Alisal Vibrancy Plan – January 2018
Community Design Charrette Summary

Purpose
Since August 2017, the City of Salinas has been collaborating with Alisal community members and grassroots organizations through a participatory process to create the Alisal Vibrancy Plan (AVP). Thanks to a grant from Caltrans, the AVP will include an East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project. The primary public involvement tool for the corridor project was an intensive three-day community design charrette. The charrette included numerous community-based design exercises to meaningfully and sincerely engage the community in crafting their community’s future.

A community design charrette allows residents, users of a street, or other target populations to be the primary force behind the designs. Several partner organizations were involved in leading this project, known as the Project Team. The City of Salinas Planning and Public Works Staff provided oversight of the event; Local Government Commission (LGC) staff managed the corridor project and were responsible for overseeing community engagement and facilitation; Building Healthy Communities - East Salinas (BHC) took the lead in the outreach to community members; and Raimi + Associates (R+A) is managing the overall AVP and its integration with the East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project. R+A is supported by Nelson\Nygaard’s transportation planning services, PlaceWorks’ urban design services, and Urban Transformation’s business district revitalization services.

Public Input Process
The public input process was comprised of an initial outreach period in the Fall of 2017, followed by a three-day intensive Community Design Charrette on January 23-25, 2018 and temporary parklet installation on January 28, 2018. Outreach for the East Alisal Corridor Complete Street Project was conducted largely by BHC. BHC engaged and trained a team of East Salinas youth, known as the Healthy Transportation Outreach Team, who hosted a series of pop-up community engagement events at local churches, community events, conducted focus group meetings, and created a video summarizing their engagement process and outcomes. BHC disseminated flyers for the community design workshop at AVP events, including AVP working group and steering committee meetings, the AVP Open House and Visioning Workshop on October 26, 2017, Sherwood Elementary School. Additionally, BHC conducted street intercept surveys, surveying residents and advertising for the Community Design Workshop. The City of Salinas included one Spanish and English advertisement each for both the community design workshop and the temporary parklet installation in the City newsletters, advertised on the City website, sent a Spanish and English advertisement via email blast to AVP stakeholders in early 2018, and sent two press releases in early January, 2018. All engagement
activities were conducted in Spanish and flyers and publications were released in both Spanish and English.

In the fall 2017 R+A, Nelson\Nygaard, PlaceWorks, and Urban Transformation interviewed ten Alisal stakeholders on two different dates. Stakeholders included Salinas United Business Association (SUBA), TAMC, MST, City staff, business owners, property owners, and the Monterey County Health Department.

LGC, BHC, and the City of Salinas also participated in the first Salinas Ciclovía event on October 15, 2017.

Prior to the community design charrette, the project team attended three AVP steering committee and/or working group meetings led by residents, organizations active in the community, school representatives, and City staff on September 28, November 16, and December 7, 2017.

These community stakeholders and Ciclovía participants provided input on existing conditions and areas for improvement along the East Alisal Corridor and the Alisal at large. The project team will attend a third AVP meeting to gain feedback on conceptual design plans for the East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project on February 21, 2018.

**Community Design Charrette**

During the three-day Community Design Charrette, the project team held a variety of events to get input from the community on ways to improve safety, livability, and health both along the East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project and within the Alisal neighborhood. The charrette included the following activities:

- Student Pick-Up Audit at El Sausal Middle School
- Student Drop-Off Audit at Sherwood Elementary School
- Stakeholder Interview with El Sausal Middle School & Meeting with Technical Agencies
- Shopper & Business Conversations
- Community Design Workshop
- Open House
- Temporary Parklet Installation

Each activity is described in more detail below.
Staff from LGC and Nelson\Nygaard surveyed student and parent behavior on East Alisal Street during morning student drop-off at Sherwood Elementary School and afterschool pick-up at El Sausal Middle School. Walking, biking, and traffic congestion are at their peak around schools during student drop-off and pick-up times. Behavior during drop-off and pick-up was observed for an approximately one-hour period. Multiple observation points were observed during these audits, including crosswalks, signalized intersections, parking, loading, and bus zones, adjacent parking lots, and automobile traffic in the roadway. There were more concerns associated with El Sausal Middle School than Sherwood Elementary School, which included:

- Students and adults (not associated with the schools) frequently crossed from the North to the South of East Alisal Street without using crosswalks or signalized intersection crosswalks.

- Parents wait for their children at an adjacent parking lot that belonged to Vineyard Christian Fellowship and cause traffic congestion at the intersection of Towt Street and East Alisal Street.

- Parents would double-park along the bus stop only and loading zones along the front of El Sausal Street (North side of East Alisal Street).

- At Sherwood Elementary School, the pedestrian crosswalk on the western side of the signalized intersection at South Wood Street and East Alisal Street does not have two solid lines to clearly indicate a crosswalk.

- The pedestrian crossing signal on the crosswalk at the northern side of the signalized intersection at South Wood Street and East Alisal Street do not have a countdown timer or signal indicating that it is safe to walk.
• Pedestrians were not observed crossing East Alisal street at Wood Street near Sherwood Elementary School where there is not a crosswalk or signalized intersection.

