

COMMUNICARE+OLE

UP VALLEY HEALTH CENTER 1861 Lincoln Avenue City of Calistoga

PROJECT NARRATIVE

This is an application for a development project pursuant to the Permit Streamlining Act, Government Code § 65920 et seq.

A. SUMMARY

Communicare+Ole intends to relocate its current healthcare clinic in Calistoga into a new, to be developed state of the art medical, dental and behavioral health clinic at 1861 Lincoln Avenue, named the “Up Valley Health Center.”

The City of Calistoga **permits outright** medical and dental clinics uses in the Community Commercial (CC) zoning district under Calistoga Municipal Code (CMC) §17.22.020(A)(7). Therefore, no Conditional Use Permit is required.

In conjunction with the Design Review Approval, Communicare+Ole requests the Director to waive Design Review for the Up Valley Health Center pursuant to CMC § 17.41.020(C)(2). The basis and findings for such request is further detailed below.

The Project is CEQA exempt under the CEQA Guideline Class 32 Exemption.

B. RELOCATION OF THE UP VALLEY HEALTH CENTER

Communicare+Ole leases its current facility located at 911 Washington Street; but due to the current facility’s size and condition, it is not adequate to meet the needs of the community

Communicare+Ole’s mission is to ensure access to comprehensive, high-quality health care services for all individuals, regardless of their ability to pay. Communicare+Ole is the only large primary care provider in the City, which has been operating in Napa County since 1972 and has served Calistoga patients since 1999. Since 2006, the clinic has been located in its current modular facility at 911 Washington Street.

The demand for health services has dramatically increased in the past 10 years, requiring Communicare+Ole to find a new, larger permanent home. Because of this increased demand, in 2023 Communicare+Ole purchased the 1861 Lincoln Avenue property for the Up Valley Health Center, which will be able to serve 4,100 Calistoga residents, 27% of whom are children 0-17 years old.

The new Up Valley Health Center will significantly increase access to primary care services for every Calistoga resident. Capacity for medical services will more than double, dental service availability will quadruple, along with 3,000 additional annual behavioral health visits. Additional services such as perinatal care, nutrition counseling, lab work and other support services will also be onsite.

C. PROJECT SITE

Communicare+Ole owns the approximate 2.8-acre property at 1861 Lincoln Avenue, which is comprised to two parcels:

1. APN 011-062-008, a 1.05-acre vacant parcel; and
2. APN 011-062-009, a 1.76-acre vacant parcel.

The property is bounded by Lincoln Avenue to the west, the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Lake Street to the north, Lake Street to the northwest, and View Road to the west. The property is currently vacant undeveloped land.

The development site for the Project is approximately 66,000 sf, which includes 11,057 sf of building area, 19,701 sf of landscape area and 35,256 sf of parking and hardscape. Prior to certificate of occupancy the 1.05-acre parcel, APN 011-062-008, will be adjusted by lot line adjustment to approximately 1.52 acres to match the project site by simultaneously reducing the size of APN 011-062-009 to approximately 1.24 acres.

D. USE DESCRIPTION

The building will be approximately 11,200 SF and will contain medical, dental and behavioral health services for the community. There will be 10 exam/consult rooms, five dental chairs, conference room, medical staff offices, staff support spaces and spaces for related community health services. The initial hours of operation will be 8am to 6pm and will adjust as needed to meet patient demand and staffing availability. Approximately 25 fulltime equivalent clinic employees will be employed at the relocated Up Valley Health Center Project.

E. PROJECT DESIGN

The Up Valley Health Center Project consists of the constructing a one-story health center with associated parking and site improvements. The maximum building height is 23'-2 1/2" (25' Max allowed), the front setback is 15'-8" (Min allowed is 10'-0") and the rear yard is 34'-8" (Min allowed is 0). Lot coverage (of the final reconfigured lot) is 18% (max = 60%). The floor area ratio (of the final reconfigured lot) is 18% (max is 80%). These are within all applicable zoning standards.

