

2023 City of Salinas General Plan Annual Progress Report



Presented to Salinas City Council March 19

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1. Introduction

Purpose and Summary

California Government Code 65400 requires cities and counties to submit an Annual Progress Report (APR) on the status of the General Plan and implementation progress to their legislative bodies, the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by April 1 of each year.

The City made significant accomplishments related to its General Plan in 2023. The City continued to upzone sites to encourage housing opportunities, rezoning City parking lots downtown to Mixed Use and an additional site north of downtown to High Density Residential. While the Housing Element is covered under its own separate report, the City did adopt a 2023-2031 Housing Element in December of 2023, which the State found in substantial compliance in February, 2024. In addition to its continuing General Plan Update, the City also started an Active Transportation Plan, Alisal District Identity Masterplan, and Alisal Streetscape Masterplan. Multiple park and recreation center improvements and maintenance projects were finished in 2023, including new playgrounds and HVAC systems. Design work was also completed for a new Hebborn Family Center and improvements to Closter Park. Public Works completed \$4.5 million in sidewalk repairs and construction of the Bardin Safe Routes to School project. These accomplishments and more are detailed in Section 2. Status of General Plan Implementation Efforts below.

While the Housing Element is the subject of its own Annual Progress Report, housing is one of the City's top priorities, and a summary of General Plan efforts would be incomplete without some description of housing progress. In the past year, Salinas became the first Central Coast city to receive the state Prohousing Designation and adopted a 6th Cycle Housing Element for 2023-2031.

General Plan Background

The City's existing General Plan was adopted in 2002 and contains eight (8) Elements: Land Use, Community Design, Housing (updated in 2015), Conservation/Open Space, Circulation, Safety, Noise, and Economic Development (adopted in 2017). In several ways this General Plan was ahead of its time, with a vision that called for a compact city form, high quality mixed use and infill development, and preservation of agricultural land. Still, much has changed in Salinas since the Plan was initiated in 1998. Salinas is acutely impacted by the statewide housing crisis and its population is projected to continue to grow for several decades. New state laws have also significantly altered the planning landscape. These legislative changes are focused primarily on increasing housing production and addressing climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing adaptation measures. Several of the most important recent changes that the General Plan should consider or will have to directly address are summarized below:

- AB 32 (2006) - the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 required the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to develop a Scoping Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 1990 levels by 2000. Subsequent Scoping Plans have added reduction targets of 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 1985 levels by 2045.
- AB 1358 (2008) – the Complete Streets Act of 2008 requires cities and counties to modify their circulation elements to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets all users' needs for safe and convenient travel.
- SB 743 (2013) - removes automobile delay and congestion (level of service) as basis for determining significant transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- SB 379 (2015) - requires general plan safety elements to include a climate change vulnerability assessment and address adaptation.
- SB 1000 (2016) - requires the creation of an environmental justice element to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities.
- AB 686 (2018) – requires jurisdictions to affirmatively further fair housing and adds new requirements for Housing Elements.
- SB 330 (2019) – the Housing Crisis Act created procedural protections for large housing developments, including limiting certain fee increases, the number of hearings that can be held, and downzoning.
- AB 68 (2019) - this bill allows for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and junior ADU where certain criteria are met, prohibits minimum lot sizes for ADU, and identifies opportunities for ADUs in multifamily buildings where building standards are met.

- AB 671 (2019) - requires local governments to include plans to incentivize and promote affordable ADUs in their housing elements.
- SB 6 (2019) - requires local governments preparing a housing element on or after January 1, 2021, to submit an inventory of land suitable for residential development.
- SB 9 (2021) – Allows for two duplex housing units where one housing unit was allowed before and waives discretionary review and public hearings for these developments. A proposed project cannot result in the demolition or alteration of a building that currently has a tenant or has had a tenant in the last three years.
- SB 10 (2021) – Creates a voluntary process for local governments to pass ordinances prior to January 1, 2029, to zone any parcel for up to ten (10) residential units if located in transit rich areas and urban infill sites.

Through the General Plan Update the City can address these and other legislative changes and chart a resilient vision for housing the entire community, creating a sustainable future, and equitable recovery from the pandemic.

