

SALINAS CITY CENTER IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, March 9th at 10:00am
CSUMB @ City Center
Salinas, CA 93901

Agenda

1. Call to Order & Introductions – Steve Ish
2. Public Comment (Limited to 2 minutes per person)
3. Consent Agenda [Action Item]
 - a. Approve Minutes: January 12th. 2023 Board Meeting
 - b. Approve Financial Reports:
4. District Goals & Objectives, Work Plan and Budget for FY 2022-2023 [Action Item]
 - a. Executive Committee
 - b. Budget
 - c. District Identity and Streetscape Improvements (DISI)
 - d. Sidewalk Operation and Beautification & Order (SOBO)
 - e. Land Use Committee (LUC)
5. Discussion
 - a. Arch update (City, Rotary, SCCIA MOU)
 - b. Homelessness/Blight update (Kevin Dayton)
 - c. St Patrick's day marketing push (DISI)
 - d. Vacancy update
 - e. Parking surveys
 - f. Board Member Recruitment
 - g. Heritage Park
 - h. Draft annual report
6. Next meeting: May 11, 2023 at 10AM Location CSUMB @ City Center
7. Adjourn

BROWN ACT: Government Code 54950 (The Brown Act) requires that a brief description of each item to be transacted or discussed by posted at least 72 hours prior to a regular meeting. Action may not be taken on items not identified as such and posted on the agenda. Meeting facilities are accessible

to persons with disabilities. If you require special assistance to participate in the meeting, notify Greg Hamer at greg@salinascitycenter.com or (831) 877-0997 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Updated Status of City of Salinas Homeless Services and Strategies

First, see the attached table showing significant progress in reducing homelessness in Monterey County. That table was created by me and can be found nowhere else.

The State of California is punishing numerous local governments for incompetence or inaction on addressing homeless, but it gives great praise to the efforts in Monterey County. Supervisor Alejo is chair of the Monterey County Coalition of Homeless Services Providers and has been making this point on social media and in the news media.

At this point City of Salinas administrators are satisfied that the city is going a good job in offering immediate, transitional, and permanent supportive housing for people struggling with not having a permanent home. The SHARE Center is operating, a permanent transitional facility is in the permitting process adjacent to the SHARE Center (see attached article from the July 2021 Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Journal), a Round 1 HomeKey (motel to hotel) facility is operating at the former Good Nite Inn, the Sanborn Inn and Salinas Inn are also being converted to HomeKey facilities in Round 2, and I see the City in the process (revealed in closed session meeting agendas) of acquiring another motel, presumably for a fourth HomeKey facility.

As you would guess, huge amounts of state grant money are being spent on these projects and programs.

Regarding housing in general, see the attached latest Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) data for City of Salinas through 2022. It's not bad - much better than the Peninsula cities where residents are using all the strategies available to stop housing and keep out the working poor and the destitute. (That table was also created by me.)

Also, note the following:

1. The overnight homeless shelter that was once located in Downtown Salinas (215 Lincoln Avenue, 20 West Market Street, and then 111 West Alisal Street) has not come back Downtown.
2. The First United Methodist Church - five years ago a major gathering and dispersement location for people who engage in anti-social behavior - has ceased to be a significant problem at this time.
3. The city and the county are cooperating and working well together on the homeless issue, which is NOT what was happening five years ago, as noted in a 2018 Monterey County Grand Jury report.
4. Homelessness and the anti-social behavior associated it with continues to be a major problem THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA and in major cities elsewhere (Seattle and Portland as two prime examples). Right now Alvarado Street in the City of Monterey is dealing with daily vandalism, graffiti, urine stink everywhere, and people harassing outdoor diners. It's bad there.

So what to do about people in the City of Salinas who don't want to change their circumstances?

The City of Salinas is going to be stepping up the health and safety cleanups of encampments in the city, especially in Chinatown. These cleanups are expensive! The police presence alone is costly.

