

**REPORT TO THE
CITY COUNCIL
*City of Salinas, California***

DATE: June 17, 2014

FROM: Gary Petersen, Public Works Director

THROUGH: Robert C. Russell, City Engineer

BY: James Serrano, Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: MARINA-SALINAS CORRIDOR PREFERRED ALIGNMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a Resolution supporting the preferred alignment through Salinas for the Marina-Salinas Corridor.

DISCUSSION:

On November 19, 2013, Council received information on planning activities regarding the Marina-Salinas Corridor from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC). The objective of the planning work by TAMC with all jurisdictions along the corridor is two-fold:

1. Identify a preferred alignment of the corridor; and
2. Develop a corridor plan that would serve to guide development and improvements along the corridor that would support multi-modal travel.

Planning for multi-modal transportation options along important regional corridors helps support more sustainable transportation networks that do not rely only on travel by car. The future multi-modal corridor plan would introduce policies that would support complete streets principles which incorporate provisions for other forms of transportation including walking, bicycling, transit use, rail, and their connectivity to other modes of travel. These policies, if adhered to, would improve transportation choices, reduce traffic congestion, and improve air quality. The corridor plan, when completed, would also include supporting guidance for land use considerations that in turn supports multi-modal travel.

The hope is that, in the coming years, jurisdictions served and connected by the multi-modal corridor would have efficient transportation options in comparison to other existing corridors such as Blanco Road and Highway 68 which are gradually becoming more congested. The Salinas General Plan Traffic Study identified Blanco Road as needing to be widened at the build-out of the City in order to maintain an acceptable level of service. This road serves the agriculture and the tourism industries and is also a commuter route for Salinas residents to jobs on the Peninsula and vice versa. There are challenges however to this option as the needed right of way for road widening would come at the expense of highly productive agricultural land. There is, therefore, little support from the agricultural entities along the corridor for a widening of Blanco Road.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) received a Caltrans Planning Grant to identify an alternative transportation corridor that would not only provide various options for travel along the corridor, meet the transportation need anticipated by growth projections of surrounding cities, but also one that would meet the sustainability goals of the region and reduce impact to climate change. Future updates to the general plans in this region including that of Salinas will require complying with the same sustainability goals and greenhouse gas reduction targets that are prescribed by the State. The planning activities for the corridor therefore support future city planning activities to update the Salinas General Plan.

Preferred Alignment

TAMC's presentation in November showed potential alignments to be considered in the planning process. Several corridor alignments were considered generally through the former Fort Ord along Imjin Parkway or Inter-Garrison Road, then to Reservation Road, then to alternate connections to Salinas via Blanco Road, Davis Road or Highway 68. In Salinas, the corridor is desired to connect to the MST Salinas Transit Station and the Train Station either through South Main Street, Alisal Street or Market Street. The map presented to Council in November showing the alternate alignments is shown as Attachment 1.

Since that time, TAMC has had much work with its member agencies and held community meetings both on the Peninsula and in Salinas. The strong concerns of the ag industry on further widening of Blanco Road are particularly important and were heard in the planning process. Other alternate routes (Reservation to Highway 68 and Davis Road to Market Street) do not lend themselves to pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Attachment 2 shows the emergent preferred alignment of the Marina Salinas Corridor through Salinas as Blanco Road west of Davis Road and then Alisal Street up to downtown, then Lincoln Avenue northward to the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC). Blanco Road is shown as a dashed line to indicate an alternate route for Bus Rapid Transit to Salinas. Bicycle travel facilities are proposed for the Reservation-Davis-Blanco-Alisal Corridor.

Staff supports the preferred alignment for the following reasons:

1. Meets planning goals. The coming General Plan update will have to comply with required GHG (Greenhouse Gas reduction) targets as well as incorporate required sustainable community strategies. The Marina-Salinas Corridor Plan intends to help meet these goals.
2. Supports Downtown Vibrancy. The preferred alignment is consistent with the draft Salinas Vibrancy Plan. City staff is working with downtown stakeholders to improve circulation conditions in downtown that support high pedestrian activity, bicycle travel, and access to transit use that would, in turn, support downtown economic activity. The draft Vibrancy Plan recommendation for Salinas downtown streets that would provide for all street users is consistent with the Marina-Salinas Corridor plan.
3. Improves street safety. A multi-modal corridor along the preferred alignment will help alleviate safety concerns along various streets. Both the Marina-Salinas Corridor Plan and the Salinas Vibrancy Plan are anticipated to make recommendations that will provide benefits for the area in terms of slower traffic speeds, better sight visibility for residents and downtown customers

existing driveways, better sight lines at intersections, and shorter crossing distances for students attending Hartnell College and Roosevelt Elementary School. Around the Government Center and downtown Salinas, a multi-modal focus in addition to improving conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, will also improve street safety conditions that are conducive to transit use and improved transit service.

