



County of Monterey Planning Commission

Item No.4

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Agenda Item No.4

Legistar File Number: PC 26-047

April 29, 2026

Introduced: 4/20/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Planning Item

PLN220308 - LINCOLN GREEN INN LLC

Public hearing to consider a Local Coastal Program Amendment to change the zoning of a 0.3 acre parcel from Medium Density Residential with a density of 2 units an acre, Design Control Overlay, with a height limit of 18 feet (MDR/2-D(18')(CZ)) to Visitor Serving Commercial, Design Control Overlay, with a height limit of 18 feet (VSC-D(18')(CZ)); amending Monterey County Code Chapter 20.12 to remove the reference to the "Lincoln Green Cottages"; and amending the Carmel Area Land Use Plan and Coastal Implementation Plan (Part 4) to limit Lincoln Green Inn to five total visitor serving units; and a Combined Development Permit for after-the-fact conversion of an existing 394 square foot two car garage into a visitor serving unit within 750 feet of known archaeological resources.

Project Location: 26208 & 26200 Carmelo Street, Carmel Area Land Use Plan

Proposed CEQA Action: Find the projects Statutorily Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15265 and Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15301, and there are no exceptions pursuant to section 15300.2.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt two resolutions:

- A resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors:
 - 1) Find that the project qualifies as a Statutory Exemption under Section 15265 of the CEQA Guidelines;
 - 2) Amend the Monterey County Local Coastal Program by:
 - a. Adopting an Ordinance to amend Sectional District Map 16 of Title 20 section 20.08.060 to rezone 0.3 acre parcel from Medium Density Residential with a density of 2 units an acre, Design Control Overlay, with a height limit of 18 feet [MDR/2-D(18)(CZ)] to Visitor Serving Commercial, Design Control Overlay, with a height limit of 18 feet and a [VSC-D(18)(CZ)]; and
 - b. Adopting an Ordinance to amend the Monterey County Code Chapter 20.12 to remove the reference to the "Lincoln Green Cottages";
 - c. Adopt a Resolution to amend Policy 4.4.3.D.4 of the Carmel Area Land Use Plan and Coastal Implementation Plan (Part 4) section 20.146.120.B.3.b to add reference to the 5 visitor serving units for Lincoln Green Inn.
 - 3) Direct HCD staff to submit the Local Coastal Program Amendment to the California Coastal Commission for certification.
- A resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors:
 - 1) Find that the project qualifies as a Class 3 Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA

Guidelines section 15303, and there are no exceptions pursuant to section 15300.2; and

- 2) Approving an After-the-Fact Combined Development Permit consisting of:
 - a. A Coastal Development Permit to allow the conversion of an existing two-car garage into a visitor serving unit; and
 - b. A Coastal Administrative Permit to allow development within 750 feet of archaeological resources.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Property Owner: Lincoln Green Inn, LLC

Applicant: Maureen Wruck Planning Consultant, LLC

Project Location: 26208 & 26200 Carmelo Street

APN: 009-403-003-000

Parcel Size: 0.30 acres

Zoning: Medium Density Residential with a density of 2 units an acre, Design Control Overlay, with a height limit of 18 feet or “MDR/2-D(18)(CZ)”

Plan Area: Carmel Area Land Use Plan

Flagged and Staked: No

Project Planner: Joseph Alameda, Associate Planner

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Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner

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SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The subject property is governed by the goals, text, and policies of the 1982 General Plan, Carmel Area Land Use Plan, Coastal Implementation Plan (Part 4), and the Zoning Ordinance (Title 20).

On September 17, 2024, the project applicant, Lincoln Green Inn, LLC, filed a request to allow after-the-fact conversion of a garage into an additional (fifth) visitor serving unit on the subject property. During the staff’s review of the development proposed, the staff identified an inconsistency between the property’s zoning district and land use designation.

County staff, having reviewed applicable planning documents (1802 General Plan, Carmel Area Land Use Plan, and Title 20), the history of the property, available documentary evidence, and the physical characteristics of the property, are recommending approval of the proposed project (zoning change, Title 20 text amendment, LUP and CIP amendment, and after-the-fact conversion).

