



TITLE: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 2021-002 AND REZONE 2021-002; AMEND THE GENERAL PLAN TO CHANGE THE GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION OF SIX (6) SITES TO MIXED USE AND REZONE THE SAME SIX (6) SITES FROM PUBLIC/SEMIPUBLIC (PS) OR COMMERCIAL RETAIL (CR) TO MIXED USE (MX) AND EXPAND THE DOWNTOWN CORE AREA (DC) OVERLAY DISTRICT TO INCLUDE THE INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER (ITC)

Transportation Center (ITC) site. The project includes rezones to four (4) downtown City-owned parking lots, the City's Permit Center and adjacent parking garage (Permit Center and Parking Garage site), and portions of the City's Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC), as well as an expansion of the Downtown Core (DC) Overlay District to include the ITC. The project also includes a General Plan Amendment changing the land use designation of the ITC, Lot 8, Lot 12, and Permit Center and Parking Garage. The sites are currently zoned Public/Semipublic (PS) or Commercial Retail (CR) and would be rezoned as Mixed Use (MX) (all six sites). The sites' General Plan land use designations are currently Retail, Public/Semipublic, or Mixed Use, which would be amended to Mixed Use where required (at four of the six sites).

BACKGROUND:

Chapter 37, Article VI, Divisions 12 and 14 provides for a process whereby all General Plan Amendments and Rezones are brought before the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council for consideration and a final decision.

The project is being fully funded by SB 2 grant funding for the purpose of increasing housing production in the City. The City applied and was awarded an SB 2 Grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development through their Planning Grant Program (PGP). The SB 2 grant is awarded to cities for the preparation, adoption, and implementation of plans that streamline housing development approval and accelerate housing production.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the proposed rezone and General Plan Amendment is to facilitate the production of high-density housing, consistent with the City's 2015 Downtown Vibrancy Plan (DVP). As a first step in Downtown Vibrancy Plan (DVP) implementation, the City completed a Salinas Downtown Housing Target Market Analysis (HTMA) in 2017 (City of Salinas 2015; City of Salinas 2017). Both the DVP and HTMA prioritize the development of Downtown Salinas to bring activity, commerce, and vitality to the city center and provide expanded housing opportunities to respond to the housing crisis affecting residents who live in substandard or overcrowded housing conditions. The project is intended to redevelop city-owned surface parking lots in Downtown Salinas and encourage the development of mixed-use development that would provide new housing and commercial spaces that encourage walkability of the downtown center. The Rezones and General Plan Amendment would affect 10.4 acres and could facilitate the development of up to approximately 500 housing units and 125,000 square feet of commercial uses in areas designated as Federal Opportunity Zones with access to public transit – based on Mixed Use (MX) zoning standard.

The project includes rezoning six (6) sites from Public/Semipublic (PS)/Commercial Retail (CR) to Mixed Use (MX) and expanding the Downtown Core Area (DC) Overlay to include the ITC site, to allow for greater housing density and more flexible development standards. These proposed rezones are shown on Exhibit "5". The project does not involve construction or other physical changes to the sites.

The six (6) sites/properties are located in the Central City Overlay District. The following Table 1 provides an overview of the land uses and zoning districts adjacent to the project site:

Table 1: Land Uses and Zoning Districts Adjacent to the Project Sites

Zoning Districts adjacent to each project site		
Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC)	North:	General Commercial/Light Industrial (IGC) – Public/Semipublic (PS)
	South:	Office/Mixed use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	East:	Park/Parks (P) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	West:	Vehicle Repair / Mixed Arterial Frontage (MAF) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
Parking Lot 12	North:	Office/Commercial Office (CO) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	South:	Office/Public/Semipublic (PS) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	East:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	West:	Office/Commercial Office (CO) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
Parking Lot 8	North:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	South:	Office/Public/Semipublic (PS) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	East:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	West:	Office/Public/Semipublic (PS) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
Parking Lot 1	North:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	South:	Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	East:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	West:	Office/Public/Semipublic (PS) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
Parking Lot 5	North:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	South:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	East:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	West:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
Permit Center & Permit Garage	North:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	South:	Office/Public/Semipublic (PS) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	East:	Office/Retail- Mixed Use (MX) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)
	West:	Office/Public/Semipublic (PS) – Central City Overlay (CC-DC-DN)

Analysis:

General Plan Amendment

Per the 2002 Salinas General Plan, the “Mixed Use” designation allows for development including a mixture of retail, office, and residential uses in the same building, on the same parcel or in the same area. The intent of this designation is to create activity centers with pedestrian-oriented uses in certain portions of the City. The maximum intensity/density of development is 1.0 + 10 dwelling

units per acre (for a total maximum allowable floor area ratio of 1.25) throughout the City and a maximum intensity/density of development of 4.0 + 80 dwelling units per acre (for a total maximum allowable floor area ratio of 6.0) for projects within the Central City. For retail or office development is a 3.0 FAR. For residential without retail or office, the maximum allowable density is 60 units per acre in the Central City. An FAR intensity of 8.0 may be allowed for receiving properties in the core of the downtown commercial area under a transfer of development rights (TDR) program that may be adopted by City.

