

# A Community Plan For the City of Salinas



*“Because we are free to choose – difficult as it sometimes is – the democratic process of self-government can defy the “inevitable” trends, and help to achieve the kind of communities we want.”*

*Gary A. Patton, Executive Director  
LandWatch Monterey County*

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## A Community Plan For The City of Salinas\*

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**T**he Salinas City Council is proposing to adopt a new General Plan for the City of Salinas. A General Plan serves as the “Constitution” for land use within the city. The policies contained in the City of Salinas General Plan, as ultimately adopted by the Salinas City Council, will determine what sort of growth and development occurs in our community over the next twenty years. It is vitally important that the policies of the new General Plan meet the needs of the community as a whole.

The City of Salinas, and Monterey County generally, is experiencing great development pressure coming from outside the community, and most notably from the Silicon Valley. Such outside development pressure is likely to continue, and even increase. In order to protect the local economy, and to maintain the opportunity for affordable housing within the City of Salinas, the Salinas General Plan must contain strong policies to counteract outside development pressures.

We, the Lideres Comunitarios de Salinas, hereby present to the City Planning Commission and the Salinas City Council “*A Community Plan for the City of Salinas,*” that contains important land use policies that should be part of our city’s plan for the future.

We urge the Salinas City Council to incorporate the following policies into the new Salinas General Plan—and to place these policies into the General Plan as presented here. These policies are the result of many community meetings and discussions, and represent the hopes and aspirations of the working families of Salinas. By placing these policies into the new Salinas General Plan, the Salinas City Council will help ensure that the future growth and development of Salinas benefits *all* its residents.

Dated:            July 29, 2002

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\* This Community Plan is presented in both English and Spanish.

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## Community Leaders of Salinas:

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**Lidia Rodríguez**



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## Housing For The People\*

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A great deal of new housing is being constructed in the City of Salinas. Most of that new housing is affordable only to persons who have above average incomes. Very little of the housing currently being constructed in Salinas is affordable to existing city residents. The Salinas General Plan should require residential housing developments to benefit families and individuals who currently reside in Salinas, or who work in Salinas. New housing in Salinas should be offered to Salinas residents and workers first!

The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan. These policies will help ensure that the future growth and development of the City benefits *all* the residents of Salinas:

- 1. Build Housing That Local Residents Can Afford** – When lands are annexed to the City for the construction of residential housing, the City shall ensure that at least 50% of all the new housing units constructed on such lands shall be sold or rented to persons or families with low or very low incomes, and these housing units shall be permanently protected so that the future sale or rental of such housing units will be to persons or families with low or very low incomes.
- 2. First Right To Rent or Purchase** – When residential housing developments are approved within the City of Salinas, and within areas proposed to be annexed to the City, the new residential units constructed shall first be offered for rental or sale to individuals who currently live in or work in Salinas.
- 3. Maintaining A List** – The City of Salinas shall maintain a list of persons who live in or who work in Salinas, and who are interested in renting or purchasing new housing to be constructed in Salinas. The City shall give written notice to everyone on this list whenever a new housing development of five or more units is proposed, and shall insure that persons on this list are notified of and provided with the first right to rent or purchase newly constructed units.
- 4. Build Affordable Housing Concurrently** – When new housing developments are constructed within the City of Salinas, those units within such development to be made available to persons or families with low or very low incomes shall be constructed prior to or concurrently with those units that will be sold at market rates.

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\* These policies should be placed in the “Housing Element” portion of the General Plan. The appropriate location for these policies would be on pages H-16 and H-17 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

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## Density And Design

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**L**ow-density housing developments do not provide housing that can be either purchased or rented by most of the individuals and families who live in or work in Salinas. It is neither fair nor appropriate to reserve most of the land set aside for new growth for such low-density residential development.

