



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2019
DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, DIRECTOR
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TITLE: CHINATOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Approve a resolution accepting the Chinatown Revitalization Plan as a key strategic planning document.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve the attached resolution accepting the Chinatown Revitalization Plan (Exhibit “A” to the resolution) as a key strategic planning document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Chinatown Revitalization Plan (“Revitalization Plan” or “Plan”) represents nearly three years of extensive work guided by dedicated Chinatown stakeholders. Inclusivity was at the center of the Chinatown community engagement process to ensure that Plan content was reflective of and equitable for all stakeholders. To achieve this objective, the Plan’s robust engagement process not only involved residents, business owners, housing developers, social service providers, and cultural and faith-based organizations, it also included activities targeted to individuals experiencing homelessness. In addition, the planning process was intentionally paused to ensure that future residents of Dai-Ichi Village and Hikari affordable housing developments, built by the Housing Authority of the County of Monterey Development Corporation (HDC), were provided the opportunity to be part of the planning process. Community recommendations, which evolved into goals, policies and actions are the “heart” of the Revitalization Plan and will inform the update of the City’s General Plan, anticipated to begin early 2020.

BACKGROUND

This Plan is not the first community planning effort undertaken to stimulate Chinatown’s revitalization. The 2007 Chinatown Renewal and 2010 Chinatown Rebound community plans sought to revitalize Chinatown and restore its unique historical and cultural identity through proposed solutions that addressed identified challenges. However, since these plans were developed, the primary plan implementor, the Salinas Redevelopment Agency, was dissolved in

2012, necessitating the development of a new plan that was more reflective of the existing community needs and visions for the future.

Through the planning process, Chinatown stakeholders revisited recommendations of these past plans, many of which were incorporated into the 2019 Revitalization Plan. However, there has been a shift in community perspective regarding the previously proposed Chinatown Health and Human Services Campus concept for the neighborhood. While many Chinatown stakeholders advocate for the inclusion of services and housing to assist individuals experiencing homelessness in Chinatown, they do not support concentrating homeless services in Chinatown, a small geographic area that is physically isolated from other parts of the City by the railroad, major arterial roadways, and restricted circulation. Focusing social services for those experiencing homelessness into one geographic area is no longer considered a best practice; these services should be distributed evenly across the City and Monterey County. Thus, the 2019 Revitalization Plan endeavors to balance the need for homeless services with the desire to transcend Chinatown's reputation as ground zero for the unsheltered. This Plan outlines policies and actions that support Chinatown becoming a more complete community with a diversity of businesses, housing opportunities, and community programs and amenities.

The plan study area of past planning efforts and the initial plan study area for the Revitalization Plan was bounded by Market Street to the south, Sherwood Drive to the east, Rossi Street to the north, and Main Street to the west. This plan study area, referred to as the "Chinatown Core" was expanded twice throughout this planning process.

Through the community engagement process, the initial study area boundary was extended eastward along Market Street, north of Sherwood Drive, Sun Street and the US 101. The decision to expand the plan study area boundaries was driven by the desire to include the Filipino Community – Salinas Valley Center as a cultural resource along with the Buddhist Temple of Salinas and the Chinese Association of Salinas, and to connect residents of the Housing Authority of Monterey's Haciendas Place Phase I and II to the Dai-Ichi Village and Hikari apartments which are located within the Chinatown Core. By integrating these three affordable housing developments and three cultural centers into a single planning area, the City is in a better position to leverage significant housing investment to transform the surrounding built environment. Staff and stakeholders alike felt that this expanded plan study area would be a stabilizing force and would improve the likelihood of securing future grant funding opportunities.

The plan study area boundary was expanded a second time as a result of the City's continued work with neighborhood businesses, property owners and residents. Recognizing the need to include a broader planning area for employment generating and open space uses, the boundary was extended to the west along Simas Street and the US 101. This expansion provided more industrially zoned parcels and potential areas for future compact urban open spaces for the neighborhood. Chinatown's stakeholders understood that further diversifying the Plan area's land uses would help transform Chinatown into a thriving community inclusive of all uses, residents, businesses and property owners.

Context with other Plans

The Salinas General Plan states the City's vision for the community's future and outlines goals, policies, and implementation measures to achieve its vision. Since its adoption in 2002, the City

has updated the Housing Element (2015), added a new Economic Development Element (2017) and undertaken multiple plans and planning efforts; some addressing regional and citywide topics, while others focusing on geographical areas in the City. Regional and citywide plans include:

1. Consolidated Five-Year Action Plan (2015)
2. Regional Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan (July 2018)
3. Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (2019)
4. Parks, Recreation and Libraries Master Plan (July 2019), and
5. Public Art Master Plan (currently underway– anticipated late 2019).

Area specific plans include:

1. Alisal Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2015)
2. Downtown Vibrancy Plan (2015)
3. East Alisal Street Corridor Plan (January 2019), and
4. Alisal Vibrancy Plan (November 2019).

All plans are available on the City's website.

