



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2019

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

THROUGH: TARA HULLINGER, PLANNING MANAGER

BY: JILL MILLER, SENIOR PLANNER

TITLE: WEST AREA SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

1. A motion to approve a resolution certifying the West Area Specific Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (ER 2018-003);
2. A motion to approve a resolution adopting both the CEQA Findings of Fact, including the Statement of Overriding Considerations, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Specific Plan;
3. A motion to approve a resolution for the West Area Specific Plan (SPEC 2013-002) including the incorporation of minor text and figure modifications (the Specific Plan Errata);
4. A motion to adopt an Ordinance approving Rezone (RZ 2019-001) and amending the City of Salinas Zoning Map accordingly for approximately 797 acres of land located within the West Area Specific Plan Project area; and
5. A motion to adopt an Ordinance approving Development Agreement (DA 2019-001).

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council affirm the findings and approve the attached resolutions certifying the Final Program EIR (ER 2018-003), adopting the Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and approving the West Area Specific Plan (SPEC 2013-002). It also recommended that the City Council adopt the attached ordinances approving a Rezone (RZ 2019-001) and a Development Agreement (DA 2019-001) for the Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The project applicant, Brian Finegan (representing multiple property owners and developers) has applied for the approval of the West Area Specific Plan (SPEC 2013-002), a Rezone (RZ 2019-001) and a Development Agreement (DA 2019-001). The West Area Specific Plan project (also referred herein as “the Project”) encompasses approximately 797 acres of land located in the northern portion of the City. The project site is bounded by East Boronda Road on the south, San Juan Grade Road on the west, Natividad Road on the east, and Rogge Road and the future extension of Russell Road on the north.

A Final Program EIR (consisting of the Draft EIR, Response to Comments and MMRP) has been prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Project in accordance with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In this regard, a Statement of Overriding Considerations has also been prepared for the Project.

BACKGROUND:

Existing Setting

The West Area Specific Plan area (also referred herein as “Plan Area”) is located within the western portion the North of Boronda Future Growth Area (FGA), which was annexed into the City in 2008. Four arterial streets form the boundaries of the project site (also referred herein as “the site”) including E. Boronda Road on the south, San Juan Grade Road on the west, Natividad Road on the east and Rogge Road and the extension of Russell Road on the north (see Attachment 7).

The approximately 797-acre site is currently utilized primarily for row-crop farming and other agricultural-related activities. Two schools, McKinnon Elementary School (Santa Rita Union School District) and Rancho San Juan High School (Salinas Union High School District), are located in the southwest and northern portions of the site, respectively. A few residences and farm structures are also located adjacent to San Juan Grade Road, Natividad Road and Rogge Road in the western, eastern and northern portions of the site, respectively.

The topography of the site is nearly flat (with an overall slope from northeast to southwest of approximately 0.3%). No significant Special Flood Hazard Areas have been mapped on the site according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). There are no natural streams or water bodies present; however, there are several agricultural irrigation ditches located on the site.

Existing infrastructure is currently located along E. Boronda Road, including water, sewer, electricity, storm drainage and dry utilities, and will be extended into the Plan Area boundaries as development occurs. Monterey Salinas Transit (MST) currently provides transit access to the site via bus stops located along E. Boronda Road.

The Plan Area includes 13 parcels and 11 property owners (see Attachment 8). Two of the parcels are owned by school districts (the Santa Rita Union School District and the Salinas Union High

School District). The remaining parcels are owned by private parties. The project applicants own or control approximately 471.64 of the 797-acre site and have been actively participating in the planning process and funding the cost of the preparation of the West Area Specific Plan, environmental document and related documents to date. As such, these applicants are referred herein to as “participating property owners”.

Surrounding Land Uses

West: Low and medium density residential uses are located across San Juan Grade Road. The Gateway Center Specific Plan area (Lowe’s Home Improvement Store) directly abuts the southwest corner of the project site. This area was originally included within the boundaries of the proposed West Area Specific Plan. In 2011, however, the City Council approved a separate specific plan for the approximate 20-acre commercial shopping center site to allow the commercial shopping center to be developed and this area was subsequently removed from the West Area Specific Plan. Staff and the developers of both specific plan areas have coordinated the two planning efforts to ensure pathway connections, sound attenuation walls, street lighting, and other improvements were consistent and complementary between the two projects.

North: The Bolsa Knolls residential area and scattered residential and agricultural-related uses are located along Rogge Road within unincorporated Monterey County.

East: Row-crop farming and other agricultural related uses on land located within both unincorporated Monterey County and City limits. The proposed Central Area Specific Plan (which is currently being processed by the City) will be located directly to the east of the Plan Area.

South: Low- and high-density residential uses and commercial shopping centers (Harden Ranch and Shaker Square) are located to the southwest and southeast, respectively.

Existing Salinas General Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning District

The General Plan Land Use Designations for the project site are Residential Low, Residential Medium, Residential High Density, Mixed Use, Park, Public/Semipublic, and Open Space.

Upon annexation in 2008, the North of Boronda FGA (including the project site) was zoned New Urbanism Interim (NI) with a Specific Plan Overlay District. The NI District was intended to serve as an interim holding zone for land located in the North of Boronda FGA until such time that future Specific Plans were approved, and the new zoning district designations were established for the area. Additionally, at that time, the City certified the Salinas General Plan Final EIR pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which included a statement of overriding considerations for the loss of agricultural lands located in the FGA as a result of the anticipated future development of that area.

The project applicants are requesting to rezone the project site from the New Urbanism Interim (NI) with a Specific Plan Overlay District to the new zoning districts proposed in the West Area Specific Plan. See below for further discussion of the requested rezone.

Project Milestones

The following is a list of Project milestones:

- September 9, 2008, the North of Boronda FGA consisting of approximately 2,400 acres (including the project site) was annexed into the City of Salinas.
- August 12, 2013, the project applicant submitted applications to the City for the purpose of developing the West Area Specific Plan.
- October 14, 2015, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR (also referred herein as “DEIR”) for the West Area Specific Plan was distributed in accordance with Section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for a 30-day public review period. Nine comment letters were received.
- October 29, 2015, a Scoping Meeting for the DEIR was held.
- February 27, 2019, the City filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) of the Draft EIR with the California Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse commencing the 45-day state public agency review period, which ended on April 15, 2019.
- February 27, 2019, the City filed a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR with the Monterey County Clerk on February 27, 2019 commencing the 45-day local public review period, which ended on April 15, 2019. The NOA was also posted at the City of Salinas City Hall, the Salinas Permit Center, the Steinbeck and Cesar Chavez Libraries, and on the City’s website.
- February 27, 2019, the Draft West Area Specific Plan was circulated for a 45-day public review period, which ended on April 15, 2019 along with the DEIR. An electronic file of the Draft West Area Specific Plan was also distributed to the Planning Commission for review at that time.
- March 12, 2019, staff presented the proposed Project to the Housing Subcommittee for consideration.
- March 13, 2019, staff presented the proposed Project to the Library and Community Services Commission for consideration. The Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of the park plan contained in the West Area Specific Plan to the City Council.
- March 14, 2019, staff presented the Project to the Traffic and Transportation Commission. The Commission voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the Project (based on the Traffic Impact Analysis) to the City Council.
- April 3, 2019, the Planning Commission held a study session regarding the proposed Project. Issues raised during that meeting were: traffic noise, the need for sound-attenuation walls and grading along Russell Road; potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County); the need for future transit service in the Plan Area; and the adequacy of the newspaper noticing. As this was a study session, no action was taken.
- April 15, 2019, the 45-day comment period for the West Area Specific Plan and the DEIR documents closed. The City received comment letters from the following individuals and agencies:

- Native American Heritage Commission, received March 4, 2019
- Monterey County Health Department, received April 10, 2019
- LandWatch, received April 11, 2019
- California Department of Transportation, received April 12, 2019
- Salinas Union High School District, received April 12, 2019
- Alisal Union School District, received April 15, 2019
- Santa Rita Union School District, received April 15, 2019
- Brian Finegan, received April 15, 2019
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, received April 16, 2019
- Monterey Bay Air Resources District, received April 16, 2019

See Section 2.0 of the West Area Specific Plan Final Program EIR (also referred herein as “Final EIR”) for further discussion of these comment letters including the responses to comments.

