



# **2-Year Economic Development Work Plan**

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# Executive Summary

The City of Salinas aims to foster sustainable economic growth, attract investment, and enhance the quality of life for its residents, visitors. To achieve these goals, the establishment of an Economic Development Division (EDD) within the city government is proposed. The EDD will serve as a central body to coordinate efforts, provide resources, and implement strategies to stimulate economic vitality.

Establishing an Economic Development Division is a strategic investment in the City's future. By fostering economic growth, creating jobs, and enhancing the City's competitive edge, the EDD will play a pivotal role in transforming Salinas into a vibrant, prosperous community. Approval and support from City leadership and stakeholders are critical to realizing this vision.

A key economic development strategy will be to improve the overall quality of life and image of the City to increase the confidence and pride of existing and potential future residents, business owners, and visitors.

The proposed 2-year workplan sets a roadmap to establish a foundation for the division and to begin moving critical projects forward. It is anticipated that once staff has been hired and the foundational work to build the division begins, the division will then embark on a much more comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan.



**Lisa Murphy**  
ASSITANT CITY MANAGER





# Organizational Structure

The Economic Development Division will be a part of the City Manager's Office and consist of the following positions:

## Assistant City Manager

The Assistant City Manager oversees the division and provides strategic leadership, oversight, and policy direction for the Economic Development Division while ensuring alignment with the City's broader goals and initiatives.

## Deputy Director of Economic Development

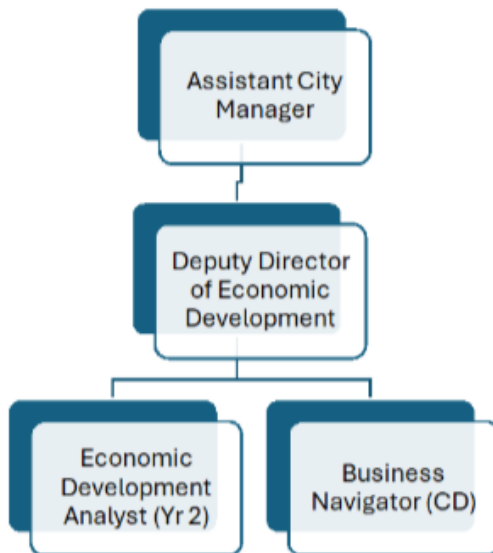
The Deputy Director acts as the operational leader, directly managing projects and programs, overseeing staff, and implementing strategies to foster economic growth. With direction and oversight from the Assistant City Manager, this position will be directly responsible for developing the programs and initiatives to implement the City's strategic plan and the economic development element as proposed in the Vision Salinas Plan. The position will oversee the real estate functions including acquisition, disposition, negotiating, and contracting, as well as be the primary contact for businesses, developers, and investors.

## Economic Development Analyst (Year 2)

The City anticipates that in the next fiscal year, as the Division is developed, additional support will be needed. The Economic Development Analyst will support the department through research, analysis, and coordination of programs aimed at enhancing the local economy. This position will conduct research on economic trends, demographics, and industry sectors to inform our strategies. The Analyst will provide direct assistance to businesses, coordinate events, workshops, and conduct outreach efforts. In addition, this position will provide vital administrative assistance in tracking budgets, updating the website, and managing city assets.

## Business Navigator

This position works in the Permit Center in the Community Development Department supporting new small business entrepreneurs. This position provides information on how to start a new business in the City, financial resources, business planning, and operational readiness.



# Our Goals



## Support Existing Businesses

### GOAL 1: Support Existing Businesses

Strengthen our local economy by supporting businesses that have already invested in our community. Our objective is to provide resources, foster connections and reduce barriers to growth for existing businesses.



## Attract New Businesses

### GOAL 2: Attract New Businesses

Salinas seeks to position itself as a hub for innovation and growth. By leveraging its rich agricultural heritage, proximity to Silicon Valley, and workforce, the City aims to attract companies that bring cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices.