Visión Salinas 2040

The City launched the General Plan Update, *Visión Salinas 2040*, which will also include a new Environmental Justice Element and the City's first Climate Action Plan (CAP), in the summer of 2021. Engagement continued in 2023 with six (6) workshops, (8) Steering Committee meetings, (11) pop-ups, (2) surveys, and other engagement activities. Specific events included:

- Public Safety Workshops- Two (2) in person workshops were held, one in English and one in Spanish. Community members (70+) learned about the General Plan and provided input on the draft Public Safety Goals.
- Public Safety Youth Survey and (4) Pop-up Activities: Over 500+ community members reached.
- Housing Element- Three (3) in person workshops were held across the city. Community members and interested stakeholders (60+) learned about the Housing Element and provided input on specific housing goals and policies. The workshops were held in English with Spanish and Mixteco interpretation available.
- Active Transportation Workshop- The ATP workshop kicked off Circulation Element engagement. The workshop showcased different active transportation alternatives and provided community members (30+) an opportunity to identify locations for their potential placement.
- Farmworker Outreach – In 2023 the City wrapped up work with the Center for Community Advocacy (CCA) to increase the grassroots reach of General Plan engagement, particularly with farmworkers. CCA General Plan Ambassadors led ninety-five

(95) house meetings with over three hundred forty (340) participants. Nineteen (19) meetings were held in Mixteco, one (1) in Triqui and the rest in Spanish.

- Climate Action Pop-ups and Survey: Climate Action Plan engagement continued with a CAP online survey and (7) interactive pop-up activities. Over 500 community members reached.
- Visión Salinas 2040 Steering Committee – Steering Committee continued to meet in 2023 and completed the review of all the GPU goals, policies and actions.

The City also published a Notice of Preparation for the Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan in September.

Coordination with Regional Planning Efforts

In addition to Visión Salinas 2040, in 2023 the City worked with partner organizations on multiple regional planning efforts, including:

- Monterey-Salinas Transit's (MST) Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study – the Community Development and Public Works Departments are collaborating with MST and other jurisdictions on a grant to study the potential for TOD along possible Bus Rapid Transit Corridors. Staff helped review the initial grant application, refined study areas, provided background information, and continues to participate in meetings to develop the final study.
- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments – 2026 Regional Growth Forecast which is the basis for planning for growth in the MTP/SCS, transportation project level analysis, corridor studies, economic analysis, etc., and is the input for the Regional Travel Demand Model which forecasts travel patterns.
- County of Monterey and LAFCO Monterey County – Agricultural Land Mitigation Policy: worked collaboratively with the County of Monterey, LAFCO, and the Salinas Valley cities on development of a county-wide policy for the mitigation of impacts to agricultural lands from future development.

2. Status of General Plan Implementation Efforts

2023		
Element	Projects and Accomplishments	Implemented Goals/Polices
Land Use /Community Design	- City in the process of launching phase 1 of the Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan. - In 2023 City and County staff met on a regular (weekly) basis to review the consultant's parking feasibility analysis. A matrix of financial ownership, and delivery and operation scenarios were formulated and presented at quarterly meetings of City/County Ad Hoc Committee. The next step is to present findings to City Council and Board of Supervisors. - Large projects completed in 2023 included: the reconstruction from fire damage of a major agricultural packaging facility at 1207 Abbott Street, four mixed use buildings at 400 and 500 Abbott Street containing 110 units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space, a new parking structure for Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, and significant tenant improvements for Vallarta Supermarkets at 1050 N Davis Road and Salinas Valley Health medical offices at 212 San Jose Street. Large permits under review or construction include tenant improvements for Kaiser Permanente Medical Offices at 1930 N Davis. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County Commuter Rail Extension at 20 New Street, and an office and warehouse expansion for Quinn Cat at 1300 Abbott Street. - The City continues upzoning opportunity sites to mixed-use and higher density housing designations via an SB-2 grant ahead of the General Plan Update. Environmental work was completed for five additional sites. - In the summer of 2023 work continued around the Clean California State Beautification Program. - Two new murals were painted at US highway 101 and Sanborn Road and US highway 101 and East Market Street undercrossing, and improvements were made to the existing murals at US highway 101 and East Alisal Street. Mural lighting is also being installed and shall be completed Spring to Summer 2024.	Goal-LU-1: Develop a balanced land use pattern that provides a wide range of jobs, housing, shopping, services, and recreation. Policy-LU-1.2: provide a plan for land uses that includes the capacity to accommodate growth projected for 2020 and beyond. Goal-CD-1: Create and preserve a positive community image and identity. Policy-CD-1.4: Use landscaping, design schemes, and signing to improve the image and distinct identity of the city, its neighborhoods, and its major gateways. Goal- CD-3: Create a community that promotes a pedestrian-friendly, livable environment. Policy-CD-3.5: Promote high-density residential