Community Outreach and Engagement

The Chinatown Revitalization Plan outreach strategy was developed with inclusivity at the center and the objective of engaging members of groups that have previously been excluded from governmental processes and/or resources. The engagement strategy was based in the principles of transparency, inclusion, relevance, fairness and collaboration and included a range of activities to encourage the participation of all stakeholders to help the City obtain a broad base of community input to identify the most relevant issues facing the Chinatown planning area and prioritize improvements to be addressed in the Revitalization Plan.

This planning process was managed by City staff with support of the MIG consultant team and the Institute of Urban Initiatives. The City organized and conducted meetings with individual advisory groups to provide feedback and direction at each stage of the planning process. Between January 2017 and May 2019, staff convened Working Groups comprised of non-technical stakeholders from four distinct interest groups in Chinatown: Asian community-based organizations, business and property owners, homeless individuals and service providers, and housing developers and residents interested in a more sustained level of engagement. Meetings were interactive and designed to gather input on key themes and issues, promote outreach activities, and brainstorm opportunities for community participation.

During this same time period, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of working professionals from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors met six times to evaluate the feasibility of Working Group and community recommendations and identify needs for further analysis based on technical studies and/or planning. TAC members had subject expertise in key topics and themes of the Plan, such as transportation, economic development, social services, and health and safety.

In addition to TAC and Working Group meetings, the City convened nine (9) large community meetings, including two (2) implementation workshops and a final draft Plan Open House, and nine (9) pop-up events, all of which were open to all members of the public. Staff facilitated

activities pertaining to the key themes of the Revitalization Plan at pop-up stations during community events, such as the Asian Festival, Obon Festival, ACE Pop-up Museum, Ciclovía, and City Council meetings. To collect the input of key interest groups and hard-to-reach populations, the City also participated in various meetings and events not explicitly tied to the Revitalization Plan.

Visit the Chinatown website <https://www.visionsalinas.org/chinatown> for more details regarding the community engagement process, Technical Advisory Committee and Working Group agendas and minutes, community meeting materials and summaries, draft studies and planning documents and the public review draft of the Chinatown Revitalization Plan.

Planning Commission Review

On December 4, 2019, the Planning Commission received a presentation and heard public comment on the public review draft Chinatown Revitalization Plan. Three members of the public spoke in support of the Plan and the Commission unanimously approved a resolution recommending City Council acceptance of the Plan as a key strategic planning document.

DISCUSSION

The Chinatown Revitalization Plan is organized into the following ten chapters:

1. Community Vision and Introduction
2. Community Overview
3. Community Engagement
4. Land Use and Design
5. Housing and Neighborhood
6. Economic Development
7. Community Health and Safety
8. Transportation and Infrastructure
9. Arts, Youth, Programming and Community Facilities
10. Next Steps and Implementation

Chapter 1 states the community's vision for Chinatown and offers a broad overview of the Plan's purpose and policy context. Chapter 2 provides community background, historical context, and a summary of existing conditions. Chapter 3 provides a summary of community engagement that occurred throughout the planning process and led to the vision, goals, policies and implementation actions in this plan.

The subsequent six chapters (Chapters 4 through 9) provide context and recommendations in six key topic areas: land use and design; housing and neighborhoods; economic and workforce development; community health and safety; transportation and infrastructure; and arts, youth and programming and community facilities. Each topic chapter begins with a brief introduction to the chapter topic, a summary of topic goals, and their connection to the Visión Salinas Guiding Principles. An assessment of related assets and opportunities provides the context for the goals, policies and implementation actions recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee, Working Groups and community members. Each goal is discussed followed by an implementation matrix of action items. Most of the goals, policies and actions come directly from the community.

Staff, technical professionals and the consultant team did add a few policies and actions that either did not come up in community conversations, incorporate best practices, or provide for a more comprehensive approach to achieving the community's desired outcome.

The Chinatown Revitalization Plan is action driven and contains efforts that could span 10 to 15 years. Residents, community stakeholders, and the City are to revisit implementation progress and priorities annually. Chapter 10: Next Steps and Plan Implementation provides the planning and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), summarizes emerging implementation priorities for each topic chapter, as defined by the community, and describes the priorities that capitalize on current strengths and opportunities to move the community's vision towards implementation. This chapter also identifies potential government funding sources for implementation and acknowledges that it is through strong partnerships between the City, County, other local government agencies, philanthropy, businesses, community stakeholders and residents that the community's vision can be implemented.

Community Vision Statement

The Vision Statement crafted for Chinatown is the product of an iterative process based upon extensive community input. In Spring 2019, the City and its chosen consultant, MIG, Inc. (MIG), drafted a preliminary statement that was based on input provided at past public workshops, meetings, and other outreach events. The City continued to collaborate with the community to refine this draft statement at events, such as the Chinatown Asian Festival, Revitalization Plan Implementation Workshop, and during several community meetings. This feedback was then used to inform subsequent revisions of the statement, ultimately resulting in a vision that embodies and reflects the community's desired future for the neighborhood.

