



## **CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

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**DATE:** FEBURARY 25, 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**FROM:** LISA BRINTON, DIRECTOR  
KRISTAN LUNDQUIST, DIRECTOR

**TITLE:** CONVEYANCE AGREEMENT TRANSFERRING 73 ACRES IN  
CARR LAKE FROM THE BIG SUR LAND TRUST AND THE CITY  
OF SALINAS

### RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a Conveyance Agreement between the Big Sur Land Trust and the City of Salinas to transfer approximately 73 acres identified as the Carr Lake Park Project/Ensen Park for the purpose of public park use and management.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since approximately 2008, the City and Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) have been working toward the development of a park and open space area within Carr Lake (Carr Lake Park Project, or “Project”). Since 2017, BSLT has been planning, designing, permitting, and fundraising for a two-phase park project, with the goal of the entire 73-acre property to be owned and managed by the City as a public park (Site Plan Review 2020-006). The Carr Lake Park Project site includes APNs 003-212-016, 261-191-001, 261-191-007, 003-212-007, 003-212-015, and 003-821-033. This Project aligns with the City's long-term vision, as the Project site is designated as a ‘Park’ in the 2002 Salinas General Plan and has a zoning designation of “Parks – Flood Overlay”. On March 19, 2024, the City Council authorized execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and BSLT to coordinate and memorialize the planning, development, ownership, and long-term management of the Carr Lake Park Project, now named Ensen Park (Attachment 4). Pursuant to the MOU, a Conveyance Agreement, has been drafted for consideration by the City Council. This report summarizes the terms and conditions of the Conveyance Agreement, provided as Exhibit “A” to the draft Resolution.

### BACKGROUND:

#### Development of Carr Lake Park Project/Ensen Park

BSLT has actively engaged over 6,700 residents through various channels, including meetings, site tours, school field trips, and stewardship events. Community input was integrated into the design and naming of the Project as Ensen Park. Phase 1 includes the development of a six-acre

neighborhood park with traditional park amenities such as restrooms, picnic tables, a skate spot, trails, parking lots, basketball courts, and a gazebo and/or playground. Phase 2 includes development of a sixty-seven-acre (67) open space area with restoration of creek and wetland habitat, planting, fencing, signage, and trail construction. Construction of Phase 1 began in spring of 2024 and is expected to open to the public in spring 2025, but no later than summer of 2025. Phase 2 construction is expected to begin in spring of 2025 and to open to the public by spring of 2026. Final park designs are attached to this staff report (Attachment 2).

Pursuant to the MOU and State Coastal Conservancy Grant BSLT received to undertake the Project, upon completion of Phase 1 improvements, the 6-acre neighborhood park area, the residence commonly known as the “Front House” and the water well are to be conveyed to the City by BSLT for ongoing management, maintenance, and upkeep by March 2025. BSLT will convey the 67-acre restoration area including the structure commonly known as the “Back House” once Phase 2 is completed. While BSLT will oversee all construction costs and successful restoration of the open space area, the City will take on maintenance responsibilities for the remaining 67 acres of the Carr Lake Property after the Project is completed. BSLT will continue to manage vegetation and habitat, and handle required monitoring and reporting as outlined in the grant and permit agreements.

#### Conveyance Agreement Terms and Conditions

The Conveyance Agreement outlines the terms and conditions for the transfer by Grant Deed. The 73 acres will be transferred in phases for a purchase price of zero (\$0.00) dollars. Upon transfer, the City will be responsible for future park maintenance. To address concerns for adequate funding to support the management and maintenance efforts, BSLT will work with the City and the community to investigate and develop funding mechanisms for long term maintenance of the park. In addition, BSLT will work with the City and community to explore potential public-private partnership models such as the development of a supporting community-based organization (e.g., a “Friends of Carr Lake”) to assist with certain park maintenance and monitoring tasks or other activities as may be appropriate.

The State Coastal Conservancy Grant Agreement with the BSLT includes terms and conditions that are incorporated in the Conveyance Agreement to the City. Grant requirements include the following.

1. At the Phase 1 Closing, the Front House is to be permanently restricted for use as affordable housing, that the City will assume the residential lease with the current tenant, and that the current tenant be allowed to remain.
2. At Phase 1 Closing, BSLT will retain an easement for ingress and egress to undertake Phase 2 construction, restoration, maintenance, and management activities.
3. The use of the Back House is to be restricted to specific park related uses that are compliant with the purpose of State grants awarded for BSLT to acquire the Property.

In addition, to facilitate required habitat management activities required by the grant terms the Parties will enter into a mutually acceptable Restoration Area Habitat Management Agreement at or prior to the Phase Two Closing. Finally, BSLT will reserve (a) the right to hold BSLT events

up to 4 times per year at Ensen Park upon coordination with and prior approval of CITY, (b) certain Naming Rights and (c) the right to install murals or art installations.