## Promote Salinas as a Vibrant Destination

### GOAL 3: Promote Salinas as a Vibrant Destination

Promoting Salinas means celebrating and sharing what makes our city exceptional. Through coordinated marketing efforts, partnerships with local organizations, and community-driven events, we will highlight our cultural richness, historical significance, and economic opportunities. These efforts will elevate Salinas' profile as an ideal place to live, work, and invest.



## Optimize Land Use & Modernize Infrastructure

### GOAL 4: Optimize Land Use and Modernize Infrastructure

Strategic land use planning and infrastructure development are fundamental to sustainable growth. By leveraging smart zoning, investing in critical infrastructure upgrades, and enhancing connectivity, we aim to ensure that Salinas remains adaptable to evolving economic needs. Our focus includes supporting housing for all income levels and creating spaces that foster community and commerce.



## Enhance City Services & Streamline Processes

### GOAL 5: Enhance City Services and Streamline Processes

Delivering efficient, user-friendly city services is a cornerstone of fostering a business-friendly environment. Salinas will ensure that the processes are clear, timely, and aligned with the needs of residents and businesses.

# GOAL 1

## Support Existing Businesses

Strategy: Re-build a Business Retention & Expansion Program (BREP) to support existing employers in Salinas.

- **1.1** Conduct a business survey to understand existing business issues, needs, and opportunities.
- **1.2** Business Inventory: Create a database of local businesses. Gather aggregated business tax data, revenue information, and growth patterns with assistance from an outside vendor.
- **1.3** Adopt a customer relationship management system to maintain information collected during visits and surveys.
- **1.4** Connect businesses with existing educational institutions and non-profits that offer workshops and resources on financing, marketing, and workforce development for local businesses. (Monterey County Business Council, Central Coast Small Business Development Center, Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, Salinas United Business Association (SUBA), Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA), Monterey County Economic Development Dept, El Pajaro Community Development Corporation, UCSC, CSUMB, and Hartnell College)
- **1.5** Support the development and implementation of economic development actions identified in the Alisal Vibrancy Plan, Chinatown Revitalization Plan, Economic Development Element, General Plan and Downtown Vibrancy Plan that promote district identity/branding, corridor appearance, revitalization, and vibrancy.
- **1.6** Support the development and implementation of Microgrant and Forgivable Loan programs for outdoor dining, social media, marketing, technology, and facade improvements.
- **1.7** Meet semi-annually with real estate professionals and brokers to understand the current industry climate, concerns, and opportunities.

# GOAL 2

## Attract New Businesses

Strategy: Foster a vibrant local economy by proactively targeting high-potential businesses and creating an environment conducive to business creation and expansion.

- **2.1** Develop an Interactive Business Portal: Create an interactive website to provide businesses with detailed information on reasons to locate businesses in Salinas. Information should highlight the City's unique location, demographics, resources, transportation systems (Hwy & Airport), workforce, history, natural resources, recreational opportunities, healthcare, and quality of life.
- **2.2** Create marketing materials and handouts that highlight the City's competitive advantage and plans for the future.
- **2.3** Engage with the community on what types of businesses they would like to see in their neighborhoods and retail centers through surveys and site visits. Use these insights to align business attraction efforts with community priorities.
- **2.4** Implement a real estate tracking program to track available properties, vacancies, and opportunities that can be showcased on the City's website.
- **2.5** Develop a business toolkit available on the City's website that serves as an online resource for entrepreneurs by providing step-by-step guidance on starting a business in Salinas, including licensing and permitting requirements, site selection tools, financing options, and links to workshops and other small business resources.
- **2.6** Conduct industry research and analysis to identify target industries, including high-growth and sustainable sectors such as ag-tech, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing. Tailor proactive business development and attraction strategies to these industries.
- **2.7** Create a program to provide focused support for home-based businesses and other independent start-ups.
- **2.8** Develop a pop-up storefront pilot program in Downtown Salinas to promote business development, fill vacant storefronts, and increase foot traffic.
- **2.9** Create a collaborative public-private task force to drive business attraction and economic growth in Salinas.