Union Pacific has begun doing a round of health and safety cleanups on their private property. These corporate cleanups reportedly lack the "compassion" of the city cleanups, which give occupants of the camps adequate advance notice of the cleanup and show empathy during the actual cleanup.

There are also collaborative efforts among agencies and private entities to deal with the litter related to the homeless encampments. I've been tracking those efforts and supporting on them at public and internal meetings. (Some people think they are a waste of money, because the trash comes back.)

There is no serious discussion about establishing an official sanctioned encampment for people who want to live in freedom from society and/or do drugs with impunity (a policy I would support as a private citizen, BTW).

My Recommendations to the Business Community

1. Join me (and Supervisor Alejo) in urging the City of Salinas to highlight its achievements, which - believe it or not - are exceptional and substantial. I feel the City of Salinas is failing to promote its successes in many areas, including homelessness.
2. Do not join the Far Left and neighborhood populists in accusing the city and its elected officials of not solving the problem. The impression that the City of Salinas is doing nothing gives the Far Left ammunition for election campaigns, where they will blame capitalism, businesses, and elected officials such as the Mayor for the miseries out there.
3. Be informed about what is happening, rebut critics, and correct people who spout false information.
4. Get involved yourself as a business leader in programs to address homelessness and litter. Don't rely on the Government to do it for you. For example, join Amor Salinas and/or donate to it. Take tours of the SHARE Center. Join me in trying to track what is happening and how the money is being spent. Praise Megan Hunter for successful leadership in this arena and also support efforts to relieve her of too many departmental responsibilities.
5. I'm going to be writing another article for the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Journal about the city/county progress on homelessness.



Salinas Valley
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS

JOURNAL

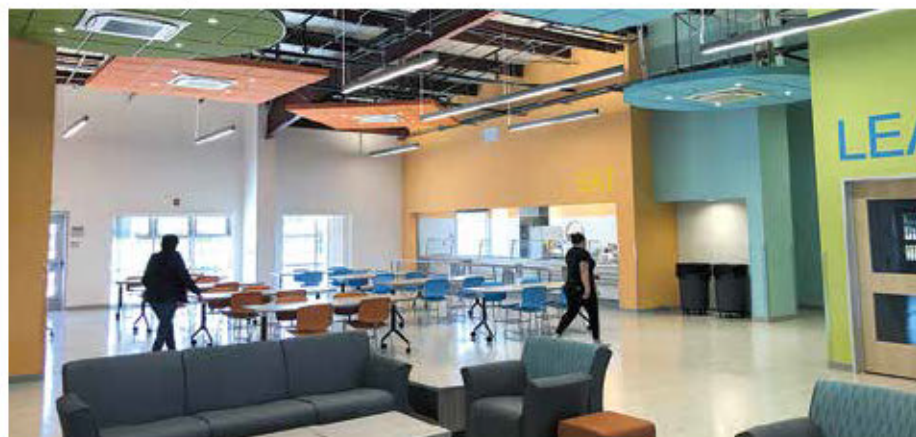
SHARE Center Offers Long-Term Solutions for Homeless

There is good news regarding public policy efforts to find permanent homes for local residents who do not have a home.

On June 9, your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee toured the newly-opened Salinas Housing Advancement, Resources & Education Center (SHARE Center) on East Laurel Drive in the City of Salinas (it's adjacent to the soccer field complex near Natividad Medical Center). This is a collaborative success of the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey in a well-defined plan to help residents without a home get a permanent home.

The SHARE Center is just one of several changes that Monterey County and some cities have made in the past three years on coordinating more effective programs and facilities for people without a home. Local efforts have come a long way.

For perspective, recall that in June 2018 the Monterey County Grand Jury issued a report entitled "Who's In Charge? Stepping up on Homelessness: The Need for Strategic Leadership and Comprehensive Planning." The report found "the County's strategy for addressing homelessness needs a clearer focus, accountable leadership and enhanced capacity" and alleged a lack of "political leadership to coalesce public support and government commitments around a concrete action-plan to end homelessness." ➡



The SHARE Center provides a place to eat, sleep and take steps to find a permanent new home.

