



CJUSD Housing: Project Narrative

Project Goals

The CJUSD Housing Proposal aims to provide needed housing for working families in Calistoga. While the City of Calistoga has made substantial progress in fulfilling its obligations to provide housing for low-income households, many households—including local educators and employees of the Calistoga Joint Unified School District—earn too much to qualify for subsidized affordable housing yet too little to afford a market-rate home. This project aims to address the so-called “missing middle” of the housing affordability spectrum, while also providing a variety of housing typologies that are appropriate for a range of different household sizes and income levels.

To accomplish this goal, the project requires an amendment to the General Plan—revising the site designation from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential. This revision, along with a set of Planned Development standards, will ensure the project balances density with appropriate and contextual design.

Overview of Project Concept and Design Approach

The 16.44-acre project site is currently vacant. The Proposal anticipates a residential subdivision, subject to the standards and guidelines detailed in the **Planned Development Guidelines** included with this project application. The Planned Development divides the site into four planning areas:

- **Planning Area A** is located at the terminus of Money Lane and is tucked between existing estate lots of approximately 1-acre in size. This area would be developed with single-family homes on lots of a minimum of 4,500 square feet.
- **Planning Area B** abuts Highway 29 to the east and the existing planned development residential neighborhood to the south. This area would be developed with either duplexes or attached townhomes.
- **Planning Area C** abuts the adjacent property to the north, the wetlands to the west, and Highway 29 to the east. This area would be developed with attached townhomes.
- **Planning Area D** is centrally located between Planning Areas A, B, and C, and encompasses the majority of the wetlands on the site. This area would be reserved for public open space and wetlands conservation.

There shall be a minimum of 97 units across the entire site. The maximum number of units is 136. The minimum and maximum number of units at each Planning Area are established by the development standards which are detailed in the design guidelines.



The illustrative design package included with this application depicts a conceptual 113-unit project that is consistent with the guidelines.

All housing units are anticipated to be for-sale. The maximum height allowed across the entire project would be two stories (28 feet), so as to allow sufficient density to make the project economically viable while maintaining an overall design that is in keeping with the surrounding context. For example, the existing single-family subdivision to the south of the site includes two-story homes.

Requested Approvals & Illustrative Design

The fundamental request of this project application is for the City of Calistoga to adopt a proposed set of design guidelines that will govern future development of the project site. The design review materials included with this application—including the site plan, landscape plan, elevations and renderings—represent an “illustrative” plan that is consistent with the proposed guidelines. They depict a 113-unit project that is consistent with the proposed density range and design standards.

The intention is that an alternative project design could be submitted and built so long as it conforms with the standards included in this approvals package. The objective is to fix in place density standards and design guidelines that ensure the eventual project is consistent with both the City's goals and CJUSD's goals, while preserving sufficient flexibility in the exact unit count and design features to allow the project to respond to changing homebuyer demand and market forces as may be experienced between the time of approvals and the commencement of construction.

Sustainability

A goal of the project is to promote sustainable living and minimize impacts on the environment. The project will be built using Cal Green energy standards, including all-electric appliances, solar-readiness, and electric vehicle charging capabilities. The illustrative landscape plan has been carefully designed to promote water-efficient planting materials and irrigation.

The project site contains approximately 1.6 acres of wetlands that will largely remain. In the illustrative site plan, a large community park is located adjacent to the wetlands to create a central open space that takes advantage of the sweeping views of Mount St. Helena that are preserved by the wetlands conservation. The illustrative plan calls for the removal of approximately 0.2 acres of wetlands to allow for roadways needed for emergency egress. Mitigation measures may include payment into an off-site wetlands conservation, and will likely be subject to review by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, as applicable.



Affordability and Target Market

The overall goal of the project is to provide a range of housing options at a level of density that encourages affordability for middle-income households. The proposed attached units—including duplexes and townhomes—make efficient use of land and promote increased affordability. It is intended that this mix of housing typologies will appeal to the “missing middle”, and attract homeowners who will live and work in Calistoga as full-time residents.

Moreover, a portion of the units in the project will be reserved for sale to CJUSD employees at restricted prices based on their household size and income. It is anticipated that between 20 to 40 percent of the total units in the project would be reserved for sale to CJUSD employees, with the exact percentage to be determined at a future date when the property is conveyed to a homebuilder (or homebuilders) to construct the project. It is also anticipated that any restricted units not purchased by CJUSD employees, if any are still available, would next be offered for sale to other local workforce including employees of the City of Calistoga.

We are proposing that these restricted units for CJUSD employees would replace the City’s typical inclusionary housing requirements. Moreover, since many CJUSD employees earn substantially more than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI), we are proposing that these restricted units could be offered to employee households earning up to 180% AMI to meet the school district’s and City’s missing middle needs. After being offered to CJUSD employee households, remaining restricted homes will be offered to other local public employees or hospitality workers. A partnership with a local Community Land Trust will ensure the restricted homes are sold to eligible households, and that future sales remain permanently reserved and affordable for middle-income households. Under the Land Trust model, the homeowners enjoy appreciation in their home value upon sale (tied to annual increases in household income), allowing them to build equity while simultaneously keeping home prices affordable for future buyers.

It is anticipated that the precise terms of the affordable housing requirements will be determined through an Affordable Housing Agreement or similar document to be adopted by the City with the project approvals.

Application Overview

Our application includes the following components:

1. Project Narrative (this document)
2. General Plan and Zoning Map Amendment
3. Planned Development Standards



4. Illustrative Design Package (Landscape, Architecture, Civil)
5. Environmental Information
6. Attachments: Preliminary Technical Studies and Reports
 - a. Acoustical
 - b. Arborist
 - c. Biological Resources
 - d. Civil Survey
 - e. Cultural Resources
 - f. Environmental
 - g. Geotechnical
 - h. Title
 - i. Traffic
 - j. Water Use Analysis

We will work with the City Planning and Public Works departments to finalize the appropriate Tentative Subdivision Map documentation that will retain some flexibility for unit counts and lot configurations consistent with the design guidelines.

We view this project as a unique opportunity to transform underutilized land into a community-serving asset that will provide attainable homes for local educators and working families in perpetuity. We look forward to working with the City of Calistoga on the processing of our application.

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