



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 12, 2025

DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION

FROM: RENÉ MENDEZ, CITY MANAGER
SOPHIA ROME, COMMUNITY RELATIONS MANAGER

TITLE: CITY OF SALINAS COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This is an informational item only. Receive a report on the City of Salinas Communication, Outreach & Engagement Strategy; no action required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Community outreach and engagement is an essential service provided by the City of Salinas. The Communication, Outreach & Engagement Strategy (Communication Strategy) is designed to establish standards and best practices in communication and is intended to equip staff with the knowledge, tools, and strategies required to facilitate inclusive outreach and engagement with the community. The Communication Strategy provides a framework for citywide communications aimed at strengthening consistency, increasing reach to the community and stakeholders, and serving as a foundation for staff training grounded in proven strategies and best practices in local government communication and community relations.

BACKGROUND:

The City's existing Communication Strategy has not been updated since it was first implemented in 2016. Over the last nine years, there have been significant changes in the way residents receive and consume information, and the communication tools used to disseminate that information. The needs of the community and best practices in communication have also changed. Additionally, in 2020, the City hired its first Community Relations Manager who is designated as the City's Public Information Officer (PIO). This has created the opportunity to develop a communication strategy that focuses on equitable outreach and engagement, establishes best practices for communication that align with the City's goals, breaking down information silos, and providing staff with tools to approach communication as a service to the community.

Earlier this year, the City Council identified engaging residents and improving communication with the community as a strategy under the City Services Goal in the 2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan. The update to the existing Communication Strategy will support this goal by improving citywide

communication, outreach and engagement. The overarching goals of the Communication Strategy are:

- Inform the public as an essential service to the community
- Encourage civic engagement
- Support and advance equity through outreach and engagement
- Ensure consistent and strategic branding and messaging
- Define leadership and staff roles and responsibilities in communication, outreach, and engagement efforts

Some departments, like Fire and Police, already have designated department-level PIOs – as is a common practice in public safety – who work closely with the Community Relations Manager. Implementation of the Communication Strategy will seek to model these types of established best practices by forming a staff communications committee comprised of at least one liaison from each department to meet on a regular basis with the goal of breaking down information silos and work towards consistency in the City’s communication, outreach, and engagement efforts. Training will also be provided to staff, with training topics and timing being informed by the communications committee.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES:

No.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The Communication Strategy aligns with the Strategic Goal of City Services, specifically engaging residents and improving communication with the community. In addition, it supports all strategic goals as effective communication, outreach and engagement are necessary to effectively inform residents and create opportunities for equitable public engagement.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Communication Outreach & Engagement Strategy was developed through collaboration with City Administration, Community Development, and Library and Community Services. Department staff worked together to identify overarching goals and strategies. Additionally, the City's Executive team has reviewed and provided feedback Communication Strategy.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Fund	Appropriation	Appropriation Name	Total Appropriation	Amount for recommendation	FY 24-25 Operating Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Resolution)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A