The building is a Craftsman-Ranch style building seamlessly merging two iconic American architectural traditions. It balances the handcrafted charm of Craftsman design with the simplicity and horizontal emphasis of a Ranch Style. With its single-story layout, low-pitched roof, wide eaves, and deep overhangs, the structure maintains a grounded and inviting presence. The exterior showcases strong horizontal lines and large windows, fostering a connection to the outdoors, while an entry porch adds to its welcoming appeal. Signature Craftsman details, including decorative brackets, intricate trim work, and a sturdy stone base, anchor the building harmoniously to its surroundings, creating a timeless and well-integrated design.

The building will feature painted horizontal siding made of durable cement board, providing both a clean aesthetic and resilience against the elements. The design will include carefully crafted window

and door trim, adding a polished and cohesive look. Extended overhangs will be incorporated not only to enhance the architectural style but also to provide functional shading, contributing to energy efficiency and comfort. The roof will be finished with standing seam metal, offering a sleek, modern appearance alongside long-lasting durability.

The parking lot is a thoughtfully designed flat expanse that accommodates 71 parking spaces. Vehicular access is from Lincoln Avenue. The site features a dedicated drop-off area at the entrance, which provides convenient access for passengers. Lining the perimeter of the lot is a charming arrangement of trees, their leafy canopies adding shade and softening the urban appearance of the space. Between the rows of parking spaces, planting beds flourish with greenery and low-maintenance shrubs, introducing vibrant textures and colors that enhance the environment.

To ensure privacy and create a seamless blend with the surroundings, a visually appealing low height wooden fence serves as a barrier along the edges of the lot. The wood fence design balances practicality and aesthetics, offering a warm, natural touch that complements the plantings and trees. Together, these elements transform the parking lot into a functional yet inviting landscape, making it more than just a utilitarian space.

A charming 6-foot wooden fence runs along the side and rear of the building, forming a secure and private enclosure. Constructed from durable materials and finished in natural wood tones, the fence blends seamlessly with its surroundings while providing an effective visual and physical barrier. Its height ensures privacy, shielding the building from external views and creating a sense of seclusion. Accompanying the fence is thoughtfully designed landscaping that softens the structure's appearance and enriches the overall ambiance. A combination of tall ornamental grasses, dense shrubs, and flowering plants are strategically positioned along the base of the fence. These plants add layers of texture and color, creating a dynamic and inviting landscape that complement the building's design. The greenery also enhances the privacy barrier by obstructing sightlines and offering natural visual appeal, turning the space into a tranquil and enclosed retreat.

F. SITE CONDITIONS

The Project site is currently undeveloped and is essentially flat, covered with low grasses and several trees. No Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan occurs on or in the area of the project site. However, the clinic development requires removal of two existing trees and mitigates the tree loss by installing over 20 new trees thoughtfully distributed across the developed site, enhancing the landscape and ensuring a vibrant, green environment. (See drawings L1.00 and L5.00). The Project will obtain all required tree removal/disturbance permit and adopt any required tree protection plan pursuant to Chapter 19.01 of the CMC prior to tree removal and any construction in the vicinity of any protected trees.

In addition, no special-status plant species have the potential to occur in the Project site and no sensitive plant communities exist on the Project site. No special status wildlife species including, sharp-shinned hawk or pallid bat have been observed on the Project site. However, in an abundance of caution, the Project will incorporate the following into its construction plans:

- To avoid impacts to nesting birds and raptors that may appear on site, vegetation removal and initial ground disturbance will occur outside the breeding and nesting season (February 1 through August 31; Nesting bird surveys are not required for construction activities that occur between September 1 and January 31.). If initial construction commences within the nesting season, then no more than two weeks prior to the initiation of construction activities, a nesting bird pre-construction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist within the disturbance footprint, plus a 300-foot buffer submitted to the City for review and approval prior to clearance for grading. If no active nests are observed, no further action would be required. If nests are found avoidance buffers will be established around active nests by a qualified biologist. Depending upon the species, suitable minimum buffers will be at least:
 - Non-raptor species – minimum of 50 feet
 - Raptor species – minimum of 300 feet

If buffer zones are determined to be infeasible, a qualified biological monitor will be on site to monitor construction activities within the avoidance buffer zones to ensure active nests and nesting birds are not impacted.