2023		
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	○ The Clean Californian Local Grant (CCLGP) Project includes the installation of new street trees and shrubs, refurbished and repainted benches, new trash receptacles for recycling and trash. Other improvements include public art, banners, wayfinding signage, and a solar-powered LED lighting shelter with bench at an existing MST bus stop. • The City hired a consultant team to create an Alisal District Identity Master Plan and completed initial community engagement and plan development work. The ADIMP is scheduled to be completed by summer 2024. • As part of the Alisal MOU, the City included a Trail Master Plan in the RFP for ATP preparation and is currently working with the County on a mural project for a new health clinic. • Completed internal administrative draft Urban Forestry Management Plan. • Completed Bardin Safe Routes to School Project and several enhanced pedestrian crosswalks. • Over 2,247 permits (commercial, residential, etc.) issued and 14,502 building inspections conducted.	development and mixed-use in the Central City. Policy- CD-3.8: Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, including bus, rial, bicycling and walking.
Housing	See 2023 Housing Element Annual Progress Report under separate cover.	
Conservation/ Open Space	• The Historic Resources Board transitioned to Advanced Planning in November 2023. The board has since held monthly meetings focusing on preserving Salinas' historic resources. HRB members began attending Visión Salinas 2040 Steering Committee meetings. • Started revisiting the renewal of the Mills Act ordinance. • Design work was completed for new Hebbroon Family Center. Currently going through Site Plan Review and RFP process for construction. • Project and Construction Management for a series of parks projects including, Closter Park Improvements, Cesar Chavez Trail, El Gabilan Play Lot continued. Closter Park improvements currently awaiting Site Plan Review, Cesar Chavez Trail partially completed, and Gabilan Play Lot project currently in review (pending funding appropriation).	Goal-COS-4: Protect and enhance community historical resources. Goal-COS-7: Provide, develop, and maintain ample park and recreational facilities that offer a variety of recreational activities. Policy- COS- 7.2: Maximize the use of built and natural features to develop a citywide network of parks and open

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	- Themes and design for two (1 at Northgate Park and 1 at Williams Ranch) inclusive playgrounds were finalized. - A new playground was installed at Natividad Neighborhood Park. John Steinbeck Neighborhood Park will also receive a completely new playground. - Resurfacing of systemwide sand playgrounds is underway. - The City entered into a contract with WRD Architects for ADA restroom improvements at Closter Park and Firehouse Recreation Centers. - The City awarded and started construction of a synthetic soccer field at Cesar Chavez Park. - The City hired a Park Operations Manager to oversee the day-today operations of the Park Maintenance crew. - The City continues to work with the Big Sur Land Trust in the development of a new 73-acre park at Carr Lake. - Work to improve recreation facilities (Breadbox, El Dorado, Closter) completed. Painting, new flooring, and HVAC repairs to Salinas Aquatic Center completed. HVAC repairs/replacements to El Dorado Park Community Center also completed.	spaces with Carr Lake, Gabilan Creek and the Sherwood Park/Rodeo Grounds complex as essential elements of the open space network. Policy- COS-7.8: While supporting the development of private recreational facilities, ensure that the supply and maintenance of public parks and recreational opportunities is adequate to ensure permanent availability of parks and recreational facilities for use by the entire community.
Circulation	- Accepted RSTP grant funds for the East Market Street Cycle Track Quick Build Project. - Awarded an \$8.1M contract for Pavement Maintenance Project. - Awarded \$602.5K contract for Cesar Chavez DG Path Improvements. - Completed \$4.5M citywide sidewalk repair project. - Completed the Bardin Safe Routes to School project which provided multimodal improvements by constructing two new roundabouts and school drop off lanes. - Completed the Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements Project. - Completed Annual Restriping of various roadways throughout the city. - Worked with Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) on a grant to study regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD), including the Alisal Street Corridor. Staff has	Goal C-1: provide and maintain a circulation system that meets the current and future needs of the community. Goal-C-2: Work with other local and regional agencies to develop regional transit and transportation systems. Goal-C-3: Promote an efficient public transportation network.

