



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, DIRECTOR

TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ELEMENT

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to accept the Administrative Report on the draft EIR for the Economic Development Element.

RECOMMENDATION:

No recommended action is required at this time. City Council will take action once the final EIR is completed and the Economic Development Element is presented for adoption.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On September 5, 2017, the City of Salinas officially circulated its draft Environmental Impact Report (“DEIR”) for the Economic Development Element in order to solicit public comments. The proposed project involves general plan amendments needed to formally adopt the EDE a new element of the City of Salinas General Plan. The proposed Economic Development Element (the “EDE”) was originally completed in April 2014 and accepted, but not adopted, by the Salinas City Council in June 2014. The document was updated in 2017.

The DEIR was also transmitted to the City Council for review on September 5th. The Administrative Report is to provide a brief overview of the DEIR and a synopsis of the EDE adoption process.

BACKGROUND:

The EDE reflects the City’s recognition of the desirability of adding to its General Plan a comprehensive policy framework that focuses and directs the City’s economic development

activities. If adopted in total after the completion of environmental review, the EDE would guide future decisions of the City Council and the community in all aspects of City policy related to economic development. The City's primary interest is to raise economic development priorities to a legislative, General Plan policy level, and by doing so, ensure that economic development is considered in all City Council planning and decision making actions.

The DEIR was circulated on September 5, 2017 for a 45 day comment period, which ends on October 19, 2017. Late November, early December 2017, a Final EIR (FEIR), including response to comments, and the proposed General Plan amendments to adopt the EDE as a general plan element will be prepared and presented to the Planning Commission to consider a recommendation to City Council. The City Council will consider certification of the FEIR and General Plan amendments mid December. The intent is that the EDE will then guide the future General Plan update, which is to begin mid 2018.

When initially released for public review in 2014, the draft Economic Development Element identified the general locations of conceptual Economic Opportunity Areas. These Economic Opportunity Areas encompassed existing developed areas within the city limits, developed and undeveloped areas outside the city limits, but within the existing Sphere of Influence, and undeveloped areas located outside the existing Sphere of Influence (SOI). Many of the economic development strategies and policies include approaches for enhancing economic development within the Economic Opportunity Areas.

Subsequent to the City Council's acceptance of the draft EDE as a strategic planning document in June 2014, a more detailed analysis of the EDE land use direction was conducted. The analysis included refinement of Economic Opportunity Areas, calculation of acreages, assignment of land use designations to the areas located outside the City's existing Sphere of Influence, and calculation of new vacant land/development capacity needed to meet projected long-term employment demand.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the EDE is to provide policy-based guidance for economic development designed to promote the long-term future prosperity of the City. The proposed EDE reemphasizes the General Plan's land use strategy of prioritizing infill development and revitalization within the city limits and Sphere of Influence. However, the proposed EDE also provides for new land supply in order to support the 45,500 new jobs needed through buildout of the existing General Plan. These areas of new land supply are termed "Target Areas" and were derived from the Economic Opportunity Areas (EOA) identified through the EDE development process and subsequent preparation of the EIR.

New development capacity would be directed to six (6) “Target Areas”. The Target Areas contain a total of 558 acres of land. One of the Target Areas (115 acres) is located within the city limits. The remaining five (5) Target Areas (443 acres) are located outside the City’s Sphere of Influence, but adjacent to it. A total of 5,255,959 square feet of new building capacity could be accommodated within the six (6) Target Areas. This development is projected to generate approximately 8,981 jobs.

All future individual development projects proposed within any of the six (6) Target Areas will undergo additional CEQA review to examine their project-specific environmental impacts. Future development proposed within the one Target Area located within the city limits could then be considered and approved by the City. The City does not have land use control over the five (5) Target Areas located outside the Sphere of Influence. For development of these Target Areas to occur in the future, the City must request and receive approval from the Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County to amend the City’s Sphere of Influence to include the Target Areas and to annex the Target Areas. The City would then have authority to approve future development proposals for these areas. The five (5) Target Areas would be considered new Future Growth Areas per the General Plan, and would therefore require a specific plan to guide future development and the approval of future development proposals.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The adoption of the Economic Development Element has a potential to result in physical changes to the environment. Thus, these impacts have been evaluated in the draft Program Environmental Impact Report as required under CEQA. The draft EIR was circulated on September 5, 2017 for a 45 day comment period, which ends on October 19, 2017 in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15087.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The preparation of the draft EIR for the Economic Development Element will lead to the adoption of the Economic Development Element, an explicit objective in the City Council’s strategic plan and aligned with the goal of Economic Prosperity and Diversity.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The development of the EIR for the Economic Development Element has been fully funded by City Council. There is no fiscal or sustainability impact related to the Administrative Report.

ATTACHMENTS:

Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Economic Development Element

<https://www.cityofsalinas.org/our-city-services/community-development/documents-public-review>