- April 30, 2019, the City Council held a study session regarding the proposed Project. Issues raised during that meeting were: school facility funding; project density, traffic noise, sound-attenuation walls, and grading along Russell Road; potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County); and the need for future transit service in the Plan Area. As this was a study session, no action was taken.
- June 10, 2019, staff held a community meeting at the Northminster Presbyterian Church community room located at 315 Alvin Drive. At the meeting, individual stations were provided for the public to obtain information about the project, provide comments, ask questions and directly engage with City staff and members of the development team. Over 70 people attended.
- November 6, 2019, the Planning Commission held a study session regarding the proposed Project. Issues raised during that meeting were: traffic noise, the need for sound-attenuation walls and grading along Russell Road; potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County). As this was a study session, no action was taken.
- December 4, 2019, the Planning Commission considered the project and voted **unanimously** (7-0) to recommend that the City Council approve the Project (see Attachment 6) as presented. Further discussion of this meeting is provided below.

DISCUSSION:

The requested entitlements include a Specific Plan and Rezone. The approval of these entitlements is needed in order to allow the development of the 797-acre project site. A Development Agreement is also included within the package of proposed entitlements to provide certainty to the City and the applicant with respect to development of the Project.

A Final EIR (consisting of the Draft EIR, MMRP and Response to Comments) has been prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Project in accordance with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Statement of Overriding Considerations has

been prepared for the Project. The Specific Plan, Rezone, Development Agreement, Final EIR and other project-related issues are discussed below:

Specific Plan

General Plan Conformance

The Salinas General Plan requires the approval of Specific Plans by the City Council prior to any development in the City's Future Growth Area (FGA). Subsequent to the adoption of the Salinas General Plan in 2002, the area located in the northern portion of the City (referred to as the North of Boronda FGA) was generally divided by the City into three proposed specific plan areas (the West Area, the Central Area and the East Area) for comprehensive planning purposes. As such, the development of the North of Boronda FGA (including the proposed Project) has been anticipated by the City as part of a long-term coordinated planning and development process envisioned under the General Plan.

The General Plan requires that development in the North of Boronda FGA be based on the principles of New Urbanism and meet specific minimum densities/percentages. In this regard, specific plans prepared for the FGA must incorporate the following:

- Distinct identifiable neighborhoods that are pedestrian-oriented and promote a safe environment.
- Pedestrian, bicycle and transit connectivity.
- An interconnected street network with narrow streets and traffic calming devices.
- A mix of housing, workplaces, retail, parks, schools and other uses.
- A variety of housing types and affordability levels.
- A minimum average density of 9 dwelling units per net residential acre to promote compact design and preserve agricultural land.
- A mix of low, medium and high density dwelling units; with 15% to 25% of the dwelling units falling within the density range of 16 to 24 dwelling units per net residential acre and 35% to 45% of the dwelling units falling within the density range of 7 to 14 dwelling units per net residential acre.

The West Area Specific Plan (also referred herein as "the Specific Plan") is the first of the three proposed specific plans to move forward into the entitlement phase. This Specific Plan will serve as the implementation tool to realize the General Plan vision for the western portion of the North of Boronda FGA. In this regard, the Specific Plan incorporates the New Urbanism Design Principles and the required minimum residential densities/percentages noted above, as well as other design principles such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), Health in All Policies, Green Streets and Smart Growth to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

The Specific Plan also specifies the ultimate distribution, location and intensity of land uses in the Plan Area in accordance with the total development capacities provided under the General Plan to ensure development of the area in an orderly and comprehensive manner with adequate infrastructure and facilities. The Project's consistency with the General Plan is further discussed in Appendix C of the Specific Plan and is herein incorporated by reference.

Content and Organization of the Specific Plan

The Specific Plan establishes the overall land use concept and development framework for the Plan Area. The Specific Plan was prepared by the applicant with the direction and input of City staff. Early consultations with local, regional, and State agencies also formed the content of the Specific Plan. The content of the Specific Plan is consistent with Government Code Sections 65450 - 65457 and Article VI, Division 15 of the Salinas Zoning Code.

The Specific Plan is organized into nine chapters and the appendices as follows:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction: This Chapter discusses the purpose and scope of the Specific Plan, the project description and regulatory authority and compliance.
- Chapter 2 - Land Use: This Chapter provides an overview of the land use plan, General Plan land use and zoning district designations, inclusionary housing, density bonus, parks and open space land use, resource management and conservation, and sustainable planning and design.
- Chapter 3 - Use Classifications and Development Regulations: This Chapter addresses the relationship of the Specific Plan to the City's Zoning and Building Codes, establishes the applicable zoning districts, use classifications and development regulations, residential product flexibility, and required residential units and commercial mix to meet General Plan requirements.
- Chapter 4 - Design Standards: This Chapter establishes the New Urbanism design standards, architectural standards, green building standards and landscaping and streetscape standards for the Plan Area.
- Chapter 5 - Circulation: This Chapter describes the existing and planned streets and improvements in the Plan Area and surrounding area. It also addresses traffic calming, public transit, pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- Chapter 6 – Infrastructure Plan: This Chapter describes the required and planned infrastructure such as water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, public services and utilities.
- Chapter 7 - Stormwater and Water Quality Management: This Chapter outlines stormwater infrastructure as it relates to water quality, supplemental storm water detention/retention and flow control.
- Chapter 8 - Public Facility Financing Plan: This Chapter addresses the financing of public facilities, infrastructure improvements, funding and reimbursement policies and maintenance responsibilities.

- **Chapter 9 – Implementation and Administration:** This Chapter discusses the Specific Plan’s authority and implementation, project review procedures, preservation and enforcement procedures, phasing, minor revisions and amendment procedures and enforcement.
- **Appendices:** Includes the definitions, the project’s consistency with the General Plan, street lighting standards, inclusionary housing, street sections and other related items.

Project Summary:

At build-out (estimated to occur over the next 20 to 30 years), the West Area Specific Plan Project will include approximately 4,340 dwelling units (provided as a mix of low, medium and high densities in conformance with the General Plan), a Village Center with up to 571,500 square feet of mixed-use commercial floor area, eleven parks, up to five schools (one high school [existing], one middle school, and three elementary schools [one existing]), open space (supplemental storm water basins) and well-sites. These land uses are further summarized below.

It is important to note that the majority of the dwelling units provided in the Plan Area will fall within the medium density range of 9 to 15 dwelling units per net residential acre (without density bonus) and the high density range of 16 to 24 dwelling units per net residential acre (without density bonus) to ensure a variety of housing options and affordability levels are provided. In addition, dwelling units in the density range of 30 to 40 dwelling units per net residential acre (without density bonus) will also be permitted in and around the Village Center through the conversion of commercial floor area to residential units, providing additional affordable housing opportunities. Accessory dwelling units will also be permitted to further increase the number of affordable housing options provided within the Plan Area.

