Chinatown Renewal Project Plan

A Report to the City of Salinas Redevelopment Agency

Prepared by
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July 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Project Description and Goals

This report summarizes the results of a charrette held in the Chinatown neighborhood of Salinas, California. A charrette is a series of interactive public events that spans several days or more and culminates in a vision or design. The Chinatown charrette was conducted March 8-13, 2007 to produce a redevelopment plan for a neighborhood facing a number of serious issues including crime, homelessness and neglect.

Salinas’ Chinatown neighborhood is both literally and metaphorically “on the other side of the tracks” and while located close to major attractions and services, it suffers greatly from physical isolation. Once a home for many immigrant families, the neighborhood has undergone much change over the last century and has increasingly become an area of abandoned buildings amidst blight and hardship. Problems with drug trafficking, illegal dumping, and homelessness are now what the community is known for. However, there is also significant positive activity and energy thanks to a diverse group of community members dedicated to a renewed Chinatown.

The project, “Economic Revitalization and Cultural Reconnection for Downtown Salinas’ Historic Chinatown Neighborhood,” expands upon recent efforts to unite the neighborhood, preserve its cultural heritage, improve community services and eliminate the blight caused by years of neglect. The project area centers on Soledad Street and is roughly bounded by East Rossi Street to the north, Sherwood Drive to the east, Market Street to the south and North Main Street to the west. The neighborhood is located in the City of Salinas, (population 151,000), which is the county seat for Monterey County, (population 402,000).

The project is funded by an Environmental Justice: Context Sensitive Planning grant from the California Department of Transportation. Lead partners include the City of Salinas Redevelopment Agency, the Local Government Commission, Walkable Communities, Pyatok Architects, Inc. and California State University Monterey Bay.
The Charrette Process

In coordination with community partners, the Local Government Commission (LGC) organized a public design charrette process to produce a redevelopment plan for the Chinatown neighborhood. The process included a multi-day series of meetings, presentations and workshops that engaged key stakeholders including the Chinese community, the Japanese community, local elected officials, social service providers, low income and homeless residents, city and county staff, and property and business owners. The activities were designed to elicit their concerns and suggestions, provide information about possible solutions and foster collaborative development of a community vision.

In order to better address two contentious neighborhood issues, crime and homelessness, two days of pre-charrette meetings with neighborhood leaders were held February 26-27, 2007. Al Zelinka of RBF Consulting led a full day of discussion on improving safety and security through community design. The following day, Piper Ehlen and Danielle Crowell from Homebase, a nonprofit public policy law firm, facilitated discussions on the core issues related to homelessness and the spectrum of services available.

The formal charrette process began with an opening event which over 120 people attended. It featured inspirational, cultural celebrations, an orientation to the issues and process, and community prioritization exercises. The first two days, six focus group meetings were held involving more than 100 stakeholders. The next event was a Saturday workshop with over 60 participants that featured a “walk audit” of the neighborhood, training on sound community design, and gave participants an opportunity to put their vision on maps during interactive design table discussions. The formal process finished with a presentation to over 100 community members of the recommendations generated by the team based on everything seen and heard during the events in the community. Over the six-day charrette, community members contributed over 1,000 hours of their time to the process.

This report is one outcome of the charrette process, but there were other results worth noting. The process represented the first time particular community stakeholders came together collaboratively. Chinese and Japanese community members participated en masse. Social service providers collaborated and their clients worked with local property owners.

This is an absolutely critical outcome, as the issues in Chinatown are serious and substantial enough that no one group or agency will be able to solve
them alone. Continued and increased collaboration is essential to realize the community’s vision.

The charrette process is not solely responsible for the outcomes. It is important to acknowledge that many community members have been working for a long time to improve the neighborhood. In particular, the meetings of the Salinas Downtown Community Board have created an atmosphere of trust that set the stage for a successful charrette process.

**Existing Conditions and Background**

**Rich Cultural History**

The history of Salinas’ Chinatown neighborhood is incredibly rich and this report does not aim to tell the full story. Instead, a quick historical summary and key events relevant to the project are provided for context.

Starting in the late 19th Century, the neighborhood was home to a flourishing community of Chinese agricultural workers and immigrants with many Chinese families living on Soledad Street. The Chinese were not allowed to own property and faced restrictions about where they could live due to the Chinese Exclusion Act, so the neighborhood remained their home for decades. After the act was repealed in 1943, many took advantage of the opportunity to move elsewhere, but the area remained under Chinese cultural influence. During Chinatown’s heyday, mixed-use structures featuring residential over retail were common and a Confucius Church was built, which still serves the Chinese community throughout the Salinas Valley.

According to residents from the time, it was a thriving community up through the mid-1950s.

Japanese immigrants also called the neighborhood home, arriving shortly after the Chinese, and living primarily around Lake Street. The Salinas Buddhist Temple, established in 1924, was a centerpiece of the Japanese Community and remains very active today. Like the Chinese before them, the Japanese faced considerable discrimination, especially during World War II when all Japanese were detained in internment camps. After their release, discrimination continued and they were unable to find property in other parts of Salinas, so they continued to make the most of Chinatown. The neighborhood featured restaurants, barber shops, a tofu shop and more. As a second generation grew up, opportunities to move increased and many left. Elders remember the area as vibrant through the 1970s.

Filipino immigrants also located in the area after the Japanese and the diverse cultural influence continued, but by the 1950s and 1960s, the...
neighborhood had become well known for its bars, bordellos and gambling houses, which drew many of the 40,000 soldiers at nearby Fort Ord until it closed in the early 1990s.

By the 1980s, Chinatown had become a magnet for drug dealing and prostitution. The gambling houses, restaurants and bordellos are now gone, replaced by vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and boarded up windows. Where many families once worked and thrived, now drug trafficking, illegal dumping, and the homeless have filled the void — all within plain view of people driving by on East Market Street.

**Challenges And Changes**

As change occurred within Chinatown and the City of Salinas, the neighborhood has become increasingly isolated over time. A vicious cycle is in place in which people have reacted to the problems in the neighborhood by cutting off connections to Chinatown, which in turn creates more problems as the area becomes more isolated and forgotten. Investment and upkeep has dropped significantly in the area, although there are exceptions such as the Buddhist Temple and Confucius Church. The isolation is a safety issue for the community.

Connections to the surrounding area have been removed over time, including the closing of three at-grade crossings of the railroad tracks which served as links to a now resurgent downtown to the south. The only connection to the north was removed when the Housing Authority was allowed to build a wall across a small neighborhood street, in an effort to reduce crime on their property. The Housing Authority reported a drop in crime, but the wall increased Chinatown’s isolation and other community members say that it made problems worse for the larger neighborhood.

The ability to travel within the neighborhood has been made more difficult as well. The City altered the traffic flow pattern through the neighborhood in an effort to reduce cruising for prostitutes. All of the north/south streets were changed to one-way streets that run to the north, and reportedly the strategy helped reduce prostitution in Chinatown. However, when combined with the neighborhood’s limited entry points, the change to one-way streets made it very difficult for anyone to access legitimate uses within the neighborhood by vehicle. It may have also made it easier for criminal activity on foot — especially drug dealing — to gain a foothold in the area.