To provide for the housing needs of current city residents, the Salinas General Plan needs to require that at least half of the area set aside for new residential development be reserved for medium and higher density development projects, and that these development projects be well designed, so as to maximize housing opportunities for those with low, very low, and moderate incomes. To accomplish this result, the Draft Salinas General Plan should be modified to do all of these things:

- Establish minimum density requirements
- Increase the amount of land to be made available for medium and higher density development, thus helping to ensure that new housing constructed is more affordable
- Ensure that larger developments include a range of housing types
- Promote “mixed use” developments to increase housing opportunities
- Establish design standards that will insure that the new medium and higher-density housing constructed fully meets the needs of the community

The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan. These policies will help ensure that the future growth and development of the City benefits *all* the residents of Salinas:

- 1. Establish Minimum Density Requirements** – The Land Use Classification System established in Table LU-2 of the Land Use Element of the Salinas General Plan shall provide for *minimum* as well as maximum densities within each of the Residential Land Use Designations. The minimum density for the Residential Low Density Land Use Designation shall be 6.5 DU/Net Acre. The minimum density for the Residential Medium Density Land Use Designation shall be 11.75 DU/Net Acre. The minimum density for the Residential High Density Land Use Designation shall be 16.75 DU/Net Acre.<sup>1</sup>
- 2. More Land For Medium and Higher Density Development** – The Land Use and Circulation Policy Map included in the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan<sup>2</sup> shall be modified by increasing the amount of land designated for medium and high density residential development, and decreasing the amount of land designated for low-density residential development. To accomplish this result, the map will be

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<sup>1</sup> Table LU-2 is found on page LU-27 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

<sup>2</sup> This map is Figure LU-3, found on page LU-26 of the June 200 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

modified to reflect the following changes to the table of Development Capacity, as included in the Salinas General Plan as Table LU-3<sup>3</sup>.

- The acres set aside in Future Growth Areas for Residential Low Density development shall be reduced from 1,042 acres to 500 acres.
- The acres set aside in Future Growth Areas for Residential Medium Density development shall be increased from 515 acres to 600 acres.
- The acres set aside in Future Growth Areas for Residential High Density development shall be increased from 160 acres to 325 acres.
- The reallocations indicated above will provide for the same number of new residential units, and the same population increase specified in the Public Hearing Draft.<sup>4</sup>

- 3. Ensure That Larger Developments Include A Range of Housing Types** – New residential developments of over 1000 units, when located in Future Growth Areas, shall include a mix of low-density, medium density, and high-density units. At least 20% of the housing units in such developments shall fall within the density range of 16-24 units per net residential developable acre, and 40% of the housing units shall fall within the density range of 7-14 units per net residential developable acre.<sup>5</sup>
- 4. Promote “Mixed Use” Developments To Increase Housing Opportunities** – New commercial and professional office developments within the City shall incorporate residential housing opportunities on site. Existing commercial and professional office developments shall be encouraged to redevelop and reconfigure uses to incorporate new residential housing opportunities. Notwithstanding this general rule, the City Council may make a finding that it would be inappropriate to require on site residential housing in a proposed new commercial or professional office development, and in that case shall require equivalent residential housing to be constructed at an offsite location.<sup>6</sup>
- 5. Design Medium And High Density Housing To Meet Community Needs** – Within all Future Growth Areas, every new residential development constructed at either Medium or High Density shall incorporate all of the following design features:
  - On site recreational facilities, appropriately sized to serve the needs of the residents of the development.
  - On site childcare facilities, or the provision within the development of one or more units specifically designed to accommodate family day care, including

<sup>3</sup> Table LU-3 is found on page LU-37 of the June 200 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

<sup>4</sup> We have included a chart on page 9 showing the differences.

<sup>5</sup> The appropriate location for this policy would probably be on pages H-16 and H-17 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document, within the “Housing Element” portion of the General Plan.

<sup>6</sup> The appropriate location for this policy would probably be on pages H-16 and H-17 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document, within the “Housing Element” portion of the General Plan.

necessary outdoor space, and appropriately sized to serve the needs of the residents of the development.

- Indoor space, including simple kitchen and restroom facilities, to accommodate educational, social service, and similar programs, and appropriately sized to serve the needs of the residents of the development.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The appropriate location for this policy would probably be on pages H-16 and H-17 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document, within the “Housing Element” portion of the General Plan.



