

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
OF THE
SALINAS HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD**

February 2, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 12 p.m. in the City Hall Rotunda.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chairperson Mazgai, Vice Chairperson Shim, Board Members Hirahara, Munoz, and Callender

ABSENT: Wadsworth

STAFF: Planning Manger, Grant Leonard, and Community Development Analyst, Michaelle Mowery

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Opened for public comment at 12:01 p.m.

Closed for public comment at 12:01 p.m.

CONSENT

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: ID#26-011

Board Member Shim: Noted that a reference to the Department of the Interior's Standard Six in the minutes may need clarification and stated an intention to provide additional Fran

Chair Mazgai: Requested a page citation for clarity, then noted a correction to the minutes on page 3 under Chair Mazgai's section, where an incorrect pronoun was used "she" instead of "he". Asked if there were any further comments or corrections and, if not, called for a motion.

Board Member Callender: Motioned to approve the minutes.

Board Member Munoz: Seconded

AYES: Chair Mazgai, Vice Chairperson Shim, Board Members Hirahara, Munoz, and Callender

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed with a 5-0 vote

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

ID#26-012 ITC Existing Conditions and Opportunities Update

Grant Leonard: Thanked the Chair and stated that city staff have prepared draft existing conditions and opportunities reports for the ITC, released with the agenda for public review as the first step in the process. Noted that staff will continue public engagement as the reports are finalized. Provided a brief overview of recent ITC planning, including the Downtown Vibrancy Plan in 2015, coordination with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County beginning in 2017, site and parking improvements in preparation for commuter rail, rezoning in 2021 to allow mixed-use and housing, and initiation of the current planning process with Harris & Associates in 2024. Noted that Harris & Associates' work concluded in 2024 and that city staff have been finalizing the memos over the past

year. Summarized results of a community outreach survey identifying priorities such as improved coordination among transit agencies, recognition of the site's historic assets, and added amenities including restrooms, seating, shade, food options, open space, and improved connections to downtown. Reviewed existing conditions, highlighting good internal circulation with signage needs, safety concerns, expanded land-use allowances, ongoing rail work by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, underutilized parking at approximately 17% peak occupancy, and pedestrian challenges along West Market Street. Described preliminary opportunity concepts including placemaking and branding improvements, added amenities such as shade structures and potential food trucks, mixed-use or housing opportunities consistent with prior rezoning, and transit operational enhancements such as real-time information kiosks. Noted ongoing coordination with Monterey-Salinas Transit on a potential downtown transit center relocation and the ITC's role. Summarized a stakeholder request on site naming, outlining the City's formal process through the Library and Community Services Commission and City Council, without evaluating specific names. Reviewed next steps: receiving public comments on draft memos, finalizing documents, coordinating on branding and naming, and pursuing near-term recommendations for amenities, site activation, and improved downtown connectivity. Introduced staff available to answer questions on property management, economic development, and land-use planning.

Board Member Callender: Asked for clarification on Harrison Associates' role in the survey, confirming that the city handled traffic counts and parking, while Harrison only collected and compiled questionnaire responses. Noted that Harrison's work cost several thousand dollars, less than half of their contract, and expressed concern over the small sample size of 161 surveys and limited demographic reach, including the farmers market and an online survey with restricted answer options. Raised concerns that recommended amenities, such as additional restrooms, seating, and covered areas, could attract overnight use by the unhoused, citing existing safety issues and fire risk. Questioned the parking study's timing, noting it did not include Mondays when jury duty increases occupancy, and asked for clarification on which property TAMC plans to transfer to the city.

Grant Leonard: Explained that TAMC purchased property for the ITC to complete the Kickstart project and transferred it to the City. Added that TAMC also purchased the future layover facility, which will be transferred to the City once construction is complete.

Board Member Callender: Noted concerns about traffic at the Lincoln and Market Street intersection, emphasizing its size, congestion during rush hour, and limited space for curb extensions. Pointed out that Market Street is Highway 183, involving Caltrans, and expressed concern that extending curbs on Lincoln could further restrict traffic flow. He asked whether such changes would require reducing lanes from four to two.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed that Market Street is under Caltrans jurisdiction and stated that any operational or pedestrian improvements would need to go through Caltrans' review process and comply with their design standards.

Board Member Shim: Asked whether MST plans to transfer the existing transit center on Lincoln to the ITC, noting her concerns as a nearby resident about the concentration of seven bus lines and the resulting carbon impacts in the area.

Grant Leonard: Clarified that relocating the current transit center is not the plan, but that MST is conducting a study on potential transit center relocation sites, with the ITC being one possible option.

Board Member Hirahara: He said he took the survey and felt it was limited in addressing intended outcomes. He noted that while the report incorporated the HRB resolution and addressed many of its questions, some issues such as the potential expansion of the Freight Depot for the Welcome Center remain unanswered and still need to be addressed.