• Parents were more frequently observed walking their children to Sherwood Elementary from the neighborhood to the south or the west of Sherwood Elementary or crossing East Alisal Street using the signalized intersection rather than driving their children to school, thereby resulting in fewer automobile trips and no sign of unsafe congestion along East Alisal Street.

Stakeholder Interview with El Sausal Middle School & Meeting with Technical Agencies
One stakeholder interview and one stakeholder meeting was held during the community design charrette. The stakeholder interview with El Sausal Middle School took place on Tuesday, January 23, 2018 and the stakeholder meeting with Technical Agencies (Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST), Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), City of Salinas Fire Department, City of Salinas Police Department, City of Salinas Public Works Department, City of Salinas Planning Department, and the City of Salinas Recreation and Community Services Department) took place on Thursday, January 25, 2018 at Salinas City Hall. LGC, Beth Alshuler (R+A), and Meghan Weir (Nelson\Nygaard) interviewed an Assistant Principal from El Sausal Middle School. The technical agency stakeholder meeting was attended by all technical agencies invited. The objective of these stakeholder meetings was to get feedback from a representative sample of different interest groups on issues and recommendations for improvements for the East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project and AVP.

Shopper & Business Conversations
On January 23 and 24, 2018, Darlene Rios Drapkin (Urban Transformation) and Monica Guerra (R+A) went to the DC Fashion Mall and other businesses on Williams Road, the Mercado Shopping Center on East Alisal Street and the surrounding blocks, and Hartnell College Alisal Campus to speak with shoppers and business owners and managers. In advance of the charrette Urban Transformations and R+A prepared a standard sets of questions for shoppers and another set of questions for businesses. While this was not a formal survey, we wanted to have a standard set of questions to enable identification of key themes across all participants. We spoke with 32 businesses and 35 shoppers.

The shopper questions sought to gather input from patrons regarding their shopping experience, potential improvements to their experience, where they go for an alternative experience and why. Business questions were asked with either the business owner or their representative and discussed how long the business had been around, reasons for choosing their present location, neighborhood improvements they would like to see, the challenges they face, and how they might work optimally with the City of Salinas.
Community Design Workshop

A Community Design Workshop was held on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 in the Multipurpose Room at Sherwood Elementary School as an opening session for the community design charrette. This workshop was held in Spanish with English-language headsets provided and gathered input for both the East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project and the AVP. The focus of the discussion and feedback centered on East Alisal Street (Front Street to Bardin Road) and the segments of East Market Street and North Sanborn Road that intersect the AVP East Salinas neighborhood.

BHC organized youth performances by the dance group *Folklorico Tonatitos*, which drew in a large crowd of parents; some of whom stayed after the performances and participated in the engagement activities. Approximately 110 community members participated in three community feedback activities. A community member from the AVP steering committee welcomed participants to the workshop and gave an overview of the engagement activities. The performances and introduction were followed by three engagement activities, which were ordered so as to lead attendees through a process where they would first start to think about conditions along the three streets and become familiar with possible complete streets treatments in a small group setting, followed by a measurement of perceptions by voting in a large group setting, and then coming back to small groups to discuss issues and recommend solutions.

The first engagement activity involved small group discussion and attendees were seated at 15 tables with seven to nine participants at each table. Discussions were led by AVP Steering Committee and Working Group community members who received training from BHC to ask facilitate the activities. These questions were printed on large sheets of paper and attendees provided written responses on the paper provided. Images and the name of complete streets treatments were shown along with the questions, which included:

- What makes a street safe for bicycling, walking, and taking the bus? (complete street images included bus shelters, curb extension, buffered bike lanes, crosswalk with median island, crosswalk with pedestrian signal)
What makes an attractive and fun street? (complete street images included wide sidewalk alongside benches, lights, and planters, bulb-outs, parklets with seating, tables, and bike racks, an enhanced crosswalk, and street trees)

What do you want development to look like on our major streets? (complete street images included mixed use with higher- and lower-density development, and townhouses)

The second activity included voting and a brief discussion after each vote was cast, led by LGC staff in Spanish. There were 12 voting prompts, including one prompt each intended to gauge interest in bicycle, bus, and multi-modal facilities; three prompts to gauge pedestrian facilities; two prompts to gauge aesthetics and beautification; and four prompts to gauge interest in different styles of multi-family development. The voting prompts and responses included:

