



## CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** DECEMBER 2, 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**FROM:** LISA BRINTON, DIRECTOR

**THROUGH:** GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER

**BY:** JONATHAN MOORE, SENIOR PLANNER

**TITLE:** ZONING CODE UPDATE: DRAFT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

No action required. Receive an administrative report on the Draft Public Engagement Plan for the Zoning Code Update and provide feedback and direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City has begun a multi-phase comprehensive Zoning Code Update. Community engagement will be a critical component of this project. City staff and the consultant team (Placeworks) drafted a Public Engagement Plan (Plan) and Plan Overview matrix, provided as Attachments 1 and 2 outlining the roles and responsibilities of the City Council, Planning Commission, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), stakeholders, the public, and the tools and frequency of engagement for each body and group. The tools used for gathering input vary and include community workshops and meetings, study sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission, individual and group meetings with stakeholders and the TAC, and surveys and pop-ups. These encourage participation from a diverse group of community stakeholders, including the public, residential and commercial property owners, business owners and business organizations, real estate, building trade and construction professionals and associations, architects and designers, developers, and community-based organizations. Staff is seeking City Council feedback and direction on the Plan. Next steps in early 2026 include forming a Technical Advisory Committee and conducting a kick-off community workshop.

BACKGROUND:

*Zoning Code Update Overview*

The City is undertaking a comprehensive Zoning Code Update (ZCU). At its [June 17, 2025 Meeting](#), the City Council authorized execution of an agreement with the consultant PlaceWorks to prepare the ZCU. The ZCU is split into three phases to address compliance and priority needs, ensure consistency with the General Plan Update once adopted, while ultimately developing a new

code. Phase One will address amendments to the current Zoning Code to bring it into compliance with State Housing Law prior to completion of the General Plan Update and will consider opportunities for streamlining and clarification that do not need to wait for the full comprehensive update.

Phase Two includes bridge amendments to bring the current Zoning Code consistent with the General Plan Update once the latter is adopted. Phase Two will include map and text amendments to the current Zoning Code to ensure consistency with the proposed Place Types and Land Use Element. By drafting these amendments concurrently with the completion of the General Plan Update, the City will avoid a long period of inconsistency. Completion of Phase Two is anticipated by late-2026, but exact timing will depend on adoption of the General Plan Update.

Phase Three is the completion of a new and revised Zoning Code. Objectives of the new Zoning Code include a code that is easier for the public and staff to understand and use, visually rich with easily shareable graphics, and streamlined, objective development standards that are consistent with development needs and community vision. This also includes full implementation of relevant portions of the General Plan Update. Completion of Phase 3 is anticipated by the end of 2027.

#### *Draft Public Engagement Plan*

Community involvement will be a key component of the ZCU and the engagement approach for this project must be appropriate for Salinas and designed to ensure the resulting Zoning Code aligns with the vision of the community. The Public Engagement Plan is a framework that can be adapted and augmented as needed throughout the ZCU. To encourage participation from a diverse group of community stakeholders' engagement for the ZCU will be:

- Transparent – by creating public awareness of the project, regular updates and direction vetting through the Planning Commission and City Council and clearly articulating the basis and context of proposed changes; and
- Inclusive – by offering multiple avenues for participation throughout the project and increasing the accessibility of engagement activities; and
- Collaborative – by giving the community and the stakeholders most impacted by the Zoning Code meaningful opportunities to shape the new Zoning Code and ensuring their input is reflected in the final product.

The Draft Public Engagement Plan, provided as Attachment 1, proposes a variety of events and tools to provide multiple opportunities and levels of engagement to maximize input from the community. Plan activities seek to engage residents, residential and commercial property owners, business owners and industry, business associations, institutions and agencies, trade organizations, and community-based organizations through community meetings, surveys, and pop ups; individual interviews and group meetings; and presentations, study sessions, and public hearings.

Attachment 2 provides an overview of the different bodies and groups that will be involved, their roles, and a summary of the engagement tools to be used with each group. These draft documents were also shared with the Planning Commission at their [October 1, 2025](#) meeting. The following sections provide more information engagement efforts for these groups.

