

2015
through
2018



Advancing the Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan: The First Three Years of Progress



Advancing the Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan: The First Three Years of Progress

Dear Friend of Downtown Salinas:

The Downtown Vibrancy Plan is a City of Salinas initiative for economic renewal developed through a multi-year process, countless hours of volunteer community and stakeholder input, all wrapped up by consultants and city staff and blessed by unanimous vote of the Salinas City Council. Put simply, it is a road map to transform Downtown into a safe and pleasant place to live, work and play. Progress towards these goals will attract housing developers, bring in new employers, and strengthen existing businesses.

In 2015, the City Council established the Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA) as the lead advocate for implementation of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. Funding for SCCIA activities comes from assessments paid by the owners of the 219 properties within the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District boundaries.

How are we doing three years later? Has there been progress?

Urban cores of California cities face significant challenges, and Downtown Salinas has its share of vacancy, blighted buildings, and vagrancy. The association board and committee members have worked tirelessly on the complicated task of running a “city within a city” while Salinas itself suffers dwindling resources and capacity for providing even basic services.

These volunteer leaders have strengthened relationships and partnerships with elected and appointed officials at multiple local governments with interests in Downtown Salinas. We continue to emphasize that Salinas deserves the opportunity and prosperity that comes with the robust growth of good jobs, decent housing, and accessible space to gather and recreate.

Truthfully, some days we feel like a glorified janitorial service. But then an entrepreneur opens a new business or expands, a vacant building is purchased by an energetic investor, and thousands show up for parades and Farmers' Markets. We are everyone's downtown and Salinas is still the heart of the valley.

We hope you'll take a look through the report for a snapshot of where we are three years in. In the private sector, patience is uncommon, but we're learning to take the long view.

Finally, please take a moment to read the names of your neighbors, colleagues and friends who form the network of volunteers dedicated to this great endeavor.

Warmly,

Catherine Kobrinsky Evans
President
November 14, 2018



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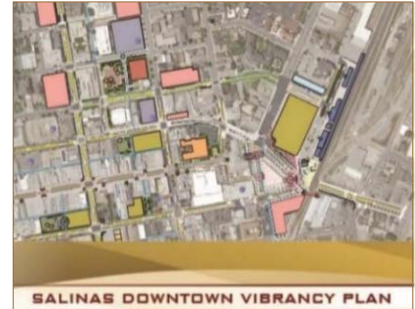




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DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY AND THE SALINAS CITY CENTER IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

The “Downtown Vibrancy Plan” is the foundational planning document for the future of Downtown Salinas, and the Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA) is the organization that works with the City of Salinas and other parties to implement it.



Four Major Objectives of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan

1	Stimulating Development Activity: amending the Salinas Municipal Code and reforming the government permitting process to encourage private investments in Downtown properties, including investments in historic and long-vacant buildings.
2	Destination Downtown: (1) improving mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and vehicles; and (2) slowing vehicle traffic and directing it through Downtown rather than allowing fast-moving, one-way traffic to bypass Downtown.
3	Building the Heart of Salinas: creating appealing gathering places, enhancing Downtown as a place for arts and history, and increasing safety for residents, employees, and visitors.
4	Managing Parking Resources: consolidating Downtown parking with multi-story garages, replacing an excessive amount of surface parking with mixed-use development, and assessing an accurate value for public parking to reduce chronic parking shortages.

What Is the Salinas City Center Improvement Association?



In 2015, the Salinas City Council established the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District after property owners voted to form the district and authorize property assessments to fund its operations and activities. To administer the District, property owners incorporated the Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA) as a 501(c)3 public benefit corporation. Within the SCCIA, two committees - **Sidewalk Operations, Beautification, and Order (SOBO)** and **District Identity and Streetscape Improvements (DISI)** - invest property assessments in services and programs. A third committee - **Land Use** - coordinates policy developments with local government agencies such as the City of Salinas, the County of Monterey, the Monterey County Superior Court, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), Monterey Salinas Transit (MST), and Monterey One Water (the water pollution control district).



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SCCIA Community Benefits

Enhance cleanliness and order over and above City services.

Create Downtown identity through branding and social media.

Promote Downtown as a safe and beautiful place to live, work, and play.

Support events that bring the community together.

Administer the district in a fiscally responsible manner.

Advocate for public improvements, wiser land use practices, and a more attractive Downtown.

Attract investment in new infill projects and adaptive reuse with an emphasis on residential units.

SCCIA services listed above are not intended to “replace” what was done by the merchant-oriented Oldtown Salinas Association (OSA). That organization was the governing authority of the Oldtown Salinas Parking and Business Improvement Area, a business improvement district established by the Salinas City Council in 1991 and dissolved by the Salinas City Council in 2016. The OSA succumbed to the challenges and shortcomings of a voluntary dues system for merchants as the association’s funding source.

The Salinas City Center Improvement Association has its own mission, objectives, and constituency. While it seeks to partner with merchants in the advancement of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan, the SCCIA is not a marketing program for individual Downtown businesses or programs.

What’s the Difference Between the Salinas City Center Improvement Association and the Now-Defunct Oldtown Salinas Association?

