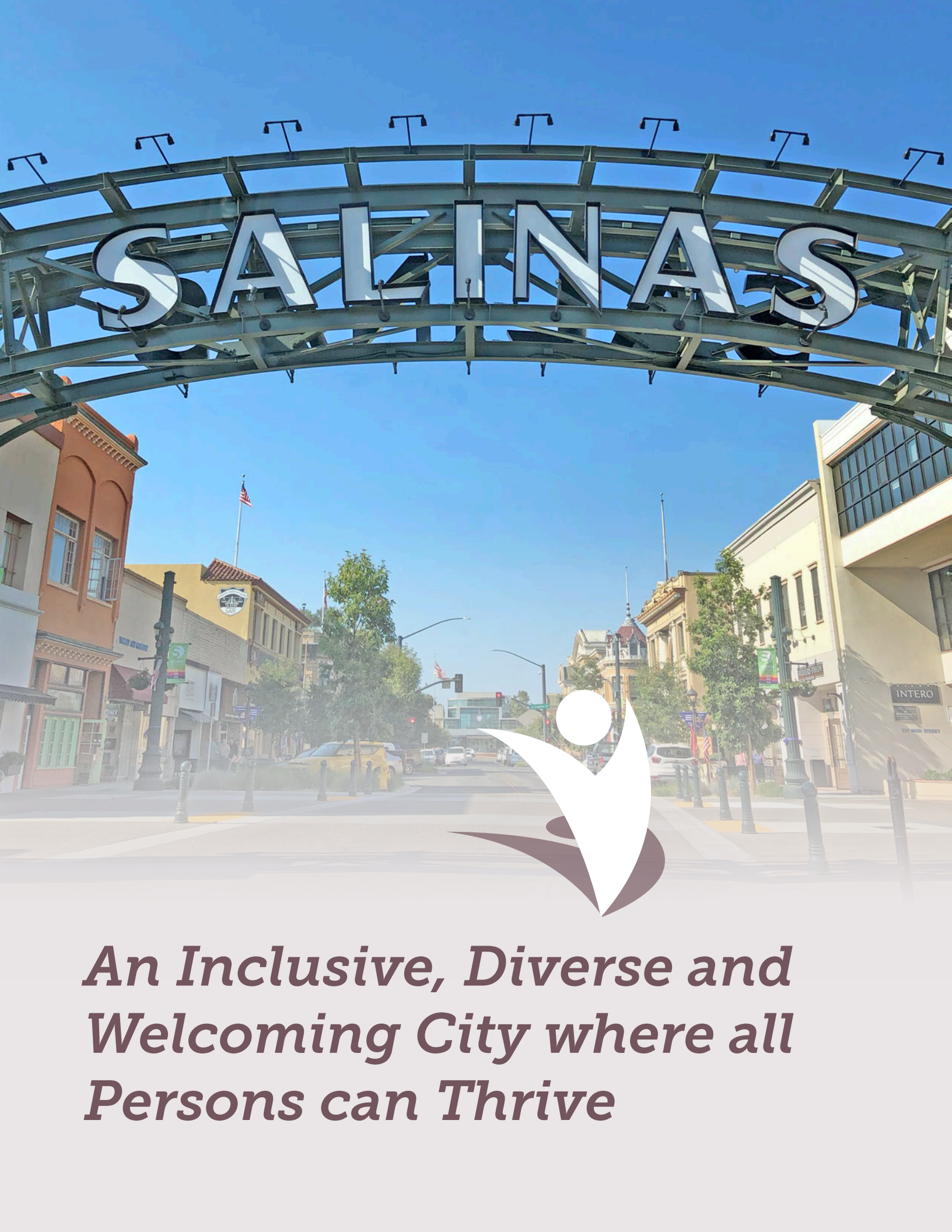




Existing Conditions Report

for the City of Salinas | **JULY 2023**



An Inclusive, Diverse and Welcoming City where all Persons can Thrive

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01

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Background and Context

By law, General Plans are required in California to guide future development, investment, and programs based on the community's vision. *Visión Salinas 2040* is the first comprehensive update to the City of Salinas General Plan since 2002. This update will also include a new Environmental Justice Element, the city's first Climate Action Plan, and an update of the Zoning Code.

Salinas has grown in both size and population since the current General Plan was created. New State laws have also changed the planning landscape, requiring local governments to address the housing crisis, climate change, the global pandemic, and economic recession. The General Plan update comes at a crucial moment for the city and is an opportunity to evaluate the community's current housing needs; promote small business development; enhance public spaces, parks, and recreation; and make Salinas more sustainable. The goals, policies, and actions of the General Plan will reflect the voice of the community and help determine City budget and priorities. In short, the General Plan update will affect where people live, work, and play, how they get around, and much more.