2023		
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	worked with MST throughout, including reviewing the application, refining the study area, and providing background information. - The city staff hired a consultant team to create an Active Transportation Plan and completed initial community engagement and plan development work. The ATP is scheduled to be completed by summer 2024. - The city staff hired a consultant team to create an Alisal Streetscape Master Plan and completed initial community engagement and plan development work. The Alisal Street Scape Master Plan is scheduled to be completed by fall 2024.	Goal C-4: Provide an extensive, safe public bicycle network that provides on-street as well as off-street facilities. Goal C-5: Provide safe routes to school, work, shopping, and recreation for pedestrians. Policy-C-5.1: Increase availability of safe and well-maintained sidewalks in all areas of the City.
Safety	- Continued to convene the Community Alliance for Safety and Peace maintaining a broad network of violence prevention and intervention partners to operationalize the strategic plan on Violence Prevention. - Partnering with the Monterey County Public Health Departments STRIVE team to develop an update to our Comprehensive Strategic Plan on Violence Prevention for 2025-2028. - Hosted and organized the second annual Salinas March for Peace in the Alisal, drawing hundreds of residents. - Management of the 3.4-million-dollar California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant that funds: - Salinas Police Department Juvenile Diversion program and a new Community Outreach Team to include a Sergeant, four officers, and a part-time analyst. - Rancho Cielo: Tiny Home construction training program. - Partners for Peace: Parent Education and youth mentoring. - Natividad Foundation: Hospital-based violence intervention program. - Managing the implementation of the second year of the \$300,000 Prevention and Wellness Grant.	Goal S-1: Continue to play a central role in the creation and maintenance of a community that resolves its problems in non-violent ways. Policy S-1.3: Support the development and operation of community centers and recreational facilities as a pre-emptive strategy to reduce youth related crime. Goal S-5: Improve the community's ability to respond effectively to natural and human-caused emergencies.

2023		
Element	Projects and Accomplishments	Implemented Goals/Polices
	- In 2023 the Fire Department’s Long-Range Master Plan was completed, which serves as a strategic roadmap that equips the City of Salinas to proactively address the dynamic risks and challenges facing the community. - Fire Department completed its first ever Fire Operations 101. It serves as an opportunity for key decision makers and local elected officials to experience what Salinas firefighters go through on a day-to-day basis. - Initiated design phase for the renovation of Fire Stations 1-6, focusing on addressing deferred maintenance issues within the living spaces to help improve response times. - Began planning process for Fire Station #7 with a preliminary needs assessment. Currently in negotiations to secure land for development, aiming to finalize the acquisition by the end of the year as well as a securing a clear funding path.	Policy S-5.1: Regularly update and use the City of Salinas Multihazard Emergency Plan for disaster planning, public education and guidance in responding to emergencies. Goal-LU-4: Provide effective and responsive fire protection and emergency response service. Policy-LU-4.1: Provide an effective and responsive level of fire protection, public education and emergency response service (including facilities, personnel, and equipment, through the Salinas Fire Department.
Economic Development	- Partnered with the Monterey County Business Council to support Building Business Back program created to help businesses recover from the effects of the pandemic. - City is in the process of developing the Salinas Broadband Master Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Broadband Fiber Network Design. Design work for the Alisal Neighborhood Fiber Design Network to be completed early 2024. In 2024, a second consultant team will assist with plan implementation. - Supported Blue Zones, Sustainable Salinas, and SUBA in doing monthly volunteer clean-ups in Natividad Creek Park, the Alisal business corridors, Santa Rita Park and old town Salinas.	Goal ED-QL-2 – Narrow social and economic disparities in the City of Salinas to foster a more inclusive community rich with diversity, social cohesion, civic engagement, and sense of belonging. Goal ED-RET-1.1: Enhance retail, entertainment, and

2023		
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	• The Small Business Hotline has received 139 calls, 236 emails, and 43 counter appointments in 2023 from businesses. The Business Navigator has assisted business owners and entrepreneurs with acquiring and renewing business licenses, permitting, referrals to small business support organizations and the promotion of workshops and financial opportunities. • Continued to support initiatives outlined in the Small Business and Economic Recovery Blueprint to provide training and financial support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. • Expanded our Marketing and Technology Grant Program to include businesses outside of the Alisal area. 11 businesses have been fully funded assistance to help improve their computer, social, or financial literacy and equip their business with up-to-date technology. • In 2023, the Downtown Outdoor Dining Forgivable Loan Program has had three interested applicants and staff have been actively working with them to process their applications to establish a permanent outdoor dining and thus enhancing Downtown revitalization improvements. • Completed an Agriculture Economic Study to develop General Plan Update policy recommendations to support the future of the agriculture industry in Salinas.	tourism opportunities throughout the City. Policy RET 1.2 – Undertake an aggressive marketing program to change the misperception and false image of Salinas as being an unsafe place to visit, live and work. Goal ED-EBG-2 – Ensure that existing businesses have access to the resources and services they need to prosper and expand in Salinas.