Within the City of Salinas, the Old Chinatown community and Soledad Street in particular, have been the hub for many social services since the 1980’s. As redevelopment occurred in nearby areas of Salinas, the needy were further displaced away from those areas to Soledad Street and the Chinatown neighborhood. Victory Mission transitional living center, and the Franciscan Workers, who operate Dorothy’s Place Hospitality Center, are long-time service providers currently located in Chinatown.

Faced with many challenges, there is a stigma associated with Chinatown and Soledad Street. The neighborhood’s current reputation is a significant barrier to attracting investment and successfully revitalizing the neighborhood. Fortunately, there are people in the community working to make the neighborhood a better place.
**Working Toward the Future**

Chinatown today is a collection of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, which unfortunately has become known as an area with an active drug trade, particularly during evening hours. Nevertheless, it serves as home for many positive uses, including the Salinas Japanese Buddhist Temple, Chinese Confucius Church, Bing Kong and Suey Sing Tongs, California State University Monterey Bay Service Learning Center, community garden, light industry, and a variety of social service providers offering a range of services and housing assistance.

The neighborhood has tremendous potential as it is located two blocks from the National Steinbeck Center, the centerpiece of ongoing downtown redevelopment, and within a quarter mile of a planned intermodal transit center with anticipated statewide service. Chinatown is within the Central City Redevelopment Project Area and the Salinas Redevelopment Agency owns property on Soledad Street that was bought with funds that must be used to develop affordable housing. The Agency has...
The Agency has invested some money into the clean-up of toxics, but has identified other environmental obstacles to future development in the area. The Agency currently has only housing dollars for Chinatown, having spent almost all of the discretionary money generated by tax increment financing for the downtown area.

On March 4, 2005, the Agency and Buddhist Temple hosted a community forum with more than 100 people in attendance. The end result was the creation of the Salinas Downtown Community Board (SDCB) with 24 seats that include property owners, local businesses, community service providers, and local government.

Since formal establishment in November 2005, the SDCB has met monthly in the neighborhood to advise policy makers on the status of development plans in the area and has produced community expectations for the neighborhood. In addition, the meetings have created an important venue for the exchange of ideas among diverse community members and helped build trust in the collaborative process.

The City’s most recent General Plan was designed to protect agricultural lands by encouraging infill growth. Chinatown lies within a “Focused Growth Area,” where the city applies New Urbanist principles to design livable, walkable and sustainable neighborhoods that are compact, pedestrian-friendly and feature mixed-use development.

In December 2006, the zoning in Chinatown changed from Commercial to Mixed Use in order to help achieve the General Plan’s goals. 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 critical characteristic of true mixed use communities is that residents provide a market and employees for businesses, and in turn, businesses provide desired amenities and employment opportunities for residents. This synergistic relationship encourages long-term economic vitality in the community and can help create 24-hour neighborhoods where workers support retail and restaurants during the day and residents can support businesses at night and on weekends.

With the recent completion of a new parking garage, 14-screen multiplex theater and more downtown projects in the works, the City is poised to move across the tracks to Chinatown.
DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Values & Priorities

The recommendations in this report are based on the values, priorities and vision of the community members who opened up their hearts and minds to share their dreams of a revitalized Chinatown.

The design team also worked to address environmental justice issues: that transportation and land use decisions meet the needs of all people, not at the expense of a particular population; and that all improvements be designed to fit harmoniously into the existing community.

Self-identified community values and priorities were determined at the opening event and are shown in boxes on this page. Some of the priorities consistently reappeared during focus group discussions, including security/safety, social services, a sense of history, parks/gardens, and connections to a larger community. In addition, the SDCB expressed that they valued a plan that is achievable and realistic.

Primary values identified by the community

- Peace/Caring/Support
- Culture/Diversity
- Family
- Safety
- Work
- Knowledge

Ranked priorities identified by the community

1) Security/Safety
2) Homeless Social Services
3) Places to Eat (Indoors & Outdoors)
4) Affordable Housing
5) Businesses
6) Cultural Center
7) Sense of History
8) Park or Garden
9) Connections to Larger Community
10) Public Restrooms
Revitalize with Safety and Security In Mind

Safety/Security was the top priority identified by the community. The way we build, rebuild, and maintain our communities affects the behavior of people, and that behavior in turn influences public safety. The degree to which public safety exists will directly affect the vitality of Chinatown. In order to address the neighborhood’s concerns, the following principles are incorporated into the recommendations.

To feel safe and enhance our safety, we need spaces that are watched over by people at all hours of the day and night. In order for crime to take place three things must be present: the criminal, the victim and the environment that allows a criminal to strike. The concept of “eyes on the street” or “public space” is considered a key to creating environments that feel safe and secure, and should be a central principle of all new development and redevelopment in the neighborhood.

“Eyes on the street” can be accomplished by insuring that new and old buildings have some “transparency” to the public realm through inclusion of windows, storefronts, balconies and doorways. Equally important is to create places with a variety of residential, commercial and retail uses that encourage the presence of people throughout the day. A third element is to provide a high level of connectivity to other parts of the city so that people can walk, bicycle and drive through the neighborhood. An isolated, disconnected area lends itself to criminal activity because it can remain out of the public’s eye.

The public realm must provide opportunities for people to interact comfortably and build a sense of community in order to enhance overall public safety. This principle was a major factor in what is recommended in the plan. Current uses that encourage interaction, such as the various spiritual centers, should remain and be supplemented with new mixed-use structures that provide space for people to meet, eat, shop and mingle.

To feel safe, we need to know that others are aware of our presence. Likewise, it is important that we are aware of the people and activities going on around us. Visibility is a major factor and windows should be plentiful, while blank wall faces and fences should be minimized. Lighting is also critical and should be incorporated and improved with each redevelopment project.

Considering the severity of the problems, increasing the police presence in Chinatown is desirable. The recommendations include a police sub-station, but as the community stressed, a more important element is an increased street presence by law enforcement. Success in Chinatown will rely on a strong relationship between the community and law enforcement.
Reconnect The Neighborhood

One of the most common issues discussed during the charrette process was the need to reconnect the neighborhood to the rest of Salinas. Multiple connections were added in all seven of the maps produced by the community during the design table exercise and also mentioned frequently in the focus groups. The most common link envisioned by participants was across the railroad tracks at Bridge and Market Streets, and there are other potential connections that could make a big impact. It is recommended that the City begin work to reconnect the neighborhood immediately as it will be a catalyst for other improvements.

Improve Connectivity to the South

A critical element of successfully reconnecting Chinatown is to provide a more direct way across the railroad tracks. At all times of the day, people walk across the lightly used tracks because the other options are considered less desirable and less safe. For pedestrians, it is a long walk to the east to Sherwood Drive and then back along Market Street, which crosses under the railroad. The other option is to go to the northwest corner of the neighborhood to North Main Street and then head south. However, the undercrossing on that route is an uncomfortable, narrow sidewalk along a road with high traffic volumes and speeds. *Note: After the charrette, Union Pacific built a fence along the tracks to prevent people from crossing to and from Chinatown. The fence has created new problems, including safety concerns and conflicts for pedestrians on the narrow sidewalks along Main Street’s railroad underpass.*

North only one-way streets and railroad tracks are significant barriers to connectivity.
The railroad tracks create connectivity problems for vehicles as well. Only the entrance at Market Way and Sherwood Drive allows legal access to all the properties in Chinatown. There are access points at either end of Lake Street, but because all of the north/south streets are one-way allowing north traffic only, the majority of the parcels are unreachable via Lake Street.