Purpose and Overview

This report is a description and analysis of Salinas—its residents, arts and culture, housing and economic development, infrastructure and services, natural environment, and current hazards. It identifies existing strengths and weaknesses and suggests opportunities for future improvement. The report provides a framework for understanding the city, inform community discussions, and serve as technical background for the General Plan update.

The report includes some key information to compare Salinas to the greater region to highlight

the city's unique characteristics. Please note that the descriptions and analyses in this report are valid as of its publication date in 2023. While some information will remain valid over time, such as seismic hazards and biological resources, other information, like existing land use development and traffic conditions, may change frequently.

Recent Plans and Studies

The General Plan update will also build off extensive recent community planning efforts. Between 2015 and 2022, Salinas completed over a dozen citywide and district plans and community engagement projects, which will contribute to the General Plan update. These plans include:

- Downtown Vibrancy Plan (2015)
- Housing Element Update (2015)
- Consolidated Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2015)
- Economic Development Element (2017)
- Urban Greening Plan (2017)
- Salinas and Pajaro Valley Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan (2018)
- *Visión Salinas* Guiding Principles (2018)
- East Alisal Street Corridor Plan (2019)
- Parks, Recreation, and Libraries Master Plan (2019)
- Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (2019)
- Alisal Vibrancy Plan (2019)
- Chinatown Revitalization Plan (2019)
- West Area Specific Plan (2019)
- Public Art Master Plan (2020)
- Central Area Specific Plan (2020)
- Consolidated Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2020)
- Vision Zero Action Plan (2021)
- Monterey County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022)
- Safe Routes to School Plan (2022)



Community members participate in an Alisal Vibrancy Plan Pop-up event at Ciclovía, 2018.

Visión Salinas: Core Value and Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles and Core Value were developed through extensive engagement with residents that included four stakeholder meetings, 15 pop-up events, and a community-wide survey.

Overarching Core Value:

An Inclusive, Diverse and Welcoming City Where All Persons Can Thrive.

Salinas believes that an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming environment is essential to developing and sustaining a livable city.

This means that the City’s decisions, policies, and practices are rooted in the principles of social equity and sustainability so that the fundamental needs of all people are met regardless of their race, color, ethnicity, age, religion or beliefs, income or where they live, language, marital status, gender identity or sexual orientation, place of birth, citizenship status, health, or disability. This Overarching Core Value is embedded in each of the following Guiding Principles.





Pop-up outreach at Take it Outside! event, 2017.



Economic Prosperity, Equity, and Diversity:

A city where all persons have equitable access to prosperity through a diversified economy, jobs, and educational and training opportunities.



Housing Opportunities for All:

A city with a diversity of housing types and affordability levels for its residents.



Healthy and Safe Community:

A city that strives to protect and improve the personal safety, health, and welfare of the people who live, work, and visit.



Youth are the Future:

A city where youth flourish and have equitable access to education, recreation, and a healthy urban environment.



Collaborative, Inclusive, and Engaged Decision-Making:

A transparent and responsive City government driven by the voices of a participatory community.



Livable and Sustainable Community:

A well-planned city with a thriving community core and commercial corridors, excellent infrastructure (streets, sewers, parks, trees and open spaces, libraries, and community facilities, etc.) that meet the unique and changing needs of the community.



Connectivity, Access, and Mobility:

An active city with a well-connected, eco-friendly network of multi-modal streets, bikeways, greenways and trails, and effective public transportation options.



A Community to Celebrate:

A city that celebrates, promotes, preserves, and honors the diversity, history, art, and culture of its community.

02

Salinas Community



Salinas Community

Our City

Salinas is one of 12 incorporated cities of Monterey County and is in the northeast portion of the county (see Figure 1). The city encompasses approximately 23.5 square miles and is the most populated city in the county.

The area's original inhabitants were Native Americans known as the Costanoan or Ohlone people who were hunter-gatherers and spoke the Costanoan language. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1822, settlers began arriving in Salinas, Spanish for "salt marsh."

Salinas became the county seat in 1872 and was incorporated as a city in 1874. In the mid-1800s, the city's agricultural industry began to grow, and today the area is known as the "Salad Bowl of the World" for its vibrant agriculture industry that supplies 80 percent of the country's lettuce and artichokes, along with many other crops. Although agriculture forms the economic base for the city, the economy has diversified substantially as Salinas is the main business, governmental, and industrial center of the region.