Land Use/Proposed Zoning Districts		Framework Acres	Projected Dwelling Units or Square Feet (without Density Bonus)
Residential Planning Areas	NE (Low)	227.72	1,361 du
	NG-1 (Medium)	188.44	1,803 du
	NG-2 (High)	59.84	1,085 du
	VC (Village Center)	4.55	91 du
	Total	480.55	4,340 du
Mixed Use Village Center (1)		20.13	571,500 sq. ft.
Total Residential and Village Center		500.68	
High School		38.97	
Middle School		20.78	
Elementary School #1		10.98	
Elementary School #2		10.00	
Elementary School #3		10.00	

Community Park	30.83	
Neighborhood Parks (four)	12.52	
Small Parks (six)	6.41	
Supplemental Detention/Retention Basin Open Space	35.03	
Water Wells/Water Treatment	1.50	
Total Public Facilities	177.02	
Circulation Roadways (2)	118.85	
Total	796.55	

Vision Statement/Key Features of the Specific Plan:

The vision statement for the West Area Specific is to “create a livable and pedestrian-oriented community, planned and designed to implement the tenets of New Urbanism and other General Plan principles, with a diverse mix of housing types and lot size, a vibrant mixed-use main street and town square, accessible public uses and gathering places, an interconnected bicycle, path and public transit networks and well planned infrastructure.” In this regard, the following key features have been incorporated into the design of the Plan Area:

- A Village Center with a main street, town square and a mix of high-density housing and mixed-use commercial uses easily accessible to residents of the Specific Plan and surrounding areas.
- Four residential neighborhoods that are organized around neighborhood parks that serves as public gathering space for the residents of each neighborhood.
- A mix of housing types and residential densities in conformance with General Plan requirements for medium and high densities.
- A centrally located community core of public facilities and services (comprised of the Village Center, community park, middle school, high school and high-density residential housing).
- Four neighborhood parks and six small parks conveniently located within 5-minute walk of residences.
- An approximate 30-acre community park located within a 10-minute walk of residences.
- Three school sites (two elementary and one middle school) and two existing schools distributed throughout the Specific Plan.
- A vehicular circulation system that fosters the efficient and safe distribution of trips incorporating traffic calming devices at key intersections and other locations nears schools, parks and other areas to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- A network of paths, bike lanes/routes, transit stops and pedestrian-friendly streets connecting the schools, parks, the Village Center and the Project’s four residential neighborhoods.
- Two greenways streets and paths that will extend through the entire length of the Specific Plan and into the greater North of Boronda FGA. The southerly greenway street includes a 10-foot wide shared-use off-street path to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. These paths/streets will connect to other paths and bike lanes/routes located both in the Plan Area and to existing developed areas located to the north, south and west.

- Decorative street lighting and pedestrian amenities are incorporated throughout the Project to further create a distinct sense of place.
- Low Impact Development (LID) features have been incorporated throughout the Project to ensure conformance with the City's stormwater requirements.

Development Regulations, Use Classifications and Design Standards:

The Specific Plan includes Development Regulations and Use Classifications (see Chapter 3 of the Specific Plan) that will modify a number of the City's existing New Urbanism Zoning district regulations contained in Article III, Division 8 of the City of Salinas Zoning Code as well as other Supplemental Development Regulations and Standards contained in the Zoning Code. Development in the Plan Area will be subject to the Salinas Zoning Code regulations and standards except where specifically modified or otherwise provided for in the Specific Plan.

The proposed Use Classifications and Development Regulations applicable to the Plan Area are listed in Tables 3-1 through 3-5 of the Specific Plan. The standards proposed in the Specific Plan are intended to facilitate New Urbanism development as envisioned in the General Plan and Salinas Zoning Code and promote Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and other design principles. Generally, the modifications to the Zoning Code provide additional flexibility to accommodate a variety of different housing types, residential densities and lots sizes, and mixed-use development.

Design standards have also been included in the Specific Plan (see Chapter 4 of the Specific Plan) addressing items such as streetscape, area entry features, landscaping, architecture, and sustainable building design. These standards are in addition to the design standards contained in the City's Zoning Code except where specifically superseded in the Specific Plan. These design standards will provide for the creation of distinct identifiable neighborhoods with a variety of architectural housing styles, porches, recessed garages and other features, which emphasize the pedestrian over the automobile.

The Specific Plan also includes a number of design and infrastructure features to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that could contribute to global warming. A range of measures have also been included to enhance development sustainability. These measures are described in Section 4.5, *Green Building Standards*, of the Specific Plan.

Housing Types, Densities, and Affordability:

All residential development within the Plan Area is required to meet the minimum/maximum densities and density percentages required under the General Plan to ensure a variety of housing options and affordability levels are provided. As previously noted, these requirements include:

- A minimum average density of nine dwelling units (du) per net residential acre must be achieved over the Plan Area;
- 35%-45% of dwelling units must be in the density range of 7 to 14 du per net residential acre (which equates to approximately 1,519-1,953 dwelling units in the Plan Area); and
- 15%-25% of dwelling units in density range of 16 to 24 du per net residential acre (which equates to approximately 651-1,085 dwelling units in the Plan Area).

Additionally, the Village Center and surrounding areas (subareas 1.6, 1.7 (portion), 3.1 and 3.5) may be developed at a minimum of 30 to 40 du per net residential acre in accordance with the City's Housing Element and State Law. These additional units may be provided through the conversion of commercial floor area into dwelling units. In this regard, up to 250,000 square feet of the mixed-use commercial floor area allocated to the Village Center may be converted into 250 additional dwelling units (see Section 3.9.3 of the West Area Specific Plan). This concept is described in the General Plan as "comparable impact". Comparable impact is considered to be the substitution of 1,000 square feet of non-residential floor area for one residential dwelling unit.

Additional dwelling units will also be permitted pursuant to the City's density bonus and accessory dwelling unit ordinances. The City's Inclusionary Housing ordinance will also apply to development in the Plan Area. See Appendix H in the West Area Specific Plan for further discussion of the project's inclusionary housing requirements.

Circulation and Transportation:

The circulation plan for the Plan Area includes an interconnected pedestrian, bicycle and roadway and public transit system to ensure connectivity between land uses and create a safe and efficient circulation system for all users. Traffic calming devices, wider parkways (separating the street from the pathways) and narrower streets will be utilized to place the emphasis on the pedestrian rather than the automobile. The Specific Plan land use and circulation design promotes increased daily pedestrian trips by connecting residential neighborhoods within walking and bicycling distance to public facilities such as schools and parks, and to retail, employment areas, and transit connections.

Two greenway streets have been provided the length of the Plan Area and will ultimately extend into the proposed Central Area Specific Plan and the greater North of Boronda FGA located to the east. These greenway streets have paths with enhanced parkways and landscaping, decorative street lighting and limited vehicular interruptions (from driveways) to promote pedestrian and bicycle use. These greenways as well as other paths and streets within the Plan Area have been designed to link with existing off-site pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular (including transit) circulation systems (see Figure 5-28 of the Specific Plan).

The Specific Plan includes a conceptual transit plan for the Plan Area. This plan (see Figure 5-23 of the Specific Plan) anticipates that there will be bus stops/shelters adjacent to the Village Center, high density residential areas and/or near major activities centers such as the community park. It was prepared in consultation with Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) staff. The final routing and bus stop/shelter locations will be subject to the approval of MST in coordination with the City and the developers of the Plan Area.

Three roundabouts will be provided along the southern boundaries of the site in conjunction with the Boronda Road Congestion Relief Project. As part of that project, E. Boronda Road will be improved to four lanes with roundabout intersection controls at McKinnon Street, El Dorado Drive and Natividad Road. Roundabouts will also be located to the east of the Plan Area at Independence Boulevard and Hemingway Drive as part of a later phase. The use of roundabouts along E. Boronda Road was approved by City Council on May 16, 2017 (City Council Resolution No. 21169). The

first phase of the Boronda Road Congestion Relief Project includes the installation of a roundabout at McKinnon Street, with design estimated to be completed by the end of 2019 and construction estimated to commence in summer of 2020. Roundabouts were chosen as the traffic relief mechanism along E. Boronda Road because of various benefits related to noise, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and aesthetics.