The SCCIA Board of Directors recognizes that some merchants miss the marketing services of the Oldtown Salinas Association. We encourage ongoing collective efforts by Downtown merchants to create short-term or long-term arrangements for individual business promotion.

SCCIA belongs to the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, and we encourage merchants to investigate the services of the Chamber. SCCIA also belongs to the Monterey County “Local First” coalition that asks local governments to promote and prefer local businesses for contracts.



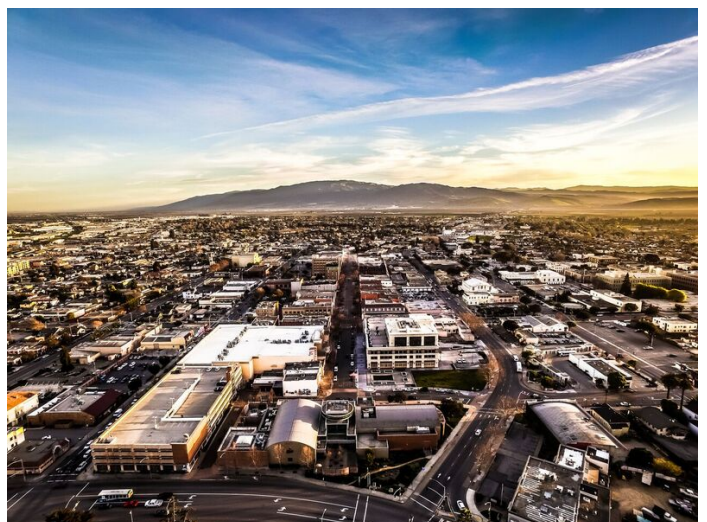
SCCIA enhances services provided by the City of Salinas - it does not substitute for them. For example, private security funded by SCCIA is meant to supplement the existing routine services of the Salinas Police Department. It does not mean police shift their resources elsewhere.



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Where Is the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District?

This map shows the district boundaries. Within the district are two “benefit zones” which are defined by the anticipated level of benefits to be received in the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District. Zone 1 (indicated in red) includes Main Street parcels (any parcel that borders or touches Main Street, including the CSUMB @ Salinas City Center). Zone 2 (indicated in yellow) includes the remaining properties out to the District boundaries, which are generally set by Capitol Avenue on the west, both sides of Monterey Street on the east, the railroad tracks on the north, and John Street on the south. In 2016, at the request of property owners, the Salinas City Council authorized adding the parcels indicated in blue into Zone 2.





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Who is the Salinas City Center Improvement Association?

SCCIA is a dedicated group of local volunteers taking part on the Board of Directors and on committees and task forces. There is also a small but efficient and responsive contract staff.

2018 Board of Directors

Catherine Kobrinsky Evans - President
Frank Saunders - Vice President
Greg Piini - Secretary
Cheri Hitchcock - Treasurer
Larry Bussard
Fred DeYoung
Brian Finegan
Gaylon Haney
Peter Kasavan
Margaret D'Arrigo Martin
Joel Panzer
Meryl DeYoung Rasmussen
Kevin Saunders

Land Use Committee

Brian Finegan - Chair
Larry Bussard
Fred DeYoung
Catherine Kobrinsky Evans
Peter Kasavan
Joel Panzer
Brad Slama
Christina Watson - TAMC Liaison
Megan Hunter - City of Salinas
Community Development Liaison

Sidewalk Operations, Beautification and Order (SOBO) Committee

Frank Saunders - Chair
Catherine Kobrinsky Evans
Gaylon Haney
Grace Jackson
Teri Madrid
Joel Panzer
Greg Piini
Teresa Slaton

District Identity and Streetscape Improvement (DISI) Committee

Margaret D'Arrigo Martin - Co-Chair
Meryl DeYoung Rasmussen - Co-Chair
Jenna Hanson Abramson
Teresa Slaton

Vacancy & Blight Task Force

Larry Bussard
James Kendall

SCCIA Staff

District Coordinator: Amy Nohr
Government Affairs Director: Kevin Dayton
Marketing & Communications:
Jenna Hanson Abramson of Mavelle Media





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Timeline of the Development of the Plan and Association

1	Salinas City Council votes to seek applications from urban design consulting firms to develop a plan to improve Downtown transportation and travel patterns and parking management.	January 22, 2013
2	Salinas City Council approves a contract with Kimley Horn and Associates Inc. to help the city develop the Downtown plan.	August 13, 2013
3	Community outreach and formal input from a "Downtown Stakeholder Team" reveals that many property owners, merchants, and residents want to see Downtown become the heart of the City of the Salinas - the place to gather for civic and community events. They want a more ambitious plan to promote community activity, commerce and vitality to Downtown Salinas, including better collaboration with the County of Monterey, the City of Salinas, and private developers.	2014
4	Marco Li Mandri of the urban planning consulting firm New City America shares with Downtown business and property owners a concept to form a new property assessment district. The plan is well received and preparation begins.	
5	Salinas City Council approves the "Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan."	March 17, 2015
6	At the recommendation of city staff, the Salinas City Council initiates formation of the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District, governed by the Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA), to create a dependable and independent financing mechanism to fund services and activities specific to Downtown.	May 26, 2015
7	Salinas City Council ratifies the vote of property owners to establish the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District.	July 21, 2015
8	City of Salinas staff and consultant Marco Li Mandri facilitate the first meeting of property owners to establish the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District governing board. An interim board and officers are selected.	September 2, 2015
9	The Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA) is incorporated.	October 5, 2015
10	Salinas City Council dissolves the Oldtown Salinas Parking and Business Improvement Area and its advisory board, the Oldtown Salinas Association (OSA). The staff report for the agenda item notes that the newly-established Salinas City Center Improvement Association "has the capacity to provide all of the benefits to the business owners and property owners within the district area previously provided by the Oldtown District and the authority to take more independent action to benefit the businesses in the district area and thereby more effectively promote economic development and job growth."	April 19, 2016