- Prior to any grading activities and vegetation clearing, Communicare+Ole also will have a qualified biologist conduct focused surveys to determine the presence/absence of roosting bats. If active maternity roosts are identified, at a minimum, no construction activities will occur within 500 feet of the roost until the young bats are able to fly from the roost. If active day or night roosts are found on the Project site, a qualified biologist will implement measures to safely flush bats from the roosts (which may include removal of roosting site during the time of day the roost is unoccupied or the installation of one-way doors, allowing the bats to leave the roost but preventing them from re-entering) prior to the onset of construction activities.

While Calistoga is located within a seismically active region that includes the Central and Northern Coast Mountain Ranges, the Maacama Fault is the nearest known active fault to the site, located approximately 6 miles southwest of the site. This site is not mapped within an Alquist-Priolo zone, therefore, the risk of damage to improvements from fault surface rupture is low.

Previous cultural resources studies associated with other projects, including City of Calistoga and CalTrans work along Lincoln Avenue, identified that a portion of the Project site contains a cultural resources site (P-28-001011/CA-NAP-943/H; Table 2). The resources potentially on site likely consist of an obsidian flake and tool scatter with a historic deposit of 19th-century refuse at the south end of the site. The resources may have been associated with Sam Brannan's store or the Brannan Resort that was in the area.

Avoiding substantial adverse changes and damage to archeological and tribal cultural resources is an Up Valley Health Center Project objective. Accordingly, Communicare+Ole has planned the development to avoid adversely demolishing, damaging, materially altering, relocating or otherwise impacting any resource on site by preserving in place through and to minimize excavation within the upper 18-inches of topsoil and to cover the site with stable soil and build above the depth in which resources may be located, thus capping or covering any resource that may be located beneath.

However, due to minor trenching that may be required for a utility trench and for detention, the Project also has incorporated the following into its construction plans in an abundance of caution to avoid any substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource:

- (1) **Field Training:** Prior to commencement of any ground disturbing activities, a qualified archeologist will provide construction personnel archaeological sensitivity training that will include a description of the types of cultural material that may be encountered, cultural sensitivity issues, regulatory issues, and the proper protocol for treatment of the materials in the event of a find during project ground disturbance.
- (2) **Archeologist and Tribal Construction Monitoring:** An archaeological monitor under the direction of the qualified archeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric archaeology will observe all initial Project-related ground-disturbing activities and upon event of discovery of an archeological feature encountered during ground disturbing activities, work in the immediate area will halt and the find evaluated for significance. If the find is determined by the to be a prehistoric culturally significant resource, the qualified archeologist will notify and initiate a qualified local Native American monitor associated with the most likely descendant affiliated with the site.
- (3) **Discovery of Human Remains.** Upon discovery of any human remains all work will halt the qualified archeologist will make all required notifications and proceed as required by law, including notifying the most likely decedent, if prehistoric.

Avoidance of impacts to an archeological resource is discussed in further detail under the cultural resources discussion, below in Section H, CEQA Exemption.

G. ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN

The Up Valley Health Clinic site is designated Community Commercial under the 2015 Calistoga General Plan. The site is also located within the Character Area 5 — Resort Character Area of the 2010 Urban Design Plan and Resort Character Area Overlay of the 2015 Calistoga General Plan. The proposed Up Valley Health Clinic Project is located outside of the Silverado Trail Gateway Area designation that applies to northernmost portion of the property (See General Plan Figure LU-7).

