



CITY OF SALINAS
FINANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: MAY 13, 2025

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FROM: LISA BRINTON, DIRECTOR

TITLE: FUTURE GROWTH AREA AND HOUSING PERMIT PROCESSING AND
SMALL BUSINESS NAVIGATION

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Receive the administrative report and provide direction to staff. No action required.

DISCUSSION:

Future Growth Area and Housing Permit Processing

To date the City has received eleven (11) applications to develop in the Future Growth Area North of Boronda Road (FGA). Applications are for the initial phases of development in the West, Central and East Specific Plan areas, each with deadlines for processing. With buildout of the FGA to be phased over the next 20 plus years, additional project management and technical capacity is needed to manage the complex and time-sensitive processing of applications and cross-department coordination to expedite application review and approval.

The FY 2024-25 Budget includes a 0.5 Senior Planner. Recruitment for a part-time position has been unsuccessful as applicants are seeking full-time work. Given the current and anticipated future volume of development applications in the FGA, a full-time Senior Planner with technical skills processing large development applications and project management and coordination experience is needed and included in the FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget to expedite entitlement and permitting approvals to facilitate housing production and commercial development in the FGA.

A primary task of the proposed full-time Senior Planner position will be to convene weekly cross department coordination meetings to review, address and facilitate decision making and approval of FGA and housing development applications. The FGA Coordination team will include identified staff from Community Development, Public Works and Fire Departments as primary reviewers. Secondary decision-making departments (Library and Community Services, Police, Administration and the City Attorney) will receive regular written updates and will be included as appropriate in the review and approval process. This level of coordination will facilitate consistent

communication as needed to ensure the efficient processing and approval of applications that will result in housing development.

Permit Services Staffing

The West and Central Areas of the Future Growth Area (FGA) allow for the construction of between 6,827 and 8,251 residential units and 1,061,200 square feet of commercial space. The permitting work for these FGA areas will likely more than quadruple the average number of building permits processed by the Permit Center in a single year. In 2025, additional Administrative, Plan Review and Inspection staffing and/or consultant support will be needed by all Permit Center divisions to keep pace with the increased workload and meet customer expectations.

In 2024, residential permits comprised 80% of total permits applied for and 78% of all inspections. To improve workflow, staff will work towards creating specialized residential teams to improve delivery of residential projects. In addition, staff will also endeavor to establish over the counter plan check days for limited permit review and issuance. Implementation of both these activities require that the two currently vacant plan check positions are filled.

Furthermore, a lot of work is underway to train and align staff priorities to what is needed to support the development and growth of the community for 2025 and beyond.

Small Business Navigation

The Community Development Analyst – Limited Term has been funded for the past four plus years through CDBG Covid funds, which will end June 30, 2025. Due to the critical nature of this position, the FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget reflects making this a permanent position and reclassifying it as a Business Navigator. As such, the Business Navigator will continue to provide much needed support to entrepreneurs and small business owners, administer grant and micro-loan programs, and act as the city liaison to SUBA. Assistance includes navigating regulatory processes and connection to technical and financial assistance provided through small business support providers. Over the past four years, this CDA-LT position has moved back and forth between Advanced Planning and Project Implementation (APPI) and Economic Development (ED) divisions. With the move of the ED division back to Administration, this position will remain in the Community Development Department under APPI as the Business Navigator works closely with the APPI on economic development and small business support activities identified in the General Plan Economic Development Element and Alisal Vibrancy and Chinatown Revitalization community plans.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

While the Business Navigator position will be funded by the General Fund, the impact will be cost neutral because an Economic Development Analyst position currently funded by the General Fund is being deleted from the FY 2025-26 workforce allocation. Staff will continue to assess the Economic Development Division staffing needs and bring back any recommendations to City Council.

The current 0.5 FTE Senior Planner position is funded by the General Fund and is incorporated into the FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget. Due to the FGA/Housing needs, staff is recommending an addition of a 0.5 FTE Senior Planner funded by the Permit Services Enterprise Fund. The additional resource is necessary to the FGA/Housing production operations specifically, in a project manager capacity to coordinate applications, comments from Permit Services, Fire and Development Engineering through the entitlement and building permitting processes.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. PowerPoint Presentation