



**CITY OF SALINAS
PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: LISA BRINTON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

THROUGH: GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER

BY: OSCAR RESENDIZ, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

TITLE: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 2022-002 AND REZONE 2022-002;
AMEND THE GENERAL PLAN TO CHANGE THE GENERAL PLAN
DESIGNATION OF FIVE (5) “PROJECT SITES” TO MIXED USE AND
REZONE THE SAME FIVE (5) “PROJECT SITES” TO MIXED-USE (MX)

1. ALISAL MARKETPLACE;
2. EDGE OF DOWNTOWN/FRONT AND JOHN STREETS;
3. FOODS CO SHOPPING CENTER;
4. LAUREL WEST SHOPPING CENTER; AND
5. SEARS (NORTHRIDGE MALL) (PORTION)

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission affirm the findings and approve the attached Resolution recommending that the City Council: 1) adopt the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Programs; 2) approve a General Plan Amendment changing the General Plan Land Use Designations of five (5) “Project sites” to Mixed Use; and 3) adopt an Ordinance to rezone the same five (5) “Project sites” to Mixed Use (MX).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Salinas is proposing General Plan Amendment (GPA) 2022-002 and Rezone (RZ) 2022-002 to change the land use designations and zoning districts of 5 “Project sites”: Alisal Marketplace, Edge of Downtown/Front and John Streets, Foods Co Shopping Center, Laurel West Shopping Center, and Sears (Northridge Mall) (portion). An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration have been prepared for each of the five (5) “Project sites” [five (5) total ISMNDs, Attachment D], which are known as ER 2022-010. The purpose of the GPA and RZ is to facilitate

the production of housing, consistent with the City’s General Plan. The GPA and RZ would facilitate the development of up to approximately 2,513 housing units and 727,089 square feet of commercial uses.


The Project does not involve construction or other physical changes to the site because there are currently no development proposals. The Project is intended to encourage future housing development that would provide new housing consistent with the Salinas General Plan. This Project is being partially funded by Senate Bill 2 (SB 2) grant funding for the purpose of increasing housing production in the City.





DISCUSSION:

Background:

In December 2019, the City accepted an SB 2 grant award from the state Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) in the amount of \$310,000. The SB 2 grant is awarded to cities for the preparation, adoption, and implementation of plans that streamline housing development approval and accelerate housing production. Grant funds are to be used to facilitate the production of housing by undertaking the necessary planning and environmental studies and analyses to consider changing land use and zoning designations of identified opportunity sites to allow for higher density residential or mixed-use development. This SB 2 grant award enabled the City to undertake the planning and environmental study and analysis required to prepare the proposed General Plan Amendment and Rezone for 5 identified sites summarized in Table 1 and are shown in Exhibit A – Project Location.

Table 1. Project Sites and Location Summary

Project Site	Location	Project Location Map	Area
Alisal Marketplace	Adjacent to East Alisal Street between Front Street and Griffin Street		12.1 acres

Edge of Downtown/Front and John Streets	Adjacent to John Street between Abbott Street and Front Street		3.7 acres
Foods Co Shopping Center	Southeast corner of East Alisal Street and South Sanborn Road		13.5 acres
Laurel West Shopping Center	East of North Davis Road between West Laurel Drive/Calle Del Adobe and Larkin Street		16.2 acres
Sears (Northridge Mall) (portion)	Northwest corner of North Main Street and Madrid Street		8.41 acres of the 10.2 acre site is proposed to be changed as shown in red.

The Project sites were identified as having the capability to provide more housing and mixed-use development consistent with the General Plan. The proposed General Plan Amendments and Rezones are shown in Exhibit B, and summarized in Table 2, below:

Table 2. Proposed Land Use Designation and Zoning District Changes

Site	General Plan Land Use Designation		Zoning District	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Alisal Marketplace	Retail / General Commercial/ Light Industrial	Mixed Use	Commercial Retail (CR)/Industrial General Commercial (IGC)	Mixed Use (MX)
Edge of Downtown	Retail / Residential Low Density	Mixed Use	Commercial Retail (CR) / Residential Low Density (R-L) / Central City (CC)	Mixed Use (MX) / Central City (CC)
Laurel West Shopping Center	Retail	Mixed Use	Commercial Retail (CR)	Mixed Use (MX)
Foods Co Shopping Center	Retail	Mixed Use	Commercial Retail (CR)	Mixed Use (MX)
Sears (Northridge Mall) (portion)	Retail	Mixed Use*	Commercial Retail (CR)	Mixed Use (MX)*
*Note: 1.79 acres of the site will remain Retail and CR – Commercial Retail				