The site is zoned CC. In the CC zoning district, medical and dental clinics are uses *permitted outright* under CMC 17.22.020(A)(7), Permitted Primary Uses, and no Use Permit is required for the clinic.¹ The Up Valley Health Center Project conforms to all applicable CC district development standards, including:

- Minimum Setbacks. Front yard: 10 feet; Rear yard: 10 feet
- Maximum Lot Coverage. 60 percent.
- Maximum Floor Area Ratio. For nonresidential uses: 80 percent.

¹ The relocated Communicare+Ole use into the new Up Valley Health Clinic as a local serving nonprofit healthcare clinic is not a formula business, such as the formula restaurants and formula visitor accommodations, regulated by Calistoga under CMC §§ 17.22.0030, 17.22.050 and 17.04.132.

- Minimum Landscaping. A minimum of 40 percent of open space on a lot will be landscaped
- Maximum Height. Principal buildings: 30 feet
- Parking. 1 space per 200 square feet

In the CC district, construction of nonresidential structures is subject to the design review approval process under CMC 17.41.020(B)(3)(a), unless waived. Under CMC 17.41.020(C)(2), Design Review approval **is not** required for construction determined by the Director of Planning and Building to raise no substantial design issues in conflict with those outlined in CMC [17.41.010](#) and [17.41.050](#), discussed in more detail below.

H. DESIGN REVIEW WAIVER CRITERIA

CMC 17.41.020C(2) provides that Design Review approval is not required for

“construction and building modifications determined by the Director of Planning and Building to raise no substantial design issues in conflict with those outlined in CMC [17.41.010](#) and [17.41.050](#). In these instances, the Director may waive the requirement for design review and may ensure compliance with this title through review of the plans submitted for a building permit.”

CMC 17.41.010 Analysis. CMC 17.41.010 states “the purposes of design review are to secure the general purposes of this title and the Calistoga General Plan, to promote high quality design and a harmonious relationship of buildings, to preserve the unique character and ambiance of Calistoga, to ensure compatibility of new development with existing development, and to promote the preservation of historic structures.” The Up Valley Health Center Project raises no substantial design issues in conflict with the purpose of CMC 17.41.010 as follows:

1. Secure the general purposes of the Zoning Ordinance and the Calistoga General Plan.

The proposed Project fully complies with all zoning requirements, ensuring it aligns with local regulations. This adherence guarantees that the Project is designed within the established guidelines for land use, building size, setbacks, and other key zoning criteria. The proposed clinic is consistent with the policies included in the General Plan for the Community Commercial Land Use area, which allows medical offices and clinics as part of the Principal Uses as defined in the General Plan. The proposed clinic use also is permitted outright and is consistent with all applicable development regulations under Title 17, including development standards and parking requirements.

2. Promote high quality design and a harmonious relationship of buildings.

The proposed design reflects exceptional quality and establishes a seamless harmony with the surrounding neighborhood. The architectural style has a residential quality, blending functionality and aesthetic appeal in a way that complements its environment.

3. Preserve the unique character and ambiance of Calistoga.

The proposed design is of high quality and a harmonious relationship with the surrounding community. The building character creates visually interest at a pedestrian scale, similar to the unique character of downtown and the surrounding areas.

4. Ensure compatibility of new development with existing development.

There are no adjacent structures to the North, East and West. The structures to the South are over 50 ft away from the project building. The single-story Project building does not impact adjacent properties, the setbacks are in excess of 34' to any adjacent property. Therefore, casting shadows will not be an issue and the Project does not impede any sightlines.

5. Promote the preservation of historic structures.

There are no historic structures on or in the vicinity of the Project site or other historic structures that would be impacted by the development of the clinic structure or relocated use.

CMC 17.41.050 Analysis. The Up Valley Health Center Project also raises no substantial design issues in conflict with the findings for design review waiver under CMC 17.41.050, as follows:

In approving or conditionally approving a design review application, the following findings shall be made that the proposed design:

A. Is in accord with the General Plan and any applicable planned development.

The proposed Project is consistent with the policies included in the General Plan. It is located within the Community Commercial Land Use area, which allows medical offices and clinics as part of the Principal Uses as defined in the General Plan. The Project relocates an existing Calistoga business, which is allowing Calistoga to retain much needed local health services servings residents.