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SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVES

Agriculture is on the verge of dramatic change. Physical and political pressures related to land use, labor, and water consumption compel the development of new technologies. There are visionaries who believe the City of Salinas could become the world's intellectual and technological center for a historic transformation of humanity's oldest organized industry.



Adaptive Reuse Ordinance

On July 3, 2018, the Salinas City Council voted unanimously for a city ordinance recommended by the Salinas Planning Commission to streamline efforts to convert empty and underused commercial buildings in the downtown for residential purposes. Through the leadership of its Land Use Committee, SCCIA strongly supported this proposal to remove legal and financial obstacles to the development of housing within existing structures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF SALINAS AS FOLLOWS: (Revisions are shown in underlined/strickethrough text)

SECTION 1. Zoning Code Section 37-10.250 (after definition of ADA), is hereby amended to read as follows (underlined text is added):

Adaptive Reuse Project. See Section 37-50.015 definition of Adaptive Reuse Project.

SECTION 2. Add Zoning Code Section 37-50.015 to read as follows:

Sec. 37-50.015 Adaptive Reuse Project.

- (a) **Purpose.** Foster the restoration and/or adaptation of existing, nonresidential buildings into residential dwelling units to produce much needed housing in the City, facilitate economic development, preserve historic resources, and create a vibrant downtown.





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Downtown Housing Target Market Analysis (HTMA)	<p>On June 28, 2017, the Salinas City Council approved the “Salinas Downtown Housing Target Market Assessment” to evaluate market demand for new ownership and rental housing in Downtown and to develop implementation strategies for real estate investments. The analysis observed that “market fundamentals would suggest the market for housing development in Downtown Salinas is robust, as vacancies are low and rents and home prices are rising.” But it also noted that “despite numerous planning and market studies recommending additional residential development in the urban core, the City has not realized the type, character, and scale of development that it seeks in Downtown.” The analysis concludes with recommendations, some of which the City Council subsequently implemented.</p>
Federal Opportunity Zones	<p>The federal tax law enacted in December 2017 established a process for the Governor and United States Treasurer to designate disadvantaged census tracts as “qualified opportunity zones.” The Opportunity Zone program is meant to stimulate private investment in economically distressed communities by reducing taxes on capital gains for investment in projects held for at least five years in those communities. The IRS has issued draft regulations for part of the program.</p> <p>Former Salinas Mayor and California State Assemblymember Anna Caballero - now elected to the California State Senate - worked to get Downtown Salinas included as one of the tracts selected by Governor Brown. She also introduced a bill in 2018 to exempt such projects from certain provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that are costly for compliance and routinely exploited by opponents of new development.</p> <p>SCCIA plans to work with city staff to highlight, promote, and educate this new designation to potential developers. Providing tax relief to property investors may encourage developers to take a risk on Downtown Salinas.</p>



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Encouraging Use of the Mills Act Program	<p>California law and the Salinas Municipal Code allow owners of qualified historic properties to enter into contracts with the city for restoration and maintenance of those properties. In exchange, the city gives those owners a property tax credit. But few historic property owners know that the City of Salinas now participates in the Mills Act program.</p> <p>Since the Mills Act program was enacted in June 2016, only one commercial building (the Rabobank Building) and two residential structures (both outside of the Downtown district) have obtained Mills Act recognition.</p> <p>SCCIA plans to hold a joint workshop with the City of Salinas Historic Resource Committee to inform downtown historic property owners about the Mills Act and encourage them to apply for this property tax break that encourages preservation of historic structures.</p>
Partnerships with Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce and Other Groups	<p>A strong and consistent ally in support of business growth and development in Downtown Salinas is the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber sees Downtown as a concern and asset for the entire region.</p> <p>Regular articles in the Chamber's <i>Business Journal</i> have provided city businesses and the general public with information about the SCCIA's efforts to advance the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. The Government Affairs Director for SCCIA is an active volunteer leader in the Chamber as a member of the executive committee, board of directors, and chairperson of the Government Relations Committee.</p>
City of Salinas Economic Development Element	<p>The City of Salinas General Plan includes acceleration and intensification of infrastructure and other improvements for infill developments within the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. SCCIA is playing a role in promoting Salinas as a good place to do business, with special focus on the potential of Downtown as a site for new or expanded enterprise. The Association supports the Economic Development Element approved by the Salinas City Council on December 6, 2017 to open new areas for development and growth of agriculture technology and support services.</p>



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AMBITIONS FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

On August 8, 2017, the County of Monterey celebrated the grand opening of the renovated East-West Wing of the former Monterey County Courthouse. In addition to restoring a beautiful old building, the County has liberated property occupied by modular offices for future development. This building - along with the Taylor Building opened in 2015 - will serve as catalysts for Downtown Vibrancy. Here are some of the other plans for Downtown Salinas.



