

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
OF THE
SALINAS HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD
August 4, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. in the City Hall Rotunda.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chairperson Mazgai, Vice Chairperson Shim, Board Members Hirahara, Munoz, and Callander

ABSENT: Wadsworth

STAFF: Planning Manager, Grant Leonard, Community Outreach Assistant, Bianca Arizmendi, and Assistant Planner, Yesenia Segovia

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Opened for public comment at 12:01 p.m.

Denise Estrada: Denise Estrada thanked the board in person for the certificates recognizing the first mayor's house, herself, and Larry Smith. She also informed everyone that the TAMC Rail Committee meeting would be held at 2:00 PM that day at the Heritage Center in the California Welcome Center. The meeting would cover the Kickstart program, which includes plans for rail service expansion and elements related to Heritage Park. The public was invited to attend.

Closed for public comment at 12:06p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: July 7, 25 ID #25-305

Chair Mazgai noted there were no questions and proceeded to the approval of the July 7th meeting minutes, asking if there were any comments from the board. Hearing none, a motion was made by Board Member Callander and seconded by Board Member Munoz. Chair Mazgai then called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Chairperson Mazgai, Vice Chairperson Shim, Board Members Callander, Hirahara, and Munoz

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Board Member Wadsworth

This motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

CONSIDERATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ID#25-315 ITC Survey

Chair Mazgai: Introduced the next agenda item, the survey, and turned it over to **Grant Leonard**.

Grant Leonard: Presented the results of a public outreach survey regarding the future of the Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC). In 2024, the city partnered with Harris & Associates to begin an existing conditions analysis as the first phase of a potential ITC master plan. The survey reflected strong community interest in enhancing the ITC, including improved transit service and safety, expanded amenities, better branding, and more historic exhibits.

Due to the contract with Harris ending in December 2024, the city will complete the remaining analysis in-house, led by Leonard and Yesenia Segovia in coordination with Public Works, the City Manager's Office, and Economic Development. Updates will be shared with the board and community in the coming months. Leonard invited questions and noted the survey summary was included in the agenda packet.

Board Member Munoz: Suggested including historical color palettes for various architectural styles in the report, to help guide future alterations or repainting—using the Greyhound building as an example.

Board Member Hirahara: Noted the discussion was about the ITC report.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed this was administrative report 25-315 on the ITC and clarified that Munoz's suggestion could apply to documenting existing colors at the train station to preserve its historic character.

Chair Mazgai: Asked what direction the city plans to take based on the findings.

Grant Leonard: Responded that the next steps include analysis of parking, usage, access, circulation, transit service frequency, and traffic. The goal is to establish a clear

baseline and identify improvement opportunities to enhance the ITC as both a transportation hub and economic driver. It aligns with the Downtown Vibrancy Plan, which designates the ITC as a cornerstone. The city will also study comparable stations statewide—from Paso Robles to the Bay Area—and work with the community to determine what makes sense for Salinas.

Chair Mazgai: Asked if there were any additional comments.

Board Member Hirahara: Had two questions. First, he noted the survey showed housing as a low priority, yet the report referenced a mandate for housing at the ITC. He asked how the city plans to address that.

Grant Leonard: Explained that the idea of housing at the ITC stems from the 2015 Downtown Vibrancy Plan, which envisioned transit-oriented development similar to the nearby Gateway Apartments. The survey reintroduced the idea to the public, and while interest was low compared to other priorities, it's now up to decision-makers to determine whether to pursue housing or shift focus elsewhere.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked if that would be in the final report.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed it would.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked about the survey's connection to renaming the area and whether there were any updates on that.

Grant Leonard: Explained that naming is part of the next project phase. The city has an existing naming policy for public facilities, and any proposed names—such as those from the Heritage Park concept—must be evaluated against that policy. This will be addressed in a future report.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked when that report would be available.

Grant Leonard: Said it is expected by the end of the year.

Board Member Munoz: Added that he saw a proposal for a new “East Salinas” sign, similar to the one in downtown. He recommended that any signage—whether downtown or in East Salinas—should reflect the area's historical period and style and be reviewed by the board rather than approved without input. He asked if the board or community could have a role in reviewing or studying historical signage.

Chair Mazgai: Asked if there were any further comments.

Grant Leonard: Noted the process would now move to public comment, then back to the board for final remarks.

Denise Estrada: Expressed concern about the status of the report from Harris & Associates. She recalled a well-attended stakeholder meeting at the Welcome Center where attendees questioned why the city was revisiting planning efforts when a master plan and the vibrancy plan already existed. Attendees urged the city to use existing work instead of commissioning a new plan. Estrada urged staff to review any records from that meeting, as it reflected significant long-term community involvement.

Chair Mazgai: Asked for any additional board comments.