Alisal Marketplace

The purpose of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Rezone is to facilitate the redevelopment of 18 parcels (12.1 acres) adjacent to East Alisal Street between Front Street and Griffin Street (“Alisal Marketplace”) into a new mixed-use neighborhood that integrates housing and services with public open space and educational and civic buildings, including a new police station. The site is currently occupied by mostly light-industrial uses and big-box retail buildings. The City considers the Project site to have significant redevelopment potential and proposes to change the land use designation and zoning district to facilitate future mixed-use development. The Project site is also within a Federal Opportunity Zone (ID 06053014500) with access to public transit.

GPA No. 2022-002 includes a land use change from Retail and General Commercial/Light Industrial to Mixed-Use. Rezone No. 2022-002 includes a rezone from CR – Commercial Retail and IGC – Industrial General Commercial to MX – Mixed Use, consistent with the proposed land use designation. There are existing commercial uses such as adult entertainment facilities, vehicle sales and services, among other uses, which are not permitted in the MX zoning district per Salinas Zoning Code Section 37-30.240 and would become legal, non-conforming uses subject to Salinas Zoning Code Section 37-50.160. Other existing uses, such as service stations, may require a Conditional Use Permit for any proposed expansions or changes to use.

Although the Project does not involve construction or physical changes to the site, the land use and zoning district changes could facilitate the development of up to 515 housing units and 131,406 square feet of commercial uses based on MX development standards.

The Project site is generally surrounded by a mix of commercial and industrial uses. As referenced in Table 3, all properties to the north, south, east, and west are planned and zoned for commercial and industrial uses. A segment of Union Pacific Railroad is located adjacent to the west of the site.

Table 3. Land Uses and Zoning Districts Adjacent to Alisal Marketplace

Direction from the Project site	Existing Land Use	Planned Land Use	Zone District
North	Industrial (San Juanita Tostada Factory), Services (Republic Services), and Commercial (wholesale, used appliance store, and golf cart dealer)	General Industrial, General Commercial/ Light Industrial	Industrial General, Industrial General Commercial
South	Public (Salinas Police Department), Service (PG&E), and Commercial (auto care, gas station, tire shop)	General Commercial/ Light Industrial	Industrial General Commercial
East	Commercial (laundromat, window installation service)	General Commercial/ Light Industrial	Industrial General Commercial
West	Railroad – Union Pacific	General Commercial/ Light Industrial	Industrial General Commercial

Edge of Downtown/Front and John Streets

The purpose of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Rezone is to facilitate the redevelopment of 8 parcels (3.7 acres) adjacent to John Street between Abbott Street and Front Street (“Edge of Downtown/Front and John Streets”) into a new mixed-use neighborhood that provides higher density housing opportunities. The site is currently occupied by a mix of retail and office uses (KSBW television station). The City considers the Project site to have significant redevelopment potential. The land use and zoning district changes would extend the mixed-use land use designation and zoning of the parcels west of the site that front John Street, providing a greater opportunity for lot assemblage to make higher density housing projects economically feasible.

GPA 2022-002 includes a land use change from CR – Commercial Retail and Residential Low Density to Mixed-Use. Rezone 2022-002 includes a rezone from CR – Commercial Retail and R-L – Residential Low Density to MX – Mixed Use, consistent with the proposed land use designation. The proposed land use and zoning changes are shown in Exhibit B. The site is also located in the Downtown Neighborhood Area of the CC – Central City Overlay Zone District. No

change is proposed to the Overlay. On the Project site, all existing uses are permitted in the MX zoning district per Salinas Zoning Ordinance Section 37-30.240; however, some existing uses, such as parking lots and structures, may require a Conditional Use Permit for any proposed changes to use.

Although the Project does not involve construction or physical changes to the site, the land use and zoning district changes could facilitate the development of up to 296 housing units and 161,172 square feet of commercial uses based on MX development standards.

The Project site is generally surrounded by a mix of retail, residential, commercial, and industrial uses. As referenced in Table 4, properties to the north and east are planned and zoned for commercial and light industrial uses. Properties south and west are planned and zoned for residential and mixed uses. Abbott Street, a six-lane major arterial, serves as a defining line between the residential and mixed-use parcels and the commercial and light industrial parcels.