Rabobank Building

On September 18, 2018, the Salinas City Council voted in favor of an August 13 recommendation from the Historic Resource Board to designate the Rabobank Building at 301 Main Street as a historic resource eligible for the Mills Act historic preservation tax incentive. The first commercial structure in Salinas to obtain this designation, this bank building was constructed in 1930 in the Art Deco and Moderne architectural style seen throughout Downtown Salinas. It remains the tallest building in the city. Two studies in 1989 and 2016 recognized the building as historic. Under the city's new Adaptive Reuse ordinance, the Rabobank Building will soon be converted into residential housing.



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Fiber Optic Communication Infrastructure for Agriculture Technology Firms	<p>City staff has worked to get a commitment for the installation of fiber optic network infrastructure under the streets of Downtown Salinas. SCCIA encouraged the city to include Main Street in the plan and promoted it as an opportunity for agricultural technology businesses emerging from the Western Growers Center for Innovation & Technology incubator to set up shop Downtown.</p> <p>The network will connect the main campus of Hartnell Community College District, the new Police Services Headquarters, and the CSUMB @ Salinas City Center. It will run under West Alisal Street, Gabilan Street, and the three blocks of Main Street, and property owners on these streets will be invited to connect to the fiber optic network.</p>
Bruhn Building	<p>The current owner bought this vacant building in 2009 and has long touted ambitious plans for renovation and reuse. Significant damage occurred to this building after a massive fire in 2016.</p>
Salinas Californian Building	<p>In 2017, the Salinas Californian newspaper sold its building on West Alisal Street that it had built and occupied in 1949. The building has been advertised for lease since then.</p>
Old Monterey County Jail	<p>Monterey County Supervisor Luis Alejo has championed adaptive reuse of the Old Monterey County Jail. On October 10, 2017, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors authorized the county Resource Management Agency to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) on reuse of the old jail. SCCIA is aligned with Supervisor Alejo on this vision and has asked the Board of Supervisors to issue the RFP. It may be issued before the end of 2018.</p>





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El Rey Theater	<p>Along with the City of Salinas, SCCIA has been active behind the scenes in trying to find an investor for the long-vacant and deteriorating El Rey Theater. This building was recently assessed with safety code violations by the City of Salinas. While repairs were being made, the out-of-state owner put the property on the market. An offer was made but the deal failed to happen.</p> <p>SCCIA supported the City in its code enforcement action due to the potential danger to pedestrians. It supports investment to transform the El Rey Theater into a habitable building while maintaining the historic facade.</p>	<p>The theater is currently listed on the market at \$495,000 with this description of the property: “This property was once the popular El Rey Theater, built in 1935 and built principally for movies but also hosted events on its small stage. In fact, Norma Jean Baker, later known to all as Marilyn Monroe, emceed a stage presentation at the El Rey as the Castroville Artichoke Queen, before her journey to stardom. Following decades of movies and entertainment of all types, the theater closed permanently following the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. Today, the solid concrete building with a colorful past awaits a buyer with a desire to restore it to its highest and best use as a community hub again.”</p>
Women’s Club Building	<p>Most recently used as a temporary homeless shelter, the vacant and deteriorating Women’s Club Building across the street from City Hall will eventually be converted into City office space. SCCIA board member Peter Kasavan is the architect for the City on the project, and the City of Salinas recently contracted with a roofing company for the first step in rehabilitation. SCCIA supports the renovation of this property for any useful purpose. It has been a nuisance property that attracts squatters and drug users.</p>	
Greyhound Building	<p>SCCIA is aware of numerous community complaints about the outside appearance of the mostly-vacant Greyhound Building, located on a prominent intersection in Downtown. The owners of this property have allowed it to fall into serious disrepair. Other than code enforcement actions, the City of Salinas has limited authority to compel the private owners to make improvements. On August 7, 2018, the City of Salinas issued a Notice of Violation to the owners in response to conditions on the property related to blight, housing and maintenance, and zoning. Some of those violations were remedied by the deadline of August 17. SCCIA continues to support community pressure on the current owner to repair or sell.</p>	
Fox Theater	<p>Code violations assessed by the City of Salinas against the Fox Theater forced the facility to close for performances in mid-April 2018. It reopened at the end of August. SCCIA advocated for a quick resolution and re-opening of the Theater. SCCIA observed the inadequacy of having the City Council sit as an Appeals Board on highly technical issues like structural integrity. SCCIA has advocated for the City to establish an independent and qualified Board of Appeals and is currently helping to recruit potential candidates for this important volunteer service.</p>	



