



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 12, 2021

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, DIRECTOR

BY: JONATHAN MOORE, SENIOR PLANNER, AND MONICA GURMILAN, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

THROUGH: LISA BRINTON, PLANNING MANAGER

TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT ON PROGRESS OF THE VISION SALINAS 2040 GENERAL PLAN

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to receive and accept the Administrative Report on the progress of the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update. No further action is required.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council receive and accept the Administrative Report on the progress of the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since the last Council update in March 2021, the City has made significant progress on the General Plan Update. Highlights include contracting with two consulting firms to provide technical support for the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan and Climate Action Plan, forming a Steering Committee to guide Visión Salinas 2040, and starting city-wide community engagement through a series of district workshops, launching of a new website, and holding the Visión Salinas 2040 Community Resource Fair on October 2nd. Staff is also working across departments to complete a policy scan of the 2002 General Plan and an Existing Conditions Report. These documents will inform new content development by Working Groups that will launch in January 2022. Also, in the first quarter of 2022, staff anticipates completing a draft land use map that will assist in the development of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan, which officially launches the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

BACKGROUND:

During the March 2021 Visión Salinas 2040 Administrative Report ([Legistar link](#)), staff outlined the General Plan update process and budget, provided the 2019-2020 General Plan Annual Progress Report, and asked the Council to appoint representatives from their districts to serve on the General Plan Steering Committee. In May 2021, the City entered into professional service [agreements](#) with PlaceWorks Inc. (PlaceWorks) to prepare the General Plan EIR and a Climate Action Plan (CAP), and with Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc. (Kimley-Horn) to serve as the General Plan master transportation consultant.

The Steering Committee also held its orientation in May, and has held regular meetings in June, August, and September. Early Steering Committee tasks have included promotion and participation in the district workshops and providing direction on General Plan document organization. Currently, the Steering Committee has 17 members, representing all six (6) Council Districts, and key institutions and stakeholder groups across the Salinas community, including:

- Affordable housing
- Agriculture
- Business associations
- Community-based organizations
- Local agencies and commissions
- Schools and youth

To develop a robust online engagement presence, the City relaunched the Visión Salinas 2040 website, www.visionsalinas.org, on the Engagement HQ platform. This will allow residents to share ideas, complete polls and surveys, and other engagement activities online.

DISCUSSION:

District Land Use Workshops

Through September 2021, City staff and councilmembers have held five (5) district land use workshops, for Districts 1-4, and District 6. The District 5 workshop will be held on October 7th at Sherwood Hall, and there will be a citywide workshop on October 13th, at City Hall. The primary objective of having seven workshops is to ensure participation from each district and to give Councilmembers the opportunity to dialogue with constituents, while keeping in-person attendance safe. Staff have also posted the workshop questions as an Ideas Board activity on the Visión Salinas website so that those who were unable to attend in person, could provide their input.

Each workshop consisted of two parts: a district “town-hall” open discussion co-facilitated by staff and the district councilmember, followed by a brief land use presentation and a small group mapping activity. In earlier workshops (Districts 1-3), participants were asked to place “development types”, represented by colored stickers, on district or citywide maps in addition to providing other suggestions. Participant and facilitator feedback suggested that this was confusing. In response, the color coordination was removed from more recent workshops (Districts 4 and 6) to allow participants to freely jump into the activity. Participant feedback also led staff to change the activity map from a street map to an aerial map, to better see actual conditions. Some common themes that emerged from the townhall sections include the desire for:

- welcome and wayfinding signage into the city and throughout neighborhoods,
- entertainment venues, options and programming,
- improvements to sidewalks and streets, and
- affordable housing and mixed-use development.

Themes and examples are further detailed in Attachment 1: Workshop Themes. All workshop notes are listed in Attachment 2: District Workshop Comments.

Map activity responses tended to reinforce the town hall ideas in specific locations throughout the districts. This included identifying potential locations for an amphitheater in parks, potential locations for crosswalks and bike lanes/paths, and future mixed-use development. Comments and input are visually summarized in Attachment 3: Draft Workshop Feedback Map. This map will be updated to incorporate feedback from the District 5 and the citywide workshops. Land use specific comments will help staff as they draft land use designations and policies and develop the draft land use map. Many of the ideas shared at these workshops went beyond land use and will be considered by Working Groups as possible General Plan policies or actions.