There is no easy solution to the connectivity problem posed by the railroad tracks. Ideally, an at-grade crossing would be opened at the same location where one used to exist, at the south end of Bridge Street, connecting to Market Street, allowing two-way travel for vehicles and pedestrians. However, it is important to acknowledge that reopening the crossing will be very difficult. Many California communities in similar situations have not been able to obtain the required support from the Union Pacific Railroad and the California Public Utility Commission, which have both established a goal to reduce the number of at-grade crossings.

Despite the significant challenge, the community and design team see this connection as a key to revitalizing Chinatown’s isolation. The option is worth pursuing, and support from state and federal elected officials may help.

Acknowledging the difficulty of obtaining an at-grade crossing, the community can consider an array of alternatives. An option is a pedestrian bridge over the tracks in the same general area. The bridge could be designed to feature public art and could also serve as a beautiful gateway into Chinatown. A number of participants mentioned that a bridge designed to look like a dragon would be an attractive and culturally appropriate option.
Another option is to improve the undercrossing along Main Street, which would help improve connectivity and safety regardless of what happens elsewhere. In the City’s General Plan, the Main Street undercrossing is slated for redesign, although there is no timeline included for the project. That anticipated project could be used to leverage additional funding to create a safer, quality environment for walking and biking. This portion of Main Street is a Caltrans facility, so it is important to explore options with their staff.

**Reopen North Connection From Lake Street to Rossi Street**

The obstructed roadway running north from Lake Street between Bridge and Soledad Streets is another important connection to reestablish. Once a through street, the link was severed when a wall was built across it in an effort to limit crime on Housing Authority property to the north. The recommendation is to remove the wall and reestablish the street to two-way traffic for all modes. The connection can be enhanced with traffic calming features to minimize volume and speed through the relatively short section.

**Reestablish Two-Way Traffic Flow**

In order for the neighborhood to increase accessibility and circulation to the level required to encourage investment in Chinatown, reestablishing a two-way traffic pattern for the north/south streets is recommended. This will help make the neighborhood a place that is more convenient for people to access and travel within. Converting to two-way streets will immediately and at almost no cost improve connectivity by making the two ends of Lake Street legitimate access points for all properties within Chinatown.

This approach is of concern to some stakeholders who fear that it will only help the law-breakers in the absence of other improvements. On the flip side, it is expected that investors will want to see better connectivity before putting money into the area. A potential solution is to tie future connectivity to a new project, letting investors know that when their project is built, two-way flow will be reestablished. The change could also be linked to an increased law enforcement presence.

**Add New Pedestrian Connection to Transit Center**

Pedestrians would greatly benefit from a direct connection to the new transit center, which will be located on the west side of North Main Street. A connection could run parallel along the south side of the tracks from the proposed crossing point near

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**Recommended circulation improvements**

- Two Way Flow
- New Street with Two-Way Flow
Bridge Street (as discussed earlier). It would then cross North Main Street at the same elevation as the railway. The connection would create a safer and quicker way for more people to utilize the transit facilities, which should be of value to the transit authority.

**Create Pedestrian Paseo Linking Bridge and Soledad**

The plan includes a 20-foot wide pedestrian paseo running from Bridge Street to Soledad Street. This pedestrian connection would run between the social services building and parking structure on the west side of the alley. On the east side, the paseo would run between the police substation and mixed-use housing, as discussed in the next section.

**Build to Attract Early Investment**

One of the most common questions participants asked during the charrette process was “Where do we begin?” The community expressed a concern
that the neighborhood is in bad enough shape that no one would want to make a significant investment. The recommended approach is to build first to address underlying social issues and crime in order to better set the stage for new investment.

**Build Community Services Center**

A key issue coming into the charrette was how handle the provision of social services in Chinatown, a challenging problem discussed in more detail in the “Add Opportunity for Improved Community Services” section of this report. Most participants including social service providers agreed that there was a need for more collaboration in order to better manage community services in Salinas. Participants also expressed the hope that the problems could be dealt with where they occurred, instead of displacing the needy.

In order for service groups to work more closely together, a 22,000 square foot community services building is proposed on Bridge Street. Social services currently provided on Soledad Street and in the surrounding neighborhood could be brought together along with homeless emergency services to form a “one-stop” service center, with transitional housing above.

A one-stop center approach would make it easier for those in need to get help and increase opportunities for social service collaboration through proximity. Another element of this structure is an internal courtyard, which would provide outside space away from the street for those receiving services.

**Build Police Substation**

Establishing a larger police presence in Chinatown would help address safety issues in the neighborhood. A police-substation located along the pedestrian paseo, near the social services building, but closer to Soledad Street is recommended. This would discourage illegal activity in the center of the neighborhood. A substation should not be situated so that it would discourage use of the social services, and so the recommended location is across the alley from the service center.

The police department is looking for a location for a new full-sized station, but the design team felt that Chinatown would not be the best location as stations typically demand more space than Chinatown could handle and still achieve the community’s vision. However, a police substation, combined with an increased law enforcement presence in the neighborhood would help stabilize the neighborhood and create the sense of security.
that all participants in the workshop emphasized was key to revitalizing the neighborhood.

**Build Public Restrooms**

Public restrooms could be located on Soledad Street, near the substation but with a separate entrance. This location would be central and convenient and the police presence will help prevent abuse. The separate entrance near the substation is recommended as an easy-to-access, low-hassle approach that balances the dual concerns about sanitation and security.

**Transform Alleys**

Making Chinatown more beautiful is a critical component to spurring investment in the community. In addition to the basic streetscape enhancements recommended in the “Improve Transportation Network, Streets and Parking” section, the three alleys that run north/south have great potential. The alleys can be transformed into a variation of a woonerf, a Dutch term for a common space designed to be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists and low-speed motor vehicles.

The alleys already offer narrow streets without curbs and sidewalks (an element of a woonerf), and vehicles can be slowed by placing trees, planters, parking areas and other obstacles along the street. The alleys could be widened to 25’ to provide the right amount of space and interaction for very slow (less than 10 mph) two-way vehicle travel. Instead of solid fences with no through visibility, structures fronting the alleys would have thoughtfully designed exteriors and entrances with windows and doors facing the alley to make the space more inviting and intriguing. The woonerf design could also include a portion of Market Way just south of the alley between Bridge/Soledad.

**Build Parking Garages to Handle Future Development**

While it is acknowledged that the City recently built a parking garage in Oldtown that is not yet generating significant revenue, “reservoir” parking...
garages in Chinatown would be very useful for allowing new investment to occur. By providing space that new residential units would be able to claim, parking garages would make housing projects possible that may not be feasible otherwise based on the acreage available and existing parking requirements. This is especially the case along Soledad Street, which has several small parcels that would be difficult to develop at the density levels necessary to bring new housing and retail to the area. The cost of the structure could be paid for by developers incrementally as housing units are built and parking spaces are claimed.

A possibility for the first reservoir parking garage is to include it as part of the Housing Authority’s development expected to happen in the next few years. It could be built to include parking for other parts of the neighborhood. At the early stage, this garage could also help serve the Buddhist Temple and Confucius Church by providing more parking spaces for their events, encouraging additional participants. Another possibility is to build a garage adjacent to the social services building. This garage could provide a direct connection to the social services building via an underground link.