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Portland Loos	<p>The traditional public bathrooms at the Salinas Transit Center are used by non-transit riders for doing drugs, and the floors are used as toilets. Private security has limited ability to control this anti-social behavior.</p> <p>On February 5, 2018, the Monterey Salinas Transit (MST) Board of Directors authorized the installation of two Portland Loos and other improvements to Salinas Transit Center. (Funding is only available for one at this time.) Portland Loos are special public bathroom kiosks that are easily cleaned and maintained while being open enough to discourage drug transactions, drug use, and other crimes. The City of Monterey built one in 2015 at the Monterey Transit Center. Some downtown merchants have expressed concerns about the lack of downtown public bathroom facilities. SCCIA will monitor the evaluation of these Portland Loos to see if they improve conditions.</p>
Steinbeck Library	<p>Renovation of this library (the oldest of three City libraries) is planned for after the construction of the new El Gabilan Library is completed. SCCIA officials have met with the City of Salinas Library and Community Services Department to learn about the Library's ambitious plan to overhaul the interior design of the Steinbeck Library to reflect the modern role of public libraries.</p>
Parking Lot 12	<p>The Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan recognizes that a disproportionate amount of valuable Downtown real estate is occupied by surface parking lots. Based on a Supplemental Parking Analysis to the Housing Target Market Analysis, the City of Salinas chose three parking lots (Lots 3, 5, and 12) to consider as "test case" sites for residential development.</p> <p>SCCIA has worked closely with Lisa Brinton and other city staff to understand the nuanced ownership history of two of the lots under consideration. SCCIA promoted the city's Lot 12 on Lincoln Avenue as the best candidate for this first project because of its proximity to the likely location of a multi-story parking structure that will serve the parking needs of employees from the Courts, the County, and the City as well as residents of the new apartment complex. The City of Salinas is expected to issue soon a Request for Proposals for development on the site of the Lot 12 parking lot. SCCIA is eagerly awaiting this economic opportunity.</p>
Monterey County Civil Courts	<p>SCCIA has promoted a move of some civil courtrooms back to the county seat of Salinas. We are promoting our vision of the Judicial Council of California funding a public-private partnership that includes civil court offices and courtrooms along with private office space (for law firms), restaurant and retail space, residential space, and a parking garage for employees, jurors, and other court visitors. SCCIA wants to make downtown an attractive place for city, county, and regional governments to operate. This requires multi-unit mixed-use residential development, adequate parking arrangements, and a neighborhood perceived as safe.</p>



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STREET AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Major Construction Projects Planned to Implement the Downtown Vibrancy Plan

Project	Description	Source of Funding
Downtown Complete Streets Project Phases 1 and 2 (West Alisal Street and Lincoln Avenue)	Putting new stripes on West Alisal Street, providing buffered bicycle lanes, and improving traffic signals, crosswalks, and intersections. This will reduce vehicle speeds and improve bicycle and street crossing safety, thereby encouraging more people to walk or bike.	A federal grant from the Highways Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and a grant for design from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).
Main Street Streetscape Project	Converting Main Street on the 200 and 300 blocks to two-way vehicle traffic, installing irrigation and parking infrastructure, transforming landscaping features, and enhancing the pedestrian environment through improved lighting and security and by adding outdoor tables and seating.	Measure X sales tax revenue provided through the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).





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Downtown Vibrancy Action Team

The SCCIA has assembled a “Downtown Vibrancy Action Team” to create a formal structure for merchants and property owners to make recommendations on how to keep business prospering during the city’s Main Street Streetscape construction project. The City of Salinas will incorporate these recommendations into bid specifications for the construction company that wins the contract for the project.

SCCIA will vigilantly monitor city expenditures for economic development and ensure the funding for street improvements is not diverted to other districts or programs. Also, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Measure X Citizens Oversight Committee watches expenditures to ensure legal compliance.

The Team

Roxanne Noble Boss

Larry Bussard

Jason Cook

Gaylon Haney

Peter Kasavan

James Kendall

Karen Nardozza

Frank Saunders

Frank Savino

Maureen Wruck





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Appearance of the Streets

Aesthetic Consultant	SCCIA participated in various outreach meetings for interested parties to learn about and comment on plans for the Main Street Streetscape Project. Community members and SCCIA board members want to ensure that the design of the Main Street Streetscape Project flows and harmonizes with the existing architecture and feel of Main Street. The City of Salinas selected Joni L. Janecki & Associates (JLJA) as an aesthetics consultant for the Main Street Streetscape Project. SCCIA representatives participated in the city's interview and evaluation process for the aesthetics consultant. SCCIA has also helped to compile various insights and ideas from property owners, merchants, and other community members to provide to the consultant.
Blue Zone Project to Encourage Pedestrian and Bicycle Use	SCCIA appreciates the Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare (SVMH) System commitment to include Downtown Salinas in its Blue Zone project to promote a healthier lifestyle in Salinas. A nationally-known walkability consultant recently toured Main Street with elected officials, staff, and community leaders for a visual assessment. It was a beautiful day and Main Street looked great. The consultant recognized areas for improvement, which the Main Street Streetscape Project can address. SVMH also invited SCCIA representatives to speak during the lunch review of the program and be part of the tour. SCCIA has provided SVMH with its assessment of opportunities and challenges in Downtown Salinas.
Clean and Clutter-Free Streets	Some merchants have noted that Main Street and other Downtown streets need a thorough cleaning. Government regulations prohibit sidewalk pressure washing operations that allow discharge of wastewater to a storm drain. Devices that collect wash water, soap, and solids must include a pump, vacuum or other device and allow for proper disposal of the waste. SCCIA is investigating ways to fund the significant expense of cleaning sidewalks in a way that complies with law. Meanwhile, SCCIA was instrumental in removal of taxi stands, newspaper racks, and most old phone booths in Downtown.
Partnership with Downtown Salinas Rotary Club	The Downtown Salinas Rotary Club has pledged \$100,000 toward design and installation of a decorative arch or arches to give Main Street a sense of central civic identity for residents, workers, and visitors. It's expected this gift will be incorporated into the plans and bid specifications for the Main Street Streetscape Project.
Search for the Missing Sign	What happened to the Salinas sign that used to hang over Main Street? The Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan calls for "installation of a landmark sign that reflects the historic Salinas sign that hung above Main Street many years ago" as a "way to foster the future vision and capture the unique past of downtown Salinas." The sign was installed in 1915 and stayed there for decades. Its whereabouts today remain unknown to SCCIA leaders. Is it possible the sign could be recovered and restored?