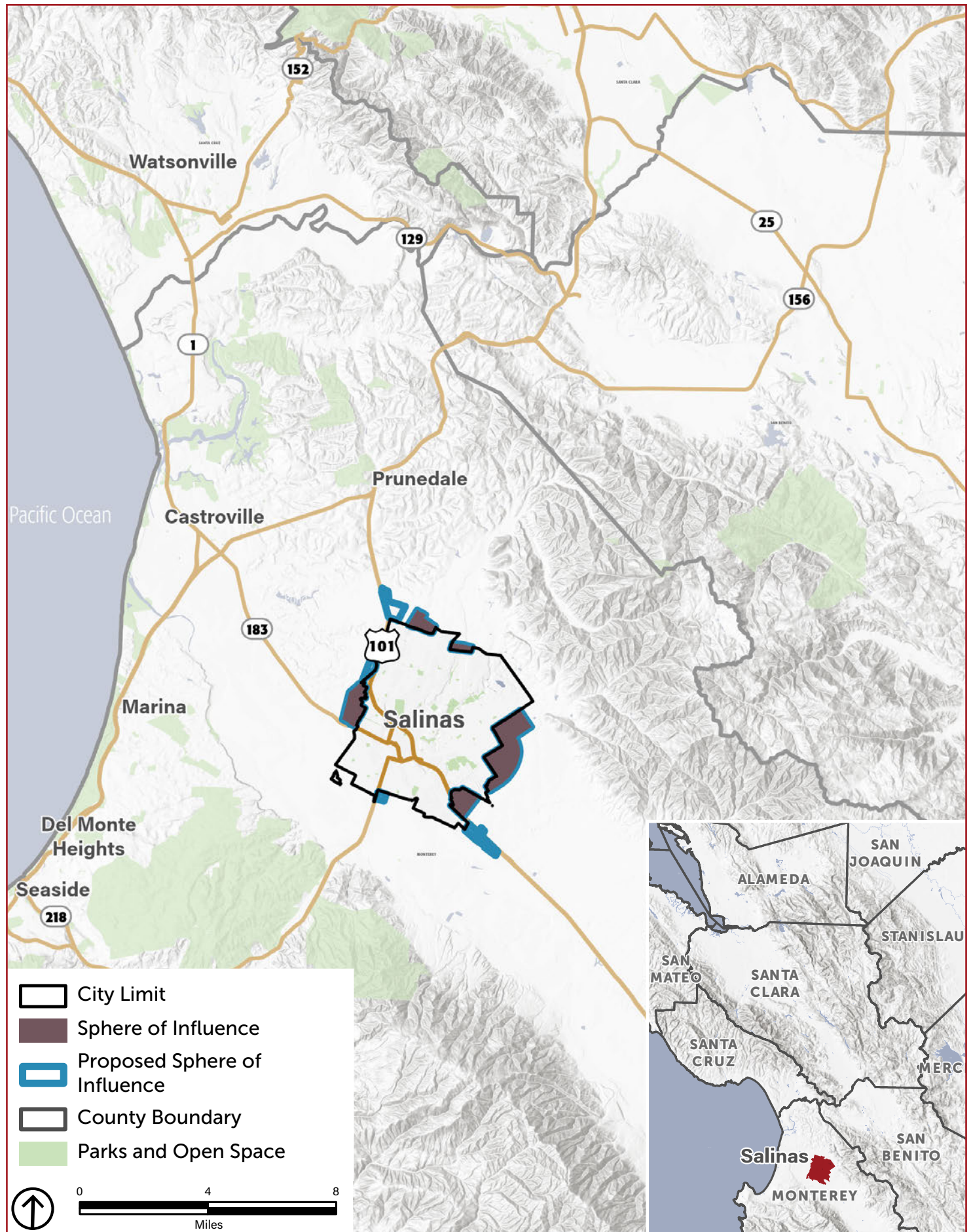
Salinas Community Assets

- A diverse population brings a mix of cultures and heritage to Salinas.
- Salinas has a younger median age than Monterey County and California.

Salinas Community Challenges

- A large portion of residents speak Spanish at home. Any community engagement or social services must be accessible to all residents.
- Salinas' growing population needs housing, jobs, and services that match demand.

Figure 1. Regional Vicinity of City of Salinas and Sphere of Influence



Data Source: PlaceWorks, 2021; City of Salinas, 2021.

Population



Salinas has grown from a small community of under 14,000 residents in 1940 to nearly 163,000 in 2022, making it the largest city in Monterey County. By 2040, Salinas' population is expected to be over 175,000 (Figure 2). Projections from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) show that Salinas will experience a growth rate of approximately 12 percent between 2015 and 2045. The growth projections estimate that the number of housing units will increase by 24 percent, with jobs projected to increase by 17 percent over this time period, which could help alleviate the current housing shortage in Salinas. It may also help limit the amount of people that need to commute into Salinas for work, which helps reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from vehicles.