B. Is in accord with all applicable provisions of this title.

The proposed clinic use is permitted outright and is consistent with all applicable development regulations under Title 17, including development standards and parking requirements.

C. Is consistent with any adopted design review guidelines to the extent possible.

The City of Calistoga has not adopted commercial design review guidelines, but the Project is consistent with the general purposes of Design Review Chapter of the Zoning Ordinance and the guidelines and policies in the General Plan. The proposed Project creates a beautiful building consistent with the Calistoga general plan design standards, which will greet visitors and residents travelling along Lincoln Avenue. The architecture and landscape is complementary to both the nearby resorts and residential neighborhoods as well. The Project has skillfully addressed the sites limited

options for parking placement by providing both landscape and fence screening to buffer the parking areas.

D. Will not impair or interfere with the development, use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity or the area.

There are no adjacent structures to the North, East and West. The structures to the South are over 50 ft away from the Project building. The single-story Project building does not impact adjacent properties, the setbacks are in excess of 34' to any adjacent property. Therefore, casting shadows will not be an issue and the Project does not impede any sightlines. The Project has been placed strategically to allow future development of the northern portion of the site for a variety of uses. The intensity of the clinic use is not such that would adversely affect the surrounding properties. There will not be any excessive noise, lighting, or anything else associated with the use or design that will interfere with surrounding properties.

Design Review Waiver Conclusion. Based on the foregoing and commitments in the Project application, the Director may ensure the Up Valley Health Center Project's compliance with the Zoning Ordinance through review of the plans submitted for a building permit. Therefore, based on the Project's conformance with the design policies and findings outlined in CMC [17.41.010](#) and [17.41.050](#) the Director may waive the requirement for design review for the Up Valley Health Center Project.

I. CEQA EXEMPTION

Up Valley Health Center Project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA requiring environmental review under Public Resources Code § 21084 because it is a project that falls within Categorical Exemption, which have been determined by the State of California not to have a significant effect on the environment. The Up Valley Health Center Project is exempt from CEQA under the Class 32 Exemption (CEQA Guideline §15332, In-Fill Development Projects) as in-fill development meeting the following conditions, as detailed below:

- (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.**

The proposed Project is consistent with the policies included in the General Plan. It is located within the Community Commercial Land Use area, which allows medical offices and clinics as part of the Principal Uses as defined in the General Plan. The Project relocates an existing Calistoga business, which is allowing Calistoga to retain much needed local health services servings residents. The proposed clinic use is permitted outright and is consistent with all applicable development regulations.

- (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.**

The proposed clinic site is less than 5 acres and is wholly within the City limits, surrounded by Community Commercial or Medium and High Density Residential urban designations.

(c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

No special-status plant species have potential to occur in the Project site and no sensitive plant communities exist on the project site. No Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan occurs on or in the area of the Project site. While the Project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, in an abundance of caution, the project is voluntarily incorporating measures described above to avoid impacts to nesting birds, raptors and to roosting bats.

(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

The Project contains dedicated stormwater retention area which facilitates holding stormwater onsite, recharging groundwater and improving water quality through bio filtration measures.

(e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The site can be adequately served via adjacent existing services. The site has electrical services located on the east and west side of the site. Water and Sanitary Sewer is located in Lincoln Avenue adjacent the site. Stormwater will be retained onsite as well as connecting to the existing drainage culvert along Lincoln.

Historical Resources Exception: Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, the Class 32 Exemption applies so long as an “Exception” does not disqualify the Exemption. CEQA Guideline §15300.2(f) (Exceptions) states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, which includes archaeological resources and sites.