At future garage sites, an option is to start with a surface parking lot as a first step. This approach could provide off-street parking at a low cost. As garages are built, including first floor retail around the outside of the garage is recommended. Garages can also act as windbreaks to the northwest wind.

**Add More Uses Along Bridge and Soledad Streets**

An additional feature to consider early is an Asian Cultural Center in the historic buildings toward the south end of Soledad Street. Respecting and celebrating the rich cultural history of the neighborhood through a cultural center was a common theme.

The cultural center could be ringed with market rate town houses along the south side facing the park and along the alley. The townhouses could continue up the alley to Lake Street. Additional market rate housing could be located at the southeast corner of Bridge and Lake Streets. Other sites along Bridge and Soledad can be developed as mixed-use with housing over retail when enough momentum has been generated.

**Continue Taking Advantage of Short-Term and Inexpensive Improvements**

There are also some easier-to-accomplish and short-term actions that can help jump-start major projects. It is important to point out that much of the recent improvement in the neighborhood is due to the community proactively recognizing such opportunities and acting on them.

Opportunities include doing façade improvement. Repainting a building can make a big difference and the City has an improvement program that can offset some of the cost to property owners and businesses for painting, as well as for signage, awnings, parking lot landscaping and related exterior improvements. Property owners can add additional lighting and security cameras. Simple landscaping improvements can also make the neighborhood more attractive.

**Invest in Open Space**

Charrette participants made it clear that the existing community garden was a critical and positive aspect of the neighborhood that should be preserved. However, at some point the garden site has to be moved, because the Redevelopment Agency is obligated to build housing on the current location of the garden. This presents several options. One possibility is to initially expand and eventually
relocate the community garden to the other side of Soledad Street. An agreement could be reached for joint-use with Comcast, which owns the northernmost parcel on the west side of Soledad that has a small shed in one corner. Comcast’s property is a smaller parcel than the current garden plot, but additional space could be added by utilizing the adjoining two parcels to the south as community garden space instead of developing as mixed-use.

This option may be expensive considering the potential costs of acquisition and clean up.

An alternative is to require that all housing provide smaller community garden spaces instead of finding a single, larger site for a garden. With the style of buildings proposed, it would be possible to include gardens in the center interior courtyards, and this approach would bring the gardens closer to where people live.

As revitalization progresses and positive activity increases, in turn bringing additional passive surveillance, a community park and playground could be located at the south end of Soledad Street. A well-thought out park would transform this location from an eyesore to a point of community pride. It could feature design elements that continue the theme of highlighting Asian culture. The timing of park construction should be tied to an increase in legitimate users in Chinatown, but design and clean up the property could begin immediately.

In addition, the current location of the City’s pump station at the southeast corner of Lake and Rossi could be turned into open space that could serve as an attractive gateway to the neighborhood. This area once housed the neighborhood’s only playground, and it could return to those historical roots and also tie into the proposed park across the street to the north where a basketball court is envisioned.

Create Complete Streets

The streets of Salinas ought to be for everyone, whether young or old, motorist or bicyclist, walker or wheelchair user, bus rider or shopkeeper. But many streets are designed only for speeding cars or creeping traffic jams. They’re unsafe for people on foot or bike, and unpleasant for everybody.

In communities across the country, a movement calling for “Complete Streets” is growing. Like many people in other states, cities and towns, charrette participants asked for road networks that are safe and convenient for everyone, whether young or old, motorist or bicyclists, walker or wheelchair user, bus rider or shopkeeper.

Improving streets and intersections would help set the stage for additional investment, increase safety for all users and provide the necessary built environment to support a thriving neighborhood. Streets should be designed with features that moderate vehicle speeds and that make them comfortable for walking and bicycling. See the Livable Streets Toolbox in the Appendix for additional details.

Crossings

No matter what mode they are using, people like to take the shortest, safest and most convenient route to a destination. Walkers and bicyclists are especially vulnerable to vehicles, so they spend as little time as
possible in the roadway or crossing it. Pedestrians need well-designed and well-marked locations to cross streets.

In locations with high traffic volumes or high speeds, tools need to be used to create a safe crossing. For example, short curb radii can significantly slow vehicle turning speeds. Compact, well-designed intersections benefit all roadway users, as less time is needed for crossing and pedestrians have less exposure to moving traffic.

Medians and crossing islands make it much easier for pedestrians to cross the street. The pedestrian only has to deal with traffic in one direction and has a location to pause and get out of the street while finding a gap to cross the second leg. Islands for pedestrians would work well on North Main St., East Market St., Rossi St., and Sherwood Dr.

**Curb Extensions**

Curb extensions can be used throughout the project area and surrounding streets. Curb extensions are built into the street to the width of the parking lane at corners or at mid-block crossing locations. Curb extensions have many benefits: they shorten the distance pedestrians have to cross; they make it easier for motorists to see pedestrians (and vice versa); and they have a traffic-calming effect by narrowing down the road. There are curb extensions in the City of Salinas close to Chinatown, in the 100 block of Main Street.

**Access Management**

Excessive driveways are an issue along Sherwood Drive. As revitalization occurs, there is an opportunity to consolidate driveways and minimize risk to pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers – referred to as access management. In addition, all driveways should be designed so that motorists understand that they are crossing the pedestrian realm. This can be accomplished by using contrasting materials and ensuring that the material used for the sidewalk continues across the driveway. The slope should be placed outside the sidewalk surface to assist wheelchair users in crossing the driveway.

**Vertical Curbs**

Vertical curbs keep vehicles from parking on the sidewalk and clearly delineate the pedestrian from the automobile zone. Streets with rolled curbs encourage motorists to park on the sidewalk and create additional obstacles for pedestrians. Alleys should not have curbs, but need to be designed with features in the roadway that keep automobile speeds low.

**Curb Ramps**

Curb ramps are a necessary improvement in order to meet the needs of all users. Instead of placing a single ramp at each corner of an intersection, ADA guidelines currently support placing two ramps at each corner with a vertical curb from the sidewalk to street. A single ramp in the center of the corner sends the user into the middle of the street and makes it hard for those in wheelchairs or with visual disabilities to correctly align themselves.

Medians make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street.

Curb extensions reduce crossing distance by two thirds in this example.

A distinct sidewalk should continue across a driveway.
Landscaping

When there is enough space, it is best to include a landscape strip between the street and the sidewalk. This is a traditional street design approach seen in many older neighborhoods and has many benefits, including providing a buffer for pedestrians and slowing vehicle speeds.

Soledad and California Streets don’t have enough room for a 6-foot landscape buffer, but there are other options on narrow streets. Small trees can be placed at regular intervals within the parking zone. Landscaping can also be included in curb extensions and median islands.

Lighting

A lighting study conducted by the City in 1991 highlighted the need for additional light in the neighborhood, and this was identified as a priority during the charrette. Pedestrian-scale lighting should...
be incorporated and will need to be thought out as revitalization occurs.

**Narrow travel lanes**

Travel lanes should be no more than 10-11 feet in the neighborhood and the surrounding area to encourage slower speeds. Reducing travel lanes to this width will provide room for other elements such as parking, landscape buffers and medians.

**Roundabouts**

Roundabouts are un-signalized intersections in which traffic circulates around a raised center island. More American cities are experiencing the benefits of well-designed roundabouts: reduced collisions, improved traffic flow, and increased pedestrian safety. Properly designed, a roundabout will allow large trucks and buses through, yet keep all vehicle speeds low.