SHARE - Continued on page 4

→ **SHARE** – Continued from page 1

Some homeless advocates and activists were offended by the report. Others said the findings were valid. The City of Salinas and the County of Monterey agreed or partially agreed with the findings in the report.

In March 2018, three months before the Grand Jury report was released, a proposal had been circulating for a new homeless shelter in Salinas that would take 2-3 years to build & could cost as much as \$70 million. This did not bode well for the future.

But in the end, a few people in Monterey County took leadership & the SHARE Center was built to serve as many as 104 people at a cost of \$7.2 million. In addition, the City of Salinas purchased a motel (the Good Nite Inn) for permanent transitional housing. Generous state funding allowed these projects to happen.

Meanwhile, in the City of Seaside, the Casa de Nodre Buena emergency shelter (located in a renovated county building) opened this year for single women and families with children.

These projects are part of a "Housing First" strategy based on the idea that people experiencing homelessness can achieve stability in permanent housing, regardless of their needs or challenges, if provided with appropriate levels of services that overcome barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing. In Monterey County, this strategy has been implemented by the county and various cities through a "Lead Me Home Plan" of core requirements and practices with a successful track record here and throughout the country.

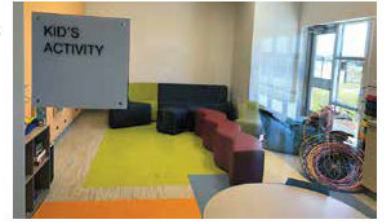
The County and cities such as Salinas work with a local "Continuum of Care" provider, the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP), to provide services in a "continuum of care" from emergency shelter to navigation center to transitional housing to permanent housing.

Is it justified to claim now that "the government isn't doing enough" to help Monterey County residents without a home? It seems resources are available for people who make that leap to seek help.

The last Monterey County Homeless Census and Survey was conducted in 2019 (the 2021 survey was cancelled because of coronavirus). It identified 2,422 unsheltered residents and residents in recognized shelters, including 562 people described as "chronically homeless." The number of Monterey County without a home under this relatively narrow definition has ranged between 2,400 and 2,850 since the Great Recession in the late 2000s, when the number spiked significantly.

But each of those 2,422 residents without a home is an individual person with individual issues. As an official at the SHARE Center told the Chamber's Government Relations Committee, people without a home often get in to their situation because of a lack of personal connections. Surveys routinely show that about 80 percent of people without a home in Monterey County are actually from Monterey County. For various reasons - including family estrangement, substance abuse, and mental illness - their connections to relatives and community have broken down.

Among these residents are individuals who will decline the offer from government and its private partners to obtain shelter. They will choose to continue living outdoors, including in collective encampments. Meanwhile, organizations will continue to advocate on moral and legal grounds for the county and cities to maintain and service these encampments as legitimate residential communities. This situation is not going away. ■



The SHARE Center also provides an area dedicated to children of families without a home.

Monterey County Biennial Point-in-Time Homeless Census and Survey for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

	Unsheltered homeless individuals and families (sleeping outdoors, on the street, in parks, or vehicles, etc.)	Homeless individuals and families in temporary shelter (emergency shelter, transitional housing, or stabilization rooms)	Total Homeless	Annual Percentage Change in Number of Homeless	Percentage Living in Monterey County at Time of Housing Loss
January 2013	1,969	621	2,590	N/A	79%
January 2015	1,630	678	2,308	-10.9%	78%
January 2017	2,113	724	2,837	22.9%	83%
January 2019	1,830	592	2,422	-14.6%	78%
January 2022	1,357	690	2,047	-15.5%	83%

City of Salinas Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Progress - 2015-2023 Housing Element (5th Cycle)