The project sites are currently designated “Public/Semipublic (PS) or Commercial Retail (CR)”. The proposed Amendment is consistent with Salinas General Plan Policies. The proposed General Plan Amendment would change the existing designation for the project sites and amend the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Policy Map to align with the proposed rezoning of each site to Mixed Use (MX). The Amendment would be consistent with the General Plan land use designation of the adjacent sites of each subject site.

The proposed “Mixed Use” land designation for all six (6) sites is consistent with General Plan Goal H-1, by providing a range of housing opportunities to adequately address existing and projected needs to Salinas. The project also complies with General Plan Policy H-1.3, by identifying adequate sites to facilitate and encourage housing production for the existing and projected housing needs of the City. In addition, the project complies with General Plan Goal H-2, by maintaining and improving existing neighborhoods and housing stock and complies with General Plan Policy H-2.6, by encouraging the retention, rehabilitation and new construction of high-density, well-designed housing in the Central City and other targeted areas, as discussed in the Land Use and Community Design Element.

Rezone

Per Zoning Code Section 37-30.230, the purpose of the “Mixed Use” land use designation is to promote and provide development opportunities for integrated, complementary housing and employment opportunities in the same building, on the same parcel or within the same block. This district allows more intensive development on busier streets without fostering a strip commercial appearance. This development will support transit use and provide a buffer between busy streets and residential neighborhoods and provide new housing opportunities in the city. The emphasis of nonresidential uses is primarily on locally oriented/neighborhood serving retail, service, and office uses. Development is encouraged to provide businesses on the ground floor with housing on upper stories and provide incentives to assist in achieving this goal, promote residential development that is appropriate in an urban setting in mixed use buildings by providing incentives, as well as standards and regulations that minimize conflicts between different types of uses, and promote vital and safe mixed-use areas through the incorporation of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) features in development.

For the proposed Mixed-Use Buildings and Developments to be permitted, the project sites need to be rezoned to “Mixed Use” (MX). The proposed rezoning of the project sites would be consistent with Central City Overlay (CC) District. It would comply with the development

regulations and design standards of the CC District, by encouraging and accommodating the increased development intensity for mixed use, commercial, retail, and office uses within the central city and increase opportunities for infill housing and innovative retail while transforming and aesthetically improving transportation corridors into pedestrian-oriented civic boulevards with mixed use projects. In addition, the proposed re-zone would encourage pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods where local residents and employees have services, shops, entertainment, jobs, and access to transit within walking distance of their homes and workplace.

FINDINGS:

Mitigated Negative Declaration:

Prior to taking action on the requested General Plan Amendment and Rezone, the Planning Commission will need to certify that the proposed environmental document is adequate for the proposed project by adopting the findings set forth in the attached Planning Commission Resolution.

General Plan Amendment/Rezone:

The Planning Commission may recommend approval of a General Plan Amendment and Rezone, if all of the findings set forth in the attached Planning Commission Resolution are established. Per Zoning Code Section 37-60.920(d)(2), an affirmative vote of a majority (no less than four (4) votes) of the Planning Commission is required for the Commission to make a recommendation of the General Plan Amendment to the City Council.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The environmental impacts of the project have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the project. Based upon review of the Initial Study, the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment because the mitigation measures outlined in the proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program have been included in the project (see Exhibit “3”). The Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration were routed to responsible agencies on July 19, 2021 and posted at the County Clerk’s Office on July 23, 2021; the deadline for comments was August 18, 2021. The State Clearinghouse received the document on July 19, 2021; the deadline for Clearinghouse comments was August 18, 2021 (SCH Number 2021070387).

On June 19, 2020, the City of Salinas, pursuant to Public Resources 21080.3.1 and AB 52, sent via certified mail notification letters to eight (8) California Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The letter was sent to representatives of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan, the Xolon Salinan Tribe, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. On August 21, 2020, follow-up letters were sent to the same tribal

representatives to notify the tribes of project site boundary revisions. On October 15, 2020, Louis J. Ramirez-Miranda, Chairperson of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, emailed a City Associate Planner requesting additional consultation. A virtual consultation meeting was scheduled via Zoom with Chairperson Ramirez-Miranda of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, the City's Planning Manager, and a Senior Planner on October 20, 2020.

