



CITY OF SALINAS FINANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: AUGUST 12, 2025

DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION

FROM: LISA MURPHY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

TITLE: 2-YEAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

It is recommended that the Finance Committee review and provide feedback on the City of Salinas' 2-Year Economic Development Work Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed 2-Year Economic Development Work Plan sets forth a comprehensive framework to support business growth, attract new investment, optimize land use, and enhance the overall quality of life in Salinas. As part of this effort, staff is re-establishing the Economic Development Division (EDD) that will lead and coordinate economic development efforts Citywide.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Salinas is positioned at a critical moment in its economic development trajectory. With key community plans already in place, such as the Downtown Vibrancy Plan, Alisal Vibrancy Plan, Chinatown Revitalization Plan, and the 2025 Strategic Plan, there is a clear vision for a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable local economy.

To realize that vision, a dedicated structure is required to drive implementation, monitor progress, and engage stakeholders. The proposed Economic Development Division will fulfill this role, working across departments and with external partners to advance Salinas' economic development priorities.

1. Work Plan Overview:

The Work Plan outlines five strategic goals that align with Citywide priorities:

- 1. Support and Retain Existing Businesses:**
Rebuild the Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP), conduct surveys, develop a business inventory, and coordinate resources to help businesses grow.
- 2. Attract New Businesses and Encourage Entrepreneurship:**
Launch a business portal, create marketing materials, track real estate opportunities, and support start-ups through pop-up stores and home-based business programs.

3. **Promote Salinas and Its Unique Assets:**

Develop a city rebranding strategy, promote tourism, partner on events, and highlight community facilities and historical attractions.

4. **Optimize Land Use and Modernize Infrastructure:**

Prioritize development at key sites such as Alisal Marketplace, Chinatown, Airport, and Downtown parking lots. Advance efforts for EIFD creation, city gateways, and infrastructure upgrades.

5. **Deliver Effective and Business-Friendly City Services:**

Improve permitting, streamline approvals, expand staffing, and enhance coordination across departments.

2. Organizational Structure:

The EDD will be housed in the City Manager's Office and include:

- **Assistant City Manager:** Oversight and strategic alignment
- **Deputy Director of Economic Development:** Division lead and point of contact for businesses and investors
- **Business Navigator (existing):** Frontline support for entrepreneurs
- **Economic Development Analyst (Year 2):** Research, outreach, and administrative support

This structure enables nimble execution of strategies, strong business engagement, and alignment with broader city goals.

3. Metrics and Accountability:

The Work Plan includes economic development indicators for monitoring progress, including:

- New and discontinued business licenses
- Sales and TOT revenue
- Employment data
- Building permit activity

These indicators will inform ongoing strategy adjustments and annual reporting.

ATTACHMENTS:

City of Salinas 2-Year Economic Development Work Plan