Income Category	RHNA Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total Units to Date	Total Remaining Units	% Achieved
Very Low	537	21	24	50	42	0	0	88	0		225	312	42%
Low	351	20	16	0	53	8	0	1	0		98	253	28%
Moderate	407	6	1	3	0	0	0	0	0		10	397	2%
Above Moderate	934	142	52	25	71	100	210	189	139		928	6	99%
Total RHNA	2,229	189	93	78	166	108	210	278	139		1,261	882	57%

Date	Status	Business	Notes	Location
12/28/22	Vacant	Golden Fish	potential tenant	221 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Vacant	Oyster Bay		231 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Vacant	Vintners Cellar	permit for kitchen with city	238 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Vacant	?	potential tenant	242 1/2 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Vacant	Somos Gallery		262 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Vacant	Legacy Church		357 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Vacant	Islas Marieta		330 Main Street, Salinas CA
1/26/23	Occupied	PBI	new company ownership	325 Main Street, Salinas CA
2/2/23	Unknown	Three Salinas Square		344 Salinas Str, Salinas CA
2/2/23	Unknown	Various		237 Salinas Str, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Red Tagged	La Fogata		232 Main Street, Salinas CA
1/27/23	Red Tagged	former convenience store		101 Monterey Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Pending	Pink Artichoke	pending per James Kendall	333 Main Street, Salinas CA
1/26/23	Pending	Clothing retail	coming in April	246 Main Street, Salinas CA
2/3/23	Occupied	Wholesale/Amazon Returns	coming in February	329 Monterey St, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Occupied	Mami Chelas		131 Main Street, Salinas CA
12/28/22	Occupied	TBD - Vegan/Ice Cream?		145 Main Street, Salinas CA
2/3/23	Red Tagged	Rositas	tenant working with city (per owner)	231 Salinas Street, Salinas CA
2/7/23	Vacant	?		40 w alisal str, salinas ca
2/13/23	Vacant	Former Californian	have plans for 42 units- too much \$\$\$	123 w alisal str, salinas ca

5e

Parking Stalls by Block	Available	Ave Used	Ave Used %	Sample Size
100 Block	23	21.7	94.2%	15
9am to 11am		21.4	93.04%	5
11am to 2pm		22.5	97.83%	4
2pm to 5 pm		21.5	93.48%	4
5pm to 12am		21.0	91.30%	2
200 Block	47	44.3	94.21%	18
9am to 11am		44.2	94.04%	5
11am to 2pm		43.9	93.38%	4
2pm to 5 pm		44.7	95.04%	4
5pm to 12am		47.0	100.00%	2
300 Block	47	41.3	87.84%	14
9am to 11am		36.5	77.66%	4
11am to 2pm		42.6	90.64%	5
2pm to 5 pm		42.3	90.07%	3
5pm to 12am		46.0	97.87%	2
Lot 1 - 200 Block Salinas	47	38.3	81.56%	9
9am to 11am		30.7	65.25%	3
11am to 2pm		44.3	94.15%	4
2pm to 5 pm		38.0	80.85%	2
5pm to 12am				0
Lot 2 - 300 Block Salinas	71	50.0	70.42%	8
9am to 11am		44.3	62.32%	4
11am to 2pm		58.3	82.16%	3
2pm to 5 pm		48.0	67.61%	1
5pm to 12am				0
Lot 3 - 200 Block Monterey	82	68.8	83.88%	10
9am to 11am		62.3	76.02%	3
11am to 2pm		73.6	89.76%	6
2pm to 5 pm		64.0	78.05%	1
5pm to 12am				0
Lot 5 - 300 Block Monterey	134	88.6	66.12%	10
9am to 11am		77.3	57.71%	3
11am to 2pm		90.4	67.46%	5
2pm to 5 pm		116.0	86.57%	1
5pm to 12am		86.0	64.18%	1