Chair Mazgai: Commented on the draft ITC existing conditions memo, emphasizing the need for clearer Greyhound ticketing, kiosks, signage, and real-time bus information to reduce confusion and improve ridership. He noted safety and accessibility concerns with waiting for buses outside or traveling multiple blocks, particularly for seniors, families, and people with disabilities, and stated that MST should ideally be located at the ITC as a true transportation hub. He also discussed the Welcome Center building, noting its shared use with city storage and Aerial Theater, questioned the need for on-site storage, and stressed that the primary focus of the ITC should be supporting train and Greyhound services. He supported many placemaking ideas but stressed that the historic train station should be restored, not changed. He favored a clearly visible Greyhound stop and kiosk to reduce visitor confusion, questioned the playground as an effective use of space for mostly adult riders, reiterated the need for stronger signage at key entry points, and raised ongoing concerns about security and unresolved illegal encampments at the site.

Board Member Callender: Raised concerns that the proposed playground could eliminate nearby parking, particularly affecting less mobile visitors to the mayor's house, and noted the need for additional accessible parking.

Board Member Shim: Expressed concern about the idea of adding housing on the property, questioning whether existing sewage and underground infrastructure could support it and citing past soil toxicity issues in the nearby Chinatown area.

Chair Mazgai: Chair opened public comment.

Peter Casavan: Introduced himself as president of Casavan Architects and expressed disappointment with the report, calling it shallow and lacking meaningful community input. He highlighted that prior plans, including the Downtown Vibrancy Plan and the Economic Development Element, emphasize connecting Bataan Park to downtown and the ITC, promoting transit-oriented development, urban plazas, and place-themed districts. He stressed that the survey does not replace authentic community engagement and recommended involving local stakeholders such as Heritage Park

shareholders, the Chamber, Salinas City Center Improvement Association, and SPARC to ensure genuine input for a true community plan.

Denise Estrada: Thanked the subcommittee for supporting Heritage Park but criticized the lack of advance notice and the fragmented master plan review. She noted past stakeholder input was ignored, the survey reached very few residents, and emphasized the need for a cohesive plan integrating committees, funding, and prior community visions. She also raised concerns about the playground, security, recent violence, vandalism, and homeless impacts, calling for round-the-clock security.

Bridget McGrath-Massey: Highlighted the Welcome Center's potential to attract visitors and educate residents, noted signage issues, and urged the board to unify efforts to ensure past investments of time and resources produce real results.

Colleen Bailey: Emphasized leveraging Salinas' assets for economic development, noting the Heritage Center and Welcome Center rank highly on TripAdvisor despite no signage. With Caltrans arriving by 2028, she highlighted the opportunity to create a safe, welcoming space that attracts visitors to the Welcome Center and surrounding attractions, boosting foot traffic and helping address local crime, and encouraged collective efforts to improve the area.

Chair Mazgai: Closed public comment.

Grant Leonard: Thanked the public and board for their comments, noting the memorandums are drafts and the public comment period will likely close within the month. He said revisions will continue with completion expected in the spring and reminded the board to review the subcommittee's draft resolution before deciding whether to act now or wait until the memorandums are finalized.

Board Member Hirahara: He asked whether the naming process referenced in the report had started.

Lisa Murphy: Clarified that the naming process has not started. A letter must first be submitted to City Council, then it will be agendaized with the Library and Community Services Board, which will prepare a staff report before it moves to City Council.

Board Member Hirahara: Noted concerns that the consultant's work was incomplete, particularly regarding a framework or timeline for the naming process. He said questions remain about the Freight Depot expansion, signage responsibilities and costs, and who is accountable for improving area appeal, such as enhancing Amtrak signage. He emphasized that if the report is accepted, these issues will need to be addressed later, but any formal action must wait until it is properly agendaized under the Brown Act.

ID#26-013 Administrative Report on the public Review Draft Vision Salinas 2040 Salinas General Plan

Grant Leonard: He outlined the city's first comprehensive general plan update since 2002, incorporating recent plans, the first Climate Action Plan, and Environmental Justice Element. The plan covers housing, transportation, economic development, parks, safety, and more, guided by inclusivity, prosperity, and community engagement.

He noted extensive public outreach, including workshops, pop-ups, and multilingual efforts, with feedback informing policies that will shape land use and zoning code updates. He explained the general plan update turns community goals into policies guiding development. It's organized into three pillars built environment, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic systems with each chapter covering assets, goals, policies, and implementation through 2040. Updates include reorganized themes, alignment with recent plans, a new flexible "place types" land use system, the 2023 housing element, and a focus on transportation. He noted the 2002 plan focused on congestion, while the update emphasizes sidewalks, bike/trail networks, roadway efficiency, and climate resilience. For this committee, historic preservation, cultural districts, Mills Act, and tourism initiatives are included. The draft, released December 19, 2025 covers all chapters, with economic development, climate action, and environmental impact sections still being finalized, and the full plan expected in spring. He outlined the next steps: in Q2, continue public engagement, hold study sessions with boards, commissions, and community, and complete the first phase of the zoning code update by June 30. Phases two and three follow general plan adoption. Through summer and fall, the formal general plan approval process begins, with final approval and next zoning code phases completed by 2028.