## Salinas GPU -Líderes Proposal For Densities in Future Growth Areas

| Public Hearing Draft - June 2002 | Max. | Avg.  | Acres | Units | Population | Average Density / Acre |
|----------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------------|------------------------|
| Low                              | 8    | 6.5   | 1042  | 6773  | 24857      |                        |
| Med                              | 15   | 11.75 | 515   | 6051  | 22208      |                        |
| High                             | 24   | 16.75 | 160   | 2680  | 9836       |                        |
|                                  |      |       | 1717  | 15504 | 56901      | 9.03                   |

| Líderes Proposal | Max. | Avg.  | Acres | Units | Population | Average Density / Acre |
|------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------------|------------------------|
| Low              | 8    | 6.5   | 500   | 3250  | 11928      |                        |
| Med              | 15   | 11.75 | 600   | 7050  | 25874      |                        |
| High             | 24   | 16.75 | 325   | 5444  | 19979      |                        |
|                  |      |       | 1425  | 15744 | 57780      | 11.05                  |

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## Protecting Agricultural Land

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The agricultural land of the Salinas Valley has incredible economic value—and not only for the individuals who own that land, but also for the community as a whole. This agricultural land is the foundation of Monterey County’s largest industry, and provides jobs for many city residents. As growth and development occur in Salinas, some loss of agricultural land is probably inevitable—but those losses should be *minimized*. Land that is commercially productive when used for agriculture should be protected and preserved for agricultural use, to the maximum extent possible.

The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan. These policies will help ensure that the future growth and development of the City benefits *all* the residents of Salinas<sup>8</sup>:

1. Land designated as “Agriculture” on the Land Use and Circulation Policy Map (Figure LU-3) shall be protected and preserved for agricultural use.
2. The City shall not extend sewer or water services into or across any lands designated as “Agriculture” on the Land Use and Circulation Policy Map (Figure LU-3).
3. An Agricultural Land Protection Boundary is hereby established. All of the areas located within the Agricultural Land Protection Boundary may be developed, consistent with the provisions of this General Plan. The following lands designated on the Land Use and Circulation Policy Map (Figure LU-3) are hereby determined to be within the Agricultural Land Protection Boundary, and are therefore potentially developable according to this policy: Residential, Retail, Arterial Frontage, Office, Business Park, Mixed Use, General Commercial/Light Industrial, General Industrial, Parks, Public/Semipublic, and Open Space. All areas designated for Agriculture on Figure LU-3 are hereby determined to be outside the Agricultural Land Protection Boundary. Until December 31, 2025, no new development other than public parks and open space uses (including agricultural uses) shall be permitted outside the Agricultural Land Protection Boundary. For the purpose of this policy, open space uses are those uses defined in Government Code Section 65560, as that section of law exists on July 1, 2002.

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<sup>8</sup> These policies should be placed within the “Land Use Element” portion of the General Plan. The appropriate location for these policies would probably be on page LU-31 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

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## Schools For Our Children

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**G**rowth and development place new demands on our schools. Because nothing is more important than the education of our children, our community needs to do everything it can to provide adequate school facilities as growth and development occur. Although the State Legislature has made it difficult for either the City of Salinas or our local school districts to address growth and development problems directly, the Salinas City General Plan should contain strong policies to support and defend our schools.

The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan. These policies will help ensure that the future growth and development of the City benefits *all* the residents of Salinas.<sup>9</sup>

- 1.** When any person submits an application to the City for the development of fifty or more residential units on property either in the City, or proposed for annexation into the City, a full copy of that application will promptly be furnished to each school district in which such property is located. Each affected school district will be formally invited to submit a report to the City, documenting any impacts that the school district believes might be caused by approval of the application. Upon request, City staff will consult with and assist each affected school district in submitting such a report. A full copy of the report submitted by a school district, pursuant to this policy, will be furnished to the Planning Commission and the City Council, at the time that the Planning Commission and the City Council considers the project application.
  
- 2.** Prior to the approval of any application for the development of fifty or more residential units, the City shall consult with each school district in which the property proposed to be developed is located. If a school district submits a report documenting that the proposed development, if approved, could have negative impacts upon existing school facilities, and requests that some or all of the property proposed for development be reserved as a schoolsite, the City Council shall take action to amend the City General Plan to designate an appropriate and adequate portion of the property as a schoolsite, pursuant to the authority provided by Government Code Section 65998.
  
- 3.** If, pursuant to Government Code Section 65971, the governing body of a school district which operates an elementary or high school has notified the City Council that conditions of overcrowding exist in one or more attendance areas within the district, and that these conditions of overcrowding will impair the normal functioning of educational programs, and if the City Council has concurred in the findings submitted by the district, then the City Council, basing its authority on Government Code Sections 65996(a)(2) and 65997(a)(7), and Government Code

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<sup>9</sup> These policies should be placed within the “Land Use Element” portion of the General Plan. The appropriate location for these policies would be on pages LU-58 and LU-59 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

Section 65972, shall not approve an ordinance rezoning property to a residential use, grant a discretionary permit for residential use, or approve a tentative subdivision map for residential purposes within such areas, unless the City Council makes a finding that there are specific overriding fiscal, economic, social, or environmental factors which justify the approval of a residential development.