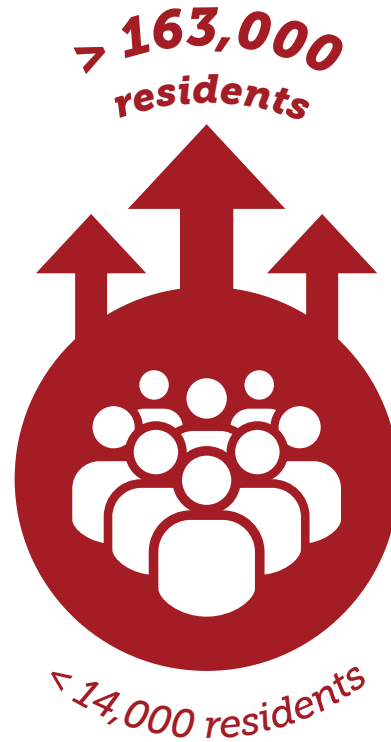
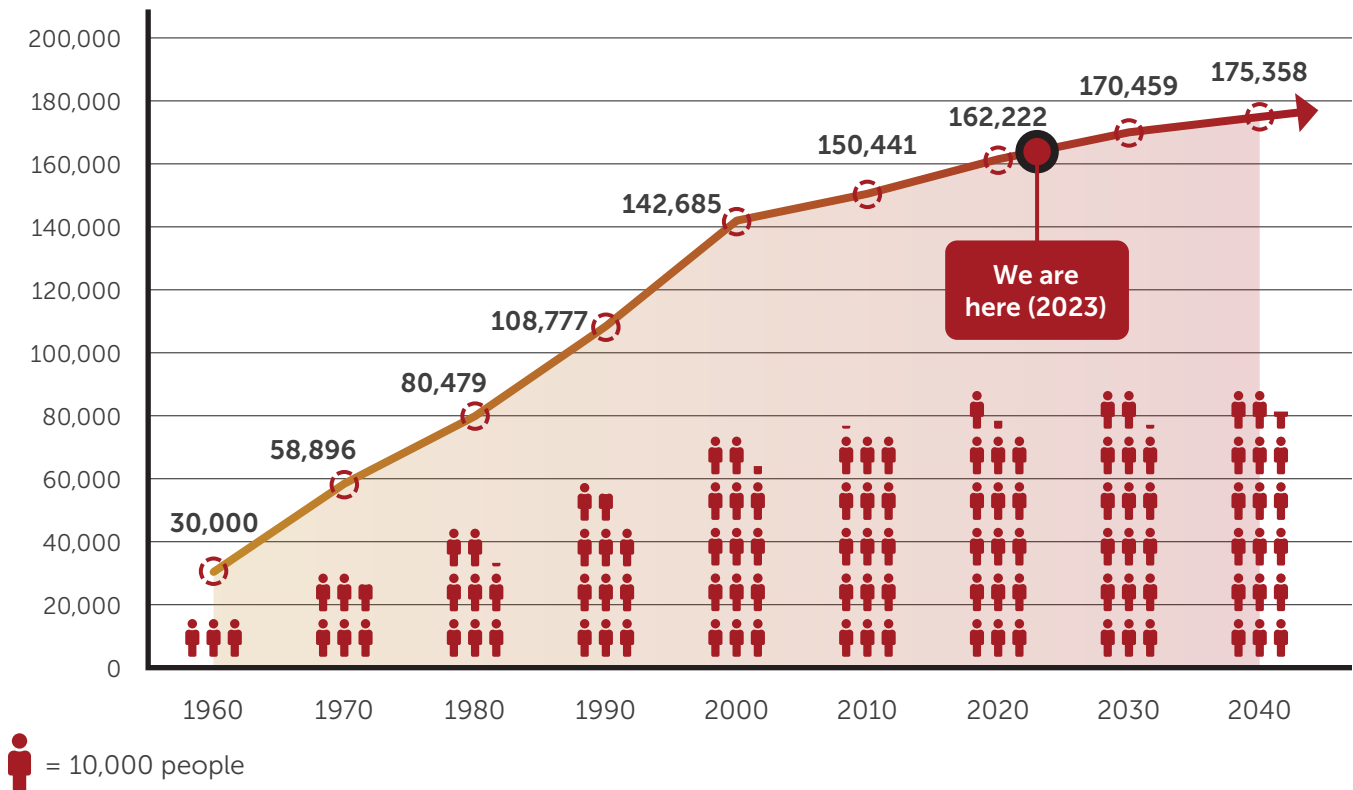