Infrastructure, Stormwater/Water Quality and Maintenance:

The Specific Plan provides infrastructure planning for the Plan Area for water supply (including treatment, storage and distribution), wastewater; public services including schools, public safety, and libraries; and utilities (see Chapter 6 of the Specific Plan). Roadway improvements and infrastructure required to serve the West Area Specific Plan include frontage street improvements, extension of sanitary sewers, storm water and drainage facilities, including on-site supplemental detention/retention basins; and the extension of utilities to the site. These improvements will be the responsibility of the applicant and may be provided through a combination of applicant-funded financing, dedications, payment of development impact fees and through main extension agreements or payment of connection fees with the applicable utility companies.

Concurrent with recording of the first final subdivision map, a Plan Area Landscaping and Lighting Maintenance District (LLMD) will be formed. The LLMD will fund the maintenance and or operations of improvements such as of the small parks, decorative streetlights, and furniture, Low Impact Development (LID) and basin areas, landscaping in parkways and other public areas, traffic calming devices and slurry sealing of roads.

The project site will be served by Cal Water. Three new well sites are proposed within the site. The approval of a conditional use permit will be required prior to construction of each well site to ensure the design of the proposed well sites blend with the surrounding neighborhood and does not adversely impact adjacent land uses. The Project will also be required to implement a Water Conservation program and meet the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, the City's Water Conservation Ordinance, Salinas Zoning Code and other City requirements.

Monterey One Water (formerly known as Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency) will be providing sanitary sewer treatment services and Monterey Bay Community Power will be the primary provider of electricity and natural gas. Solid waste management and recycling will be provided by Republic Services or other service provided as determined by the City.

The West Area Specific Plan designates sites for three new elementary schools (each site is approximately ten acres in size) and one middle school (approximately 20 acres in size) within the Santa Rita Union School District. These sites will be reserved in accordance with the requirements of the City's Subdivision Ordinance and State Law. The school districts have voiced concerns regarding the cost of the school facilities and need for sufficient funds to construct schools. The developers will be required to pay school impact fees in accordance with the requirements of State

law and local ordinance. This issue is further discussed in the response to comments in Section 2.0 of the Final EIR.¹

A new fire station is planned directly to the east of the Specific Plan (off Natividad Road within the proposed Central Area Specific Plan area). This fire station will be constructed as development occurs to meet the fire needs of the West Area Specific Plan area, the greater North of Boronda FGA and surrounding areas.

Storm water and water quality management is addressed in Chapter 7 of the Specific Plan. The Chapter outlines how the Project will comply with the City of Salinas Storm Water Management Program, including the Storm Water Development Standards, as required under the City's current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

The Project will be required to incorporate on-site LID Best Management Practices such as bio-swales and bio-retention planters and detention/retention/infiltration basins to provide the required mitigation in relation to water quality and hydromodification. The supplemental basins will also be required to be landscaped and maintained to ensure a natural and visually pleasing vegetated appearance.

Section 3.9 of the EIR discusses public services and Section 3.11 discusses utilities including stormwater.

Clarification of General Plan FGA Land Use Designations:

The comprehensive master planning of the FGA had not been undertaken at the time the City of Salinas General Plan Update was adopted in 2002. As a result, the land use designations shown on the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Policy Map (herein called the “Land Use Map”) for land located in the FGA illustrated potential land use scenarios based on the total development capacities provided under the General Plan for these areas. It was envisioned that the actual distribution, location, density and intensity of the land uses located in these areas would be clarified and determined through the formulation of Specific Plans subsequently prepared by Project applicants and adopted by the City Council for these areas. As such, it was anticipated that the General Plan Land Use Map would be revised to reflect the land use plans brought to the City and ultimately adopted by the City Council for the Future Growth Areas as part of the Specific Plan approval process.

Upon approval of the Specific Plan, the General Plan Land Use Map will be revised to clarify the location and distribution of these existing General Plan land use designations for the project site as shown on Figure 1-8 of the Specific Plan. These land use designations will be consistent with the land use designations envisioned and planned for the FGA and with the total development capacities specified under the General Plan for this area.

¹ The Santa Rita Union School District has also alleged Brown Act violations associated with the Planning Commission’s consideration of the Project. (Attachments 22.c and 23) The City Attorney has evaluated the allegations, has determined the allegations, to be meritless and will respond accordingly.

Errata - Minor Text and Figure Modifications to the Draft Specific Plan Document:

The Draft West Area Specific Plan was released for a 45-day public review and comment period on February 27, 2019, which ended on April 15, 2019. Subsequent to release of the draft document, staff prepared an Errata Sheet (see Attachment 11) to the Specific Plan with recommended modifications to refine text, figures or clarify issues that have arisen since the draft document's release. Upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission and the adoption of the West Area Specific Plan by the City Council, a final Specific Plan document will be produced incorporating these recommended modifications (the Errata), other changes approved as part of the public hearing process and any other corrections that are typographical or non-substantive in nature.

Rezone

Zoning for the project site is currently New Urbanism Interim (NI) with a Specific Plan Overlay. Upon approval of the Rezone and related entitlements, the site will be rezoned to following four New Urbanism (NU) Zoning Districts: Neighborhood Edge (NE)/Low Density Residential, Neighborhood General-1(NG-1)/Medium Density Residential, Neighborhood General 2 (NG-2)/High Density Residential, and Village Center (VC) as well as the Park (P), Open Space (OS) and Public/Semipublic Zoning Districts, as applicable (see Attachment 12, Zoning Map Upon Adoption of Specific Plan). These Zoning Districts align with the corresponding General Plan Land Use Designations for the site. A Specific Plan Overlay will also be applicable to each district.

Development Agreement

A draft Development Agreement (see Attachment 13) has been prepared for the Project pursuant to Government Code Section 65864. The Development Agreement will allow the participating property owners and developers to proceed with the Project in accordance with existing policies, rules, and regulations, subject to the conditions of approval, thus vesting certain development rights in the property. As previously indicated, the participating property owners control approximately 471.64 of the 797-acre site. As of the writing of this staff report, the proposed Development Agreement would be applicable only to these properties. Staff understands that the Kantro property (approximately 154 acres) will also join the Development Agreement and will therefore be subject to the Development Agreement. With the Kantro property included, owners and developers controlling approximately 626 acres of the 797-acre site would be participating in the development process.

Public Review of the West Area Specific Plan and DEIR

The following is a brief discussion of the comments received during the 45-day public review period for both the Specific Plan and DEIR as well as those issues raised at the Planning Commission and City Council study sessions and the West Area Specific Plan community meeting.

- *45-day Public Review Period:* No comment letters were submitted to the City regarding the Specific Plan during the 45-day public review period, which began on February 27,

2019 and ended on April 15, 2019. The City did receive ten comment letters on the DEIR from the following agencies and individuals during the same review period as follows:

- Native American Heritage Commission, received March 4, 2019
- Monterey County Health Department, received April 10, 2019
- LandWatch, received April 11, 2019
- California Department of Transportation, received April 12, 2019
- Salinas Union High School District, received April 12, 2019
- Alisal Union School District, received April 15, 2019
- Santa Rita Union School District, received April 15, 2019
- Brian Finegan, received April 15, 2019
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, received April 16, 2019
- Monterey Bay Air Resources District, received April 16, 2019

See Section 2.0 of the Final EIR for further discussion of these comment letters including staff's responses to the comments.