Board Member Hirahara: Requested clarification on whether an ITC master plan currently exists, as he had never seen one.

Grant Leonard: Responded that staff would work with Denise Estrada to review past work. He noted the transition away from Harris & Associates and staffing changes, and said they would check internal files.

Board Member Shim: Asked if the housing planned at the ITC is part of the city's housing element.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed that it is listed as an opportunity site in the housing element.

Board Member Shim: Commented that, with potential future rail connections like the proposed Santa Cruz–Pajaro line, placing housing at the ITC may not make sense. She felt it could be a questionable use of the space.

Chair Mazgai: Moved to the next agenda item.

!D#25-299 Historic Landmarks

Chair Mazgai: Introduced the topic of historic landmarks, noting that many cities feature accessible landmark listings on their websites to promote heritage tourism. While Salinas has valuable data from the 1989 survey, it's not easy for the public to access or navigate. Chair Mazgai asked for board input on improving visibility.

Board Member Munoz: Noted the board previously created a self-tour pamphlet of Salinas landmarks, but agreed it should be more prominently featured on the city's website. He emphasized the value of promoting these sites through groups like the Chamber of Commerce and spoke about his personal efforts to scan and preserve historic buildings in Salinas. He also mentioned a near-complete virtual tour for the MST downtown station,

which could serve as an example of how to showcase historic properties online—something missed with the Greyhound station.

Board Member Callander: Expressed concern about listing private homes from the 1989 survey without owner consent. He suggested focusing on historic districts, like Maple Park, rather than highlighting individual residences, unless permission is given.

Chair Mazgai: Emphasized that property owners must consent to be listed, but noted many may actually welcome it. He added that once the Page & Turnbull survey is complete, the architectural inventory—like the 1989 survey—should be publicly accessible, regardless of owner preference, since it's part of the public record.

Board Member Callander: Pointed out that owners would need to be aware of their inclusion, especially for programs like the Mills Act, which requires properties to be listed.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed and suggested that Page & Turnbull could be asked to incorporate this goal into their final report to support future public access and engagement.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed that staff could bring this up with Page & Turnbull as they finalize their work and prepare their report.

Board Member Hirahara: Commented that cultural resource documentation already includes detailed information and hoped that much of it wouldn't need to be recreated. She asked whether, once Page & Turnbull completes their survey, some properties would automatically qualify as historic landmarks, or if the board would need to make that determination.

Grant Leonard: Explained that the designation process is outlined in city code and requires property owner initiation. It involves multiple steps, including a review by the board before going to the city council.

Chair Mazgai: Clarified that no one has come forward recently, and asked if there is currently a city landmark list.

Grant Leonard: Responded that while Salinas has historically designated properties, they aren't labeled as "landmarks." The protections are similar, but the term "landmark" may be more public-friendly for things like walking tours or GIS maps. He cited the El Rey Theater as a recent example of designation and said staff could discuss terminology with Page & Turnbull.

Chair Mazgai: Stressed the lack of public access to any such list, noting there's no easy way—like a tab or database—to view designated properties.

Grant Leonard: Agreed and suggested it's up to the board whether to start a subcommittee now or wait for Page & Turnbull's final report. Researching other cities' practices in the meantime could be beneficial.

Board Member Hirahar: Noted the current city website lacks accessibility and praised Riverside's government site for its navigable landmark listings. However, she found the Chamber of Commerce site more difficult to use.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed, saying it's helpful when external organizations promote heritage tourism, but user-friendliness is key.

Board Member Hirahara: Added that while some landmark listings had images, integration could be improved, and Salinas should aim for similar ease of access.

Board Member Munoz: Recommended reviewing accessibility guidelines from the Secretary of the Interior, California's historical building standards, and especially the City of Pasadena's model. He praised Pasadena's clear, comprehensive approach to preserving historic buildings while addressing accessibility, energy upgrades, and ADUs, and suggested Salinas could adapt similar practices locally.

Chair Mazgai: Opened the floor for public comments or questions.

Kent Seavey: Introduced himself as the author of the original historic survey, funded by the state and archived with the Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento. He noted that Salinas has exceptional buildings and districts, and tools like the Mills Act and Secretary of the Interior's standards can already be leveraged. He emphasized the importance of using existing resources and called for a stronger embrace of Salinas's cultural assets, particularly for heritage tourism. Seavey mentioned a recent visit from 37 historic preservation professionals who were impressed by Salinas and urged the city to move past negative perceptions like the term "lettuce curtain." He also noted the original survey gave good coverage to Chinatown but said much more remains to be done.

Chair Mazgai: Thanked him and reflected that Salinas is at a turning point—with the new survey underway and a more vibrant downtown, there's great potential to promote the city through its historic and cultural resources.

Board Member Hirahara: Added that Riverside's Historic Resources Board issues certificates of recognition, a program Salinas has already started independently, reinforcing that they're on the right track.