Figure 2. Population Growth in Salinas, 1960 - 2040



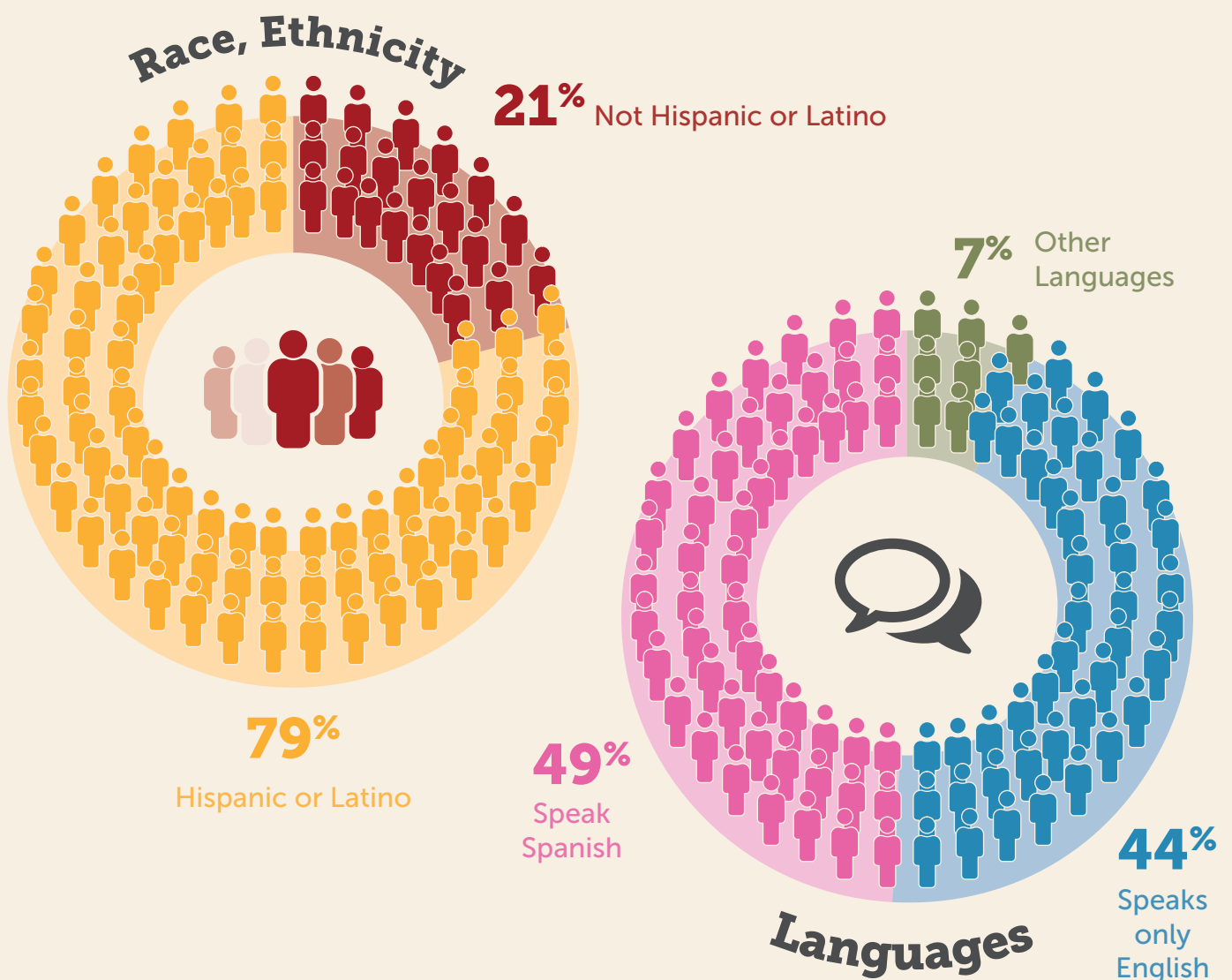
Data Source: AMBAG 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, California Department of Finance.

Race and Ethnicity

Salinas is a majority-minority city, which means that an ethnic or racial minority group make up a majority of the local population. Nearly 80 percent of residents identified as Hispanic or Latino in 2020 (Figure 3), which is more than the neighboring jurisdictions of the city of Monterey (17 percent) and Monterey County (59 percent). As shown in Figure 3, nearly half (49 percent) of Salinas residents speak Spanish at home.



Figure 3. Race, Ethnicity, and Language in Salinas





Take it Outside, 2019.