- *Planning Commission (PC) Study Session:* A study session was held at the PC meeting on April 3, 2019. Issues raised during that meeting were traffic noise, the need for sound-attenuation walls, and grading along Russell Road, the potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County), the need for future transit service in the Plan Area, and the adequacy of the newspaper noticing and whether residents had informed of the study session.
- *City Council (CC) Study Session:* A study session was held at the CC meeting on April 30, 2019. In addition to the same issues that were raised at the PC meeting (relating to traffic noise, the need for sound-attenuation walls and grading along Russell Road, the potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area and the need for future transit service); school facility funding and the proposed intensity of densities in the Specific Plan were also raised by the public.
- *West Area Specific Plan Community Meeting:* Staff held a community meeting on June 10, 2019 at the Northminster Church community room; over 70 members of the public attended. The Project was generally well-received by those in attendance. The primary feedback received from the public related to the need for more market rate and affordable housing given the housing shortage in Salinas. Representatives from the Santa Rita Union School District also voiced concerns regarding funding for the schools.
- *Planning Commission (PC) Study Session:* A study session was held at the PC meeting on November 6, 2019. Issues raised during that meeting were traffic noise, the need for sound-attenuation walls, and grading along Russell Road, the potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County).

Staff responses to the issues raised at the PC and CC study sessions:

- *Traffic Noise and Sound Walls:* Sound attenuation walls will be provided along Russell Road to mitigate traffic noise impacts to the Bolsa Knolls area. Section 3.7 of the DEIR analyzes noise and provides eight mitigation measures. Figure 4-1 of the West Area Specific shows the community wall concept for the Plan Area.
- *Grading on Russell Road:* Changes in grade will be addressed as part of the review of the improvement and grading plans for future development in the Plan Area. Appropriate measures such as retaining walls may be required.
- *Bolsa Knolls Sewer Connection:* The West Area Specific Plan does not mandate that residential uses in the Bolsa Knolls neighborhood tie into the City sewer system. According to Monterey County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP), when a septic system fails, if sewer is located within 300 feet of the site, the property may be required to tie in. This is a Monterey County regulation. Neither the City nor the West Area Specific Plan would trigger mandatory sewer connection for the Bolsa Knolls neighborhood; the City Council's approval of the proposed Project would not automatically and in-and-of itself require the residents of the Bolsa Knolls neighborhood to connect to the City's sewer system.
- *Transit:* Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) is the public transit provider in the area and would provide service based on demand and funding availability. Figure 5-23 in the West Area Specific Plan illustrates the concept for extending bus transit and stops in the Plan Area, provided by MST in May 2016. Appendix G of the West Area Specific Plan includes correspondence from MST regarding transit in the Plan Area.
- *Newspaper Noticing:* In this regard, staff utilized the Monterey Herald to notice the City Council study session, which is the standard practice for the City. This manner of noticing complies with Section 37-60.400(d)(1) of the Salinas Zoning Code, which requires notices to be published in a newspaper of general circulation. The Monterey Herald offers more frequent publishing for legal ads thus offering more flexibility than the Salinas Californian. Noticing is not typically required for study sessions and was circulated as a courtesy in an effort to inform the public about the Project.
- *Development Density:* The project complies with the average minimum/maximum residential density per net residential acre as prescribed in the General Plan, and the required high and medium density percentages. As previously noted, the 4,340 dwelling units proposed as part of the Project does not include accessory dwelling units, density bonus dwelling units, or the commercial conversion of 250,000 square feet of mixed-use commercial floor area into an additional 250 dwelling units. The additional units provided through these mechanisms have been considered in the Project EIR and would further increase the density and intensity of the Project to provide additional housing opportunities in the Plan Area.

- **School Facility Funding:** The City will require that the Project applicants (including but not limited to subsequent developers and other applicable parties) to pay the State identified school impact fees, which are set to assist in school funding. The applicants have agreed to pay this obligation. The timing of the payment of the school impact fees will be in accordance with the requirements of State law. Three new school sites (requested by the Santa Rita Union School District) will also be reserved within the Plan Area pursuant to applicable law and regulations.

Library and Community Services Commission Review

The Library and Community Services Commission considered the Specific Plan park plan at a public hearing on March 13, 2019. The Commission voted (7-0) to recommend that the Planning Commission and the City Council approve the Specific Plan park plan. The Library and Community Services Commission minutes of the meeting are attached as Attachment 9 herein. The Commission raised the issue of sizing and designing the proposed parks so that multiple sports fields might be accommodated. In this regard, staff directed the Commission to Figures 4-6 and 4-7 of the West Area Specific Plan, which demonstrates how the neighborhood parks can accommodate multiple sports fields/courts.

Traffic and Transportation Commission Review

The Traffic and Transportation Commission considered the traffic implications of the Project at a public hearing on March 14, 2019. The Commission voted (7-0) to recommend that the Planning Commission and the City Council approve the Project. The Traffic and Transportation Commission minutes of the meeting are attached as Attachment 10 herein. The Commission pressed the importance of ensuring the cumulative impact intersection mitigations are funded, that drop-off and pick-up traffic at school sites be carefully considered to minimize impacts on City streets, and that the Boronda Road Congestion Relief Project precede the West Area Specific Plan.

Planning Commission Review

On December 4, 2019, the Planning Commission considered the Project at a duly noticed and agendized public hearing. The primary issues discussed by the Commission included residential density, fiscal impacts, road and infrastructure maintenance, affordable and inclusionary housing, school funding and community benefits. Commissioners noted concerns regarding the phasing of the proposed development including the timing of when the affordable and high density would be potentially built, with fire access on the project's narrower residential streets and other traffic-related issues. Staff explained the various residential density categories and additional mechanisms for increasing density of housing and that the timing of development will be largely market driven. Staff clarified that the current Inclusionary Housing Ordinance will apply to the project and would be implemented accordingly with the approval of each subsequent planning entitlement. Staff also explained that extensive collaboration occurred early in the project planning process between Community Development Department staff and Fire Department staff to ensure narrow New Urban roads could be accessed with fire apparatus. Regarding the traffic-related issues, Public Works staff provided a brief overview of the related Boronda Road Congestion Relief Project.

The following issues were raised by members of the public at the Planning Commission meeting on December 4, 2019: insufficient school site funding, potential project impacts on the Bolsa Knolls community, the need for higher residential densities and more affordable dwelling units, the need for a community benefits agreement, and that the reduced land alternative (Alternative 2) considered in the EIR should be the staff recommended project.

Staff responses to the issues raised at the Planning Commission meeting:

- *School Site Funding:* The City will require the Project applicants (including but not limited to subsequent developers and other applicable parties) to pay the State identified school impact fees, which are set to assist in school funding. The applicants have agreed to pay this obligation. The timing of the payment of the school impact fees will be in accordance with the requirements of State law. By statute, the City and School District cannot require fees beyond that allowed by State law and affirmed by the District through their approved nexus study, nor may the City deny the project proponents' request for approval of the Specific Plan solely due to projected funding shortfalls. Additionally, three new school sites (requested by the Santa Rita Union School District) will be reserved within the Plan Area pursuant to applicable law and regulations. The City has worked with the District to ensure the size, location and number of these school sites are appropriate and acceptable to them.
- *Impacts on Bolsa Knolls:*
 - Grade Differences. Changes in the grade (from that currently existing) will be addressed as part of the review of the improvement and grading plans for future development in the Plan Area. Measures such as retaining walls may be required, if deemed appropriate by the City Engineer.
 - Bolsa Knolls Sewer Connection: The West Area Specific Plan does not mandate, obligate or require in any way that residential uses in the Bolsa Knolls community (which is located directly north of the Project Site) connect to the City sewer system. According to Monterey County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP), when a septic system fails, if sewer is located within 300 feet of the site, the property may be required to tie in. Since the Bolsa Knolls community is located in unincorporated Monterey County, the determination of when and if a property is required to connect to a sewer system falls under the purview of the County not the City.
 - Noise Attenuation. Sound attenuation walls will be provided along Russell Road to mitigate traffic noise impacts to the Bolsa Knolls area. Section 3.7 of the DEIR analyzes noise and provides eight mitigation measures in this regard. Figure 4-1 of the West Area Specific shows the community wall concept for the Plan Area. As part of the improvement and grading plans for subsequent entitlements, the location and height of the sound attenuation wall (as measured from final grade) will be further addressed to ensure compliance with these mitigations.
- *Higher Residential Density:* The project complies with the average minimum/maximum residential density per net residential acre as prescribed in the General Plan, and the required high and medium density percentages. In this regard, it is important to note that the majority of the dwelling units provided in the Plan Area will fall within the medium

density range of 9 to 15 dwelling units per net residential acre (without density bonus) and the high density range of 16 to 24 dwelling units per net residential acre (without density bonus) to ensure a variety of housing options and affordability levels are provided. As previously noted, the 4,340 dwelling units proposed as part of the Project does not include accessory dwelling units, density bonus dwelling units, or the commercial conversion of 250,000 square feet of mixed use commercial floor area into an additional 250 dwelling units. The additional units provided through these mechanisms have been considered in the Project EIR and would further increase the density and intensity of the Project to provide additional housing opportunities in the Plan Area.

