



**CITY OF SALINAS  
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

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**DATE:** JANUARY 9, 2024  
**DEPARTMENT:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
**FROM:** LISA BRINTON, DIRECTOR  
**THROUGH:** GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER  
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**TITLE:** QUARTERLY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Receive quarterly General Plan Update and provide comment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Work on the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update during the fourth quarter of 2023 included adopting the 2023-2031 Housing Element, reviewing initial draft General Plan policies with the Steering Committee, and continuing Climate Action Plan engagement. The adopted Housing Element was submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, meeting the December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. In 2024, the focus will be on continuing public engagement, drafting General Plan content, and completing the required environmental analysis. Adoption of the General Plan is anticipated by the end of 2024.

BACKGROUND:

*Housing Element Adoption and Submittal*

The 2023-2031 Housing Element was submitted to HCD on December 12, 2023, following adoption by City Council on December 5. This major accomplishment was the result of intense work and community engagement over the past year, including releasing three revised drafts between September and November 2023 to respond to HCD and Planning Commission comments. The State has 60 days from submittal to review the adopted Housing Element and provide comments. The final deadline for Certification of the Housing Element is April 15, 2024.

*General Plan and Climate Action Plan Fall 2023 Engagement*

Another area of focus this fall was completing the review of over 250 initial draft goals, policies, and actions from all eleven (11) proposed elements (see Table 1) with the Steering Committee.

These draft policies reflect the previous two years of community engagement and the incorporation of priorities from recently approved planning efforts. Staff is incorporating recommendations from the Steering Committee and preparing for citywide engagement next year, as discussed more below. Staff has also continued engagement related to the Climate Action Plan, conducting seven pop-ups, promoting an online survey, and presenting to North Salinas High School students.

**Table 1: Pillars and Elements of the General Plan**

<i>Pillars</i>	<i>Built Environment</i>	<i>Environment and Sustainability</i>	<i>Socioeconomic Systems</i>
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land Use</b> and Infrastructure</li> <li>• Community Design</li> <li>• <b>Housing</b></li> <li>• <b>Circulation</b></li> <li>• <b>Noise</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conservation &amp; Open Space</b></li> <li>• Environmental <b>Safety</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and <b>Environmental Justice</b></li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• <b>Public Safety</b></li> <li>• Arts, Culture, and Youth</li> </ul>

**Bold = State-mandated element**

*General Plan Community Engagement and Review in 2024*

The GPU Engagement and Review Strategy Memo (Attachment 1) outlines an intense engagement and drafting schedule for completion of the General Plan Update, Climate Action Plan, and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in 2024. The early months of 2024 will focus on topic and stakeholder-specific engagement. This includes targeted land use outreach to businesses in areas of change, a Transportation Open House, and a second Climate Action Webinar. Staff and consultant teams will also work on drafting content for a spring General Plan Open House and the release of public review drafts of the General Plan by June 2024.

Public review drafts of the Climate Action Plan and the EIR are likely to trail by a couple of months to August 2024 due to the need to include analysis of topic specific technical studies (Water Supply Assessments) and the completed draft General Plan. Following the mandatory 45-day EIR comment period and revisions based on comments received, the City could start the adoption process late fall of 2024.

The Community Outreach and Review Strategy also includes multiple study sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission throughout the year to address key areas of interest and importance. Council member collaboration with staff will be critical to identify these areas of interest, as well as using their networks to promote engagement opportunities.

**CEQA CONSIDERATION:**

**Not a Project.** The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378).

In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Because the General Plan acts as the City’s guiding document for future growth and development, it will help meet all City Council Strategic Goals, and is aligned with improving economic development, affordable housing, sustainability, and public safety. The General Plan Update itself is specifically reflected as an objective under Effective and Culturally Responsive Government. Adopting a Climate Action Plan is also an objective under Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Community Development Department (CDD) staff is working with Public Works, Library and Community Services, Police, and Fire staff to review draft policies and documents to ensure internal consistency. CDD staff is also working closely with the City Attorney and their outside special counsel firm Meyers Nave on the development of the General Plan and related environmental documents.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There is no cost associated with receiving this update. However, the General Plan update is estimated to cost approximately \$3.4 million dollars. The City secured \$1.1 in grant funding through the Local and Regional Early Action entitlement grants and a Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation grant to support the General Plan update. Spend down of these grants will be complete by March 2024. Additional funding for the General Plan update comes from the General Plan Fund (2513), formerly CIP 9701, which is funded by the General Plan/Zoning Maintenance Fee. There is currently approximately \$2.6 million available in the General Plan Fund (2513) to support the General Plan update and associated EIR and Zoning Code update.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. GPU Community Engagement and Review Strategy Memo