Table 4. Land Uses and Zoning Districts Adjacent to Edge of Downtown

Direction from the Project site	Existing Land Use	Planned Land Use	Zone District
North	Green Space/Park, Industrial (building materials supplier) and Commercial (garden equipment store)	Park, General Commercial/ Light Industrial	Park, Industrial General Commercial
South	Single-Family and Multi-Family Residences, Commercial (motel)	Residential Low Density, Mixed Use	Residential Low Density, Mixed Use
East	Commercial (auto repair shop, auto body shop), Industrial (storage)	General Commercial/ Light Industrial, Office	Industrial General Commercial, Commercial Office
West	Commercial (auto repair shop, gas station), Single-Family and Multi-Family Residences	Residential Medium Density, Residential Low Density, Mixed Use	Residential Medium Density, Residential Low Density, Mixed Use

Foods Co Shopping Center

The purpose of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Rezone is to facilitate the development of 8 parcels (13.5 acres) on the southeast corner of East Alisal Street and South Sanborn Road (“Foods Co Shopping Center”) into mixed-use villages with critically needed housing units. The

site is currently developed with big-box retail buildings, including Foods Co, Fallas Discount Store, and smaller retail and commercial services. Recently, several big box retail establishments either declared bankruptcy or were at risk of declaring bankruptcy. In consideration of these conditions, the Advance Planning and Project Implementation and Housing staff reviewed conditions for the appropriate moment to re-imagine these properties.

GPA 2022-002 includes a land use change from CR – Commercial Retail to Mixed-Use. Rezone 2022-002 includes a rezone from CR – Commercial Retail to MX – Mixed Use, consistent with the proposed land use designation. The proposed land use and zoning changes are shown in Exhibit B. On the Project site, there are existing restaurant and financial services with drive-through uses and vehicle related sales and service uses, among other uses, that are not permitted in the MX zoning district per Salinas Zoning Code Section 37-30.240 and would become legal, non-conforming uses subject to Salinas Zoning Code Section 37-50.160. Other existing uses, such as service stations, may require a Conditional Use Permit for any proposed changes to use. Although the Project does not involve construction or physical changes to the site, the land use and zoning district changes could facilitate the development of up to 576 housing units and 147,015 square feet of commercial use based on MX development standards.

The Project site is generally surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential uses. As referenced in Table 5, properties to the south, east, and west are planned and zoned for residential uses, and properties to the north and west are planned and zoned for retail uses. El Sausal Middle School is located north of the Project site across from East Alisal Street.

Table 5. Land Uses and Zoning Districts Adjacent to Foods Co Shopping Center

Direction from the Project site	Existing Land Use	Planned Land Use	Zone District
North	Commercial (auto parts store, shopping mall), Services (loan agency, tax preparation service), School (El Sausal Middle School)	Retail, Public/Semipublic	Commercial Retail, Public/Semipublic
South	Apartments, Single-Family Residences	Residential High Density, Residential Low Density	Residential High Density, Residential Low Density
East	Religious (Vineyard Christian Fellowship), Single-Family Residences	Residential High Density, Residential Low Density	Residential High Density, Residential Low Density
West	Commercial (supermarket, grocery), Services (ATM), Single-Family Residences	Retail, Residential Low Density	Commercial Retail, Residential Low Density

Laurel West Shopping Center

The purpose of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Rezone is to facilitate the development of 6 parcels (16.2 acres) east of North Davis Road between West Laurel Drive/Calle Del Adobe and Larkin Street (“Laurel West Shopping Center”) into mixed-use villages with critically needed housing units. The site is currently developed with big-box retail buildings, including Kmart (permanently closed), and smaller retail and commercial services. Recently, several big box retail establishments either declared bankruptcy or were at risk of declaring bankruptcy. In consideration of these conditions, the Advance Planning and Project Implementation and Housing staff reviewed conditions for the appropriate moment to re-imagine these properties.

GPA 2022-002 includes a land use change from Retail to Mixed-Use. Rezone 2022-002 includes a rezone from CR – Commercial Retail to MX – Mixed Use, consistent with the proposed land use designation. The proposed land use and zoning changes are shown in Exhibit B. On the Project site, there are existing restaurant and financial services with drive-through uses and service station with vehicle washing uses, among other uses, which are not permitted in the MX zoning district per Salinas Zoning Code Section 37-30.240 and would become legal, non-conforming uses subject to Salinas Zoning Code Section 37-50.160. Other existing uses, such as service stations, may require a Conditional Use Permit for any proposed changes to their use.

Although the Project does not involve construction or physical changes to the site, the land use and zoning district changes could facilitate the development of up to 691 housing units and 176,418 square feet of commercial uses based on MX development standards.