Age

Salinas has a higher proportion of young residents than California and Monterey County, with a median age of 31 years, compared with the median age of 36.7 in California and 34.7 in Monterey County (see Figure 4). This presents an opportunity to plan a community for all ages where residents of Salinas can work, learn, play, and age within their local community.

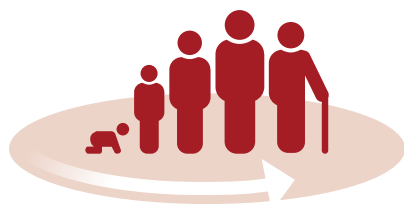
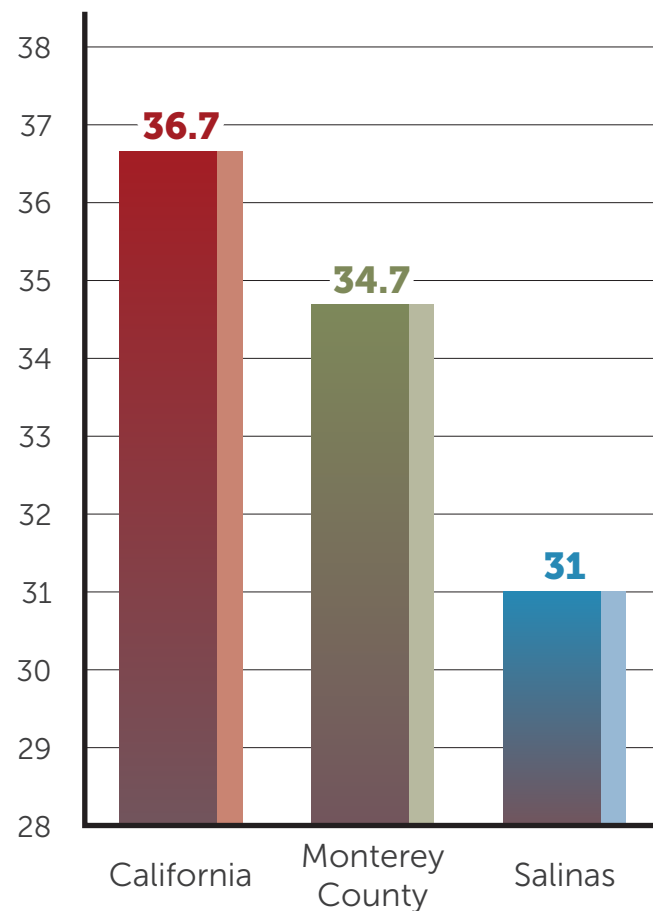


Figure 4. Median Age



Data Source: 2020 American Community Survey, 5 year estimates.