Three roundabouts are proposed for this project. One is at the intersection of Rossi and Main and
was previously recommended in design work performed by Calthorpe and Associates. The other two are located at Market and the reestablished Bridge Street, and Market at Sherwood. Currently the intersections of Rossi at Main and Market at Sherwood are not comfortable places for pedestrians. Roundabouts would improve the environment for walking.

Successfully implementing a roundabout includes providing education to users. Signage, media coverage and printed materials can all help. First hand experience is also beneficial and one approach may be to install a smaller scale roundabout somewhere in the city, before building the larger versions recommended here.

**Speed Humps**

Speed humps are not recommended as part of this project. If the other elements recommended can be implemented, then they will achieve traffic calming, and do so without the drawbacks that come with speed bumps: slowed emergency responders, increased noise, and discomfort for those with back problems.

**Change Parking**

Parallel parking is recommended along both sides of Soledad, both sides of Lake, the west side of Sherwood, and the east side of West Main between Rossi and Lake. Dual side angled parking is recommended on both sides of Market Way between Soledad and Sherwood. Single side angled parking is recommended along the south side of Rossi. On California and Bridge, a combination of parallel parking on one side and angled parking on the other is recommended.

Considering the lower speeds and volumes on California and Bridge, back-in angle parking could be implemented. The basic idea behind back-in angle parking is that it is better to reverse into the known as opposed to backing into a roadway with an obstructed view, as in the case with standard forward pull-in parking. As such, back-in angle
parking has been shown to reduce collisions. Back-in angle parking also directs people towards the sidewalk as they exit their vehicles, a benefit in particular for those with children.

On-street parking can play a role in traffic calming. The space for parking can be colorized to provide contrast to the asphalt travel lane and thus visually narrow the roadway and help lower vehicle speeds. Using the same color or texture as the sidewalk gives the sense that the parking space is part of the pedestrian realm and makes the roadway feel narrow even when there are no cars parked alongside it.

It is also worth exploring options to remove minimum parking requirements or reduce parking ratios and consider shared parking to reduce the overall space needed for parking. Shared parking is when two or more users (a store, office, restaurant, residential, etc.) share the same parking spaces instead of each having dedicated spaces. Since the neighborhood is only about a quarter of a mile from transit, Chinatown can thrive with less parking than is required by typical strip malls and suburbs.

Create a Sense of Place

In order to attract residents, customers and visitors, it is important for Chinatown’s community to think in terms of making the neighborhood a place that is unique. The vision developed during the charrette included the concept that the neighborhood would be comfortable and sociable. Chinatown would be a place where people could meet, with businesses and events that draw activity, and that featured unique art and intriguing places to explore.

Incorporating Chinatown Culture and History in Style and Design

Creating a Chinatown that reflects the history and culture of the neighborhood is important to the community. Form and detail that highlight historic architectural style would not only be attractive to the community but could serve as a draw to visitors.

Throughout the process of revitalization, the neighborhood should embrace local artists, including school children, to help create a
neighboring that celebrates the culture and history of the area. Art can be used to make Chinatown special in every aspect of revitalization.

There is great potential to incorporate cultural elements in aspects of design, including sidewalks, signage, and parks. A specific historical consideration is recreating the historical “arcade” on Soledad Street by having the second stories jut out a bit to achieve that effect. Another way to celebrate the history of Chinatown is to preserve and revive structures with historical significance that are structurally sound and can be safely reused.

The community discussed the possibility of creating design guidelines to establish a clearer plan for new construction. Well-designed projects that are consistent with a Chinatown style are desirable, but the community wants to be careful about how such a process would work so that it does not create a hurdle that would make it harder to attract developers.

**Signage and Wayfinding**

Entryways are another way that communities can stand out and encourage passersby to enter and explore. Attractive gateway signs can be placed at major entry points. Once in the neighborhood, wayfinding signage of a consistent style will help visitors navigate Chinatown. Signage allows people to feel safe and enhances safety by letting the user know where they are, where they are going, and what the rules are.

**Railroad Track Fencing**

The area between the railroad tracks and Market Way is a space that can also be transformed to something beautiful that enhances safety. For example, an artistically-designed, low-height fence with high through-visibility could direct people to the at-grade crossing or bridge.

In this context, thinking along the lines of designing something simply from the perspective of preventing access typically does not work, as every community has evidence of fences and walls that were breached and broken through. A low fence would serve the purpose of directing law-abiding citizens to proper crossing points and clearly defines where they should and should not be. In addition, if a law-breaker decides to cross over, they will not destroy the fence in the process. It is important not to further isolate the neighborhood and preserve existing passive surveillance by taking care not to obstruct the view across the tracks.

**Add quality housing**

A rich mix of housing choices is a prerequisite to a diverse neighborhood, and the plan takes this into account. The envisioned units include a comprehensive mix of housing types that meets the needs of a broad spectrum of community members: subsidized affordable and market-rate; supportive, service-enriched and independent; permanent and transitional; family, senior, and singles; live/work, apartments, and townhomes. 1,964 units are shown, of which 65% are planned as market rate housing. Some of the units are in the surrounding area, with 650 in the core of the project area. Residential zones and densities are shown on pages 24 and 25.

In general, buildings along the perimeter of the project are 5-stories and include 1-story of “podium” parking at ground level, which can be ringed with retail or other housing. There are three-story buildings in the interior of the project area, particularly along California Street. Alley townhouses are two-story.

One cost consideration for 5-story buildings is related to the parking. The first floor podium parking is concrete construction, which allows for 4-story of wood construction on top. The wood construction is more affordable than the concrete construction, so developers would likely be attracted by the possibility of building out to maximum height to make the most of their concrete costs.

The 5-story buildings include a second story courtyard built on the top of the parking level. The housing units are built ringed around a central
DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

courtyard open to the sky. This serves as small-scale open space where only residents have access. The 5-story construction can be stepped back from the roadway as it goes higher, so that it doesn’t overwhelm the street.

The 3-story housing sites have a small amount of first floor parking built in, but do not require concrete construction and would be walk-up buildings so no elevator would be needed, further lowering development costs. The properties across the street from the Buddhist Temple were designed at 3 stories, assuming that these would be developed in smaller pieces by the existing owners.

The recommendations about what kind of housing to build where were tied to existing plans, such as Housing Authority and Redevelopment Agency intentions, and the community table exercises, which included the recommendations for senior housing and the community services center. In locations where future housing types were less clear, the need for affordable housing was balanced against the number of market units in which a developer could typically make a worthwhile investment.

Affordable Housing

Well-designed, affordable, subsidized housing is often at the vanguard of revitalization efforts. Its presence brings population into the neighborhood, which provides stability and encourages market-rate development. Here, “affordable” is used to mean housing that is affordable to a low-income household, meaning that such a household would spend no more than 30% of its income on housing costs. In the plan, area U is designated 100% affordable housing.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “low-income” as a household whose income is at or below 80% of the area’s median for households of the same size. According to HUD, in 2007, median income for a household of four in Salinas is $63,400. A household of four would qualify as low-income if their income did not exceed $51,600; an individual with an income of $31,600 would also be considered low-income.

Some funding sources have different requirements; common ones are 60% of area median income, 50% of area median income (considered very low income) and extremely low income (considered 30% of area median income). HUD recalculates the dollar figures annually.