Chinatown is envisioned as a thriving, affordable, safe, walkable, healthy, and well-connected community that serves as a cultural center for the arts and a vibrant tourist destination for the City and the region. To support the needs of its existing and growing population, Chinatown will include diverse new land uses that create a more balanced neighborhood, including affordable and market-rate housing, health and social services, healthy and multicultural food establishments, open spaces, and employment options for all residents. Culturally relevant urban design, coupled with the rehabilitation of existing historic buildings, will help ensure that future development serves to complement and preserve the neighborhood's rich cultural fabric.

Overarching Themes

The policies and implementation actions in the Plan establish the conceptual and regulatory groundwork for comprehensive neighborhood transformation based on principles of social equity, inclusivity, prosperity, and sustainability. The Revitalization Plan is to guide both future private, public, and social investment. Short and long-term strategies identify priorities that support City staff and partners in proactive management neighborhood land uses and resources.

A top priority and overarching theme of the planning process is addressing Chinatown's current physical condition which is unclean, unsafe, includes contaminated properties and blighted buildings, and is isolated from the rest of the City. While the transformation of Chinatown into a

cultural center for the arts was highlighted by stakeholders, it was recognized that this goal cannot be achieved unless the encampments are addressed, and the safety and cleanliness of the neighborhood is restored and maintained. Policies and actions focus on improving safety and cleanliness of the neighborhood, and the maintenance and appearance of public spaces including streets, sidewalks and open spaces, reconnecting Chinatown with the Downtown, Intermodal Transportation Center and the rest of the community, and the need for the diversification of housing options and opportunities for all. Additional priorities include increased access to education, training and employment resources, rehabilitation of historic properties, increased recreational programs and open space for residents, improved mental, physical, and social health services to house individuals experiencing homelessness, and the improvement of underground and above ground infrastructure. Attachment 2 provides a summary by topic of top community concerns and recommendations and Attachment 3 provides a goal summary for each topic chapter area.

As stated above, Chapter 10: Next Steps and Plan Implementation describes the priorities that capitalize on the current strengths and opportunities to move the community's vision towards implementation.

Draft Plan Comments

On November 26, 2019, the Community Development Block Grant/Housing Committee received a Revitalization Plan update. The next day, November 27, 2019, staff released the public review draft Chinatown Revitalization Plan. The Plan was posted on the City and Chinatown Revitalization Plan websites with hard copies made available at City Hall, the Permit Center, John Steinbeck Library, Chinatown Navigation Center and the California State University - Monterey Bay Chinatown Student Learning Center.

Since the release of the public review document, staff have continued to edit the Plan correcting spelling and grammatical errors and refining content, figures and images. No substantive changes were made to the public review document. The only content addition is included in the attached Errata Table. The revised document is Exhibit "A" to the resolution and has been uploaded to the City and Chinatown websites. An email notification was also sent to the Chinatown participants informing them of the updated plan document.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The Chinatown Revitalization Plan is a strategic planning document. The proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines section 15378). If recommended policies or actions progress to a "project" level further CEQA analysis will be required to address potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The preparation and development of the Chinatown Revitalization Plan is a key objective under Economic Diversity and Prosperity. Topic areas covered in the Plan also include recommended policies and actions that address the initiatives of a Safe, Livable Community, Effective, Sustainable Government, Well- Planned City and Excellent Infrastructure and Quality of Life.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Community Development Department's Plan and Project Implementation and Housing and Divisions led the planning process and prepared the public review draft Plan with consultant support. Staff from other Community Development Department Divisions and City departments including Library and Community Services, Public Works, Police, and Fire participated in or assisted with the facilitation of community workshops, working group meetings and/or pop up events. Multiple departments provided valuable input into the Revitalization Plan.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The City Council budgeted for the preparation of the Chinatown Revitalization Plan by creating a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) account (9070) funded through the sale of 100 Main Street (Steinbeck Center - \$197,000) and the General Fund (\$31,920). In November 2016 and April 2019, the City entered into Professional Services Agreements with MIG to prepare the Revitalization Plan for total amount not to exceed \$192,349. Staff's time working on the preparation of the Plan is included in the City's annual budget.

The Chinatown Revitalization Plan is intended to be the foundation for ongoing collaboration between the City, other agencies, residents, and community stakeholders. The Plan contains efforts that could span 10 to 15 years. It is expected that the City Council will use the Revitalization Plan to inform the budgetary process in future fiscal years and establish new CIPs for core infrastructure projects. As part of the 2020-2021 budget process, staff will present recommendations for the funding of priority policy and action items based on emerging priorities identified in Chapter 10.

It should be noted that many of the Plan's actions would be implemented by partners and therefore would not necessarily require City funding other than staff support.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution Accepting the Chinatown Revitalization Plan as a strategic planning document
 - a. Exhibit "A": Public Review Draft Chinatown Revitalization Plan
2. "What We Heard" – Community identified issues and recommendations
3. Topic Chapter Goal Summaries
4. Errata Sheet