CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2024

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FROM: LISA BRINTON, DIRECTOR

THROUGH: GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER

BY: OSCAR RESENDIZ, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

TITLE: ALISAL DISTRICT IDENTITY MASTER PLAN (ADIMP)

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a resolution accepting the Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP) as a strategic planning document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP) aims to strengthen the cultural and physical identity of the Alisal neighborhood to better match the cultural richness, community spirit, and diversity of the area. The ADIMP offers guidelines for branding (graphic identity) public art, and streetscape, open space and façade improvements.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2019, the City Council unanimously accepted the Alisal Vibrancy Plan (AVP) as a strategic planning document. The AVP is an action-oriented, comprehensive strategy for Salinas' Alisal (East Salinas) neighborhoods. The Plan's purpose is to communicate the collective vision, goals, and desires of those who live, work, worship, and shop in the Alisal. AVP implementation has been focused on five priority areas: appearance, cleanliness, safety and infrastructure, parks and open space, and economic development.

The establishment of district identity themes, branding, color palette, and commercial corridor façade and public art design guidelines are AVP actions identified by the community to improve appearance in the Alisal. Working collaboratively with the community, staff prepared a Request for Proposals in October 2022 to prepare a district identity master plan for the Alisal. Proposals were received in November 2022. Urban Fields Studios was the selected consultant team and began work on the Alisal District Identity Master Plan in February 2023.

ADIMP Objectives and Content

The primary objectives of the Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP) are to further AVP goals, policies and actions related to the community's identity as a unique cultural, arts and shopping district, and to improve the Alisal commercial corridor appearance through greening, gateway elements, banners and signage and public art. The ADIMP includes individual chapters focusing on the following topics:

1. Introduction
2. Public Realm Design Guidelines
3. Storefront Design Guidelines
4. District Graphic Identity
5. Public Art for the Alisal
6. Implementation

The ADIMP has been written to provide ways for the City of Salinas and the Alisal community to strengthen cultural identity with physical improvements to the district. The Alisal District Identity Master Plan specifically supports investment in amenities with guidelines for a more intentional incorporation of cultural identity and community heritage to strengthen the sense of place for the Alisal.

Intended to be an action-oriented plan, the ADIMP concludes with an Implementation chapter (Chapter 6) that lists actions that can be taken to improve the District Identity of the Alisal. The Implementation Matrix, provided as an attachment to this staff report, aligns recommended actions to AVP Goals, identifies a lead department and/or organization, estimates cost, and provides a timeframe for action; on-going, short-term, or long-term. The estimated cost to implement all short-term actions ranges from $650,000 to $1,550,00. The implementation strategy builds on existing momentum from recent planning efforts, infrastructure and art projects, and successful funding from State and Federal grant program applications. Ultimately, the implementation of public realm improvements throughout the Alisal district will require continued focus from the City and the community to ensure the ADIMP and the Alisal Vibrancy Plan are successfully implemented.

Community Outreach and Engagement

The Alisal's identity is best defined by its community. Engagement for this project sought to include local artists, business owners, the Alisal Vibrancy Plan (AVP) Implementation Committee, schools, and the general public. The outreach for this project built upon the foundation of community engagement undertaken for the AVP, and focused on what the Alisal District identity could be.

The outreach efforts included:

- **Focus Groups:** Two stakeholder meeting focus groups took place on May 31 and June 6, 2023. They included 15 local artists and the AVP implementation Committee. The purpose

of the meetings was to introduce the project and to vet three initial ideas for the graphic identity of the area.

- **District Graphic Identity Survey**: The three initial ideas for the District Graphic Identity were shared with the greater community through an online survey. The survey resulted in 84 responses. Outreach about the survey utilized the City's website, social media, and notification lists.
- **Community Events**: The survey and the project were shared at nine pop-ups held at the following locations, reaching a total of 278 people:
    o Pop-Up #1: Los Abuelitos Senior Apartments (7/20/23) - 22 participants
    o Pop-Up #2: National Night Out-Closter Park (8/1/23) - 60 participants
    o Pop-Up #3: Food Bank-Firehouse Recreation Center (8/10/23) - 20 participants
    o Pop-Up #4: Firehouse Recreation Center (8/15/23) - 12 participants
    o Pop-Up #5: Everyone's Harvest Farmers Market (8/23/23) - 30 participants
    o Pop-Up #6: César Chávez Library (8/24/23) - 20 participants
    o Pop-Up #7: César Chávez Library (10/5/23) - 5 participants
    o Pop-Up #8: César Chávez Library (10/10/23) - 4 participants
    o Pop-Up #9: Ciclovía (10/15/23) - 105 participants

