



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: SEPTEMBER 4, 2018

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, DIRECTOR

TITLE: FARMWORKER HOUSING STUDY AND ACTION PLAN FOR
SALINAS AND PAJARO VALLEYS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Motion to receive and accept the Administrative Report on the Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas and Pajaro Valleys. No further action is required.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council receive and accept the Administrative Report, which provides an overview on the Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas and Pajaro Valleys.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A draft of Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas and Pajaro Valleys was presented at a Regional Farmworker Housing Forum held on April 19, 2018. Over two hundred attendees representing agricultural producers, labor contractors, advocacy organizations, housing developers, farmworkers, and local and county government participated in the forum. Feedback from the Forum along with a subsequent oversight committee meeting held on May 16, 2018 was incorporated into the final version of the Study and Action Plan. The Study and Action Plan was finalized at the end of June and posted on our website.

Community Development Department (CDD) staff will continue to convene quarterly oversight committee meetings to track regional progress and coordinate efforts on the Action Plan. It is critical to maintain the momentum that came out of the Forum. Specifically, CDD has been working with MBEP, United Way, and CHISPA on implementation of some of the actions around financing for affordable housing. CDD also has initiated conversations with the County on mapping appropriate locations for farmworker housing. Recently, the County Board of Supervisors initiated a subcommittee to focus attention on the need for farmworker housing. City staff will attend these meetings and collaborate in any way to further the Action Plan.

The leadership of the City Council, which advocated and largely funded this Study and Action Plan, was critical in this effort. The Study and Action Plan is a model for other agricultural communities in California.

BACKGROUND:

In August 2015, the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) - East Salinas Housing Workgroup submitted a letter to the City of Salinas requesting that the Draft Housing Element 2015-2023 include an action to “conduct a special study that requires a scientific community survey and/or a survey of agricultural employers in the county to further define housing needs of farm labor workforce, financing constraints and opportunities, and best practices.” Members of the Workgroup included representatives of BHC, the Center for Community Advocacy, CHISPA, Community Organized for Relational Power in Action, Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, and Health in All Policies of the Monterey County Health Department.

The Salinas City Council endorsed the request and added the development of a study to the Housing Element. The mayors of South Salinas Valley cities had been studying alternative models for farmworker housing and when asked to collaborate in the regional study, insisted that an “Action Plan” also be developed. When the Study was announced, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments and Santa Cruz County offered to participate and financially contribute to the preparation of the Study. Therefore, the scope expanded to include Pajaro as well as Salinas Valley.

The following partners contributed towards the approximately \$300,000 cost of the consultant: Salinas (\$204,000), Monterey County (\$25,000), Santa Cruz County (\$20,000), Gonzales (\$5,000), Greenfield (\$5,000), King City (\$5,000), Soledad (\$5,000), Watsonville (\$5,000), Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (\$20,000), Midpen Housing (\$3,000), Monterey County Housing Authority (\$1,500) and Monterey County Housing Development Corporation (\$1,500). The United Way of Monterey County contributed (\$3,000) toward the Forum to unveil the Study and Action Plan.

An Oversight Committee for the Study was formed of representatives from funding partners plus collaborative stakeholders: Monterey County Departments of Health, Social Services, and Economic Development; Grower-Shipper Association of the Central Coast; California Strawberry Commission; Farm Bureaus of Monterey County and Santa Cruz County; and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership. In June 2016, the Oversight Committee guided the development of the scope of services in the RFP. In October 2016, the Committee met to review proposals, and interview and select California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) and California Coalition of Rural Housing (CCRH) as a sub consultant from the responses to the RFP. A contract with CIRS was executed in December 2016. CIRS and CCRH are experienced with conducting agricultural workforce surveys and analyzing best practice projects throughout California, most recently in the Coachella Valley and San Mateo County.

DISCUSSION:

The process of gathering data in Salinas and Pajaro Valley Laborshed was done by CIRS. Specific needs, barriers, and solutions were identified to address the farmworker housing crisis. In December of 2016, an analysis of existing databases concluded that there are 91,433 employed agricultural workers in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys.

