, river access and

walkways/bikeways/plazas, etc.). How much can we/the City of Calistoga afford? How much can our private landowners afford and still have profitable projects?

Specific Comments (by section/page number):

1. Page 16/Foothill Corridor—in the “Existing Conditions” write-up, a) the section should address “connections” to the Petrified Forest/Highway 128 and the Lincoln Avenue/Foothill “Gateways” and b) it should also address the reality that Foothill Boulevard=State Highway 128 and the associated limits on “right of way” and uses along the road, given CalTrans constraints (see discussion of Lincoln Avenue in Downtown area). Further, there is no discussion of lighting/crosswalks/other safety issues/traffic calming approaches that could be implemented, or ingress/egress issues for small side streets and residential driveways between Lincoln Avenue and Petrified Forest Road.
2. Page 16/Objectives—The suggestion to include additional infill housing/workforce housing fails to consider the impacts of “high volume traffic and road noise” from current and possibly “re-routed” traffic on those uses, as well as on existing residents.
3. Page 17/Land Use—The discussion fails to address the positive/negative impacts of potential development of the “old hospital” property and the inconsistencies of the latest plan (i.e., “backs up” to Foothill) vs. the UDP proposals.
4. Pages 18 to 21/State Highway 29 Corridor—The concept of “Public Access” to, and along, the Napa River (and the requirement that private landowners should provide such) needs significant additional discussion, including evaluation of the price of such access. There also should be discussion of crosswalks and/or signals to allow pedestrian access to both sides of Highway 29.
5. Page 22 ff/Character Area 3: Downtown—Why does the “Historic District” stop at Stevenson Way (I think that should be Stevenson Street). I believe it should include both sides of Wappo/Wapoo Avenue (not Drive) since two of Calistoga’s most historic buildings are located there. I see no particular value in separating the Downtown area into two pieces.
6. Page 24/Objectives—The UDP should clearly include: “Add visitor and resident friendly features such as public restrooms, signage and clearly marked parking”
7. Page 25/Development Character—The description provided appears to ignore the potential uses being considered by the Merchant family for the portion of their property along Lincoln Avenue. It also fails to address the need for more parking for the proposed expansion of Dr. Wilkinson’s current facility. Some discussion of the public/private funding mechanisms should be provided. For full consideration of parking options throughout this part of town, some preliminary estimates of costs for various alternative elements should be estimated and shared with the residents of Calistoga.
8. Page 34/Character Area 5: Resort—Objectives—Please provide a more descriptive approach to what a “state of the art” resort might be. Is it a high-rise? Is it low density with lots of open space? What services are provided? At what cost?
9. Page 39 & 40/Land Use—A discussion of Calistoga Beverage Company’s “entitlement” under current zoning and General Plan should be included and considered in discussions of future uses for their property holdings.
10. Page 40/Connectivity—The second bullet “strongly recommends” a roundabout for the Silverado Trail/Highway 29 intersection. What happened to all the discussion (by both Jim McCann and Charlene Gallina) prior to and on June 9 regarding “no decision on the type of traffic control at the gateways will be made until extensive studies of alternatives are conducted”? The current 4 way stop approach is working fine for safety and congestion reduction.
11. Page 43/Character Area 6 Lower Washington—There appears to be a goal to reduce parking on Lower Washington. Why not increase it to cover both Lower Washington new businesses and assist in solving the parking for the Lincoln Avenue/Downtown businesses with parking within walking distance of Lincoln. Or even consider a distant parking lot (accessible from the Washington Street extension to Dunaweal) with peak period shuttle service to the Downtown area.
12. Page 44/Connectivity—I support both the extension of Washington Street to Dunaweal Lane (as a congestion reduction/public safety/truck traffic management plan) as long as the construction and use of same minimizes impacts to private and public property and current uses (ball park, bike path, wastewater treatment ponds). A minimal road cross-section should be proposed

- along with landscaping (see the Figure titled "Connection between Washington and Silverado" at the back of the document) and speeds should be kept to 25 to 35 mph. I also support the pedestrian/bicycle path over the Napa River to Highway 29, with the same caveats.
13. Page 47/Critical Actions—The text identifies the Petrified Forest Gateway as "presents immediate opportunities". I thought the City's focus in discussions with CalTrans has been regarding the Silverado Trail/Highway 29 Gateway. Isn't there money available there?
  14. Page 47/Critical Actions—It is recommended that a new signage/"wayfinding system" should be considered for immediate action given it's relatively low cost and benefits to all our local businesses.
  15. Page 48/Key Elements—There is no Map 2 (as described here) and Map 1 may be mislabeled. Please clarify and improve associated graphics for better understanding. Also, on Map 2 "Circulation and Parking", there is a disconnect between Key item 5.3 and Map numbering system that uses 3 at the Lincoln Avenue/Foothill Blvd intersection.
  16. Page 49/State Highway 29—At the bottom of the page, it may be more accurate to say that diverting bypass traffic away from Lincoln Avenue so that "more resident and visitor traffic can be safely handled with less overall congestion. Our businesses need "downtown traffic".
  17. Page 51/Street Sections—Some clarification is necessary regarding downtown vs. rural/resort area cross-sections vis-à-vis use of curbs, lighting, drainage management, etc. Perhaps providing proposed cross-sections for each new road/path/improvements, including corners and "bulbouts", would be useful.
  18. Page 57/Wayfinding Signs—I'm disappointed to see this important "critical action" left to the very last page of the UDP and then have no specific recommendations. New signage is one of the easiest, most cost-effective, and most long overdue improvement the City of Calistoga could do to benefit our businesses and our visitors. It was my hope that the firm contracted to do the UDP would have provided some specific suggestions (e.g., drawings/comparison to how others (Sonoma/Healdsburg) do it, color coding, etc. In addition, this is one of the most easily "adjustable" actions that can be modified as new development takes place in Calistoga.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input, and for your consideration of these comments on the May 2009 Draft UDP. We look forward to additional opportunities to participate in the process of finalizing the UDP, and to contribute to facilitating participation by other members of our community.

We also look forward to a community consensus on the UDP, and working with each of you, your departments, and other representatives of the City of Calistoga in implementing the UDP as we move along with upgrading and improving the Brannan Cottage Inn.

Sincerely,

Doug Cook  
Brannan Cottage Inn

CC: Rex Albright/Calistoga Chamber of Commerce