



**CITY OF SALINAS  
LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION**

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**DATE: JANUARY 8, 2025**

**FROM: LISA BRINTON, CDD DIRECTOR  
KRISTAN LUNDQUIST, LCS DIRECTOR**

**TITLE: CONVEYANCE OF ENSEN PARK FROM BIG SUR LAND  
TRUST TO THE CITY OF SALINAS**

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend to the City Council that it approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a Conveyance Agreement for the transfer of 73 acres in Carr Lake from the Big Sur Land Trust to the City of Salinas (Ensen Park).

BACKGROUND:

Since approximately 2008, the City and Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) have been working toward the development of a park and open space area within Carr Lake (Carr Lake Park Project, or “Project”). Since 2017, BSLT has been planning, designing, permitting, and fundraising for a two-phase park project, with the goal of the entire 73-acre property to be owned and managed by the City as a public park. This Project aligns with the City's long-term vision, as the Project site has been designated as a ‘Park’ in the 2002 Salinas General Plan.

BSLT has actively engaged over 6,700 residents through various channels, including meetings, site tours, school field trips, and stewardship events. Community input was integrated into the design and naming of Ensen Park. Phase 1 includes the development of a six-acre neighborhood park with traditional park amenities such as restrooms, picnic tables, a skate spot, trails, parking lots, basketball courts, and a gazebo and/or playground. Phase 2 includes development of a sixty-seven-acre (67) open space area with restoration of creek and wetland habitat, planting, fencing, signage, and trail construction. Construction of Phase 1 began in spring of 2024 and is expected to be open to the public in spring 2025, but no later than June 1, 2025. Phase 2 construction is expected to begin in spring of 2025 and to open to the public by spring of 2026.

On March 19, 2024, the City Council authorized execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and BSLT to coordinate and memorialize the planning, development, ownership, and long-term management of the Carr Lake Park Project. The MOU details the roles and responsibilities of each Party, as well as the conveyance of both Phases of the park to the City once construction is complete in compliance with public and private grants and agency permits secured by BSLT. Pursuant to the MOU, a Conveyance Agreement, has been drafted for consideration by the City Council in February 2025. Government Code Section 65402(a) requires a report to the planning agency (Planning Commission) as to the conformity of the property

conveyance and any proposed future development to the General Plan prior to City Council consideration. The required report will be presented to the Salinas Planning Commission on January 15, 2025.

The Conveyance Agreement outlines the terms and conditions for the transfer by Grant Deed. The 73 acres will be transferred in phases for a purchase price of zero (\$0.00) dollars. Upon transfer, the City will be responsible for future park maintenance. To address concerns for adequate funding to support the management and maintenance efforts, BSLT will work with the City and the community to investigate and develop funding mechanisms for long term maintenance of the park. In addition, BSLT will work with the City and community to explore potential public-private partnership models such as the development of a supporting community-based organization (e.g., a “Friends of Carr Lake”) to assist with certain park maintenance and monitoring tasks or other activities as may be appropriate.

The Property is subject to State grant agreement terms and conditions to acquire and build the Carr Lake Park Project. Grant requirements include that at the Phase 1 Closing, the Front House is to be permanently restricted for use as affordable housing, that the City will assume the residential lease with the current tenant, and that the current tenant be allowed to remain. The use of the Back House is to be restricted to specific park related uses that are compliant with the purpose of State grants awarded for BSLT to acquire the Property. In addition, at Phase One Closing, BSLT will retain an easement for ingress and egress to undertake Phase 2 construction, restoration, maintenance, and management activities. To facilitate required habitat management activities required by the grant terms the Parties will enter into a mutually acceptable Restoration Area Habitat Management Agreement at or prior to the Phase Two Closing. Finally, BSLT will reserve (a) the right to hold BSLT events up to 4 times per year at Ensen Park upon coordination with and prior approval of CITY, (b) certain Naming Rights and (c) the right to install murals or art installations.

#### 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). Environmental impacts of the Carr Lake Park Project were analyzed in accordance with CEQA. An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) adopted by the City Council on September 14, 2021, found that the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

This action supports the Salinas City Council goals (2022-2025) of Economic Development, Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability, and Youth and Seniors. Ensen Park and its improvements will provide recreational and educational resources serving Salinas residents and visitors. Phase 2 improvements further Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability by restoring wetland and riparian fish and wildlife habitat, improving water quality and flood conveyance and capacity through the installation of green infrastructure.

#### DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Library & Community Services Department coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office and

the City Manager's Office on the development of the MOU and the Conveyance Agreement.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

As outlined in the Conveyance Agreement there is no cost for transferring of land and improvements. The City will be responsible for the ongoing operations and management of the Neighborhood Park, Park Restoration and Open Space Area. Additional Park Maintenance resources will be required in FY 25-26 to fund the operation and maintenance of an additional 76 acres of parkland.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.