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Monterey County Rail Extension Project and Intermodal Transportation Center

An especially bright spot for Downtown Salinas is the launch of improvements related to the future Intermodal Transportation Center on Market Street. After years of negotiating for property and preparing for utility relocation, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) has now demolished abandoned buildings on the site of the future station.



These improvements will occur concurrently with the city's "Downtown Complete Streets Project (Alisal Street)." Phase 2 of that project will improve Lincoln Avenue from West Alisal Street to Market Street and the location of the future Intermodal Transportation Center.





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The Intermodal Transportation Center would be the terminus of planned commuter rail service between Salinas and the San Francisco Bay Area. Monterey County residents would have quick public transit access to the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, and beyond. In the long-term, passengers would be able to ride from Downtown Salinas to the planned Gilroy station of the California High-Speed Rail network.

The City of Salinas is anticipating eventual high-density, mixed-use residential and commercial development in the area around the Intermodal Transportation Center.

This would also be a potential location for a long-desired grocery store to serve future Downtown residents, workers, and visitors.



SCCIA has developed a cooperative relationship with TAMC staff in pushing to turn this vision into reality. SCCIA was a partner in the August 9, 2018 ribbon cutting for the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center project. SCCIA provided a tent, and the SCCIA President spoke during the ceremony about the project in the context of the Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan. TAMC Rail Policy Coordinator Christina Watson attends SCCIA Land Use Committee meetings to provide updates and answer questions about the project.



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Making Parking a Breeze Rather Than a Hassle

After the completion of the Main Street Streetscape Project and the West Alisal Street/Lincoln Avenue Downtown Complete Streets Project, the City of Salinas plans to establish a new Downtown Parking Management District with a Downtown Parking Oversight Committee.



SCCIA plans to be active in the development and operations of this committee to improve access to Downtown parking for employees, residents, shoppers, and visitors. SCCIA also plans to ensure that any parking revenue will be invested in downtown maintenance and improvements and not be diverted to other expenses in the city's general budget. In the meantime, SCCIA representatives will participate in advisory committees set up by the city to discuss parking management.

Change in Leadership at the Public Works Department

The Public Works Director for the City of Salinas is a critical position for the future of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. In October 2017, Gary Petersen left the position, and Don Reynolds served ably as Acting Public Works Director. The city has now hired David Jacobs, previously the Public Works Director in the City of Buena Park (in Orange County). SCCIA representatives participated in the interviews of candidates for this position.



SCCIA recognizes the future of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan depends on city officials with a passion and knowledge of urban renewal - leaders who can also successfully oversee and manage potentially disruptive infrastructure improvements such as the Main Street Streetscape Project and the West Alisal Street/Lincoln Avenue Downtown Complete Streets Project.



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ARTS, CULTURE, AND COMMERCE



CSUMB @ Salinas City Center

In 2015, California State University, Monterey Bay purchased the National Steinbeck Center building, home of the Steinbeck Museum, at 1 Main Street. In this building, the university established CSUMB @ Salinas City Center, a base for extended education non-credit professional education programs, faculty lecture series, workshops, and other community events and meetings. It provides forums for provocative discussions that can impact thought and action on issues important to the community.

CSUMB Salinas Center for Arts and Culture

The CSUMB Salinas Center for Arts and Culture hosts regular programs and workshops and gives students and local artists opportunities to create and curate exhibitions, organize and perform at events, and work in collaboration with community partners to create projects. CSUMB Salinas City Center-based arts professor Enid Baxter Ryce has emphasized arts and creativity as part of the future of Downtown Salinas.



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SCCIA Event Sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival • Annual Lighting of the City Holiday Tree • Thursday Evening Farmers Market • Saturday Farmers Market • Kiddie Kapers Parade • Colmo del Rodeo Parade • Police Activities League Annual Classic Car Show • Veterans Day Parade 	SCCIA has authority to review and issue approval letters for all downtown parades and events.
Tree Lights on Main Street	SCCIA took on the responsibility of installing festive lights on Main Street trees and worked for several months in 2018 to obtain a city permit to install permanent lights. The lights were approved and installed in time for the holiday season.	
Merchant Meet- Ups	SCCIA has hosted “Merchant Meet-Ups” at Farmers Union Pour House and Portobello’s to give merchants and residents an opportunity to hear about the implementation of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan and provide input.	
Promoting District Identity	SCCIA installed branded Salinas City Center triangle banners on light poles along three downtown Main Street blocks, produced and displayed “Welcome to Salinas City Center” banners at the Forbes Ag Tech Summit, and distributed Salinas City Center coasters, stickers, caps, shopping bags, mugs, and other branded memorabilia to merchants.	
Communicating with the Public	SCCIA established a website, monthly EANewsletter, a Facebook account (3,300 followers), and an Instagram account (970 followers) for Salinas City Center and contracted with consultants to operate promotional media.	