Pursuant to Title 20 section 20.94.030, the Planning Commission shall act as a recommending body to the Board of Supervisors for Local Coastal Program Amendments, including text amendments and rezones. Since the proposed after-the-fact conversion element of the project is concurrently being considered with the proposed Local Coastal Program Amendments, the Planning Commission shall act as the recommending body to the Board of Supervisors on the entire project scope. Following the Planning Commission’s recommendation, the Board of Supervisors will consider the project. Although the County is required to correct this error, the proposed rezone and text amendments do amend the County’s Local Coastal Program, and thus, consideration by the California Coastal Commission is still

required and will occur following the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors hearings.

Zoning and Land Use Inconsistency

The Lincoln Green Inn was built on the subject property in 1926 and has been in operation ever since. The property received its first zoning district in 1963. Although the property was commercially developed and operated, the property was zoned Residential (“R-1”) in 1963 and through 1980. In 1982, the Carmel Area Land Use Plan was adopted in October 1982. At this time, the property received its first land use designation (Visitor Serving Commercial). Although the property’s land use designation reflected its historical and ongoing visitor-serving commercial operation, the property was rezoned to Medium Density Residential. However, this was done in error as the Medium Density Residential zoning district is not compatible with the underlying Land Use Designation of Visitor Serving Commercial. This erroneous zoning continues to apply to the property today. California Government Code § 65860(a) states, “County or city zoning ordinances shall be consistent with the general plan of the county or city.” Accordingly, the County is required to correct this inconsistency between the property’s land use designation (enforced by the Carmel Area Land Use Plan and the 1982 General Plan), and the zoning district (the County’s Zoning Ordinance [Title 20]). To correct this, the project involves changing the subject property’s zoning district from Medium Density Residential with a density of 2 units an acre, a height limit of 18 feet, and a Design Control Overlay [MDR/2-D(18)(CZ)] to Visitor Serving Commercial with a height limit of 18 feet and a Design Control Overlay [VSC-D(18)(CZ)]. In addition, should this rezone be implemented, the Medium Density Residential zoning district’s reference to the “Lincoln Green Inn Cottages” (Title 20 section 20.12.070.E(3)) is no longer applicable. Accordingly, the staff recommends that this language from Chapter 20.12 be removed. Rezoning the property VSC would bring the zoning into compliance with the underlying land use designation and better align with the historical and current use of the property.

Rezone and LCP Amendments

The rezone and Title 20 Zoning Ordinance Amendment were previously considered by the Planning Commission on November 12, 2025. At this time, the Combined Development Permit proposing to allow after-the-fact conversion of a garage into an additional (fifth) visitor serving unit was still under review and not ripe for consideration. However, both elements of the project are now ready for consideration and have been incorporated into the project scope.

On November 12, 2025, members of the Planning Commission raised concerns about the potential visitor-serving (or other commercial) intensification that could result from the proposed rezoning of the property from MDR to VSC. While any intensification of the property would be subject to separate discretionary and environmental reviews, the Planning Commission expressed a desire to recognize Lincoln Green’s historical and ongoing operation (5 units) and limit future intensification through the use of a Special Treatment Area, or other planning mechanism. After public testimony and deliberation, the Planning Commission continued the item to a date uncertain to allow staff to explore ways to recognize historical and ongoing uses, while limiting future expansion of the Inn, thereby maintaining its compatibility with the surrounding medium-density residential area.

A "Special Treatment Area" (STA) is intended to be used in conjunction with the underlying land use designation. Its purpose is to facilitate a comprehensive planned approach for specifically designated properties (or a single property) where a mix of uses is permitted and/or where there are unique

natural and scenic resources or significant recreational/visitor-serving opportunities. In this case, while a STA could be utilized to recognize the historical and ongoing visitor serving commercial use of the property despite its residential zoning, the STA would not resolve the property's land use designation and zoning inconsistency. This is because the STA would be used in conjunction with the property's visitor serving commercial land use designation and not supersede or change its inconsistent residential zoning district. Simply, the inconsistency would still exist with the adoption of a STA. To resolve the inconsistency, either the land use designation or zoning district must change to be compatible with the other. Given that the property's historical use (Inn/visitor serving commercial) is compatible with its historical/current land use designation (visitor serving commercial), staff believes it is more appropriate to then change the zoning of the property than it is to redesignate the property to residential, thereby creating a legal non-conforming use (inns are not allowed uses in MDR). However, to address the Planning Commission's concerns regarding intensification and needing to maintain a density and intensity that is appropriate for the residential neighborhood, staff recommends two amendments to the text of the Carmel Area Land Use Plan and Coastal Implementation Plan (Part 4).

