



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2021

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

THROUGH: COURTNEY GROSSMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

BY: LISA BRINTON, PLANNING MANAGER
OSCAR RESENDIZ, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

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)

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to:

1. Approve a resolution affirming the findings, adopting the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and approving a General Plan Amendment (GPA 2021-02) changing the General Plan Land Use designations of six (6) sites to Mixed Use; and
2. Adopt an Ordinance to rezone the same six sites to Mixed Use (MX) and expand the Downtown Core Area (DC) Overlay to include the Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) site (RZ 2021-002).

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Approve a resolution affirming the findings, adopting the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and approving a General Plan Amendment (GPA 2021-02) changing the General Plan Land Use designations of six (6) sites to Mixed Use; and

2. Adopt an Ordinance to rezone the same six sites to Mixed Use (MX) and expand the Downtown Core Area (DC) Overlay to include the Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) site (RZ 2021-002).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City is proposing to change the land use and zoning designation of six (6) sites in the Salinas Central City (CC) Overlay District from Public/Semipublic (PS)/Commercial Retail (CR) to Mixed Use (MX) and to expand the Downtown Core Area (DC) Overlay to include the Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) site. Selected sites include 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). The proposed general plan and zoning code amendments (GPA 2021-002 and RZ 2021-02; Amendments) implement a 2015 Downtown Vibrancy Plan recommendation to allow for the redevelopment of the selected city-owned surface parking lots and facilities with a mix of residential and commercial retail uses. In addition, the proposed Amendments would encourage pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods where local residents and employees have access to services, shops, entertainment, jobs, and transit within walking distance of their homes and workplace. The proposed Amendments 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 based on the Mixed Use (MX) zoning standard. Attachment 3, Exhibit "C" and "D" show the location and current zoning and land use designation of the six (6) selected sites.

BACKGROUND:

One of the key implementation recommendations of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan (2015) is to stimulate development activity by creating catalyst sites through the re-zoning of public surface parking lots to allow for residential or mixed-use development, and to focus on aligning the land use approval process to facilitate private investments in downtown development. This includes amending City land use designations and regulations to allow for the recommended type(s) of housing development.

In December 2019, the City accepted an SB 2 grant award from the state Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) in the amount of \$310,000. Grant funds are to be used to facilitate the production of housing by undertaking the necessary planning and environmental studies and analyses to consider changing land use and zoning designations of identified opportunity sites to allow for higher density residential or mixed-use development. This SB2 grant award enabled the City to undertake the planning and environmental study and analysis required to prepare the proposed Amendments.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the proposed Amendments is to allow mixed-use development that would provide new housing and commercial spaces that increase the vibrancy and walkability of the Salinas downtown. Amendments include the changing the land use and zoning designations six (6) sites/properties located in the Central City (CC) Overlay District and described below:

1. ITC, northwest corner of North Main Street and West Market Street.
2. Parking Lot 12, northwest corner of Lincoln Avenue and West Gabilan Street located at 122 Lincoln Avenue.
3. Parking Lot 8, southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and West Gabilan Street located at 210 Salinas Street.
4. Parking Lot 1, Salinas Street between West Alisal Street and West Gabilan Street, mid-block located at 219 Salinas Street.
5. Parking Lot 5, southwest corner of Monterey Street and East Alisal Street located at 300 Monterey Street.
6. Permit Center and Parking Garage, 65 West Alisal Street between Lincoln Avenue and Salinas Street.

Attachment 3, Exhibit “C” and “D” show the location and current zoning and land use designation of the six (6) selected sites. The Amendments do not involve construction or other physical changes to the sites but are intended to facilitate future development or redevelopment.

General Plan Amendment 2021-02

GPA 2021-02 includes changing the land use designation four (4) of the six (6) sites; the ITC, Lot 8, Lot 12, and Permit Center and Parking Garage, from Public/Semipublic or Retail, to Mixed Use. GPA 2021-02 would also amend the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Policy Map to reflect the land use change to Mixed Use (MX) which is consistent with the General Plan land use designations of adjacent sites. 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 proposed “Mixed Use” land designation for all six (6) sites is consistent and complies with the following General Plan Housing Element goals and policies.