Transitional Housing

Plan areas B and W are envisioned as transitional housing in the form of single room occupancy (SRO) development. The goal of transitional housing is to provide a service-enriched environment that stabilizes a formerly homeless individual with the goal of readying him or her for permanent housing. Individuals who become healthy enough and acquire the skills to live more independently receive assistance in locating permanent housing that meets their needs, with ongoing support services if necessary.

Workforce Housing

Plan areas A through I include workforce housing, with percentages ranging from 20%-50% of the housing proposed. It is important to understand that unlike terms such as “low-income,” the term “workforce housing” does not have a HUD standard definition. However, in its Inclusionary Housing Guidelines (adopted November 2006; see below for more information), Salinas defines workforce housing as affordable to households earning up to 160% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Generally speaking, workforce housing is understood to mean housing that is affordable (using the metric of 30% of income going to pay housing costs) to middle-class households working...
Proposed Residential Density

A. 200 Lofts 200 Autos  
B. 50 Dwelling Units 50 Autos  
C. 28 Dwelling Units 28 Autos  
D. 175 Dwelling Units 220 Autos  
E. 160 Dwelling Units 210 Autos  
F. 155 Dwelling Units 380 Autos  
G1. 108 Dwelling Units 110 Autos  
G2. 84 Dwelling Units 112 Autos  
H. 175 Dwelling Units 220 Autos  
I. 160 Dwelling Units 160 Autos  
J. 30 Dwelling Units 20 Autos  
K. 30 Dwelling Units 20 Autos  
L. 30 Dwelling Units 20 Autos  
M. 30 Dwelling Units 20 Autos  
N. 30 Dwelling Units  
O. 47 Dwelling Units 35 Autos  
P. 48 Dwelling Units  
Q. 38 Dwelling Units  
R. 4 Dwelling Units  
S. 28 Dwelling Units  
T. 28 Dwelling Units  
U. 54 Dwelling Units  
V. 18 Dwelling Units  
W. 125 Dwelling Units (SRO)  
X. 65 Dwelling Units  
Y. 64 Dwelling Units

Proposed Residential Zones

A. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%)  
B. Transitional (50%) & Workforce (50%)  
C. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%)  
D. Market (70%) & Workforce (30%) + Mixed Use  
E. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%) + Mixed Use  
F. Market (70%) & Workforce (30%) + Mixed Use  
G1. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%) + Mixed Use  
G2. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%) + Mixed Use  
H. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%)  
I. Market (80%) & Workforce (20%)  
J. Senior Housing (100%)  
K. Senior Housing (100%)  
L. Senior Housing (100%)  
M. Senior Housing (100%)  
N. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
O. Senior Housing (100%)  
P. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
Q. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
R. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
S. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
T. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
U. 100% Affordable Housing  
V. Market (100%) + Mixed use  
W. 100% Transitional Housing (SRO)  
X. Market (100%) + Mixed Use  
Y. Market (100%)

Unit Summary

Market Rate: 1,286 (65%)  
Transitional: 150 (8%)  
Workforce: 307 (16%)  
Affordable: 54 (3%)  
Senior: 167 (8%)

Total Units: 1,964
in jobs such as teaching, firefighting, policing, clerical, and social work. In places where housing costs are high, such as Salinas, many professionals are unable to afford adequate housing. Workforce housing may allow such professionals to stay in the community in which they work.

**Senior Housing**

The recommended senior housing is centered on California Street near the Buddhist Temple and Confucius Church in areas J, K, I, M and O. A mix of market-rate and subsidized, independent living and service-enriched units will ensure that housing options are available for a spectrum of seniors. The senior housing recommended on Buddhist Temple property would be above the existing surface lot with all existing structures preserved, including the bell.

**Supportive Housing**

An additional component that could overlay some of the units is supportive housing, which includes services designed to meet the specific needs of the population housed. The types and intensity of services varies with the housing, so this broad category can include housing for senior citizens with social programs, clean and sober housing for former substance abusers with intensive counseling and money management services, or family housing with ESL classes and childcare on-site.

**Other Housing Components**

Areas A, C, D, E, F, G, H I, N, P, Q, R, S, T, V, X and Y are envisioned as primarily mixed-use, market rate housing. The housing planned for Market and Main would be a more pricey development than other properties and would come late in the phasing. It would feature a second story garage to which a pedestrian bridge across the tracks could link.

The plan takes advantage of the Housing Authority’s intent to redevelop their property along Rossi and also at Rossi and Sherwood in the near future. More units than currently exist are possible at both locations, even with a parking structure included at the Rossi site.

Live-work units are shown in the current auto industry building at Market and Bridge. Alley townhouses are found between Sherwood and California. Retail redevelopment along Sherwood would encourage this development.

The plan also shows development on land currently owned by PG&E. This land is currently underutilized and a conversation about potential use with PG&E is encouraged.

**Parking**

The proposal includes recommendations for off-street parking and additional on-street parking. Two multi-story garages are shown in the project area (as discussed earlier) with a third shown on what is currently PG&E property. Each garage could hold approximately 450 cars.
Density

The City’s current General Plan recommends 583 new units in the Central City over 20 years. The recommendations in this report show a build-out scenario with 1,964 units in Chinatown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Based upon the community’s vision, the design team believes that the number of residential units shown in this report achieves the vibrant street life that would ensure that vision of Salinas’ downtown. The plan supports the City’s goals of preserving agriculture and open space and also provides the numbers to support enhanced transit services.

In addition, the scenario shown is expected to be attractive to developers, who may need the higher density to make things more financially feasible given the increasing costs of construction, especially if they were expected to build some affordable housing.

There is increasing demand for the types of units shown, as more and more people are looking for smaller spaces. This includes the booming population of retirees who are willing to give up expansive backyards requiring lots of maintenance for proximity to shops and services. The number of households without children is also on the rise and they often choose more compact neighborhoods with lots of activity.

Higher density can be alarming to some, and people often envision projects that have been notable failures. In order to be successful, the community’s structures and spaces have to be built with safety and security in mind.

The community may chose to build less units and could still achieve the desired effect, but it was felt that it would be most beneficial to see what kind of density is possible and allow the neighborhood to scale back, as opposed to vice-versa.

On pages 28-31, conceptual images are provided to show how the building, street and landscaping would interact based on the community’s vision. The inset photos show the current view of the street that served as the basis of the perspective drawings.

Seek Retail to Support the Neighborhood

The community expressed a strong desire for basic retail in the neighborhood that would reduce the need for trips outside the area. The most common retail desired centered on food, including grocery stores and markets featuring healthy food, cafes and restaurants. To get the right type of investment, the City should take an active role to pursue potential development that best serves the community.

Businesses deemed nonconforming by the recent change to mixed-use zoning should be allowed to continue in the area. The presence of local manufacturing and service businesses add to the vitality of the neighborhood and should be provided support. Over time, however, as more housing and retail uses are built, these businesses will likely decide to redevelop their properties and benefit from their higher value.
Perspective drawing of Soledad Street looking north from Market Way
Perspective drawing of California Street looking south from Lake Street
Perspective drawing of Bridge Street looking south from Lake Street
Perspective drawing of Lake Street looking west from Bridge Street
**Add Opportunity for Improved Social Services**

How best to help the neediest in society is a complex issue, extending far beyond the stark question of whether someone has a roof over his or her head. During the charrette, a variety of perspectives were shared about how to care for the homeless, the marginalized, the poor, and those otherwise at-risk in Chinatown. Despite some disagreement on specifics, the team clearly heard that the current approach could be improved and that increased collaboration and communication was needed to improve services in Chinatown.