- **Canvassing at Local Businesses:** The team went door to door talking to local businesses owners and tenants to gather input and share ideas and information about upcoming events.
- **Design Workshop:** A design workshop was held on September 30, 2023, at the Firehouse Recreation Center that included stations with each of the components of the Alisal District Identity Master Plan (graphic identity, public realm improvements, façade improvement, and public art) displayed for discussion. The consultant team was available to field questions and gather feedback from the community about the ideas for each component. A total of 42 participants attended the workshop.
- **Collaboration with Local Organizations:** The team worked closely with local community organizations, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders to create awareness of the Alisal District Identity Master Plan.
- **Multilingual Communication:** All materials were provided in both English and Spanish and translators were available for all events.
- **Public Art Commission:** Two presentations were made to the Commission. The first presentation was on August 21, 2023, regarding the Public Art Guidelines for the ADMIP, the second on May 20, 2024, presented the public draft Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP).
- **Housing and Land Use Committee:** presentation on June 4, 2024, presenting public draft Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP).
- **AVP Implementation Committee:** presentation on July 9, 2024, presenting public draft Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP).
- **Planning Commission:** presentation on August 7, 2024, presenting public draft Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP).

A summary of the feedback gathered through community engagement was incorporated in context by topic in each chapter of the ADIMP.

Current Alisal Vibrancy Plan Projects:

Although the ADIMP is just being finalized, the City is already moving forward with multiple AVP improvement projects that are incorporating themes identified in the ADIMP. These include:

- Temporary trash/recycle vinyl graphic with matte lamination wraps (AMOR Salinas on 10 corrals) along Alisal Street.
- Clean California Local Beautification implementation
  - Tree planting
  - Installation of additional trash/recycle corrals
  - Call for photography for installation new banners along East Alisal Street
  - Upcoming calls for art at:
    - Closter Park
    - Skyway Roundabout
    - Bread Box Recreation Center
    - Trash/recycle corrals

Next Steps for the Alisal Identity Master Plan (ADIMP)

Following adoption, staff will work with the community to implement the ADIMP recommendations. Implementation will include continued community engagement, as well as consultation with the Planning Commission, Public Art Commission, Housing and Land Use Commission, and City Council.

Establishment of an Alisal Vibrancy Plan Façade Improvement Pilot Program is one of the first implementation actions. The Façade Pilot Program will offer micro-grants and interest-free forgivable loans for qualifying façade improvements, with a goal of assisting businesses along primary commercial corridors in the Alisal Neighborhood. Approval of the Alisal Vibrancy Plan Façade Improvement Pilot Program is also being considered by Council at the November 19, 2024, meeting. Following Council approval, staff anticipates launching the program in December 2024 or January 2025.

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 preparation of the ADIMP furthers the City Council Strategic Plan Goals of Economic Development and Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability. The ADIMP implements AVP priorities related to corridor appearance, cleanliness, and district branding and identity. The ADIMP will provide a cohesive framework for creating an attractive corridor through greening, gateways at City entry points to the Alisal area, public art including murals, and promoting the Alisal as a cultural shopping district.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Community Development Department staff (Economic Development and Advanced Planning & Project Implementation Divisions) led development of the ADIMP with the support of Public Works and Library and Community Services staff and community stakeholders. The Legal Department also assisted with finalizing the Agreement for Professional Services.

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

There is no direct fiscal impact from accepting the Alisal District Identity Master Plan. Continued implementation of the AVP and ADIMP will result in future project costs, which are anticipated to be funded through a combination of grants and the Alisal Vibrancy Plan Implementation CIP 9246.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution accepting the Alisal District Identity Master Plan (ADIMP) as a strategic planning document.
2. Alisal District Identity Master Plan
3. Implementation Matrix