Lot 8 - Gabilan	71	35.9	50.50%	7
9am to 11am		19.0	26.76%	1
11am to 2pm		39.8	55.99%	4
2pm to 5 pm		36.5	51.41%	2
5pm to 12am				0
Monterey Garage	435	119.5	27.47%	4
9am to 11am		106.0	24.37%	2
11am to 2pm		133.0	30.57%	2
2pm to 5 pm				0
5pm to 12am				0
	Available	Ave Used		
Total Parking	957	508.3		
Total Sample Size	95			

Total Respondents	34
How would you rate your satisfaction with parking in Salinas City Center?	
Very Dissatisfied	12
Dissatisfied	7
Neutral	9
Satisfied	4
Very Satisfied	2
How do you to get to work?	
Car	31
Bus	0
Walk	1
Bike	1
Other	1
On average, how long do you park in Salinas City Center?	
1-2 Hours	2
2-4 Hours	5
4-8 Hours	12
Over 8 Hours	13
How would you describe the availability of parking in Salinas City Center?	
It is normally difficult to find a parking space	10
It can be hard to find a parking space during certain times	16
I can usually find a parking space	3
I can always find a parking space	5

Other	0
Do you park in public or private space?	
Public	27
Private	5
How far from your destination do you park?	
Right by the door	1
Within one block	20
1-2 Blocks	7
3-4 Blocks	4
4 or More blocks	0
Do you move your car when the time limit runs out?	
Yes	16
No	0
How many times a day do you move your car?	
1	9
2	8
3	4
4 or more	2
Have you used any of the parking garages in Salinas City Center?	
Yes	18
No	15
If you don't use the parking garages, why?	
I didn't know there was a parking garage	0
It is too far away from my destination	9
Feel unsafe	7
Too expensive	2
Other	6
Would you park in the garage if it was free (paid by employer or city)?	
Yes	24
No	9
Have you ever received a ticket in Salinas City Center?	
Yes	21
No	12
If yes, why?	
Violated parking in the same block rule	1
Unclear or confusing signs	1

Exceeded time limit	12
Lost track of time	6
Other	2
Do you currently pay for a parking permit?	
Yes	12
No	20





City of Salinas

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER • 200 Lincoln Ave • Salinas, California

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February 28, 2023

Ms. Denise Estrada
1 Station Place
Salinas, CA 93901

RE: INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER REQUESTS – WELCOME CENTER EXPANSION/ BANNER REQUEST

Dear Denise,

First, I thank you for your devotion to promoting Salinas and activating the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC). I am writing to formally respond to the California Welcome Center's request to expand into the remainder of the Freight Building and your application for the installation of banners at the ITC.

It is our understanding that the proposed expansion will provide additional classroom and exhibit space for the "Valleys of Anza" initiative and its objective is to expand tourism through leveraging historic sites to attract tourist to the inland valleys of Monterey and San Benito counties. The proposed banners are to promote current activities and uses at the ITC under the branding of the Salinas City Heritage Park, a Regional Heritage Center.

The City has also received a request to use the Freight Building for a rail exhibit; however, Aerial Theater, a current tenant has communicated to staff that they do not want to move from their space. Staff met internally to discuss the multiple requests and have determined that it is important to engage and build consensus with all community and ITC stakeholders regarding future development, activation, and branding of the ITC. Therefore, at this time we will not be moving forward with approving the Welcome Center's request for expansion.


City staff are developing a scope of work to select a consultant from the established On-Call Planning Services list to prepare a master plan for the ITC that will include branding and identity, signage and banners, connectivity between the ITC and Salinas Downtown, site activation and the incorporation of mixed-use transient oriented development (TOD). ITC and community stakeholders will be actively engaged in the planning process to incorporate the current uses and to find ways to make the ITC a destination point for visitors and residents through TOD. We anticipate an 8-to-10-month process to finalize the scope of work, select a consultant and prepare the ITC Master Plan.

Additionally, while we appreciate the initiative taken to develop proposed banners, we are concerned that the proposed name—Salinas City Heritage Park—may create confusion, as we are not certain of the efforts taken to have the area formally designated as historic or as an historic landmark. Before the banners are fabricated and displayed, we must be careful to ensure the area meets the criteria for

designation as an historic landmark.

