How to Amend the Salinas General Plan

CITY OF SALINAS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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What is the Salinas General Plan?

The Salinas General Plan is the City's comprehensive, long-range plan for the orderly growth and development of Salinas. It establishes policies and maps that guide future land use, development, circulation, housing, public facilities, conservation, and other matters affecting the community.

The City's zoning and subdivision regulations implement the General Plan and must be consistent with its policies and land use designations.

What is a General Plan Amendment?

A **General Plan Amendment (GPA)** is a change to the adopted General Plan.

An amendment may involve:

- A change to the General Plan Land Use Map;
- A change to the text or policies of the General Plan; or
- Both a map and text amendment.

A General Plan Amendment may be necessary when a proposed project or requested zoning designation is not consistent with the existing General Plan.

Who May Initiate a General Plan Amendment?

A General Plan Amendment may be initiated in accordance with the Salinas Zoning Code.

Applicants proposing an amendment affecting private property should contact the Current Planning Division before submitting an application to discuss the proposed amendment and determine what applications, plans, studies, and supporting information will be required.

What Findings are Required?

Before approving a General Plan Amendment, the City Council must make the findings required by the Salinas Zoning Code.

These generally address whether the proposed amendment:

- Is internally consistent with the General Plan;
- Would adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare;
- Is consistent with applicable State law; and
- Would result in a logical and orderly pattern of development.

The specific findings applicable to a proposed amendment should be evaluated as part of the application review.

What is the Process for Amending the General Plan?

The following steps generally apply:

01 **Step 1 – Contact the Current Planning Division**

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the proposed General Plan Amendment with Planning staff before submitting an application. Staff can identify applicable application requirements and whether related land use entitlements may also be necessary.

02 **Step 2 – Prepare the Application**

Complete the applicable Development Review Application and provide the required plans, maps, project description, and supporting information.

For a General Plan Map Amendment, the application should clearly identify the existing and proposed General Plan land use designations and the area affected by the proposed change.

For a General Plan Text Amendment, the application should clearly identify the existing language and proposed revisions.

03 **Step 3 – Submit the Application**

Submit the completed application, applicable filing fees, plans, maps, and supporting documents to the Current Planning Division.

04 Step 4 – Application Review

The Current Planning Division will review the application for completeness and coordinate review with other City departments and outside agencies, as applicable.

Additional information, plans, reports, or studies may be required to evaluate the proposed amendment.

05 Step 5 – Environmental Review

The proposed General Plan Amendment will be reviewed in accordance with the **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**.

Depending on the project and its potential environmental effects, the amendment may qualify for an exemption or may require preparation of the appropriate environmental document.

06 Step 6 – Project Review and Revisions

Following review of the application and environmental information, the City may require revisions or additional information before the application proceeds to public hearings.

07 Step 7 – Planning Commission Public Hearing

The Planning Commission will conduct a noticed public hearing to consider the proposed General Plan Amendment.

The Planning Commission considers the application, environmental review, staff recommendation, and public testimony and forwards a recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission is required to review a General Plan amendment before its adoption by the City Council.

08 Step 8 – City Council Public Hearing

The City Council will conduct a noticed public hearing to consider the proposed General Plan Amendment and the Planning Commission's recommendation.

The City Council is the final decision-making authority for a General Plan Amendment and may approve, approve with modifications, or deny the proposed amendment.

How Often Can the General Plan Be Amended?

General Plan Amendments are subject to the frequency limitations established by **California Government Code Section 65358** and Section 37-60.900 of the Salinas Zoning Code.

State law generally limits mandatory elements of the General Plan to **four amendments per calendar year**, subject to statutory exceptions. Multiple changes may be considered together as part of a single amendment. The City should determine whether a proposed amendment is subject to an exception or must be included within one of the permitted amendment cycles.

Can Other Applications Be Processed at the Same Time?

Yes. Related applications may generally be processed concurrently with a General Plan Amendment.

Depending on the project, concurrent applications may include:

- Rezone or Zoning Code Amendment;
- Specific Plan or Specific Plan Amendment;
- Planned Unit Development Permit;
- Conditional Use Permit;
- Tentative Map or Parcel Map; and
- Other applicable Development Review applications.

Processing related applications concurrently can help ensure that the General Plan, zoning, subdivision, and project approvals are considered together.

When is a Rezone Also Required?

A General Plan Amendment does not automatically change the zoning designation of a property.

If the proposed General Plan designation is inconsistent with the property's existing zoning, a **Rezone** may also be required so that the zoning is consistent with the amended General Plan.

The Zoning Code expressly identifies implementation of General Plan policies as one of its purposes.

How to Obtain More Information

For additional information regarding General Plan Amendments, contact:

CITY OF SALINAS
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Refer to **Article VI, Division 12 – General Plan Amendments (Sections 37-60.880 through 37-60.950)** of the Salinas Zoning Code for current requirements