As described above in the site conditions, a previously recorded cultural resource (CA-NAP-943/H) was identified on the Project site through prior studies. These indicated the presence of a hunting encampment or lithic manufacturing station consisting primarily of obsidian debitage. The prior owner of the site excavated seven mechanical trenches to determine the extent and density of CA-NAP-943/H within the site. A limited amount of obsidian debitage and artifacts were observed consistent with previous analysis in the area, but occur at a lower densities. That trench investigation indicated similarities with other evaluations but that due to the limited artifact density identified, it is unlikely that any additional excavation on the current Project site would yield new information and simply produce redundant data.

The CEQA Guidelines and Public Resources Code regulate project activities that may impact an archaeological site with historical resources. To avoid damaging effects on any historical resource of an archaeological nature, the CEQA Guidelines provide that certain factors shall be considered for a project involving such an archaeological site. Of those factors, the Guidelines provide that “preservation in place is the preferred manner of mitigating impacts to archaeological sites. Preservation in place maintains the relationship between artifacts and the archaeological context.” The

Guidelines further provide that preservation in place may be accomplished by planning construction to avoid archaeological sites and covering the archaeological sites with a layer of chemically stable soil before building facilities on the site.

Accordingly, Communicare+Ole has voluntarily planned the development to avoid adversely demolishing, damaging, materially altering, relocating or otherwise impacting any resource on site by preserving in place. To accomplish this the Project will minimize excavation within the upper 18-inches of topsoil and cover the site with stable soil and build above the depth in which resources may be located, thus capping or covering any resource that may be located beneath. However, due to minor additional trenching that may be required for a utility trench and for detention, the Project also is voluntarily incorporating the following into its construction plans:

- (1) **Field Training:** Prior to commencement of any ground disturbing activities, a qualified archeologist will provide construction personnel archaeological sensitivity training that will include a description of the types of cultural material that may be encountered, cultural sensitivity issues, regulatory issues, and the proper protocol for treatment of the materials in the event of a find during Project ground disturbance.
- (2) **Archeologist and Tribal Construction Monitoring:** An archaeological monitor under the direction of the qualified archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric archaeology will observe all initial Project-related ground-disturbing activities and upon event of discovery of an archeological feature encountered during ground disturbing activities, work in the immediate area will halt and the find evaluated for significance. If the find is determined by the to be a prehistoric culturally significant resource, the qualified archaeologist will notify and initiate a local Native American monitor associated with the most likely descendant affiliated with the site.
- (3) **Discovery of Human Remains.** Upon discovery of any human remains all work will halt the qualified archaeologist will make all required notifications and proceed as required by law (under the California Health and Safety Code and Public Resources Code), including notifying the MLD if prehistoric. The MLD may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

Such preservation in place and avoidance measures will ensure that the Up Valley Health Center Project will not cause any substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource, which includes archaeological resources and sites, including the previously identified and recorded cultural resource CA-NAP-943/H around and on the site.

Common Sense Exemption. In the event the City does not find that the Class 32 CEQA exemption applies, the Up Valley Health Center Project is also CEQA exempt under CEQA Guideline 15061(b)(3), the "common sense" exemption. The common sense exemption exists to allow obviously exempt types of project not listed in the categorical exemptions to avoid being required to "needlessly to comply with the requirements of CEQA." *Myers v. Board of Supervisors* (1976) 58 CA3d.413, 425. This exemption acts as general provision that recognizes a project that "qualifies for neither a statutory nor a categorical exemption may nonetheless be found exempt" if it fits within the terms of this exemption. *Muzzy Ranch*, 41 C4th at 380. A project can qualify for the common sense exemption even

if the lead agency has discretion to approve or deny the activity. *Martin v. City & County of San Francisco* (2005) 135 CA4th 392, 403.

Here, the existing clinic uses are being relocated down the street to a new site within the City that is and zoned community commercial which permits the use outright. It will be located within in a new larger facility that complies with all applicable development standards, including adequate parking, and is designed to avoid environmental impacts, all while serving community healthcare needs. This is the type of project that is obviously exempt type that does not needlessly to comply with the requirements of CEQA

Therefore, based on the available evidence and regulations described above, the Up Valley Health Center Project is exempt from further CEQA review.