



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

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DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
PUBLIC WORKS

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TITLE: DETERMINATION OF ZONING CODE EXEMPTION FOR
CLOSTER PARK REVITALIZATION PROJECT

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a resolution exempting the Closter Park Revitalization Project (Project, CIP 9350) from Chapter 37, section 37-50.010(d)(5)(B) Accessory Uses and Structures under Section 37-10.070 Applicability to City and Redevelopment Agency Owned Property finding the Closter Park Revitalization Project to be proper and in the interest of the public.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City is currently finalizing plans for the Closter Park Revitalization Project, located at the city-owned, 6.95-acre Closter Park. As part of the project, the City plans on maintaining an existing non-conforming Conex Box as an Accessory Structure. Council may grant an exemption to allow the continued use of non-conforming structure based on finding the Project to be proper for the site and in the interest of the public as allowed under Zoning Code Section 37-10.070.

BACKGROUND:

In 2019, the City of Salinas completed the Parks, Recreation, and Library Services Master Plan (PRLMP). The development of this PRLMP was led by a Steering Committee of stakeholders, residents, and organizational leaders and involved extensive public engagement in the planning process. 98% of City residents answering a survey felt that public parks, recreational opportunities, and library services are important or essential to the quality of life in Salinas; more than half (57%) rated the park and recreation system as “fair” or “poor.” City parks and open spaces were the focus

of one of the four Open House sessions, with participants placing high priorities on safety and maintenance, trails for walking and biking, water play, dog parks, and family/social gatherings.

One outcome of the PRLMP was the development of a 20-year Capital Improvements Plan for Park and Facility Projects, and Closter Park was ranked #1 for parks in terms of needing improvement. The park received the highest rankings in all six criteria – significance, funding leverage, community need, safety/security, usage/benefit, and location/demographics. The PRLMP identified the following main improvements for Closter Park: renovations of a restroom and concession stand; installation of a new restroom; installation of skate elements; repairs to chain link fences and baseball backstops; ball field improvements including adding plantings, dugouts, batting cages, several ADA and safety elements; and numerous other repairs and refurbishing.

On December 8, 2021, the California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) selected the City of Salinas Closter Park Improvement Project application for funding. The grant award is for \$6.8 Million Dollars and will fund a comprehensive renovation of Closter Park. On December 13, 2022, the Council authorized the City Manager to enter into an Agreement for Professional Services (Agreement) between the City of Salinas and BFS Landscape Architects for the design, program, and construction management for Closter Park.

In December 2023, the Council approved a Schematic Design developed by BFS Landscape Architects (BFS) using the information gathered from park users through extensive community engagement efforts in 2021 and again in 2023. Per Zoning Code Section 37-30.340, Table 37-30.150, Park and Recreation Facilities are subject to approval of an administrative Site Plan Review (SPR) in the Parks (P) District. The City is currently working with BFS Landscape Architects on the design, program, and construction management for Closter Park going through the Administrative Site Plan Review (SPR) process with the Current Planning Division.

National Little League currently uses a non-confirming Conex Box as an Accessory Structure to secure and store equipment throughout the year. Per Zoning Code Section 37-50.010(d)(5)(B), the architectural design of accessory structures shall be compatible with the design of the principal structure by use of complementary building colors and materials, window and roofing treatments, and architectural detailing. Due to limited funding availability, the park renovation project does not include replacing the Conex Box with a storage structure that would comply with Zoning Code 37-50.010(d)(5)(B).

Council may approve an exception to the zoning requirements for Accessory Structures and allow the Conex Box to remain in place based on finding the Project to be proper for the site and in the interest of the public as allowed under Zoning Code Section 37-10.070.

To streamline the entitlement process for the Project, meet grant funding timelines, and avoid increased costs, it is recommended that the City Council grant an exemption as allowed under Zoning Code Section 37-10.070 and find the continued use of the existing non-confirming Conex Box appropriate and in the public interest.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The exemption to Chapter 37, section 37-50.010(d)(5)(B) Accessory Uses and Structures under Section 37-10.070 Applicability to City and Redevelopment Agency Owned Property and finding the Closter Park Revitalization Project to be proper and in the interest of the public in not considered a Project under CEQA.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The Closter Park Revitalization Project furthers City Council's Strategic Plan Goals of Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability, Public Safety as well as Youth and Seniors and is identified as a priority in the PRLMP and Alisal Vibrancy Plan.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Public Works, Library & Community Services (LCS) and Community Development (CD) Departments are collaboratively working together to facilitate the entitlement, design, and development of the Project.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact to the General Fund resulting from this action. The Project is funded through the California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) grant award of \$6.8 million and is supplemented by CIP 9246 (Alisal Vibrancy Plan).

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution: Determination of Zoning Code Exception for Closter Park