4. Strengthens the Academic Link. Inherent in the Marina-Salinas Corridor plan is a link between educational institutions of CSUMB and the Hartnell College's Main Campus. Future Bus Rapid Transit Service may not only serve this link but also link to the Hartnell East Campus which provides students access to the agriculture and technology programs that the City supports. The Hartnell College West and East Campuses are currently served by the MST trolley providing connections for both campuses along Alisal Street with free bus rides to Hartnell students.
5. Connects to the Train. The Marina-Salinas Corridor alignment connects to the ITC and train station which are both hubs for regional travel.

TAMC staff is therefore requesting the City Council's concurrence with the preferred alignment. This is a necessary step before TAMC can enter into the design phase of the Corridor Plan which would produce the guiding policies for the corridor.

Next Steps

After receiving the City's concurrence on the preferred alignment, TAMC will begin work on the strategies/policies that support a multi-modal corridor and complete streets design for the Marina-Salinas Corridor. These recommendations will be brought back to the Commission and Council at a future date.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

The preferred corridor alignment does not make changes to the Salinas General Plan Circulation System. Instead, the planning efforts hope to establish a strategy for the creation of this multi-modal corridor. Such a strategy may support efforts of the City to meet new requirements for the future update of the General Plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

TAMC staff met with City staff and Doug Yount, project manager for the Economic Development Element (EDE). There is no inconsistency between the proposed Marina-Salinas Corridor and the EDE.

ISSUE:

Shall the Council adopt a Resolution supporting the preferred alignment of the Marina-Salinas Corridor through Salinas and encourage TAMC to continue with the corridor planning process?

COMMISSION, COMMITTEE, COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Traffic And Transportation Commission Review

As this report is being prepared, the Traffic and Transportation Commission is scheduled to consider the Marina-Salinas Corridor alignment at their meeting on June 12, 2014. Staff will provide a report on the actions of the Traffic and Transportation Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The development of the Marina-Salinas Corridor Plan is funded by a State Planning Grant and regional planning funds. There are no impacts to local funds.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS:

State monies that fund the Marina-Salinas Corridor Plan have associated deadlines for the use of funds. With concurrence with the preferred alignment, TAMC can begin to develop the policies and strategies for the multi-modal corridor which the City may incorporate in our own upcoming General Plan update.

ALTERNATIVES/IMPLICATIONS:

Council may choose not to support the preferred alignment and provide comments to City and TAMC staff.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS:

Supporting safe and efficient transportation strategies such as developing multi-modal corridors increases choice for Salinas residents and travelers, considers the needs of all road users, promotes efficiency and safety in the local and regional transportation systems, and would be a step in meeting State requirements for averting climate change. This meets Council's goals of Effective Mobility and Excellent Infrastructure. In addition, the multi-modal corridor plan contributes to the advancement of Council Goals of Economic Diversity and Prosperity and a Healthy, Vibrant, Sustainable and Green Community.

CONCLUSIONS:

The Council is recommended to adopt a Resolution supporting the preferred alignment of the Marina-Salinas Corridor through Salinas and encourage TAMC to continue with the corridor planning process.

Distribution:
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
Department Directors

Back Up Pages:
Resolution
Exhibit 1- Corridor Alternatives: Nov 19 2013 Council Meeting
Exhibit 2- Preferred alignment for the Marina Salinas Corridor

RESOLUTION NO. _____ (N.C.S.)

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PREFERRED ALIGNMENT OF THE MARINA-SALINAS CORRIDOR THROUGH SALINAS

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2013, the Salinas City Council received a presentation from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) describing the planning effort for a multi-modal regional corridor that includes segments through the City; and

WHEREAS, TAMC has worked with member jurisdictions' staff and held community meetings in Salinas and the Monterey peninsula to receive input in the Marina-Salinas Corridor Plan; and

WHEREAS, taking into account the feedback received from jurisdictions, a preferred alignment has been proposed for the Marina-Salinas Corridor; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2014, the Traffic and Transportation Commission received a report from staff and thereafter recommend support for said corridor alignment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council that the Council adopts a Resolution supporting the preferred alignment of the Marina-Salinas Corridor through Salinas; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council encourages TAMC to continue with the corridor planning and report back as appropriate.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 17th day of June 2014, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Joe Gunter, Mayor

ATTEST:

Patricia M. Barajas, City Clerk

Attachment:

Exhibit 1: MARINA-SALINAS CORRIDOR PREFERRED ALIGNMENT