- *Community Benefits Agreement:* Community Benefits Agreements are agreements between project developers and community groups to provide advance agreement on how some of the benefits of economic development projects will be shared. A typical CBA defines specific benefits the developer(s) guarantee to residents of affected neighborhoods. The benefits can include living-wage jobs, affordable housing, childcare centers, recreational facilities, parks, and playgrounds. CBA's are most-applicable to those development projects which occur on already-developed property where residents or jobs are being displaced or where greenspace is being developed. The proposed project is not an appropriate project for a CBA: it is being proposed on undeveloped farmland, will not displace residents or jobs; it will create jobs, will include open space, recreation centers, and park space (including a 30+ acre community park accessible to all of Salinas's residents); it will result in the development of much-needed housing at a variety of densities, accessible to a variety of income levels (including low income housing) through application of the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and Guidelines.

The CBA proposed by the "Housing Coalition" in its December 2, 2019 letter (Attachment 22) is particularly problematic. The Housing Coalition letter demands "a commitment to adequately and continually fund an Anti-Displacement Fund that will support tenant and landlord education, free legal assistance, and relocation assistance." Regarding the demand for an Anti-Displacement fund: no displacement will occur as a result of the proposed Project. The Project is proposed for undeveloped land; no residents or jobs will be displaced by development of the proposed Project. The demand is for the Fund to be both "adequately and *continually*" funded, but there is no definition as to what is adequate or who determines the adequacy of the funding. Moreover, the demand is for the Fund to be continually funded, meaning the developers would be responsible for funding the Fund in perpetuity. Similarly, the Housing Coalition demands "free legal assistance," but provides no definition as to who would be entitled to the free legal assistance or what sort of legal issues would be eligible for assistance: Would the free legal assistance be available in criminal cases, civil cases, divorce proceedings? Delays to the City Council's consideration of the proposed Project to attempt and address demands for a CBA in this context will not guarantee a CBA and would result only in a delay in the opportunity for development of much-needed affordable housing in Salinas.

- *Reduced Land Area (RLA, Alternative 2):* LandWatch submitted a comment letter containing remarks regarding the RLA alternative, the full discussion of which is included on pages 2.0-55 through 2.0-97 in Chapter 2.0 of the FEIR. The RLA Alternative would

leave two parcels that total approximately 162 acres in size (APNs 211-011-008 and 211-011-009) undeveloped. In addition to the discussion provided in the FEIR regarding the RLA, staff would add the following as to why the RLA alternative is not the preferred alternative:

- The City has contemplated and planned for the development of the North of Boronda FGA (including the project site) since the update and adoption of the Salinas General Plan in 2002. Additionally, at that time, the City certified the Salinas General Plan Final EIR pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which included a statement of overriding considerations for the loss of agricultural lands located in the FGA as a result of the anticipated future development of that area. In 2008, the North of Boronda FGA was annexed into the City and rezoned from the Agricultural (A) district to the New Urbanism Interim (NI) with a Specific Plan Overlay district to serve as a holding zone until such time that specific plans (required under the General Plan) were approved by the City for that area and development could be undertaken.
- The General Plan requires a minimum average density of 9 dwelling units per net residential acre within the North of Boronda FGA. This does not include the additional dwelling units permitted pursuant to the City ordinance and State law, accessory dwelling unit ordinance or the conversion of commercial floor area to dwelling units. As such, the ultimate density provided in the Plan Area can exceed the minimum and maximum densities currently proposed.
- The General Plan requires the City to “Provide public services and infrastructure improvements that achieve and maintain City Service Standards”. The RLA would result in the following roadways and infrastructure not being developed in accordance with the General Plan: expansion of Natividad Road and frontage improvements, expansion of Russell Road, Rogge Road frontage improvements, the #3 water well/treatment site and supplemental stormwater basins along Natividad Road. Without these improvements, the City’s ability to provide public service and infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of the General Plan would be compromised.
- A portion of the northerly greenway feature street runs through APN 211-011-009. This is a key feature of the Plan Area providing pedestrian and bicycle access and connections across the full North of Boronda FGA. Under the RLA, a gap in this important pathway system would occur as a result of elimination of this land area from the project site.
- Also, with the RLA, the density of the project would generally provide a similar number of residential units as the Project, but the alternative would reduce the amount of land area within the project site resulting in the elimination of a three-acre neighborhood park. As such, the RLA would not meet the three acres of parkland per 1,000 persons required under Quimby Act, City Subdivision Ordinance and the General Plan.

Additional letters commenting on the project were submitted before the meeting after agenda packets had been distributed. Copies were provided to the commission and made available to the

public. An email (containing written testimony from LandWatch) was received the day after the Planning Commission hearing. These letters and correspondence are included as Attachment 22.

After deliberating on the proposed project, the Planning Commission voted **unanimously** (7 – 0) to recommend the City Council certify the EIR and adopt the CEQA Findings, including the Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, approve the specific plan and adopt ordinances approving the rezone and development agreement. The Planning Commission resolutions are included as Attachment 6.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is to disclose the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Project and the mitigation measures that can be employed to lessen or avoid impacts identified as potentially significant and significant. Decision-makers are to consider these effects as part of their deliberations to approve or deny a proposed Project. Documents associated with the CEQA process for the Project are included in Attachments 15 through 20 of this staff report. When a proposed Project has potentially significant environmental impacts that cannot be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures, an EIR is required. The Draft Program EIR (herein referred to as “Draft EIR” or “DEIR”) included in Attachment 16 identifies that the Project would result in a number of significant environmental impacts. A summary of the significant impacts is included in Table ES-2, *West Area Specific Plan Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures*, in the Summary section of the Draft EIR. The table lists each significant impact by topic area, the impact level of significance, mitigation measures to avoid or substantially lessen each impact, and the level of significance of each impact after implementation of the mitigation measures.

Project Description

The West Area Specific Plan Project details are described in Section 2.0, Project Description of the DEIR. Implementation of the project would result in physical change to the environment, the impacts of which must be evaluated under CEQA. These are identified in the DEIR.

The proposed West Area Specific Plan project (see summary table on page 8 above) will establish the land use planning and regulatory guidance, including the land use and zoning designations and policies, development regulations and design standards, for the approximately 797-acre Specific Plan Area. The Specific Plan will serve as a bridge between the Salinas General Plan and individual development applications in the Specific Plan Area, applying—and adding greater specificity to—the goals, policies and concepts of the General Plan for that area. The Specific Plan provides a complete blueprint for development of the Specific Plan Area, including:

- A description of proposed land uses,
- Policies, regulations and standards to support the Specific Plan,
- Infrastructure needed to support the Specific Plan, and
- Implementation and administrative processes needed for plan development.