We look forward to working with all community and ITC stakeholders on the preparation of ITC Master Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Carrigan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Steve Carrigan
City Manager, City of Salinas

Cc: Via e-mail to denisee@sonic.net
USPS

March 1, 2023

Steve Carrigan, City Manager

City of Salinas

200 Lincoln Avenue, Salinas CA 93901

SUBJECT: Personal Response to: Intermodal Transportation Center Requests-Welcome Center Expansion/Banner Request

Dear Steve:

I am in receipt of your letter of February 28th. As the liaison to the City for Heritage Park, I have distributed copies of your letter to the impacted parties to convey your directives.

Additionally, as your letter was addressed to me, I want to share my thoughts on the elements of your letter. Please understand that these comments are my personal responses and not those generated by the stakeholders of Heritage Park.

Promoting Salinas

As stated in your letter, I have continued, post retirement, to promote Salinas, especially the ITC. During my employment, I worked with the Redevelopment Director to facilitate the move and restoration of the First Mayor's House to its current location at the ITC. When the City accepted the donations of the historic railcars to the Steaming Ahead exhibit, City staff, train buffs, and I, facilitated the move of the cars to the ITC. When the Freight Building was slated for demolition, I supported the community movement that saved it and wrote the first grant, the Federal TEA, Transportation Enhancement Activities grant that procured \$250,000 each, for the Freight Building and the First Mayor's House. The REA and Depot restorations also took place during my employment. For years, I worked with TAMC through over eighteen plan revisions for the commuter rail proposals. So...yes, I am deeply committed to the City of Salinas, especially to the success of the ITC with its incredible opportunities for economic benefits to Salinas through heritage tourism and transportation enhancements.

After many attempts to engage City administration in the planning process, dedicated volunteers moved forward and continued to contribute their time and expertise to build a unique project in the historic downtown of Salinas, in spite of the lack of engagement by the City. To see City administration, go from no apparent interest in the historic properties to now saying that the plans that were developed by people who do care deeply for the site, will be set aside in favor of a new master plan by a consultant, is deeply distressing.

In prior years, the Council, Mayors, and staff, all had their hands on some portion of the growth of what had long been envisioned to be a future historic district. In 1998, the City funded the Historic Analysis of all the buildings by noted historian, Kent Seavy. Mayor Anna Caballero, now Senator Caballero, Anna Velasquez, now Mayor of Soledad, Maria Orozco, prior Mayor of Gonzales, Dennis Donahue's support of the Steaming Ahead Exhibit, Mayor and Mrs. Joe Gunther's active support at the First Mayor's House, are just some of the examples of what was a clear demonstration of support by City administration, for a vision of the future at the ITC.

Historic Landmark Status

There should be no confusion as to a formal designation of the site as a historic landmark. The City funded 1989 Historic Architecture /Property Survey Report concluded the following: *“Three properties, the Salinas Southern Pacific Train Depot, the Southern Pacific Freight Building, and the Railway Express Agency Building constitute a potential National Register district under Criteria (A) and (C). The Associated Seed Growers Building appears to be individually eligible for National Register listing in the context of agricultural development in the Salinas Valley under Criteria (A) and possibly (C). None of the resources considered in this evaluation appear to have the potential to yield archaeological information pertaining to important questions in historical or archaeological research.”*

The Summary of Findings also state that to achieve this official historic listing the City of Salinas, as the property owner, would have to consult with the SHPO and request a determination of eligibility to the National Register. This could not be accomplished by a third party, including the Heritage Park stakeholder group. Heritage Park is not currently a formal historic district, although this potential status has been under discussion for many years.

Welcome Center

The Welcome Center and its museum and community education environment, far exceed my expectations for the potential plans that were identified in the initial planning stages in the late 1990s. The expansion of the Welcome Center into the remainder of Freight Building is consistent with the criteria that allowed us to be eligible for Federal TEA funding. The SVTVB Board, Heritage Park stakeholders and the countless community groups and individuals that have come forward to visit and support the planning for the Center, has been outstanding. The Welcome Center is now a unique visitor's center, heritage museum, educational visiting point for school classrooms, a community meeting place, and a destination for those who have heard what this site has to offer.