**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). Environmental impacts of the Carr Lake Park Project were analyzed in accordance with CEQA. An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) adopted by the City Council on September 14, 2021, found that the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

**CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES:**

Yes.

**COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION REVIEW:**

On January 8, 2025, the Library and Community Services (LCS) Commission received a report and presentation on the proposed conveyance and its terms and conditions. The LCS Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the City Council that it approve the conveyance agreement between the City of Salinas and BSLT. See link to agenda item under Attachment 5.

Government Code Section 65402(a) requires a report to the planning agency (Planning Commission) as to the conformity of the property conveyance and any proposed future development to the General Plan prior to City Council consideration. A report on the conformity of the proposed acquisition of the Carr Lake Property to the General Plan was presented to the Planning Commission on January 15, 2025. The Planning Commission accepted staff's report and established findings supporting the conformity of the conveyance of Ensen Park to the 2002 Salinas General Plan. See link to agenda item under Attachment 6.

**STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:**

This action supports the Salinas City Council goals (2022-2025) of Economic Development, Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability, and Youth and Seniors. Ensen Park and its improvements will provide recreational and educational resources serving Salinas residents and visitors. Phase 2 improvements further Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability by restoring wetland and riparian fish and wildlife habitat, improving water quality and flood conveyance and capacity through the installation of green infrastructure.

**DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:**

The Library & Community Services Department coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Office on the development of the MOU and the Conveyance Agreement. The Community Development facilitated the preparation and adoption of the Carr Lake Park Project ISMND, General Plan Amendment and Rezone (GPA 2020-001 and RZ 2020-001), Site Plan Review approval, and the issuance of Project building permits.

## FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

As outlined in the Conveyance Agreement there is no cost for transferring the land and improvements. The City will be responsible for the ongoing operations and management of the Neighborhood Park, Park Restoration and Open Space Area. Park Maintenance is a 7-day a week service and the team is currently maintaining 246.8 acres and will be assuming the maintenance of Ensen Community Park, an additional 7 acres before the end of the fiscal year for a total of 253.8 acres of core parkland. The national standard for park maintenance is 11 acres per FTE. With the addition of Ensen Community Park, our service level will be 14.9 acres per FTE. We are also planning for the addition of another 66 acres when the Ensen Community Park Restoration area is complete, the renovation of Closter Park, improvements at Cesar Chavez Park and the new Hebbbron Family Center by the end of the calendar year. Additional parkland and facilities require increased staffing levels to adequately maintain and care for the park system. It is critical that the City strive to increase staffing levels in order to meet the national standard. Staff has developed a staffing plan to forecast staffing needs through FY 30-31.

Additional Park Maintenance resources will be required to fund the operation and maintenance of an additional 73 acres of parkland. These costs will be phased in beginning with the FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget.

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

## ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
  - a. Exhibit “A” Draft Conveyance Agreement with Exhibits (Ensen Park Project, Salinas, California)
2. Final Design Ensen Park Phases 1 and 2
3. September 14, 2021: Resolution No. 22174 (N.C.S.) adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and approving General Plan Amendment 2020-001; and adoption of Ordinance No. 2648 (N.C.S.) for Rezone 2020-001  
[City of Salinas - File #: ID#21-381](https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5092484&GUID=E11B71DD-7CD9-4D76-8BAD-AFEE57A80E70&Options=&Search=)  
<https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5092484&GUID=E11B71DD-7CD9-4D76-8BAD-AFEE57A80E70&Options=&Search=>
4. March 19, 2024: Resolution No. 22923 (N.C.S.) MOU Between the City of Salinas and Big Sur Land Trust for the Carr Lake Park Project  
[City of Salinas - File #: ID#24-140](https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7082735&GUID=76614BA9-C9BA-46C3-A835-0FD607EA9185&Options=&Search=LCS)  
<https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7082735&GUID=76614BA9-C9BA-46C3-A835-0FD607EA9185&Options=&Search=LCS> January 8, 2025, Meeting Packet
5. Library and Community Services January 8, 2025, Meeting Packet

- [City of Salinas - File #: ID#24-709](https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7082735&GUID=76614BA9-C9BA-46C3-A835-0FD607EA9185&Options=&Search=)  
<https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7082735&GUID=76614BA9-C9BA-46C3-A835-0FD607EA9185&Options=&Search=>
6. Planning Commission January 15, 2025, Meeting Packet  
[City of Salinas - File #: ID#25-001](https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7090785&GUID=1F749AFD-19DD-4414-AC15-3CCCF24080E2&Options=&Search=)  
<https://salinas.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7090785&GUID=1F749AFD-19DD-4414-AC15-3CCCF24080E2&Options=&Search=>