Giving the issue of expanded community services the attention it deserves is outside the scope of this project. However, because it was recognized as a central issue, efforts were made to bring in additional resources. This report addresses the issue as best it can, but more focused discussion, strategizing and collaboration are needed in the neighborhood, city and county.

The recommendations are:
- Create a citywide plan to end homelessness to complement the County’s plan
- Develop a comprehensive network of services co-located in one center in Chinatown
- Maximize funding opportunities
- Explore increased capacity by using the Chinatown community and City resources
- Encourage existing social service providers to engage in deeper collaboration to develop a more inclusive network of services

This issue of homelessness goes beyond Chinatown; the City of Salinas must decide how to approach this problem. Does the city want to relocate social services as the area gets revitalized? Or does it want to support efforts to help the needy where the affected are located and can most easily access services? It is a challenge to fully prepare a redevelopment plan for an area so impacted by these issues in the absence of clear direction.

In a January presentation to the Salinas City Council, the Salinas Downtown Community Board expressed a need to better understand the City’s plan to deal with homelessness. Developing a citywide plan to end homelessness would help neighborhoods like Chinatown deal with the complexities.

Based on background information, input from participants and contributions from Homebase, providing better services for the needy in Chinatown is preferred to displacing them. A key strategy is to provide a one-stop service center to make it easier for those in need to find the continuum of services they need.

There is some concern that if community services in Chinatown improve, then the neighborhood will become a magnet for more people in need. Homebase’s experts shared a perspective on this issue: “Quality homeless services are not a magnet for more homeless, rather the absence of any policy, the void, is the magnet. If a structured services plan is in place, those who choose not to participate will move on.”
Currently, there is the impression that social services are disjointed. Monterey County has established the Continuum of Care (CoC), and many positive collaborations and results have come out of this. Participants mentioned that there was significant collaboration at the macro level, but there was a need to build on that to focus on the micro level issues in Chinatown.

Part of the issue is that many of the County’s services are located in Fort Ord, outside of Salinas. It is worth noting that after the County adopted its current 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and focused its efforts on providing services at Fort Ord, the 2005 Homeless Census reported an 80% increase in the homeless population in Salinas.

A significant part of the problem is that the social service providers are overwhelmed. Local staff and volunteers shared that they don’t have the capacity to take on the additional tasks required to address the community issues more comprehensively. A key example of this challenge is that the CoC has not maximized HUD Supportive Housing Bonus funding opportunities. The money must be used for housing, but the HUD funding has not been pursued because there is a lack of capacity to provide services to those who would be housed.

In response, Homebase recommended broader participation in the CoC to expand capacity, and to consider that research has shown that putting a roof over a person’s head goes a long way towards combating homelessness. Homebase made the point that once a person doesn’t have to spend their day worrying about where they will live, sleep, and go to the bathroom, many other parts of their lives fall back into place. Adding a bit of housing stock every year can make a big difference over time.

There appears to be a lot of excitement among providers to move forward with creating change in the downtown area, both by coordinating services and by creating additional services. Capacity can be increased through collaboration. It may take additional work up front, particularly in creating something like the recommended one-stop service center, but collaboration will pay off in the end.

Perhaps there are other organizations in the neighborhood or City departments that could step up and commit funding or time up front to help bring the groups together. There could be an important role for the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers to play in moving this plan forward.

A potential underutilized resource are the residents within Chinatown. Charrette participants from this group were very motivated to see change and interested in job training opportunities. Exploring potential ways to use their skills and experience to address the capacity issue is strongly recommended.

Increased communication is one aspect of collaboration that is encouraged. Social service providers and those who support them, need to ensure that the word gets out about what is available. An example is that a Salinas police officer did not know that there was a mental health emergency hot-line.

The support of the larger Chinatown community is needed for success. In the report “Addressing Homelessness: Successful Downtown Partnerships,” the International Downtown Association makes an excellent point about collaboration.

“Everyone with an interest in the problem has a legitimate set of goals that need to be respected and reflected in the program response. When the means selected to address homelessness and mental illness meet the business sector’s goal of restoring a sense of safety on the streets, when they also meet the advocates’ goal of respecting the rights of homeless people and when they meet the service providers’ goal of treating the root cause of the problem as well, success will follow. Success does not require each interest group to embrace the goals of the others.”

“By building strong nonprofit and business partners, government resources can go further, with less duplication or gaps and toward a set of goals that are bipartisan and community-wide.”

Caring, peace, and support were values self-identified as the most important to the Community. Even businesses and groups who have had to deal with significant problems associated with the issues expressed deep concern for the needy and showed a willingness to help. There is a tremendous reservoir of support and energy in Chinatown and its people have the drive to make their neighborhood a better place.
IMPLEMENTATION

Phasing

The diagrams on pages 34-35 summarize the recommended three-step phasing plan for a revitalized Chinatown. The phasing should be viewed as flexible, and generally projects from one phase can occur in an earlier or later phase without compromising the overall plan. However, there are aspects that are critical to address in Phase 1, including improving safety, security and connectivity, in order to better set the stage for future investment.

The principles behind the phasing recommendations include looking for opportunities that will stimulate private investment, acknowledging projects in the works, capacity, and the values and priorities of the community.

Throughout all of the stages, and particularly early on, the community can continue to make quick and inexpensive improvements to facades, lighting, landscaping and other design elements. Chinatown has already made progress thanks to community action, and the effort creates a strong foundation for future investment.

The bulk of the transportation improvements are shown occurring in Phase 1, as they will be vital to reconnecting the neighborhood and make new investment more attractive. The focal point for community services shifts from Soledad Street to Bridge Street in the first stage, and redevelopment of the Housing Authority properties provides new opportunities for additional housing and parking.
**Chinatown Renewal Project**

**Phase 2**

2017 (5-10 Years)

1. Buddhist Temple
2. Confucius Church
3. Renovate Existing Building
4. Senior Housing
5. Alley Townhouses
6. Grocery Store
7. Mixed-Use (Housing over Retail)
8. Market Rate Housing
9. Affordable Housing

**Chinatown Renewal Project**

**Phase 3**

2022 (10-15 Years)

1. Pedestrian Bridge
2. Basketball Park
3. Mixed-Use (Housing over Retail)
4. Market Rate Housing
5. Alley Townhouses
6. Affordable Housing
Chinatown Renewal Project at Buildout
The second phase focuses on the section between Soledad Street and the alley east of California Street. It includes a significant investment in senior housing. Toward the end of this stage, it is likely that there will be enough people in the area to support a grocery store at Market Way and Sherwood.

Redevelopment is shown starting primarily in the heart of Chinatown and then later focuses more on the fringes of the project area and along the arterials. This includes acquiring land from the PG&E property north of Rossi and using it for landscaping, parking and additional affordable housing. If a connection across the railroad tracks at Bridge Street has not yet been constructed, there is an opportunity to incorporate a crossing into the development south of the tracks at Market and Main.

**Funding**

The vision for the Chinatown neighborhood includes housing affordable to a mix of incomes and household types, businesses, gathering places and community services. Much of this development will rely on private capital, but before private investors can be persuaded to take risks with their money, it will be necessary to “prime the pump” with public and semi-public investments.