The Specific Plan has been crafted to be consistent with overall community goals as expressed in the General Plan, as well as more specific policies and implementation measures contained in other documents. The City of Salinas Zoning Code requirements will apply to development applications and property within the Specific Plan Area unless specifically superseded by the development regulations or design standards contained in the Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan establishes the overall land use concept and development framework for the Plan Area. The specific planning process involves analyses of the following: planning, environmental, financial, and engineering. The process also included public comment and contribution; developing a document that will guide the future development of the Specific Plan Area; and subsequent implementation measures recommended by the Specific Plan. The content of the Specific Plan reflects the physical characteristics of the Plan Area, as well as the City's goals for land use change in general and for the Plan Area, in particular. The Specific Plan establishes and/or identifies:

- The New Urbanism and other design principles, purpose, relationship to, and conformance with the General Plan policies, the preparation process, and the Specific Plan content.
- The proposed land use plan, General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations, development intensities, and organization of land uses used to meet the objectives of the Specific Plan.
- The use classifications and development regulations to implement the land uses contained in the Specific Plan, which will create a New Urbanism style community.
- The standards that guide design and planning of residential and mixed-use commercial development, as well as parks and other amenities.
- The location and classification of roadways and the circulation infrastructure needed to link the Specific Plan Area to the vicinity road network.
- Public services and a framework for the expansion of infrastructure systems.
- The plans for low impact development features and a supplemental storm water collection system that are being incorporated into the Project to comply with the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, Storm Water Development Standards (SWDS) and Storm Water Standard Plans (SWSP).
- The proposed financing plan, Project phasing, public facility cost summaries, and funding sources.
- The Project review process, actions, and approvals needed to implement and amend the Specific Plan.

Environmental Impact Summary

The areas of potential environmental effects analyzed in the West Area Specific Plan DEIR include air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gases and climate change, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, population and housing, public services, transportation and circulation, utilities and cumulative impacts. The Draft EIR includes a number of appendices. The appendices are found in Attachment 17 to this report, and include: Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation/Initial Study & Comments*; Appendix B, *Criteria Air Pollutant, Greenhouse Gas Mitigation measures Guidebook*; Appendix C, *CAPCOA's Quantifying Greenhouse Gas, and Energy Modeling Results*; Appendix D, *Biological Resources Report*; Appendix E, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials Studies/Reports*; Appendix F, *Hydrology and Water Quality Technical Study*; Appendix G, *Water Supply Assessment*; Appendix H, *Noise Technical Report*; Appendix I, *Transportation Impact Analysis*; and Appendix J, *2007 Final Supplement for the Salinas General Plan Final Program EIR mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program*.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15128, the DEIR includes a statement indicating reasons that various possible significant effects of the Project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail. Moreover, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, the findings of the initial study on environmental topics that were either found to have no impact or be less than significant, or would be found to be sufficiently addressed in the Salinas General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (Cotton Bridges Associates 2002), and subsequent Final Supplement for the Salinas General Plan Final Program EIR (EDAW/AECOM 2007), are not included within individual sections of the DEIR. These areas include aesthetics, agricultural and forest resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, recreation, transportation and circulation (air traffic).

The following impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level through implementation of identified mitigation measures, as identified in the DEIR: Cultural and Tribal Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Population and Housing, and Utilities.

Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The following impacts are significant and unavoidable even with the adoption of all feasible mitigation, as identified in the DEIR:

- Air Quality - The Specific Plan would exceed the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) thresholds of significance for operations for ROG, NOx, and PM10, even after mitigation. (DEIR, pp. 3.1-19 through 3.1-23);
- Biological Resources - Wildlife Movement and Corridors. Development of the proposed Project would eliminate any movement habitat through the Specific Plan Area, along with any upland habitat adjacent to the movement corridors. There are no mitigation measures that can fully mitigate this impact and, given the fact that once the land is converted, it will no longer be a viable migration corridor for any species. (DEIR, pp. 3.2-46 through 3.2-47);

- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change - Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Project would generate GHG emissions, directly and indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. While the recommended mitigation measures would result in reduced GHGs, it is possible that individual Projects within the Plan Area may not achieve GHG reductions needed for their individual impacts to be less than significant. (DEIR, pp. 3.4-31 through 3.4-38);
- Noise - Traffic Noise at Existing Receptors. The proposed Project would cause increased noise levels exceeding the City of Salinas 60 dB Ldn exterior noise level standard at existing residential receptors. Additionally, traffic noise level increases would exceed the FICON CEQA substantial increase criterion of 1.5 to 5 dB, as outlined in Table 3.7-7. (DEIR, pp. 3.7-14 through 3.7-23);
- Public Services –
 - School Facilities: Project implementation may result in the need for the construction of new schools, which has the potential to cause substantial adverse physical environmental impacts. Development of a school within the proposed Plan Area would contribute to significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality (Impacts 3.1-2, and 3.1-7), biological resources (Impacts 3.2-9 and 3.2-12), greenhouse gases (Impacts 3.4-1, 3.4-2, and 3.4-4), noise (Impacts 3.7-1, and 3.7-8), and transportation and circulation (Impacts 3.10-3, and 3.10-4)(DEIR, pp. 3.9-19 through 3.9-21);
 - Park Facilities: Project implementation may result in effects on parks or has the potential to require the construction of park facilities which may cause substantial adverse physical environmental impact. Development of 49.76 acres of park land within the Plan Area would contribute to significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality (Impacts 3.1-2, and 3.1-7), biological resources (Impacts 3.2-9 and 3.2-12), greenhouse gases (Impacts 3.4-1, 3.4-2, and 3.4-4), noise (Impacts 3.7-1, and 3.7-8), and transportation and circulation (Impacts 3.10-3, and 3.10-4). (DEIR, pp. 3.9-22 through 3.9-23); and
- Transportation and Circulation Under Cumulative Plus Project Conditions - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would conflict with the transportation performance measures established by the City of Salinas, Monterey County, and Caltrans. (DEIR, pp. 3.10-63 through 3.10-70).

Some of the impacts listed above also represent cumulatively considerable (i.e., significant) and unavoidable impacts of the proposed Project as discussed in Section 4.1, Cumulative Setting and Impact Analysis.

Analysis of Alternatives

One of the main differences between an EIR and a lower level environmental review, such as a Negative Declaration, is the need for the EIR to consider a reasonable range of alternatives, and then evaluate these alternatives to determine the extent to which significant adverse impacts of the Project are lessened or avoided. Each alternative's ability to meet the Project's objectives is also considered. Based on these analyses, the alternative(s) that best substantially lessens or avoids significant environmental impacts of the Project is identified as the environmentally superior alternative. If the environmentally superior alternative is not approved, findings must be made that

the environmentally superior alternative(s) is infeasible (e.g., because it does not meet all Project objectives or does not meet them as well as the proposed Project).

Four alternatives to the Project were evaluated in the DEIR:

- Alternative 1: No Project (No build) Alternative;
- Alternative 2: Reduced Land Area Project Alternative;
- Alternative 3: Reduced Residential Intensity/Density Alternative;
- Alternative 4: Smaller-Scale Project Alternative.

The significance of each impact of the Project and the significance of each impact of each alternative is detailed in Section 5.0 of the DEIR, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*. The results of the analysis are tabulated in the DEIR in Table 5.0-10, *Comparison of the Alternative Project Impacts to the Specific Plan*.

Alternative 1, the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative because it results in the least adverse environmental impacts when compared to the proposed Project. However, as required by CEQA, when the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the environmentally superior alternative among the others must be identified. The Smaller-scale Project Alternative is the next best alternative. It ranks equal to or better than the proposed Project for every environmental issue. In addition, in aggregate, the Reduced Land Area Project Alternative, and the Reduced Residential Intensity/Density Project Alternative rank higher than the proposed Project. It should be noted that none of alternatives meet all the Project objectives, as listed below. Additionally, the reduced number of residential units in the Reduced Residential Intensity/Density Alternative would be inconsistent with the General Plan standards for the Plan Area and would not meet the minimum number of residential units required for New Urbanism.