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LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ADVOCACY

The Salinas City Center Improvement Association is an advocacy organization that seeks public policies to implement and advance the city's Downtown Vibrancy Plan. Urban development is a challenging and often controversial arena of public policy, and one threat to SCCIA is that the Downtown Vibrancy Plan will become dormant, ignored, and irrelevant over time, as frequently happens with government plans.

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Recognizing that much of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan was stalling after two years, SCCIA hired a passionate, committed, principled, and highly-qualified Government Affairs Director in October 2017 to ensure local governments are informed about and accountable to the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. As shown in this report, the Downtown Vibrancy Plan is now incrementally advancing in numerous ways and everything is being documented and reported.



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ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY

Eliminating Long-Term Vacancies

SCCIA regards long-term vacant buildings and storefronts as major obstacles to the advancement of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. The fundamental solution to this problem is residential development, encouraged through initiatives such as the city's new Adaptive Reuse Ordinance and the conversion of parking lots into mixed-use developments. SCCIA advocacy is critical to moving these initiatives forward.

While SCCIA seeks a permanent solution to the vacancy problem, the SCCIA also recognizes that the immediate problem of irresponsible and disrespectful property neglect reduces the value and utility of neighboring properties. When vacancies endure for years, they become a public safety problem and a frustration to the community.

SCCIA has asked the Salinas City Council and staff to enact policies that respect private property rights but also bring needed public accountability to owners of long-vacant buildings and storefronts. These policies may include registration, monitoring, new public nuisance definitions, blight abatement programs, and fees or fines that increase exponentially over time to impose a sense of urgency on the property owner. SCCIA has provided city staff with sample legislation adopted in other Northern California cities such as San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, San Jose, and Fresno.

SCCIA volunteers are developing and maintaining three lists of downtown properties: (1) vacancies; (2) citations for violations of nuisance and blight ordinances; and (3) tax delinquencies. Not surprisingly, these three lists include many of the same properties.

Public Safety and Private Security

Much of the SCCIA budget is spent on a contract with Uretsky Security for private security in the Downtown area. Security teams patrol the Downtown streets during business hours and constructively address anti-social behavior, prevent non-authorized individuals from accessing private property, and report criminal activity to law enforcement.

Security personnel keep detailed logs of incidents, and as a result SCCIA now has substantial records of nuisance activity and petty criminal incidents that compromise the Downtown experience for everyone else. We also know which individuals perpetrate most of the problems: generally, single people suffering from mental illness and substance abuse and the unscrupulous street criminals who take advantage of them.





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Cleaning and Maintenance

SCCIA maintains contracts with Hope Services and New Image Landscape Company for cleaning and maintenance of some common areas. This includes sweeping sidewalks and some parking lots, litter collection, irrigation, weed control, watering of flowerpots and gardens, minor pruning tasks, and other similar activities.

Merchants are often uncertain of who is responsible for certain cleaning and maintenance activities. SCCIA does NOT have authority for tree trimming, electrical and irrigation repair, bulb replacement for streetlights, emptying trashcans or bins, collection of large items, or cleanup of human feces, needles, and encampments. These are responsibilities of the City of Salinas.

In addition, SCCIA only has authority to clean sidewalks from the curb to the property line. SCCIA does not have authority for cleaning and maintaining streets and alleys - these are the City's responsibilities. Storm water regulations from agencies such as Monterey One Water (formerly known as the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency) also hinder SCCIA and the City of Salinas from keeping streets clean. Wastewater from street cleaning operations cannot be disposed in storm drains. Wastewater must be contained. Equipment for this job is expensive.

Commercial Continuity at Street Level on Main Street



The Salinas Zoning Code requires property owners on the ground floor of Main Street (100-400 blocks) in Downtown to limit use to active commercial purposes. New Harvest Christian Fellowship sought to change that city law to allow religious assembly on the ground floor of properties facing Main Street. SCCIA is working to reduce the number of long-term vacancies on Main Street but does not believe proliferation of storefront churches is the solution. Residential development is the fundamental solution.

SCCIA advocates for keeping the current zoning code, which emphasizes continuity of commercial activity on the ground floor of Main Street. A row of active, populated enterprises promotes commerce and improves safety. Conversely, SCCIA believes that gaps in commercial activity on Main Street encourage urban blight.



