



**CITY OF SALINAS
PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT**

DATE: MAY 20, 2026

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: LISA BRINTON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

THROUGH: GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER

BY: JONATHAN MOORE, SENIOR PLANNER

TITLE: STUDY SESSION ON ZONING CODE OPTIONAL PHASE ONE AMENDMENTS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Receive a presentation on proposed Phase One Zoning Code amendments related to Conditional Use Permits for residential driveway width expansion projects and accessory office space in Industrial zones. No action is required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the City began a multi-year, multi-phase comprehensive Zoning Code update in support of the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update. This study session provides the Planning Commission with updates on Phase 1 Zoning Code updates related to Conditional Use Permits for residential driveway width expansion projects and accessory office space in Industrial zones.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The City launched a multiphase, multi-year comprehensive Zoning Code Update (ZCU) in June 2025. Phase One addresses short-term amendments to the current Zoning Code, Chapter 37 of the Salinas Municipal Code, to bring it into compliance with State law prior to completion of the General Plan Update and includes priority items that do not need to wait for the full overhaul.

In November, 2025, staff from the ZCU planning consultant, PlaceWorks, conducted a [study session](#) with the Planning Commission on Phase One changes related to State housing law and the

2023-2031 Housing Element. This study session covers two topics not related to State housing law or the 2023-2031 Housing Element; the Minor Conditional Use Permit (Minor CUP) requirement for expanding residential driveway widths on single family homes, and limits on accessory office space in industrial districts. These items are both frequently cited as unnecessary barriers by applicants that may be addressed with relatively minor text changes. Changing these in Phase 1 also creates the potential to examine outcomes and adjust with future amendments as part of later phases of the ZCU.

Driveway Width Expansion

The City amended the Zoning Code in 2019 ([ZCA 2019-006](#)) to allow driveway width increases of up to ten feet for single family dwelling units, subject to the approval of a Minor CUP. This increase can only be located on the opposite side of the driveway as the front door of the dwelling unit (see [Sec. 37-50.450. – Driveways](#), Note 8). This amendment sought to address challenges with illegal parking on front lawns and sidewalks due to the high costs and shortages of supply of housing leading to overcrowding. The Minor CUP was intended as a path to providing additional legal space to park safely without impacting neighborhood character, through an administrative process that still provided notice to adjoining property owners. It also allows Current Planning, Development Engineering, and other reviewing divisions to place conditions on a proposed driveway expansion based on the unique conditions of each site.

Despite this intent, residents have still expressed that this is an unnecessary barrier and expense. Since December of 2019, there have been over 100 applications for driveway width expansion, with none protested by neighbors. The current application cost of \$617.14 is cited as a challenge by applicants and is not sufficient to recover the cost in staff time from the Current Planning and Development Engineering divisions required for processing the CUP applications. Applications for driveway width expansions are approximately one-third of all CUP applications since December 2019.

As part of the Phase One Zoning Code Update, the City is proposing amending Sec. 37-50.450 by removing the CUP requirement for driveway expansion, while adding the most common conditions of approval as regulations. See Attachment 1 for draft amendment language.

Removing the CUP requirement could save the City and residents both time and money while still providing standards for developing safe, additional parking spaces. Potential risks include losing the ability to condition individual projects according to the characteristics of each property and placing additional burden for compliance monitoring on Code Enforcement.

Accessory Office Space in Industrial Districts

Division 5. Industrial (I) Districts of the Zoning Code establishes three such districts for a broad range of manufacturing and services uses. To ensure adequate space for manufacturing, processing, distribution, and other industrial uses, the Industrial-General Commercial (IGC) District, and the Industrial-General (IG) District place certain restrictions on office development.

To address compatibility of uses, business and professional offices require a CUP as a principal use and as an accessory use if the use exceeds 30 percent of the square footage of all structures or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less ([see Sec. 37-30.310. – Use classifications](#)). We will continue to evaluate compatibility issues as we proceed with these Phase 1 updates to ensure the health and safety of the community are protected.

As market conditions and the need for office space in industrial development have changed since adoption of this section of the Zoning Code, the accessory office space limit has become a section of code often cited as a barrier for projects. Particularly the 2,500 square feet is very limiting in larger developments and results in a longer and more expensive approval process. The proposed amendment (see Attachment 1) would eliminate the 2,500 square feet limit and increase the allowed percentage without a CUP from 30 percent to 40 percent. This amendment would still limit office space without a CUP to less than half of a project's total square footage, increasing flexibility while still preserving the intent in the IGC and IG districts to encourage industrial projects and the compatibility of accessory uses.

Next Steps

Staff intend to bring a draft ordinance for all Phase One Zoning Code amendments for Planning Commission consideration on June 3. This will include the amendments to align the Zoning Code with State housing law and other changes for legal compliance and the two optional topics discussed in this report. Phase One amendments would then be presented to City Council for consideration of adoption on June 30, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Amendments to Driveway Width Expansion and Accessory office space in Industrial Districts
2. PowerPoint Presentation