### General Public

Large in-person and virtual community meetings will be held at key points in the planning process. These meetings may be held as workshops or open houses to introduce and receive feedback on proposed changes and to receive community input on areas of change needed. Other activities to build broader awareness and obtain input from the wider Salinas community include pop-ups at events and locations throughout the city, surveys, and business canvassing. Amendments for the Zoning Code will also require public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.

### Planning Commission and City Council

The City of Salinas Planning Commission will be the primary advisory committee for the Zoning Code Update and forum for reaching consensus on recommendations to City Council. Staff will meet regularly with the Planning Commission for review and direction of draft content and education on new State laws and best practices. The Planning Commission must make formal recommendations to City Council on amendments before City Council consideration.

Staff will provide City Council with updates at least quarterly, with additional reporting and study sessions as amendments near public hearings. City Council will provide project and engagement direction and has final adoption authority.

### Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will consist of stakeholders that frequently use the Zoning Code with the time and dedication to drill down on the details of the Zoning Code Update with City staff. These stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, architects and designers, developers, property owners, business owners and organizations, and building trade and construction and real estate professionals. This group will be an informal, non-Brown Act group that meets during business hours and provides recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission. The exact frequency of TAC meetings may vary depending on project phase, but it is expected to meet at least quarterly, with monthly or even bi-monthly meetings depending on materials to review.

It is expected that the TAC will include approximately 15 Committee members, not counting potential alternates. The City will work with the Salinas Planning and Research Corporation (SPARC), the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA), the Central Coast Builders Association (CCBA), and the Monterey County Association of Realtors to identify representatives of those groups and recommendations for individuals in the disciplines above. Permit Center staff will also identify other frequent code users to ensure a well-rounded composition of the TAC.

### Stakeholder Meetings

Some users or stakeholders may not have the time or desire to participate in the ZCU at the TAC level but still want to discuss constraints or opportunities, or check-in at key draft milestones.

These may include small business and property owners that have had challenging experiences with the Zoning Code, or professionals or organizations that have specific questions or items to discuss. City staff and consultant team members will conduct a mix of small-group or one-on-one interviews to ensure their feedback is heard and incorporated in the ZCU. Staff will ensure that residential and commercial property owners and small business owners, who are less frequent users, but may have experienced challenges working through planning entitlement and permitting processes, are invited to engage and contribute to recommended Zoning Code changes based on their experience.

### Next Steps

PlaceWorks will meet with the Planning Commission in December to discuss the Planning Commission's vision for the ZCU and changes in state housing law driving required updates in Phase One. City staff will work to create a Technical Advisory Committee as described above to launch in early 2026 and prepare for a large public kick-off workshop.

### CEQA CONSIDERATION:

**Not a Project.** The City of Salinas has determined that this administrative report is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

### CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES:

No.

### STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

By streamlining development procedures and implementing General Plan recommendations, the Zoning Code Update, and its corresponding engagement efforts, will further the following 2025-2028 Salinas Strategic Plan strategies:

#### Economic Development

2. Support and engage both new and established businesses to drive economic growth and job creation.
3. Revitalize residential and commercial areas through targeted initiatives, private investment and community partnerships.
4. Strategically explore and expand economic development opportunities throughout the City

#### Housing

1. Continue to pursue transit-oriented housing development opportunities.
3. Facilitate the addition of workforce, low-income, farm worker housing, and ADU development while minimizing impacts to neighborhoods.
4. Streamline the entitlement and permitting of residential developments by implementing efficient workflows and ensuring timely reviews and approvals.

#### City Services

4. Provide high quality customer service.
6. Engage residents and improve communication to the community.

**DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:**

The Community Development Department (CDD) is leading this effort with close coordination with other departments. CDD established an internal committee in May 2025 to support the ZCU comprised of staff from CDD, Public Works, Library and Community Services, Police, Fire, and Legal departments.

**FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

There is no cost associated with this administrative report. Funding for the Zoning Code Update comes from the General Plan fund, which is funded through General Plan/Zoning maintenance fees collected on all building permits.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>General Ledger Number (Operating/CIP)</b>	<b>General Ledger Account Name</b>	<b>Remaining Budget Appropriation</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft ZCU Public Engagement Plan
2. ZCU Engagement Overview