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Homelessness: A Continuing Challenge for Downtown Salinas

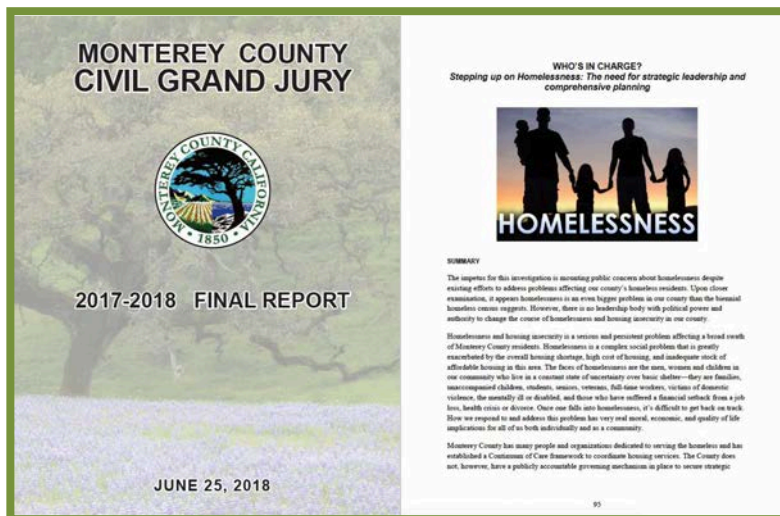
There Is a Problem

SCCIA leadership believes the advancement of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan is hindered by chronic anti-social behavior among some people who are apparently homeless and have mental illness and/or substance abuse problems. Our organization has collected private security logs and obtained about 50 testimonials from Downtown merchants and property owners regarding their challenges with troubled people in our community.

Behaviors of concern include obvious drug use in public, leaving drug paraphernalia on the ground, sleeping in entryways, public urination and defecation (sometimes done brazenly in the open), vandalism, littering, and verbal pestering and harassment of pedestrians, motorists, merchants, employees, and customers (often done in conjunction with loitering). Human waste and discarded needles were particular concerns during the previous winter, when public health officials identified twelve cases of Hepatitis A among homeless in Monterey County.

Solutions Are Elusive

Homelessness is a difficult issue throughout California. It has both broad systemic causes and personalized individual causes. Local governments seem unable to solve the problem, and it is difficult to measure success of any program. A report released this year by the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury contended (accurately, we believe) that local governments are failing to coordinate efforts to address homelessness.



SCCIA has limited capability to facilitate solutions for Downtown homelessness. However, a growing spirit of cooperation on homeless issues between the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey and new funding sources from the State of California bring new opportunities to address the problem.

There is a tentative plan for a homeless shelter at 855 East Laurel Drive (formerly the site of a County of Monterey corporate yard) to replace the year-round shelter in operation at 111 West Alisal Street. Eventually there may be a permanent transitional housing facility at 1220 Natividad Road (formerly the site of a County of Monterey printing facility) near Natividad, the county medical center.

SCCIA is using the state's Public Records Act to gain some clarity for the public about this policy challenge and the effectiveness of local government responses to it. Data should be the basis for policy positions related to the Downtown Vibrancy Plan, rather than unsubstantiated verbal testimony at public meetings and the imagery of public relations campaigns.



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Recent History of Homeless Shelters in Salinas

Era	Location	Former Use	Status
Past	215 Lincoln Avenue	Salinas Women's Club building	Recently used as a winter warming shelter; city now plans to renovate as offices.
	20 West Market Street	Monterey County Employees Credit Union	The current owner, Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), has demolished this building to prepare for the Intermodal Transportation Center.
Present	111 West Alisal Street	Portable trailers formerly used by the county Public Defender's Office	A "temporary" homeless shelter that was supposed to be seasonal but is now operated year-round by Monterey County.
Future?	855 East Laurel Drive	Former county corporation yard near Carr Lake, future multi-use park and site for mixed-use development	Proposed temporary shelter location. Residents of nearby neighborhoods are objecting to the proposal to move this shelter from Downtown to this location.
	1220 Natividad Road	Vacant former county printing services/mail operations building adjacent to Natividad (aka Natividad Medical Center)	A proposed \$70 million permanent homeless facility that will have to overcome years of funding challenges, environmental reviews, and opposition from residents of nearby neighborhoods.



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Resources for Help with Homeless and Transient People

SCCIA is working to inform property owners and merchants via SCCIA social media, website, and newsletters on how to appropriately and effectively deal with problematic individuals.

- Disturbs your business: contact Uretsky Security patrol at 383-0726.
- Exhibits a mental health crisis: contact Tzitziqui Romero at Interim Inc. Outreach: 869-5352 or 883-3030.
- Law enforcement dispatch: 758-7321 (ask for a CIT trained officer or Mobile Crisis Unit).

When using these resources, you should be prepared to describe the person and the situation and the location where you last saw the person. Please do not intervene yourself.

Download the SalinasConnect App to your smartphone to report biohazards such as human waste and needles, as well as potholes, abandoned vehicles, tree trimming, graffiti, or other issues. The app is available on the City of Salinas website.

SALINAS CONNECT
SERVICE REQUEST
MOBILE APP

Stay connected via **SalinasConnect**, the service request mobile app for the City of Salinas, California.

Need a tree trimmed? Tired of seeing that abandoned vehicle on your street? Have a code violation you want to report? Report it to the City using **SalinasConnect**.

HERE'S HOW TO REPORT:

- Add the location
- Select a request type
- Provide a description
- Submit your request!

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