Chair Mazgai: Asked if the 2040 plan aims to fully achieve goals by then or just make progress.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed both chapters include implementation timelines, though some programs may be ongoing or revisited. General plans are typically updated every 10–20 years, so the next update will likely begin around 2040.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked if the historic components in the plan are complete or if anything is missing.

Board Member Munoz: Asked when the historic component and 2040 vision will be available for review.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed the historic elements are in the Community Design chapter, released December 19, 2025 and attached to the agenda for review.

ID#26-014 Historic Plaque Designs

Chair Mazgai: Noted that the purpose of today's review is to narrow sign options rather than evaluate many examples in detail. More information on costs, timing, and funding will be presented at a later meeting. He shared examples the Glikbarg building plaque by Native Sons of the Golden West, a bronze Monterey home plaque with the city logo, and a recent Hebron Family Center plaque. He emphasized that Salinas should have signs that are unique, informative, and visually appealing.

Board Member Munoz: Liked the San Juan Bautista example for its completeness and QR code for historical information.

Chair Mazgai: Showed a wooden plaque in Pacific Grove noting a home's name, construction date, and architect. Mentioned cost differences and suggested involving

local schools or groups in production. Highlighted Salinas' chrysanthemum logo as a potential design element. Shared a Santa Cruz County example made from MDF, durable outdoors, with a nominal homeowner fee (\$210), noting Salinas could adapt materials, shape, and colors.

Board Member Munoz: Highlighted a building with three plaques showing historical information, including a QR code for deeper context. Suggested developing maps of historic sites, similar to San Juan Bautista, to accompany the plaques and support heritage walking tours.

Chair Mazgai: Noted Watsonville's model, where brochures and online maps guide tours. Agreed HRB should move toward promoting heritage tourism with accessible online resources, while print options remain optional.

Board Member Munoz: Suggested placing plaques on fences to preserve homeowners' privacy while still showcasing historical homes.

Chair Mazgai: Clarified that what looks like two signs is actually one divided sign and asked for board comments.

Board Member Callender: Praised inclusion of QR codes and city logo for consistency. Recommended providing homeowners options for plaque material—bronze, wood, or mid-cost alternative so it suits style, budget, and landscaping.

Chair Mazgai: Confirmed preference for a single plaque per building that includes all information, rather than multiple plaques.

Board Member Shim: Opposes including QR codes on plaques, citing aesthetic concerns. Feels QR codes make plaques look commercial and detract from historic ambiance; homeowners can research on their own.

Board Member Callender: Prefers split plaques one for historic info, another optional with QR code and number for walking tours so homeowners can choose. Numbers may discourage participation if included on private homes.

Board Member Hirahara: Agrees QR codes and numbers should be optional add-ons for walking tours, with homeowner consent. Suggests small wooden plaques for residences and larger bronze/wood plaques for prominent or National Register buildings.

Chair Mazgai: Notes QR codes may become obsolete and prefers single plaques with optional add-ons. Agreed to use the San Juan-style bronze example for homework purposes and review wooden plaque option next.

Denise Estrada: Suggested keeping the plaque design consistent while offering material options bronze, aluminum, or wood so walkers can easily identify historic signs. Noted that less durable materials would require more frequent replacement.

Chair Mazgai: Confirmed agreement to use the displayed design and price it in three materials—bronze, wood, and another option for later cost discussion.

ID#26-015 Salinas Art Collection

Grant Leonard: Suggested tabling the discussion on the city’s art collection until next month, noting he lacked full background.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed to move the item to next week’s meeting.

Board Member Munoz: Asked the city/mayor for options on making the art collection publicly accessible, suggesting the Women’s Building as a potential display space.

Chair Mazgai: Supported the idea, noting the city owns the building, but some restoration would be needed.

Board Member Shim: Recommended including artist bios or publications with the displayed art, similar to past practices at the Mark Hopkins Institute.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed, noting additional research and documentation could enhance the collection’s presentation, emphasizing the need to catalog current inventory first.

Board Members Reports and Comments

Board members discussed the importance of following Secretary of Rehabilitation Standard 6 for historic preservation, emphasizing repair with “like-for-like” materials, safety, and sustainability. They agreed training is needed—potentially a 3-hour seminar or webinar—for board members and the permit center staff to ensure proper guidance for historic property owners. Grant Leonard will follow up to organize this.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked Chair Mazgai if the HRB agenda will be on next month’s agenda?

Chair Mazgai: Confirmed.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

Confirmation of attendance for next regular meeting on March 2, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.

Michael Mazgai
Chairperson

Grant Leonard
Executive Secretary