The Project site is generally surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and service uses. As referenced in Table 6, all properties to the north are planned and zoned for retail. Properties south and east are planned and zoned for residential uses, and properties west of the Project site are planned and zoned for a mix of retail, public/semipublic, and residential uses.

Table 6. Land Uses and Zoning Districts Adjacent to Laurel West Shopping Center

Direction from the Project site	Existing Land Use	Planned Land Use	Zone District
North	Ponding Basin	Retail	Commercial Retail
South	Single-Family Dwellings	Residential Medium Density	Residential Medium Density
East	Single-Family Dwellings	Residential Medium Density	Residential Medium Density
West	Commercial (IHOP, Carl’s Jr.), Service (US Postal Service), Apartments	Retail, Public/Semipublic, Residential Medium Density	Commercial Retail, Public/Semipublic, Residential Medium Density

Sears (Northridge Mall)

The purpose of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Rezone is to facilitate the development of 1 parcel (8.41 acres; portion) on the northwest corner of North Main Street and Madrid Street (“Sears (Northridge Mall)”) into mixed-use villages with critically needed housing units. The site is currently developed with a big-box retail building. Recently, the big box retail establishment on site had declared bankruptcy and is permanently closed. In consideration of these conditions, the Advance Planning and Project Implementation and Housing staff reviewed conditions for the appropriate moment to re-imagine these properties.

GPA 2022-002 includes a land use change from Retail to Mixed-Use. Rezone 2022-002 includes a rezone from CR – Commercial Retail to MX – Mixed Use, consistent with the proposed land use designation. The proposed land use and zoning changes are shown in Exhibit B. GPA 2022-002 and Rezone 2022-002 would only apply to an 8.41-acre portion of the 10.2 acre site. The remaining 1.79 acres would maintain the Retail land use and CR – Commercial Retail zoning designation.

Although the Project does not involve construction or physical changes to the site, the land use and zoning district changes could facilitate the development of up to 435 housing units and 111,078 square feet of commercial uses based on MX development standards.

The Project site is generally surrounded by a mix of residential and retail uses. As referenced in Table 7 all properties to the north and east are planned and zoned for retail, and properties to the south and west are planned and zoned for residential uses.

Table 7. Land Uses and Zoning Districts Adjacent to Sears (Northridge Mall)

Direction from the Project site	Existing Land Use	Planned Land Use	Zone District
North	Retail (Northridge Mall)	Retail	Commercial Retail
South	Apartments	Residential High Density	Residential High Density
East	Retail, Restaurants	Retail	Commercial Retail
West	Apartments	Residential High Density	Residential High Density

Analysis:

General Plan Amendment

Per the 2002 Salinas General Plan, the Mixed-Use land use designation allows for development including a mixture of retail, office, and residential uses in the same building, on the same parcel or in the same area. The intent of this designation is to create activity centers with pedestrian-oriented uses in certain portions of the City. The maximum intensity/density of development is 1.0

floor area ratio plus 10 dwelling units per acre throughout the City and a maximum intensity/density of development of 4.0 floor area ratio + 80 dwelling units per acre (for a total maximum allowable floor area ratio of 6.0) for projects within the Central City.

The proposed General Plan Amendment is consistent with General Plan Policies. The proposed General Plan Amendment would change the existing designations for the project sites and amend the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Policy Map to align with the proposed rezoning of each site to Mixed Use (MX). The General Plan Amendment would be compatible with the General Plan land use designation of the adjacent sites of each subject site.

The proposed “Mixed Use” land use designation for the five Project sites is consistent with General Plan Goal H-1, by providing a range of housing opportunities to adequately address existing and projected needs to Salinas. The proposed project also complies with General Plan Policy H-1.3, by identifying adequate sites to facilitate and encourage housing production for the existing and projected housing needs of the City. In addition, the project complies with General Plan Goal H-2, by maintaining and improving existing neighborhoods and housing stock.

Rezone

Per Zoning Code Section 37-30.230, the Mixed Use (MX) zoning district “provides opportunities for mixed use, office, public and semipublic uses, and commercial uses that emphasize retail, entertainment, and service activities.” Medium and high-density residential uses are encouraged within MX districts to facilitate pedestrian-oriented activity centers. The proposed zoning district would be consistent with the proposed land use designation, Mixed Use.