- Goal H-1, by providing a range of housing opportunities to adequately address existing and projected needs to Salinas.
 - Policy H-1.3, by identifying adequate sites to facilitate and encourage housing production for the existing and projected housing needs of the City.
- Goal H-2, by maintaining and improving existing neighborhoods and housing stock; and
 - Policy H-2.6, by encouraging the retention, rehabilitation and new construction of high-density, well-designed housing in the Central City.

Rezone 2021-02

RZ 2021-02 changes zoning designation of all six (6) sites from Public/Semipublic (PS) or Commercial Retail (CR) to Mixed Use (MX) and expands the Downtown Core Area (DC) Overlay to include the ITC site, to allow for greater housing density and more flexible development standards. 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. 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.

The proposed rezoning of the six (6) sites would be consistent with Central City Overlay (CC) District and 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 increasing opportunities for infill housing and innovative retail while transforming and aesthetically improving transportation corridors into pedestrian-oriented civic boulevards with mixed use projects. No specific development plan is included with RZ 2021-02. Future development would be subject to the City of Salinas Zoning Code including, but not limited to use classification, development standards, design standards, and performance standards.

Consideration of Amendments

Chapter 37, Article VI, Divisions 12 and 14 provides for a process whereby all General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments are brought before the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council for consideration and a final decision. On October 20, 2021, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to review the proposed Amendments and approved the attached Planning Commission Resolution 2021-21 recommending that the City Council adopt the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, approve General Plan Amendment 2021-002 and Rezone 2021-002 (see attached October 20, 2021 Planning Commission Staff Report and draft Planning Commission minutes). In addition, on November 2, 2021, the Housing and Land Use Subcommittee received a presentation on the proposed Amendments as an informational item.

The City Council may approve the proposed Amendments if all of the findings set forth in the attached City Council Resolution and Ordinance are established. Per Zoning Code Section 37-60.930(d), an affirmative vote of not less than four (4) votes of the City Council is required for the Council to approve the General Plan Amendment. Prior to taking action on the proposed Amendments, the City Council will need to affirm environmental impacts of the project have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

In June 2020, the City entered into an agreement with Rincon Consultants, Inc. to prepare the technical and environmental documents required for CEQA compliance associated with the Amendments. An Initial Study was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the Amendments. Based upon review of the Initial Study, the proposed Amendments will not have a significant effect on the environment because the mitigation measures outlined in the proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program reduce future project related impacts to less than significant level (see Exhibit “2” of attachment 1). 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 consultation were received.

Agency Comments and 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 and the 90-day response was granted. 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 submitted the IS-MND accordance to the instructions 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.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The proposed Amendments advance the City Council goals of Investment Strategies/Risk Management and Operational Efficiency by establishing land use and zoning designations to align the land use approval process to facilitate private investments in downtown development including future mixed-use development that ultimately creates more housing, jobs, and business opportunities.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Community Development Department Advanced Planning and Plan and Project Implementation (APPI) division is leading the implementation of the SB2 grant, managed the preparation of the Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration and drafted the Amendments in coordination with other CDD divisions (Current Planning and Housing), Public Works, Economic Development staff and the City Attorney's office.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There are no additional fiscal impacts to the City's General Fund associated with the approval of the Amendments. Staff time for managing the SB2 grant and managing the preparation of CEQA documents was fully funded with SB 2 grant. Staff time dedicated to prepare the Amendments and this report is already incorporated in the 2021-2022 Community Development APPI division budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft City Council Resolution for GPA 2021-002 and Mitigated Negative Declaration with the following Exhibits:
 - Exhibit 1: Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND), dated August 2021
 - Exhibit 2: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
 - Exhibit 3: Proposed General Plan Amendment 2021-002 (GPA 2021-002) Map and Proposed Rezone 2021-002 (RZ 2021-002) Map
2. Draft Rezone Ordinance for Rezone 2021-002 with following Exhibits:
 - Exhibit 1: Proposed General Plan Amendment 2021-002 (GPA 2021-002) Map and Proposed Rezone 2021-002 (RZ 2021-002) Map
3. Planning Commission Staff Report dated October 20, 2021
 - 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

4. Unofficial Planning Commission Minutes for October 20, 2021
5. Planning Commission Resolution
Exhibits for PC Resolution