03

Built Environment

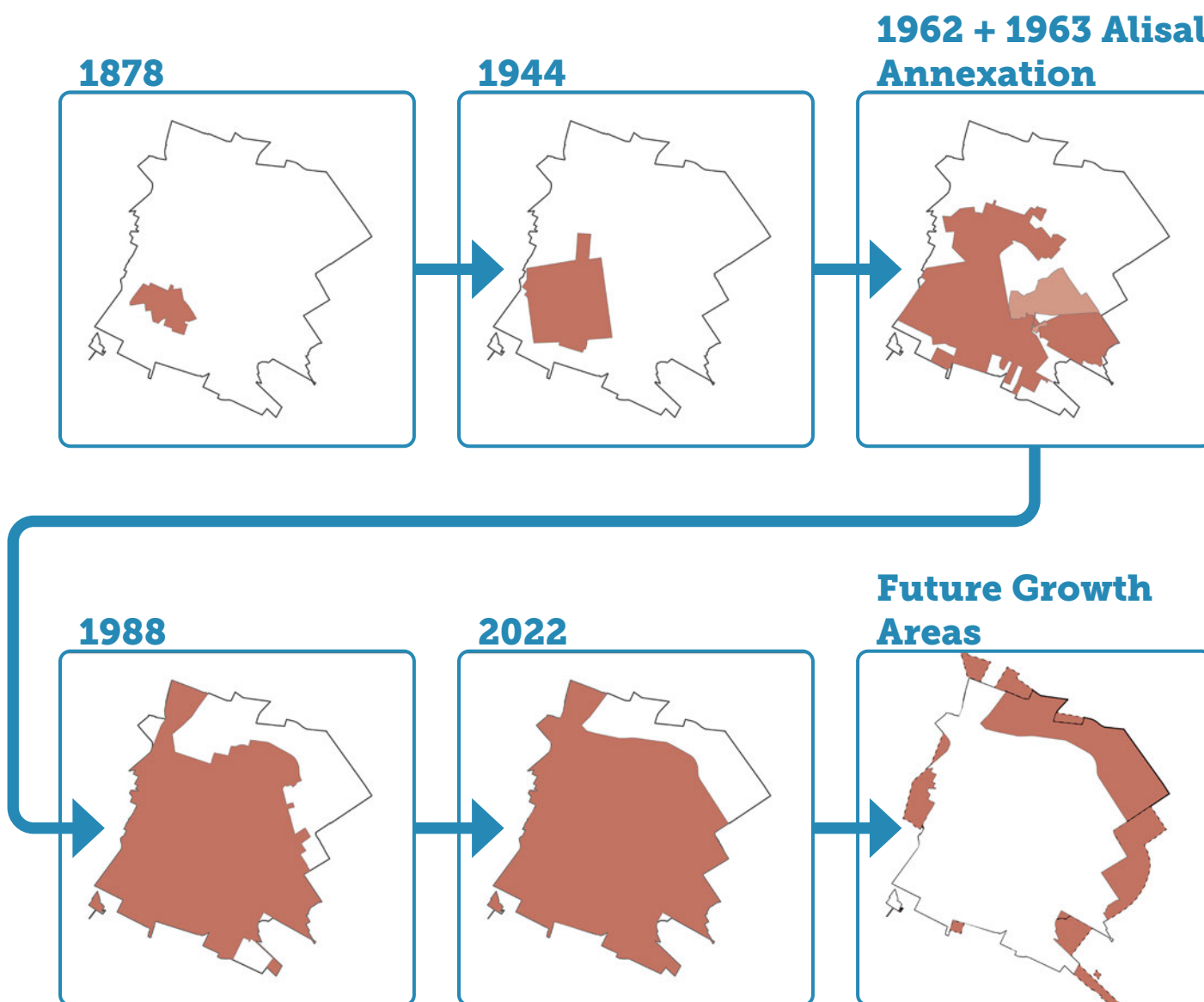


Built Environment

Overview

Since its incorporation in 1874, Salinas has grown to a community of approximately 23.5 square miles (Figure 5) with about 163,000 residents. Today, Salinas is characterized as a compact urban community within a unique agricultural setting. Visión Salinas aims to align future land uses with the needs of the community, including affordable housing, open space protection, new high-quality jobs, and safe transportation options. Additionally, the City seeks to balance growth with environmental, infrastructure, and market constraints.

Figure 5. Salinas Urban Growth From 1878



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2022.

Land Use

Overview

The Land Use Element of the General Plan maps out how and where land will be developed and used in the future. The majority of land in Salinas is designated for residential use, which includes mostly single-family homes and some multifamily housing. As agriculture is important to the community identity and economy, there are also large portions of land designated for agricultural use. As shown in Figure 6, other land uses include commercial, industrial, mixed-use, parks and open space, and public or institutional, which often refers to government buildings or public facilities.

Land Use Assets

- Strong retail corridors and centers, including North and South Main Street, the Alisal, Auto Center, Northridge Mall, and Davis Road provide shopping opportunities for residents and visitors as well as economic development opportunities for business-owners.
- Underutilized commercial properties present potential for new mixed-use development.
- Two Specific Plans were approved for the Future Growth Area north of Boronda Road for over 7,400 housing units, new parks and schools, and mixed-use/commercial space.