Chair Mazgai: Concluded by noting the next step is the plaque program, which, while more complex, will help the public better recognize historic properties as it progresses.

ID#25-333 Greyhound Depot

Chair Mazgai: Introduced the next topic: the Greyhound Depot.

Grant Leonard: Provided a brief visual presentation of the final rendering submitted for the renovation of the old Greyhound building on West Gabilan. He noted that while the building design is finalized, there's no confirmed information on future tenants.

Chair Mazgai: Asked whether the project includes housing, to which **Grant Leonard** confirmed it does not. Mazgai then inquired about the former bus parking area behind the building, and Leonard speculated it would be used for tenant parking only—not for public use or a parking structure.

Chair Mazgai: Acknowledged common complaints from merchants and visitors about limited downtown parking, noting that customers sometimes leave due to a lack of spaces. He hoped future planning would include more accessible parking to support downtown businesses.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked if the building was considered historic. Grant Leonard said it is not. Hirahara mentioned the visible Kotick Furniture sign and noted the building's layered facade, suggesting there may be some unique features hidden beneath. He also asked if any specific plans were known for the building's future use, which Leonard confirmed there were not.

Chair Mazgai: Thanked Grant for the update and invited further public comments.

Denise Estrada: Asked about the partial mural that was once visible on the side of the Greyhound building, which had sparked public curiosity. She wanted to know if the mural—possibly historical—had been preserved or incorporated into an interior wall during renovations.

Chair Mazgai: Confirmed the mural had been moved inside the building. While it's unclear how it will be used in the final design, he noted he saw it about a week and a half ago. He mentioned it featured an old Carnation advertisement and a bulldog, likely related to overalls.

ID#25-316 34-38 Soledad Street Update

Chair Mazgai introduced the Soledad Street update.

Grant Leonard: Provided a project status update on Chinatown pre-development efforts. He said environmental testing is underway on the one-story portions of 34–40 Soledad to

determine if lead or asbestos remediation is needed. The two-story building at 38 and the former gas station at 40 have already been remediated.

Across the street, work continues on the Republic Cafe. TEF Design will conduct a field visit next week to assess structural needs, facade repairs, and historic features of 37 and 39 Soledad. Design work is also progressing for 45 Soledad and 34–40 Soledad, with a presentation scheduled for the Salinas Downtown Community Board.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked whether 37 and 39 Soledad, despite sharing an APN, would be treated separately due to their differing historic statuses. Grant Leonard confirmed that only 37 is currently designated and that staff will follow up with TEF Design on how that distinction will be handled.

Chair Mazgai: Asked for clarification on the even-numbered side of Soledad, including the PI Market and pool hall. He recalled the structures were planned for demolition, though some original elements might be saved.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed the demolition plan, stating the facade of the pool hall will be carefully removed, preserved if possible, or used as inspiration for recreating architectural elements in the new design.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

OTHER BUSINESS

Field Guide to American Houses Book

Yesenia Segovia: Reported that three copies of *Field Guide to American Houses* were ordered—one for herself, one for Grant Leonard, and one extra copy available for lending. Offered to give the extra copy to Chair Mazgai.

Board Member Shim: Expressed approval.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed to hold the extra copy and confirmed he would receive it after the meeting.

Board Member Munoz: Suggested creating a historical library accessible to the board and community, where members could contribute additional historical books.

Chair Mazgai: Supported the idea and asked Grant Leonard if Planning had space for such a library.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed the city library already has a copy, but the three additional ones were for staff and HRB use. Proposed a small in-house lending library for board members, with the extra copy available on request. Other similar resources could be added over time.

Chair Mazgai: Clarified the lending library would be located at the Community Development Permit Center on West Alisal and Salina Street.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed the location.

California Preservation Association

Board Member Shim: Thanked the board and Grant for the California Preservation Association subscription, noting it has been very informative. Attended two webinars—one by Lori Matthews on Heritage Landscapes, highlighting the high academic standards in the field, and another by Ian Grossman, who created a blog documenting historic resources in Los Angeles. Mentioned plans to share the blog link with the board and appreciated learning about the growth of preservation efforts in California.

Boronda Day

Board Member Munoz: Announced that the Monterey County Historical Society will host "Boronda Day" at the Boronda Ranch, providing access to the digitized Williams Week building. Grants are being pursued to restore the structure. The event will welcome historical interest groups to set up tables and share information, with participation from groups across the county, including representatives from the city.

Chair Mazgai: Noted the event will take place on the last Saturday of the month.

Board Member Munoz: Confirmed the date as the 27th.

ADJOURNMENT

Confirmation of attendance for next regular meeting on September 8, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Michael Mazgai
Chairperson

Grant Leonard
Executive Secretary