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## Parks and Libraries

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**P**arks and libraries play a vital role in the life of the community. The Salinas General Plan should help ensure that adequate parks and libraries are provided as new development occurs.

The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan. These policies will help ensure that the future growth and development of the City benefits *all* the residents of Salinas:

- 1.** Developments within Future Growth Areas shall be conditioned to provide all the land and improvements required to achieve the parkland standard of three acres of developed public parkland per 1,000 residents, and to construct and provide the facilities necessary to meet existing and future park acreage needs, as referenced in Table COS-5. All new parks constructed within the City shall meet, at a minimum, the park standards established in Table COS-2.
- 2.** Residential developments not located within Future Growth Areas shall be conditioned to provide the funding necessary to carry out infrastructure repairs and to make the improvements needed to eliminate the deficiencies in the City's current facilities, as identified in Table COS-3.<sup>10</sup>
- 3.** New developments shall be conditioned to provide the funding necessary for the City to achieve the recommended standard of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Policies #1 and #2 should be included in the "Conservation/Open Space Element" of the General Plan, in the section covering Parks and Recreation Facilities, found on pages COS-34 to COS-41 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

<sup>11</sup> Policy #3 should be included in the "Land Use Element" of the General Plan. Libraries are mentioned on page LU-60 of the June 2002 Draft Salinas General Plan Document.

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## Making Development Pay For Itself

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**W**hen new developments are approved, existing city residents must provide various kinds of services for the new development. Sewer, water, fire protection, and police services are examples. Unless the city is careful, new development can actually make things *worse*, not better, for current residents of the city. The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan.

The following policies should be made part of the Salinas General Plan. These policies will help ensure that the future growth and development of the City benefits *all* the residents of Salinas:

- 1. Cost-Benefit Analysis** – A cost-benefit analysis shall be prepared prior to the consideration or approval of new residential subdivision projects (of six or more housing units), to determine the impacts that additional residential units will have on existing Salinas neighborhoods and on the community as a whole. Such fiscal impact report shall identify any impact fees necessary to offset the public costs that would be caused by the proposed project.
- 2. Content of Cost-Benefit Analysis** – The cost-benefit analysis shall include an examination of the fiscal consequences of the loss of acreage in agricultural land (both in terms of lost revenue potential and loss of industry employment) and the fiscal and service impacts of the proposed project on roads, water, sewer, storm water runoff, fire, police, schools, libraries and other community facilities.
- 3. Adequate Infrastructure** – Before approving any new residential development, the City Council shall require that adequate water and wastewater facilities, parks, libraries, public safety services, and all necessary infrastructure improvements will be provided prior to or concurrent with actual construction of the new development. Impact fees shall be imposed, or other arrangements shall be made as a condition of any project approval, to insure that required infrastructure, public facilities, and public services will be provided in accordance with this policy.

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## Conclusion

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The policies that are included in a city General Plan are more than “mere words.” These policies have a legal effect. Under state law, *every* significant land use decision made by the City Planning Commission or the City Council must be “consistent” with the adopted General Plan. If the General Plan is clear, and definite, and establishes a specific requirement or rule, then the City *must* follow that requirement or rule as it makes future decisions. Developers and builders must follow General Plan policies, too.

Because the policies placed in the General Plan establish requirements that will determine future land use decisions, *these policies have great power to shape the future of our community.*

The policies presented in this “Community Plan For The City of Salinas” are strong and clear. They establish definite requirements. They are legally enforceable. We urge the City Council to adopt these policies as we present them, and not to “water them down.”

If the Salinas City Council adopts these policies, builders and developers will have to build more housing that current city residents can afford, and more farmland will be protected. Developers will have to pay their own way, and parks, schools, libraries, and other community necessities will not be forgotten, as new developments occur.

This is the kind of future our community deserves. By placing these policies into the new Salinas General Plan, the Salinas City Council will help ensure that the future growth and development of Salinas benefits *all* of its residents.