- I would like to see safe bicycle lanes on East Alisal Street – 89% in agreement, 77% strongly agree
- I would like to see comfortable places to wait for the bus – 91% in agreement, 77% strongly agree
- I like pedestrian refuge islands to cross Alisal Street – error with slides prompted presenter to skip recording results for this question
- I like pedestrian-activated signals for crossing – 90% in agreement, 86% strongly agree
- I like wide sidewalks with benches, landscaping, and lighting – 97% in agreement, 90% strongly agree
- I like curb extensions that shorten crossing distance – 94% in agreement, 84% strongly agree
- I like amenities like parklets with chairs – 93% in agreement, 84% strongly agree
- I like streets that support different transportation options – 91% in agreement, 81% strongly agree
- I would like to see more housing above stores in shopping centers (image shows higher density housing fronting a shopping plaza) — 70% in agreement, with 50% strongly agree, 23% disagree, 20% strongly disagree
- I would like to see more housing above stores on streets (image shows medium density housing fronting a street) — Mixed response. 45% in agreement, with 33% strongly agree, 31% disagree, 22% strongly disagree. 24% neutral.
- I would like to see more townhomes (image shows rowhouses somewhat setback from the roadway) — Mixed response. 43% in agreement, with 28% strongly agree, 42% disagree, 17% strongly disagree. 15% neutral.
- I would like to see more housing above stores on streets like this (image shows medium density housing above retail that is immediately fronting the roadway) — Mixed
response. 46% in agreement, with 40% strongly agree, 40% disagree, 24% strongly disagree. 14% neutral.

For the last activity, attendees worked in small groups to mark locations for the addition of complete street treatments and hazards on large aerial maps of East Alisal Street, East Market Street, and North Sanborn Road. The project team created stickers that had different complete streets treatments and street hazards for attendees to add to the aerial maps. Recommendations based on this mapping activity were presented during the Open House, which is discussed below.

Open House
The Open House was held the day after the Community Design Workshop, on January 25, 2018 at the Firehouse Community Center. The Open House was an opportunity to display and get feedback from community members on draft recommendations for the AVP and East Alisal Corridor Complete Streets Project based on pre-charrette and charrette community engagement activities. Community members were asked to provide comments, suggestions, or revisions to recommendations by physically marking up visually-rich posters that consolidated community input up until the Open House, including:

- A sub areas map of the Alisal neighborhoods
- Locations of gateways to distinctive neighborhoods in the Alisal, including opportunity sites for retail and housing development
- Key destinations for community members along the East Alisal corridor and throughout the Alisal community
- An aerial map of consolidated input from the Community Design Workshop on January 24, 2018

The R+A consultant team also provided boards with the same questions and visual prompts that were used for the second voting activity during the Community Design Workshop for additional input. The maps and posters will be used by BHC to get additional input on the consultant team’s preliminary design concepts.
Pop-Up Temporary Installation Parklet
LGC and the City of Salinas collaborated to install a temporary parklet on the North side of Alisal Street near Filice Street in front of Leal’s Bakery on Sunday, January 28, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The parklet included tables, chairs, benches, green outdoor carpet, a children’s activity, and plants and was surrounded by a white picket fence to create a sense of security and place. A “What is a Parklet” poster in Spanish and English with photos of temporary and permanent parklets was on exhibit. The objective of hosting a temporary parklet was to demonstrate to community members and business owners what parklets are and how they can create much needed outdoor space for residents that visit East Alisal Street, contribute to placemaking and beautification, and are safe and enjoyable.
What We Heard

This section provides a summary of key issues and recommendations as a result of community input received from engagement activities during the community design charrette (January 23-25, 2018) and the temporary parklet installation on January 28, 2018. BHC, the City of Salinas, and R+A continued to engage community members using the prompts and engagement materials used during the Community Design Workshop and the Open House in the days following the community design charrette. Outcomes from the engagement activities during and after the community design charrette have been used to inform the recommendations in this report.

Key Recommendations

Key recommendations for East Alisal Street, East Market Street, and North Sanborn Road as a result of the community design charrette and temporary parklet installation include improving perceived and actual safety for all roadway users, enhancing public space, traffic calming, and creating more open space. Specific recommendations include:

- Add more crossings for pedestrians, particularly near El Sausal Middle School and high-activity areas, such as the Swap-Meet and WIC buildings. Protected median island and flashing crossing signal crossings preferred
- Create a sense of place and increased desirability to visit and stay. This includes:
  - More sidewalk and street lighting
  - Local artist installations such as murals and art on utility sheds with a lens sensitive to local diversity and culture
  - Clean sidewalks
  - More consistent design guidelines for buildings, especially for storefronts (i.e., vibrant colors, more inviting (tables, chairs), trees and other types of green landscaping that will be maintained
  - Trash cans and public restrooms
  - More open space, parks, and an after school/community center facility to host a variety of community events, to visit with family and friends, and engage and support youth
- Diverse housing types for multi-generational families and singles (singles include agricultural workers, temporary employees typically housed in substandard housing, other), with sensitivity to potential noise and traffic impacts
- Transportation/parking solutions for agricultural workers
- Improved amenities for bicyclists and buses
  - Bus shelters, including increased service in the East Alisal neighborhood
  - Bicycle lanes (preferably protected), particularly along East Alisal Street due East of North Sanborn Road that connect residents to the Hartnell College Campus on East Alisal Street and Bardin Road
  - Bicycle racks
- Traffic calming features, particularly along North Sanborn Road and East Alisal Street
- A majority of patrons visiting businesses along East Alisal Street travel by car. There are mixed feelings regarding whether there is sufficient parking supply for residents.
Businesses and patrons prefer cultural authenticity, low prices, ease of access, and improved safety (lighting, art, public outdoor space, colorful and better signage). Business owners believe these issues could be resolved with improved communications with the City.