On October 29, 2020, the City of Salinas, pursuant to California Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) and California Government Code Section 65352.3 sent via certified mail notification letters to eight (8) California Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The letter was sent to representatives of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan, the Xolon Salinan Tribe, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

As of the date this report was written, no additional requests for additional consultation were received.

Agency Responses:

Correspondence was received from interested parties and public agencies (paraphrased comments are shown below – also see Attachments):

1. Comments received via email from Louise J. Miranda Ramirez, Tribal Chairwoman of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, on October 15, 2020 stating that because the project includes a General Plan Amendment that they have a 90-day response time for consultation.

Staff Response: As stated in Page 12 of the Initial Study, the required tribal consultation pursuant per CEQA prior to circulation of the IS-MND was conducted on October 20, 2020 via Zoom. The IS-MND was drafted and transmitted for 30-day public review pursuant to CEQA from July 19, 2021 to August 18, 2021. The Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation was provided a copy of the IS-MND as a part of the routing for public review.

2. Comments received via email from Erik Lundquist, Director of Housing & Community Development for Monterey County, on July 29, 2021 stating that the County received a hard copy of the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the referenced project. In an effort to provide Salinas with consistent and sufficient feedback from the County, please submit your environmental documents to the Planning Clearinghouse at clearinghouse@co.monterey.ca.us for distribution. A completed transmittal form (attached). Also, the IS/MND does not appear to be posted on the City's website at the link provided. Would you direct the County to the site where these documents may be found?

Staff Response: Staff replied on July 29, 2021 and provided the IS-MND to the email

provided by Mr. Lundquist (clearinghouse@co.monterey.ca.us) and also, provided the web link to the City webpage where the IS-MND was posted for public review.

3. Comments received via email with letter (attached) from Sloan Thomas Campi, Planning Manager with Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) dated August 16, 2021. MST supports the proposed project because TOD projects encourage compact development of mixed uses that are supported by public transit. MST's Salinas Transit Center is in close proximity, and walkable, to the City's proposed lots for rezone. The project would support the City's Vision Zero initiative by encouraging mixed-use development that can take advantage of existing transit services. With high density and walkable communities, the City will be reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping to spur increased transit usage.

Staff Response: Not Required.

4. Comments received via email from Janet Brennan with LandWatch Monterey County, on August 24, 2021 stating that they plan on supporting the project if it was not too late to support and if MND and project schedule could be emailed.

Staff Response: Staff responded to LandWatch Monterey County via email on August 24, 2021.

5. Comments received via email with letter (attached) from Michael D. DeLapa, Executive Director for LandWatch Monterey County dated September 9, 2021. LandWatch supports the proposed project. The Project would comply with or exceed plans, policies, regulations and GHG reduction actions/strategies outlined in AMBAG's 2040 MTP/SCS, the 2017 Scoping Plan, and the City of Salinas General Plan. Consistency with these plans would therefore reduce the project's incremental contribution of GHG emissions.

Staff response: Not required.

TIME CONSIDERATION:

The proposed project includes requests for a General Plan Amendment and Rezone, which are legislative acts and not subject to the Permit Streamlining Act (PSA).

ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO THE COMMISSION:

The Planning Commission has the following alternatives:

1. Affirm the findings set forth in the attached Resolution, recommending that the City Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve General Plan Amendment 2021-002, and Rezone 2021-002 with modifications; or

2. Find that the proposed applications are not appropriate and establish findings at the public hearing recommending that the City Council deny General Plan Amendment 2021-002 and Rezone 2021-002.

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed Planning Commission Resolution, including the following exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Figure 1 Regional Location
- Exhibit B: Figure 2 Project Location
- Exhibit C: Figure 3 Existing General Plan Land Use Designation
- Exhibit D: Figure 4 Existing Zoning District
- Exhibit E: Figure 5 Proposed Land Use and Zoning Modification
- Exhibit F: Letter of Support from Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST), from Sloan Thomas Campri, Planning Manager, dated August 16, 2021.
- Exhibit G: Letter of Support from LandWatch Monterey County, from Michael D. DeLapa, Executive Director, dated September 9, 2021.
- Exhibit H: Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND), dated August 2021

Cc: Louise J. Miranda Ramirez, Tribal Chairwoman of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation
Erik Lundquist, Director of Housing & Community Development for Monterey County
Sloan Thomas Campri, Planning Manager with Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST)
Janet Brennan with LandWatch Monterey County
Michael D. DeLapa, Executive Director for LandWatch Monterey County