A representative survey of 420 farmworkers was conducted in summer of 2017. The survey revealed that approximately 40% of respondents live in houses, 30% in apartments, 19% live in rented rooms without kitchens, and 12% live in other types of dwellings such as motels, boarding houses, or barracks. 89% of farmworkers were renters and 11% were owners where one quarter owned mobile homes. The survey found that a significant number of households are comprised of unrelated farmworkers who are required to co-habitate due to housing costs and supply. These farmworkers are living with more than two people per bedroom and five people per bathroom. 93% of farmworker households in the survey exceeded the standard of one person per bedroom. In fact, about 16% of farmworkers do not even sleep in a bedroom. Extreme conditions of overcrowding were identified in the Study. To alleviate overcrowding and provide the necessary workforce housing, it was estimated that an additional 47,937 are needed.

The study also uncovered that the biggest housing need is for the permanent year round farmworker. Eighty (80%) of the farmworkers in the region are residents with families and are struggling with growing housing costs. Only 20% or 18,300 farmworkers are considered migrant and temporarily in the area for seasonal work. Of the 18,300 migrant workers, 4,600 are H-2A visa workers. Because growers are required to provide housing for H-2A workers, much of the housing focus has been on this population. More recently, labor contractors have purchased existing housing for this population and in some cases, displaced our residents who are farmworkers. Moving forward, it is critical that we collaborate with labor contractors and agricultural producers on construction of affordable housing for our farmworker families as this in the long run will help stabilize the agricultural workforce.

In addition to the Study, CIRS and CCRH collaborated with the Oversight Committee to draft an Action Plan. Ultimately, the goal of the Action Plan is to “Make available 5,300 permanent, affordable housing units over the next five years to stabilize the agriculture workforce in the Salinas and Pajaro Valley Region.” The Action Plan is split into four categories with different objectives and actions in order to achieve the goal stated. In total, there are 57 actions.

Housing Types

The objective for the Housing Types is to “Promote alternative farmworker housing tenure and development prototypes that have worked in Monterey Bay Region, California, and other parts of the region”. This category contains actions that focus on aspects of housing that the City can explore when developing farmworker housing. There are 11 actions in this category. For example, Action “H4 Accessory Units” addresses the potential of developing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and reducing the cost of fees and establishing financing avenues.

Suitable Sites

The objective for Suitable Sites is to “Collaborate among jurisdictions to identify appropriate locations for farmworker housing within cities and unincorporated counties to facilitate development of farmworker housing”. This category deals with many processes such as zoning, mapping, and land use. The City is currently working on “Map Sites” to identify appropriate sites for farmworker housing in collaboration with Monterey County and other local jurisdictions. The City’s GIS department along with the County of Monterey have produced maps with possible sites for permanent affordable and migrant farmworker housing.

Financing

Financing has two objectives to “Proactively pursue and leverage governmental and non-governmental funds to increase the inventory of farmworker housing”; and “capitalize on existing regional and local housing trust funds and create new local funding sources for the construction, rehabilitation, acquisition, and operation of farmworker housing”. This category discusses funding and financing for farmworker housing. On the November 2018 ballot is Prop 1, the Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act. Passage of this bond measure could provide a critical funding source for farmworker housing and will be important for the City to support.

Regulatory Reform

The objective for Regulatory Reform is to “Change regulations to remove barriers, streamline processing, and reduce costs for the development of farmworker housing”. This category emphasizes updating outdated restrictions, reforming zoning, and adopting ordinances to make developing farmworker housing a streamlined process. For example, Action “R5 Priority Processing” identifies the priority processing of permanent farmworker housing projects.

DEPARTMENT COORDINATION:

Multiple divisions of the Community Development Department have provided critical support throughout this process including the following divisions: Housing and Community Development, Code Enforcement, Project and Plan Implementation, and Current Planning. The Advanced Planning Division was the lead project manager and facilitated the Oversight Committee. Additional feedback was also provided by the Development Review Committee, which included the Fire and Public Works Departments. The City Manager’s Office and Mayor provided essential assistance in coordinating with other jurisdictions and securing financial support. The Measure G Committee recommended to City Council that this effort be funded.

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).

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

This report supports City Council’s goal of Well Planned City with Excellent Infrastructure and the objective of completing a comprehensive Farmworker Housing Study. This also fulfills an objective in our Housing Element.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

This project has been completed and no further funding is requested at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

<https://www.cityofsalinas.org/search/site/farmworker>

April 19, 2018 Action Plan, Infographic, and Powerpoint