Even though the Smaller-scale Project Alternative, the Reduced Land Area Project Alternative, and the Reduced Residential Intensity/Density Project Alternative would all provide a lesser level of environmental impact than the proposed Project, the Final Program EIR (also referred herein as “Final EIR”) explains why these alternatives do not meet the City’s Project objectives (see immediately below) and be infeasible on other grounds. The reasoning from these discussions is included in the draft CEQA Findings of Fact submitted to the City Council concurrent with this staff report.

Project Objectives

- Create a community with a compact form that promotes sustainable neighborhood design and is pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly;
- Provide a variety of land uses in easy walking distance of housing including a mixed-use village, parks, and schools to reduce vehicle miles travelled;
- Provide parks and other public green space in accordance with General Plan standards that are designed to be safe and easily accessible to residents;
- Provide a variety of low density, medium density, and high-density housing to provide a variety of housing options for residents at various life stages;

- Provide public services and infrastructure improvements that achieve and maintain City service standards;
- Provide an inviting tree-lined street system which incorporates traffic calming and other measures;
- Establish an interconnected sidewalk/path system throughout the development which links to the greater FGA and City as a whole;
- Create a sense of place and unique identity through the use of entry treatments, landscaping, streetscapes, public art, decorative street lighting, pedestrian amenities and other elements;
- Provide for a reasonable jobs/housing balance;
- Provide opportunities for senior housing; and
- Provide for a site/parcel-based post construction Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs)/LID to the maximum extent practicable.

Final EIR

The Draft EIR was released and circulated for public comment (for 45 days) pursuant to CEQA requirements on February 27, 2019. The comment period ended on April 15, 2019. Refer to the Notice of Completion found in Attachment 18. Ten comment letters were received as previously noted above. General themes from the comment letters address: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic and circulation, and existing school capacity/new school funding, and water resources.

Section 2.0 of the Final EIR contains responses to these comments. Where changes to the Draft EIR were warranted based on the responses to comments, these changes are identified in Section 3.0 of the Final EIR in strike-through (the FEIR Errata) and underline format. The Final EIR, included in Attachment 19, was completed in October 2019.

Certification of the Final EIR

The City Council will be responsible for the certification of the Final EIR. Should it choose to approve the Project, the City Council must first certify the Final EIR by making the following findings, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15090:

- The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA;
- The Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency, and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approve the Project; and
- The Final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

Findings

If approving a Project, the City Council, upon recommendation of the Planning Commission, must make certain determinations or findings. Some of these are related to the CEQA process and others are related to the Project approvals and their consistency with the General Plan. In recommending action to the City Council on the resolutions, the Planning Commission must also recommend the

adoption of these findings. Findings are required for both CEQA review process and the Project approvals.

CEQA Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

When an EIR has been prepared that indicates implementing a Project or plan would result in significant environmental impacts, the lead agency documents the environmental review analysis in CEQA Findings that are adopted following certification of the Final EIR. When there are mitigation measures applied to reduce or eliminate potential environmental impacts, the lead agency must also adopt a MMRP. The CEQA Findings also contain the Statement of Overriding Considerations. The CEQA Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and MMRP are included as Exhibits to Attachment 1, the Final EIR certification resolution.

Project Findings

The City Council's decisions to approve the Specific Plan, Rezone, and Development Agreement must be supported by findings. Each approval requires that a specific set of findings be made. The required findings for these approvals are identified in the Salinas Zoning Code in sections 37-60.1230, 37-60.1120, and 37-60.810, respectively. The findings are found in the Project Findings, which are included in Attachment 21. The Project Findings are referenced in the resolutions for each of the approvals.

Planning Commission and City Council Decision Making Process

Planning Commission. Following the conclusion of the public hearing, the Planning Commission shall make written recommendations to the City Council to approve, approve with conditions or modifications, or deny the requested approvals as submitted or in modified form and shall make written findings supporting the reason for the recommendation. An affirmative vote of a majority (not less than four (4) votes) of the Planning Commission's total membership is required to forward the recommendations to the City Council (Salinas Zoning Code, Section 37-60.920, (Ord. No. 2463 (NCS))).

City Council. Following the conclusion of the public hearing at which it considers the Final EIR and Project approvals, the City Council will consider the Planning Commission's recommendations, and vote to approve, modify, or deny the Project. An affirmative vote of the City Council is required for its decision to be final (Salinas Zoning Code, Section 37-60.930, (Ord. No. 2463 (NCS))).

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The West Area Specific Plan aligns closely with the City Council's goals (2016-2019) of Economic Diversity and Prosperity, Safe, Livable Community, Effective, Sustainable Government, Well Planned City and Excellent Infrastructure, and Quality of Life. The Project is consistent with the Council Goal to entitle and develop the FGA. Additionally, responsible consideration of developments supports the Council Strategic Plan goal of Economic Diversity

and Prosperity. The Project also requires the installation of dark fiber conduit within the Specific Plan consistent with the Council Strategic Goal of supporting the development of the City's Broadband infrastructure.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Community Development Department staff is the lead on this Project in coordination with the Public Works Department regarding infrastructure, traffic and stormwater-related issues. Coordination also occurred with the Police, Fire, Finance, Library and Community Services Departments. The City Attorney's Office was particularly instrumental in review of the CEQA documents, the Specific Plan, and the related ordinances and resolutions. The City Attorney's Office also led the drafting of the Development Agreement on behalf of the City.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

A fiscal impact analysis (Attachment 14) has been prepared for the Project to assess its net economic effects. The report considers the fiscal impact of both the West Area Specific Plan and the Central Area Specific Plan. At build out, the report indicates that the Project (plus the Central Area) is Projected to generate an approximate annual surplus of between \$2,422,000 and \$5,872,000 for the City's General Fund based on three scenarios (conservative, baseline, and optimistic). Of this total amount, the West Area Specific Plan is Projected to generate an annual surplus of between approximately \$1,541,619 to \$3,376,303.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1	City Council Resolution to Certify the Final Program EIR (ER 2018-003)
Attachment 2	City Council Resolution to Adopt both the CEQA Findings of Fact, including the Statement of Overriding Considerations, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Specific Plan (ER2018-003)
Attachment 3	City Council Resolution for the Specific Plan (SPEC 2013-002)
Attachment 4	City Council Ordinance for the Rezone (RZ 2019-001)
Attachment 5	City Council Ordinance for the Development Agreement (DA 2019-001)
Attachment 6	Planning Commission Resolutions and minutes, dated December 4, 2019
Attachment 7	Project Site Location Map
Attachment 8	Property Ownership/Existing Conditions Map
Attachment 9	Library & Community Services Commission Meeting Minutes dated, March 13, 2019
Attachment 10	Traffic and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes dated, March 14, 2019
Attachment 11	Draft West Area Specific Plan (link) with Errata sheet
Attachment 12	Rezone Map (Zoning Map Upon Adoption of Specific Plan)
Attachment 13	Draft Development Agreement
Attachment 14	Fiscal Impact Analysis
Attachment 15	Notice of Preparation

Attachment 16	Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (link)
Attachment 17	Draft Program Environmental Impact Report Technical Appendices (link)
Attachment 18	Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability
Attachment 19	Final Program EIR (Errata Sheet, Response to Comments and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program)
Attachment 20	CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations
Attachment 21	Project Findings
Attachment 22	Comments received regarding Project including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Letter from Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) dated, December 4, 2019 b) Letter from Housing Coalition dated, December 2, 2019 c) Letter from Lozano Smith dated, December 4, 2019 d) Correspondence - written testimony (received via email) from LandWatch dated, December 4, 2019
Attachment 23	Letter from Lozano Smith (Santa Rita Union School District) dated December 10, 2019