Your letter says that there is a request “for a rail exhibit”. Are you aware that there is already a significant City investment in the development of the Steaming Ahead Rail Exhibit and the Museum and model rail exhibit of the historic Salinas Valley sites in miniature in the REA Building? This project's operation is not currently supported with City funds. This only now flourishes because of the dedication of a core of volunteers. If there is an interest in a new additional railroad exhibit, there should be discussion about the potential of integrating it into the existing exhibit.

Banners/Branding

The stakeholders brought forward a proposal to make the historic properties a city park based on the needs identified in the City's General Plan and the Downtown Vibrancy Plan. The properties then would also be eligible to apply for funds from sources such as Prop 64 for park facilities. This proposal was denied and in one of the few meetings that we were able to have City staff attendance, we were also told that we could call ourselves, anything we wanted to. With that direction, the stakeholders received input and agreed on Heritage Park. The Welcome Center was to function as the Regional Heritage Center, within Heritage Park. A grant from the Harden Foundation, secured \$10,000 to design and purchase banners. The design was completed, and I was directed to secure the required Encroachment Permit to hang the banners. At this point, your letter has brought this project to promote the site, to a halt.

Master Plan

Your letter says that staff is developing a scope of work to select a consultant whose job will be to prepare a master plan to include branding, identity, signage and banners, connectivity between the ITC and Downtown, site activation and incorporation of a mixed-use TOD. The Downtown Vibrancy Plan has already identified these elements. In the absence of the City's effort, site identity has already been established through the work of many volunteers. Branding too has been a part of that effort. A design for signage was a collaborative effort of the stakeholders with input from other interested parties. We have developed a collaboration with the SCCIA and the Asian Cultural Experience group to work toward the expansion of connectivity between all the properties that form the core downtown. The TOD portion was initially addressed in the work with TAMC and in the Downtown Vibrancy Plan which also included a significant community outreach effort.

In 1996, the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan was developed. This also included a "preliminary Archaeological Reconnaissance for the Proposed Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center. To update prior plans to current conditions is realistic, however, I conclude that the bulk of what you have identified as the work for the consultant either has already been undertaken or is in the works by the community minded volunteers who have invested their time and expertise to see the project move forward.

Conclusion

You conclude your letter to me saying that "We look forward to working with all community and ITC stakeholders on the preparation of the ITC Master Plan". Clearly, we could have been much farther along in an effective planning process if the City truly had shown a genuine interest in the project and joined the work effort much sooner. Coming late to the process and to now ask those that have worked so hard on these elements to stand down and wait for the development of a Master Plan by a consultant over a period of 8-10 months, is discouraging and disingenuous. I request that you withdraw your determination, as stated in the February 28th letter and direct staff to engage in a collaborative effort with the stakeholders and community members who have already invested considerable effort in this project. This truly is in the best interest of the community.

Again, please understand that this letter is my candid and personal response to your letter and as such, it is not provided at the direction of any of the other stakeholders involved in the development of Heritage Park.

Respectfully,

Denise Estrada,

6915 Oak Estates Drive

Salinas CA 93907

BUSINESS

'Valleys of Anza' would use historic trail to expand tourism, tap revenue for social issues



The Anza Expedition of 1775-1776 came through Alta California in what is now Monterey County including Mission San Antonio de Padua established in 1771, the Salinas Valley along the Salinas River, over to Monterey and to the Carmel Mission – then only about six years old – through Salinas and on to the San Juan Bautista area 21 years before its mission was built. (James Herrera/Monterey Herald)

By **JAMES HERRERA** | jherrera@montereyherald.com | Monterey Herald

PUBLISHED: January 9, 2023 at 2:55 p.m. | UPDATED: January 9, 2023 at 2:57 p.m.