Chapter 4.4 of the Carmel Area Land Use Plan establishes specific development policies for various land use designations. In keeping with Key Policy 4.4.1, which requires that all future development be clearly consistent with and subordinate to the foremost priority of protecting the area's scenic beauty and natural resource values, Policy 4.4.3.D(4) (Specific Policies) establishes maximum intensities for various "Recreation and Visitor-Serving" sites throughout the CARLUP area. Pursuant to this Policy, the following sites are limited to:

- 86 visitor units and 12 employee units for Carmel River Inn
- 150 visitor units and 12 employee units for Highlands Inn
- 35 visitor units and 4 employee units for Tickle Pink
- 16 visitor units and 2 employee units for Sandpiper Inn

This policy and the maximum intensities for the four visitor-serving sites are mirrored in Coastal Implementation Plan (CIP; Part 4) section 20.146.120.B.3.b.

To limit Lincoln Green Inn to its current intensity, the proposed project includes amending CARLUP Policy 4.4.3.D(4) and CIP section 20.146.120.B.3.b to include "5 visitor units for Lincoln Green Inn" (**Exhibits D and E**). Based on site constraints, namely existing mature native trees, existing structures, and required parking stalls per inn unit, five visitor-serving units are the maximum that the subject property could feasibly be developed with. Lincoln Green Inn has been operating with five inn units for approximately 30 years. Staff is aware of parking complaints, as guests' vehicles often extend into the traveled right-of-way (**Exhibit H**). However, as described below, the Applicant is proposing modifications to the property's parking to address the raised concerns and to ensure that the property complies with the County's parking regulations (one stall per inn unit). Thus, staff believes allowing for up to five visitor units on the Lincoln Green Property is reasonable, protects the area's scenic beauty and natural resource values, and allows for historical uses to continue that have proven to be compatible with the neighborhood.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution (**Exhibit A**) recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve rezoning the property to VSC and implementing the above-mentioned

LUP and CIP amendments.

Conversion

The project also involves the after-the-fact permitting of an existing 394 square foot detached garage that was converted into a visitor- serving unit approximately 30 years ago. Although the subject property is currently zoned MDR, the proposed project includes rezoning the property to VSC to align with its underlying land use designation. Therefore, the VSC zoning district was considered when analyzing the after-the-fact conversion's consistency with applicable regulations. The VSC zoning district allows hotels, motels, and inns (and intensification of existing visitor-serving facilities) as a conditionally permitted use, subject to the granting of a Coastal Development Permit. The project involves after-the-fact authorization to increase Lincoln Green Inn's units from four to five through the conversion of an existing garage. The project also involves a Coastal Administrative Permit to allow development (parking modifications and after-the-fact conversion) within 750 feet of existing archaeological sites.

Potable water will continue to be provided to the parcel by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD), and wastewater will continue to be managed by the Carmel Area Wastewater District.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution (**Exhibit B**) recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the after-the-fact conversion.

Parking

Pursuant to Title 20 section 20.58.040, the required parking for inns is 1 space per unit plus 2 spaces for every three employees. The proposed after-the-fact conversion does not alter the existing operation of Lincoln Green Inn. According to the operations plan (**Exhibit B.3**), there are no full-time on-site staff members. Contract services are retained for landscaping and room turnover. Landscaping is conducted twice a week, after guest check-out times (i.e., between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM). Room turnover and cleaning are also done during this time period. There are up to four individuals who provide these services. Guests self-check-in during 3:00 - 6:00 PM, and self-check-out at 11:00 AM. There is a two-night minimum stay on the weekends and a three-night minimum stay on some holidays. A roving manager does check-in on the property.