Ideally, a mix of hard and soft funding would be acquired to provide both infrastructure and services. It will likely be harder to find sustainable funding for services. This will be a complicated task and we recommend hiring a full-time coordinator with experience and expertise to maximize the utilization of the available funding resources.

There is a broad range of financial instruments and resources that are potentially appropriate for the planned revitalization of New Chinatown, considering that the plan incorporates diverse mix of uses. Each component requires and has the potential to access different financing tools. The Potential Funding Appendix includes additional information about the variety of funding options and opportunities. Some of the key sources to consider are discussed here.

Outside of such traditional financial products as bank loans and private venture capital, there is a wide range of instruments available to finance revitalization efforts. This generally includes grants, loans, tax credits, bonds, taxes and fees.

**Financing Infrastructure**

In order to successfully compete for many of the funding sources available to revitalize Chinatown, entities with experience and a track record of success will need to be brought in as partners and, in some cases, created. For affordable housing and in some cases economic development, Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Housing Development Corporations (HDCs) will need to be at the table. For support service funds, experienced support service agencies should take the lead. For a thriving business environment, local businesses may want to organize a Business Improvement District (BID).

**Community Development Corporations**

A community development corporation (CDC) is a non-profit community-based organization that serves low-income families and neighborhoods. CDCs are formed by residents, small-business owners, congregations, and other local stakeholders. CDCs help a community address poverty and its symptoms. Many CDCs build affordable housing and create jobs for area residents. Jobs are often created through small-business loans or commercial business projects. Some CDCs also create programs that tutor children after school, care for senior citizens, organize neighborhood watches, and otherwise respond to community needs.

**Housing Development Corporations**

A Housing Development Corporation (HDC) is much like a CDC. It is also a non-profit organization that serves low-income families and neighborhoods. It differs in that its primary mission is to create housing for low-income households, and it is not necessarily neighborhood-based.

California is home to many of the most sophisticated and innovative CDCs and HDCs in the nation. A number are active in and around Salinas, a partial list of which are in the Potential Funding Appendix, along with some of their particular strengths.

**Business Improvement Districts**

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are public/private sector partnerships in which property and/or business owners of a defined area elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development and marketing/promotion of their commercial district. BIDs are grassroots organizations that are driven by community support. However, to establish one the participating businesses must have legislative authority from the City Council. Once established, BIDs are
CHINATOWN RENEWAL PROJECT

provides development financing, as well as an operating subsidy for the property.

For supportive housing, the Multifamily Housing Program – Supportive Housing is a State capital financing program. It is targeted to the creation of supportive housing with associated health and social services for low-income renters with disabilities. Section 811 funding from HUD also finances the creation of permanent supportive housing for disabled adults. This competitive grant program provides development financing, as well as an operating subsidy for the property.

For permanent housing for the formerly homeless, the State is working to consolidate its homelessness programs under the Governor’s Homeless Initiative. A variety of deferred payment loan programs that have been managed through different State agencies are being administered through an interagency effort. The funds are available as deferred payment construction, bridge, and permanent loans; terms vary depending on the funding source. Housing must be supportive and designated for persons with severe mental illness who are chronically homeless.

For transitional housing, the primary federal funding source is the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. The City of Salinas receives an annual allocation of these funds from HUD, and spends those funds to support the priorities outlined in the City’s Consolidated Plan and the related annual Action Plans. In Fiscal Year 05-06, Salinas anticipated receiving approximately $110,000 in ESG funds.

The largest number of financing instruments are available for developing housing for households that meet specific income requirements (low-income or less), but do not have age or disability restrictions. It should be noted that many of these funding sources could be used to augment the other sources discussed above. It is also important to note that some of the funding sources discussed in this subsection have set-asides for specific subpopulations, and that in addition to that

Funding Sources

For senior housing, Section 202 funding can be sought from HUD. Section 202 is the primary dedicated funding source for low-income senior housing. It is a very competitive grant program

overseen by a member-elected Board of Directors. BID's typically provide services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, public safety officers, park and open space maintenance, marketing, capital improvements, and various development projects. The services provided by BID'S supplement the services already provided by the municipality.

BID'S are funded through special assessments collected from businesses (including landowners who lease property) and/or property owners within the defined boundaries of the district. In Chinatown, considering how few businesses are currently located in the neighborhood, it makes sense to pursue a BID that focuses on the property owners.

For permanent housing for the formerly homeless, the State is working to consolidate its homelessness programs under the Governor’s Homeless Initiative. A variety of deferred payment loan programs that have been managed through different State agencies are being administered through an interagency effort. The funds are available as deferred payment construction, bridge, and permanent loans; terms vary depending on the funding source. Housing must be supportive and designated for persons with severe mental illness who are chronically homeless.

For transitional housing, the primary federal funding source is the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. The City of Salinas receives an annual allocation of these funds from HUD, and spends those funds to support the priorities outlined in the City’s Consolidated Plan and the related annual Action Plans. In Fiscal Year 05-06, Salinas anticipated receiving approximately $110,000 in ESG funds.

The largest number of financing instruments are available for developing housing for households that meet specific income requirements (low-income or less), but do not have age or disability restrictions. It should be noted that many of these funding sources could be used to augment the other sources discussed above. It is also important to note that some of the funding sources discussed in this subsection have set-asides for specific subpopulations, and that in addition to that
jurisdictions may choose to target some funds to meet policy goals. Such targeting might include more stringent income requirements, or housing for the formerly homeless.

Low-income housing support can be found through the State Predevelopment Loan Program and the Multifamily Housing Program, the federal HOME Investment Partnerships block grant program and Community Development Block Grant Program, the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits program, and tax-exempt bond financing.

A key policy already in place is Salinas’ Inclusionary Housing requirements adopted in 2005. The Salinas Inclusionary rules require that the creation of 10 or more units of market-rate housing must be augmented by the development of affordable units as well. The requirements can be met in a variety of ways: the developer can build the affordable units along with the market-rate units, can pay “in-lieu” fees and dedicate land for the development of the affordable units, or can contract with a nonprofit developer to build the units subject to City Council approval. Units must be targeted to four income levels: Very Low Income (50% of AMI); Low Income (80% of AMI); Moderate Income (120% of AMI), and Workforce (160% of AMI). There are additional requirements for the number of units (and at which income levels) must be developed as rental and homeownership opportunities.

The Redevelopment Agency is another potential source of funding. At the moment, they have money for affordable housing and plan to build on their property that is the current site of the community garden. While there is no discretionary funding currently, additional resources and redevelopment tools are possible as the Agency develops future implementation plans.

Economic Development covers everything from neighborhood revitalization to job creation to microlending. New Chinatown will benefit from programs that encourage businesses to locate within the neighborhood, building a job base and the “bones” of a vibrant neighborhood. There are a wealth of programs and several are worth investigating for use in Chinatown, including New Markets Tax Credits, Economic Development Administration grants, and Office of Community Services low-income employment grants.

The Chinatown Renewal Project recommendations are presented as a conceptual plan based on the community’s priorities, values and vision as heard during the charrette process. On a project of this scale, no one group or agency will be able to address all the issues. Continued and increased collaboration is essential to realize the community’s vision of a revitalized Chinatown.

The Design Team would like to sincerely thank the community for their participation during the charrette process. There is an amazing amount of passion and dedication in Chinatown and because of this, great things will continue to happen in the neighborhood.