SALINAS – There's an important historic story underfoot in the region that could be mined into an international attraction, expanding tourism and hospitality while creating revenues to pay for social programs.

That's the hope of Salinas Valley Tourism and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Craig Kaufman whose idea for a program called the Valleys of Anza could provide regional economic development by leveraging historic sites to attract tourists to the inland valleys of Monterey and San Benito counties.

In 1776, around the time of the American Revolution, Spanish Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza, leading a contingent of more than 240 men, women, and children for more than 1,800 miles, arrived to establish a settlement at San Francisco Bay. That expedition came through Alta California in what is now Monterey County including Mission San Antonio de Padua established in 1771, the Salinas Valley along the Salinas River, over to Monterey and the Carmel Mission – then only about six years old – through Salinas and on to the San Juan Bautista area 21 years before its mission was built.

"I've been for years trying to figure out what kind of story could be told on an international level that would bring people to this part of (Monterey County)," said Kaufman.

The river was the lifeline for the diverse group of settlers, military escorts, and support workers of Spanish society made up of Native American, African, and European heritages, and included about 1,000 head of livestock. The expedition used the missions as stopping points along the way.

The Valleys of Anza program is the footprint of the San Antonio Valley, the Salinas Valley and the San Juan Valley where the Anza trail passed through the region. Kaufman points to a postcard he came across from 1906 urging tourists to come see Monterey County for its historic three nations of Spanish, Mexican and American cultures.

"That's truly what I'm picking up on is trying to reinvigorate this and trying to show that this is how we initially became a tourist attraction," said Kaufman.

A 2015 study from Harvard University showed that in Monterey County, hospitality and tourism had the greatest growth potential in accommodations and related services, and in cultural and educational entertainment, he said.

Kaufman believes the Anza program checks both of those boxes.

The Valleys of Anza program would incorporate assets that are underutilized in the region and create better circulation so that the over-tourism that occurs on the Monterey Peninsula, especially on the Big Sur coast, could be alleviated.

With the Anza Trail as the path, visitors could stay in accommodations at points along the trail in tiny house villages may be built in a Spanish-era theme, or camp out in grass huts based on what native peoples in the area lived in so that there is a tourism experience based on the expedition. It incorporates mobile hospitality, with a social-distancing aspect built in for people who do not necessarily want to stay in a hotel environment.

The trail could be marketed using the detailed journals left by the Anza expedition that helped the National Park Service meticulously map out the path and stopping points, and will enable the telling of the Anza story. The program could use augmented reality technology using smartphones in the natural settings that still exist along the trail as backdrops.

"What we are able to do is create re-enactments based upon those stories," said Kaufman.

The technology would help to tell the stories found in the detailed journals, and with the help of GPS, people could see what happened at that location during the Anza expedition.

"You have the background that's obviously live, but with these prerecorded vignettes telling the story of the Anza trail," said Kaufman.

The tours become self-guided either by car or by trail walks in multiple languages so there is no need for a crowded tour bus.

The idea has caught the attention of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. Its Masters of Urban Design program will present six draft strategies later this month for bringing tourism to the Salinas and San Juan valleys to the stakeholders in the area including both Monterey and San Benito counties.

The Valleys of Anza program hopes to create new transient occupancy taxes with a portion being targeted to the development of new tiny home communities funded by a sustainable influx of revenue.

"If this model can work and we can start to get these villages up and running, we can now start to create new TOT for at-risk populations, or low-income, or teachers," said Kaufman. "That's the goal here and that's where Berkeley comes in."

The mobile communities can deal with different aspects or population of homeless individuals that are paid for by TOT and does not impact general funds, yet deals with the problem.

Kaufman is hoping that after the MUD presentation that people come away with a sense of urgency.

"We need to do something. If this is not the idea please come to the table with something because we're in trouble," said Kaufman. "The urgency is in economic development and job creation, and in protecting the tourism industry."