The proposed rezoning would be consistent with the Mixed-Use land use designation and CC Overlay District. Future development would comply with the development regulations and design standards of the MX District, by:

- Promoting and providing development opportunities for integrated, complementary housing and employment opportunities in the same building, on the same parcel or within the same block.
- Supporting transit use and providing a buffer between busy streets and residential neighborhoods and providing new housing opportunities in the city.
- Promoting compact development that is intended to be pedestrian-oriented with buildings close to and oriented to the sidewalk.
- Promoting residential development that is appropriate in an urban setting in mixed use buildings by providing incentives, as well as standards and regulations to minimize conflicts between different types of uses.

FINDINGS:

Mitigated Negative Declaration:

Prior to recommending approval of the General Plan Amendment and Rezone, the Planning Commission will need to determine that the proposed Mitigated Negative Declarations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Programs (ER 2022-010) are adequate for the proposed project by approving the attached Resolution.

General Plan Amendment/Rezone:

The Planning Commission may recommend approval of a General Plan Amendment and Rezone, if all the findings set forth in the attached Planning Commission Resolution are established. Per Zoning Code Section 37-60.920(d)(2), an affirmative vote of a majority (no less than four (4) votes) of the Planning Commission is required for the Commission to make a recommendation of the General Plan Amendment to the City Council. A draft ordinance for Rezone is provided for reference as an attachment to this staff report.

Time Consideration:

The proposed project includes a General Plan Amendment and Rezone, which are legislative acts and not subject to the Permit Streamlining Act (PSA).

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The environmental impacts of the project have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study (one (1) per site, five (5) total ISMNDs) was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the project. Based upon review of the Initial Study, the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment because the mitigation measures outlined in the proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program have been included in the project (Exhibit C). The Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declarations were routed to responsible agencies on August 18, 2023, and posted at the County Clerk's Office on August 18, 2023; the deadline for comments is September 6, 2023. The State Clearinghouse received the document on August 18, 2023; the deadline for Clearinghouse comments is September 6, 2023 (SCH Numbers 2023080480).

On June 14, 2022, the City of Salinas, pursuant to AB 52 (Chapter 532, Statutes 2014) and SB 18 (Chapter 905, Statutes 2004) sent via certified mail notification letters to 9 California Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The letter was sent to representatives of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista, Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan, Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band, Xolon-Salinan Tribe, and Runsen Am:a Tur:ataj Ohlone. Consultation for AB 52 ended on July 14, 2022, and consultation for SB 18 ended on September 12, 2022.

Chairperson Louise Miranda-Ramirez of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation requested formal consultation on September 13, 2022. Formal consultation was held by telephone on June 21, 2023. Nine (9) mitigation measures were requested through the formal consultation. The requested

mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project (Exhibit C). No requests for additional consultation were received.

It is noted that the circulated Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Sears (Northridge Mall) site incorrectly shows the proposed land use designation and zoning district applying to the total acreage of the site. The Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration shows the proposed land use designation of Retail and zoning district of CR – Commercial Retail for the entire 10.2-acre site; however, the proposed land use designation and zoning district would only apply to 8.41 acres. The remaining 1.79 acres would maintain the current land use designation and zoning district. The final ordinance for City Council consideration will reflect the correct acreage.

Further, removal of the 1.79 acres does not affect the analysis contained in the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration because the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration analyzed the maximum buildout of the entire 10.2 acres with mixed-use buildings. Therefore, the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration analyzed the “worst-case scenario” for development of the site with higher intensity uses.

Agency Responses:

At the time that this Staff Report was written, no public comment was received. Any comments received will be addressed and included in the Planning Commission hearing and/or with the council staff report and Council hearing.

Alternatives Available to the Commission:

The Planning Commission has the following alternatives:

1. Affirm the findings set forth in the attached Resolution, recommending that the City Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve General Plan Amendment 2022-002, and Rezone 2022-002 with modifications; or
2. Find that the proposed applications are not appropriate and establish findings at the public hearing recommending that the City Council deny General Plan Amendment 2022-002 and Rezone 2022-002.

Conclusion:

The project is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code. The project is intended to encourage future higher density development that would provide new housing consistent with the Salinas General Plan. The project does not involve construction or other physical changes to the site because there are currently no development proposals.

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit "A" Project Location

Exhibit "B" Existing Zoning District

Exhibit "C" Proposed General Plan Land Use and Zoning Map

Exhibit "D" Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND), dated August 2023

Exhibit "E" Mitigated Monitoring and Reporting Programs

Proposed Planning Commission Resolution, including the following exhibits:

Exhibit 1: Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program

Exhibit 2: Proposed General Plan Land Use and Zoning Map