Policy Scan, Existing Conditions Report, and Working Groups

Between the 2002 General Plan and the many community planning efforts undertaken in the last decade, there is already a strong foundation for Visión Salinas 2040. Since late July, Community Development Department (CDD) staff have been working with other City departments to review existing General Plan goals and policies, including those in the 2015-2023 Housing Element and 2017 Economic Development Element. This Policy Scan (see Attachment 4 for a sample) will help identify what has already been implemented/accomplished, what is no longer relevant, and what could be carried forward in the Visión Salinas 2040 update.

CDD staff is also working across departments and with the consultant teams to collect, update, and analyze data for an Existing Conditions Report. The Existing Conditions Report will show how the community has changed in the prior decades and quantify some of the opportunities and

challenges in Salinas today. The Policy Scan and Existing Conditions Report will form the framework and context for the Working Groups, who will drive content creation. Like in the Alisal Vibrancy Plan, Working Groups will be centered around plan topics, and will be made up of residents and community stakeholders, as well as staff and technical advisors. Initially, these groups will be based around the three (3) General Plan pillars: the Built Environment, Natural Systems, and the Socioeconomic. The Steering Committee selected these pillars as a proposed way of grouping General Plan Elements in a more relatable manner. For details on what may fall under each pillar, please see Attachment 5: Proposed General Plan Organization. As content generation evolves it is anticipated that members of these three Working Groups may split into more concentrated topics, such as Housing, Climate Action, Economic Development, etc.

Next Steps

In late October, staff will share initial drafts of land use designations and a draft land use map with the Steering Committee and public, with the anticipation of bringing a preferred proposed draft land use plan to Council in the first quarter of 2022. Establishing a preliminary land use plan is critical to developing a program scope for the General Plan to initiate the Environmental Impact Report process.

In early November, there will be a Steering Committee/community meeting to share an existing conditions presentation and build interest in the Working Groups. Full drafts of the Policy Scan and the Existing Conditions Report will be complete by January 2022, which is when the City will launch meetings for the initial three (3) Working Groups.

Also, in the first quarter of 2022, staff will work with PlaceWorks to develop a Notice of Preparation for the General Plan EIR. The NOP and accompanying Scoping Meeting let the public and local agencies know the City is officially starting the environmental review and provides an avenue for them to help shape that process. These steps are summarized in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Visión Salinas 2040 Anticipated Next Steps	
4th Quarter 2021	1st Quarter 2022
October <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee Meeting – discuss place type land use designations 	January <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release Draft Policy Scan and Existing Conditions Report Steering Committee reviews draft land use map/designations Launch Working Groups
November <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue land use engagement Host Existing Conditions Presentation 	February <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee and Working Group Meetings Planning Commission reviews draft land use map/designations
December	March

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue land use engagement • Work on Draft Policy Scan and Existing Conditions Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council reviews draft land use maps/designations • Notice of Preparation for General Plan Environmental Impact Report
--	---

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The City of Salinas has determined that this report is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Given that the General Plan acts as the City’s guiding document for future growth and development, it will help meet the Council’s Goals of Investment Strategies/Risk Management, New Revenue, Operational Efficiencies and Public Safety through the development and future implementation of the various General Plan policies and actions.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

City departments are coordinating on the General Plan Update through the Visión Salinas 2040 Staff Committee. This internal committee will meet monthly to facilitate cross-department discussion on the General Plan and coordinate related engagement efforts. As discussed above, City departments have recently collaborated on compiling a Policy Scan of the existing General Plan and existing conditions data. The Update will also require significant coordination with regional agencies, including but not limited to, the County of Monterey, Monterey-Salinas Transit, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

This report has no direct fiscal impact. However, it is anticipated that the three-year General Plan process will cost approximately \$2.5 million. With the addition of staffing, the City was able to reduce the cost of the General Plan by \$500,000. A General Plan/Zoning Maintenance Fee was established in 2015 and has surpassed the original estimate of generating between \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually. The City currently has almost \$1.89 million for this effort in the CIP budget, including over \$1.1 million generated by the General Plan Maintenance Fee. Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) and Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) entitlement grants received total \$855,000 and the Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation (SALC) grant of \$250,000 brings our total GPU funding to over \$2.9 million.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Workshop Themes
2. District Workshop Comments
3. Draft Workshop Feedback Map
4. Draft Policy Scan Example
5. Proposed General Plan Organization