Historically and currently, guests and contracted services park diagonally in front of the property, within the Carmelo Street right-of-way. This is because the property's two garages, which abut Carmelo Street, have been converted into a visitor serving unit and a storage/check-in structure. As a result, Lincoln Green Inn has operated with five inn units for 30 years, with no on-site parking. The County is in receipt of complaints regarding vehicles' spillover into the 60 public right-of-way. Pursuant to Title 20, parking must be located entirely on-site. Accordingly, the property is not currently in compliance with the County's parking standards. However, as proposed, the storage/check-in office would be partially converted back to allow for one parking stall within the structure, and the property's frontage would be modified to allow for four additional on-site parking stalls. Reconstruction of a landscaping wall, removal and replanting of landscaping, and the removal of one nonnative tree would need to occur to implement the parking/frontage modifications. A draft parking plan has been provided (**Exhibit F**) and illustrates the property's ability to have five on-site

parking stalls as required by County Code. Condition No. 5 requires that the Applicant/Owner provide a final parking plan meeting County requirements prior to issuance of any permits from Building Services. In general, contracted services are not typically considered permanent employees for the purpose of calculating the number of parking stalls per Title 20 section 20.58.040. Here, there are only up to four contracted employees (no permanent employees), and such employees will be on-site when guests check out and vacate their respective parking stalls. Therefore, with the implementation of the project, the property will come into compliance with the required parking stalls (1 stall per unit).

Cultural Resources

According to the Monterey County Geographic Information System (GIS), the subject property is within an area of high archaeological sensitivity. In accordance with General Plan Open Space Policy OS-6.3, any new development being proposed within moderate or high sensitivity zones, or within 150 feet of a known recorded archaeological and/or cultural site, shall complete a Phase One Archaeological survey. According to the prepared Phase One Archaeological Survey (County of Monterey Library No. LIB240240), no cultural resources or indications of archaeological resources were identified during the Project Archaeologist's pedestrian survey of the project site. The potential for inadvertent impacts to cultural resources is limited and will be controlled by use of the County's standard condition (Condition No. 3), which requires the contractor to stop work if previously unidentified resources are discovered during construction.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15265 statutorily exempts project activities and approvals made by any local government necessary for the preparation and adoption of a local coastal program. Amendments of the local coastal program, including Land Use Plan land use designation amendments and zoning amendments, are subject to the same processing and analysis regulations as the original adoption of the local coastal program. This land use and zoning change will not take effect until after the change is certified by the California Coastal Commission. CEQA Guidelines section 15301 Categorically Exempts existing facilities with negligible change. The project involves after-the-fact authorization of an existing facility. Negligible changes to the property are proposed (landscape and parking improvements). No intensification over baseline conditions (current conditions) would occur. Therefore, the subject Local Coastal Program amendment is exempt from CEQA, and no environmental review is required.

OTHER AGENCY/DEPARTMENT INVOLVEMENT:

The following County departments have reviewed the project:

- HCD-Planning Services
- HCD-Engineering Services
- Environmental Health Bureau
- HCD-Environmental Services
- Office of County Counsel

Prepared by: Joseph Alameda, Associate Planner, x7079
Reviewed by: Fiona Jensen, Principal Planner
Approved by: Melanie Berretti, AICP, Chief of Planning

The following attachments are on file with HCD:

Exhibit A - Local Coastal Program Draft Resolution

- Draft Ordinance (clean)
- Proposed Zoning Map

Exhibit B- Coastal Development Permit Draft Resolution

- Draft Conditions of Approval
- Project Plans
- Operations Plan

Exhibit C - Draft Ordinance (redline)

Exhibit D - Land Use Plan (clean & redline)

Exhibit E - Coastal Implementation Plan (clean & redline)

Exhibit F - Draft Parking Plan

Exhibit G - Traffic Assessment

Exhibit H - Public Comment

Exhibit I - Vicinity Map

cc: Front Counter Copy; Joseph Alameda, Associate Planner; Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner; California Coastal Commission, Santa Cruz Office; Lincoln Green Inn LLC, Property Owner; Joel Panzer, Agent/Architect; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); Laborers International Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); Christina McGinnis, Keep Big Sur Wild; LandWatch; Project File PLN220308.