# GOAL 3

## Promote Salinas as a Vibrant Destination

Strategy: Develop a marketing campaign to showcase the City's cultural, agricultural, historical, and recreational assets.

- **3.1** Meet quarterly with regional tourism boards including See Monterey and the Chamber of Commerce to collaborate on regional tourist attraction programs.
- **3.2** Hire a consultant to develop a re-branding effort to promote positive images of the City as a safe, vibrant, and fun place to visit, live, and work.
- **3.3** Work with partner groups to create community events in Downtown Salinas, such as First Friday events, a live music series, movie nights, or Sip & Stroll events.
- **3.4** Promote existing facilities including Sherwood Hall, National Steinbeck Center, Salinas Sports Complex, Regional Soccer Complex, and Carr Lake to increase local utilization of the facilities as well as to attract more events and activities to the City.
- **3.5** Work in collaboration with the California Welcome Center, Steinbeck Center, Monterey County Historical Society, Chinatown, Filipino Community-Salinas Valley, Asian Cultural Experience, etc. to promote the historical assets of the community and attract visitors.



# GOAL 4

## Optimize Land Use and Modernize Infrastructure

Strategy: Facilitate the revitalization of opportunity sites by fostering public/private/educational partnerships and investing in infrastructure improvements that will support development

- **4.1** Infrastructure: Help facilitate capital improvements to existing infrastructure systems. Infrastructure development and improvements including sewer, wastewater, and storm drainage conveyance and disposal facilities are critical to enabling desired employment generating from economic development.
- **4.2** Chinatown Revitalization: Complete the predevelopment work for the Chinatown area for future disposition and development.
- **4.3** Alisal Marketplace: Continue work towards the development of the Alisal Marketplace with a focused effort to move the project into the implementation phase. Prepare a vision and strategy for the Alisal Marketplace that will position the City as a binational hub – a key connector between the U.S. and Mexico for innovation, investment, and cultural exchange.
- **4.4** City-Owned Parking Lots 8 & 12: Work towards disposition and development of both parking lots.
- **4.5** Airport: Leverage the Salinas Municipal Airport as a hub for innovation and community engagement by attracting emerging technology industries, expanding hangar capacity, and activating underutilized areas for public events and economic development.
- **4.6** Underutilized Parcels: Increase temporary activation of underutilized spaces such as the ITC to create places for community events.
- **4.7** City Gateways: Create gateways creating a sense of arrival for visitors at the City's major entry corridors that is based on themes of agriculture and community safety, jobs, and health.
- **4.8** Hotel Development: Target specific hotel proprietors to consider building in Salinas.
- **4.9** Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD): Continue working towards the creation of an EIFD to leverage private sector investment to facilitate needed infrastructure improvements.

# GOAL 5

## Enhance City Services and Streamline Processes

Strategy: Simplify regulatory procedures, improve customer services, and deploy modern technologies to create a business-friendly environment.

- **5.1** Increase staffing in critical areas to reduce processing delays for permits and inspections.
- **5.2** Provide clear guidance and instructions to customers to reduce timelines for processing permits and business licenses.
- **5.3** Continue to review the City's permitting and approvals process to ensure streamlining.
- **5.4** Convene regular inter-departmental working groups focused on review and modification of permitting and approvals processes.
- **5.5** Enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of the City's planning processes by improving customer communication, strengthening cross-departmental coordination, and exploring the addition of a dedicated project manager to guide priority projects from application to completion

# Economic Development Indicators

## 1 New Business Licenses

Number of business licenses issued annually.

## 2 Sales Tax Revenue

Amount of citywide sales tax collected annually.

## 3 Transient Occupancy Tax Revenue

Amount of transient occupancy tax revenue collected annually.

## 4 Building Permits

Number and value of commercial and industrial building permits issued by the City per quarter.

## 5 Employment and Unemployment Rate

Total number of jobs and unemployment rate per quarter.

## 6 Discontinued Business Licenses

Number of business licenses that are discontinued annually.