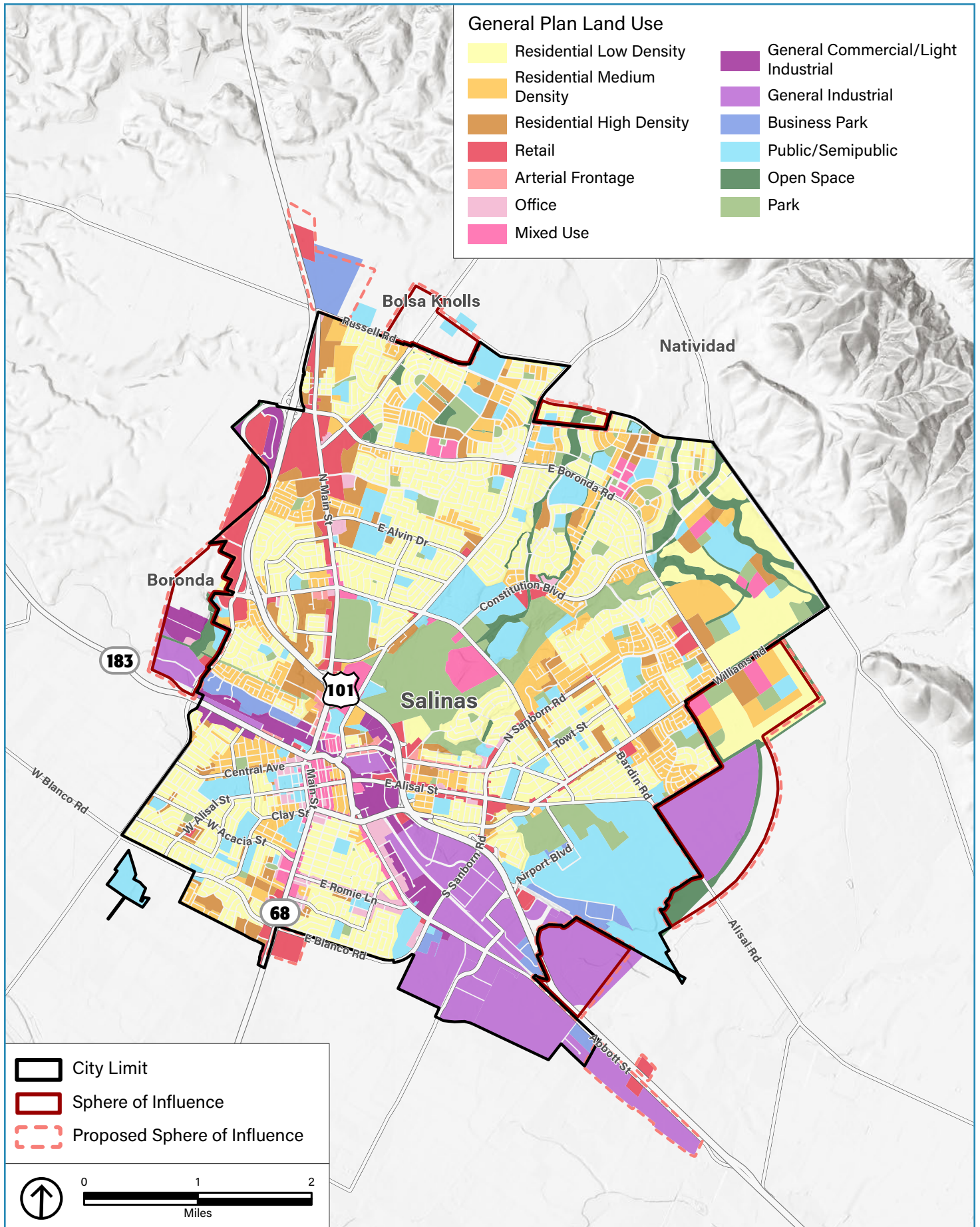
Land Use Challenges

- With limited space, Salinas must balance the needs for additional space by competing uses (e.g., housing, parks, retail, office).
- Most existing development is limited to a single use in one- or two-story buildings, making it challenging to provide room for all in a growing city.
- Limited vacant lots along major streets are available for infill development because of challenges like flood risks, difficult terrain, or environmental concerns.



Romie Lane converted homes to business.

Figure 6. Current General Plan Land Use



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021.

Distribution of Land Uses



46%

Housing



13%

Parks & Open Space



15%

Schools & Government



15%

Business Park & Industrial



8%

Retail & Office



3%

Mixed Use

Figure 7 . How Salinas' Land Uses are Distributed
(Percentage of Total Area)

Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021.



Multifamily Housing, Moon Gate Plaza.

Future Development and Growth

The City has two designations for areas that will experience future development. Future Growth Areas are outside city limits and consist of land that is currently designated for agricultural production. These areas would be designed with a commercial or mixed-use center and surrounding residential neighborhoods with pedestrian and bicycle connections between areas. Focused Growth Areas are inside city limits in existing urban areas where additional growth and/or redevelopment and revitalization would be appropriate and beneficial to the community. These areas would be developed in a manner compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods to ensure continuity with the existing neighborhood character.

Although only 3 percent of Salinas is currently designated as mixed-use development, Salinas' strong existing retail corridors and low vacancy rates for residential, commercial, and industrial buildings indicate that there is potential for future rezoning and redevelopment with increased density. There are also a limited number of vacant properties in the city,

which presents a challenge when trying to balance competing development needs for additional space. However, the lack of vacant land could be an opportunity for Salinas to explore creative programs to encourage and incentivize infill development on underutilized properties in the existing urban areas of the city and promote development that goes up and not out to help conserve valuable agricultural land.



Only 3 percent of Salinas' land is currently designated for mixed-use development.

Housing

Overview

Housing is consistently the number one subject in community planning efforts and is a critical topic in the General Plan. The Housing Element is one of several required General Plan elements and is often prepared separately from a comprehensive General Plan update to meet legal requirements and statutory deadlines. The State requires each city and county to prepare a Housing Element to address existing and future housing needs for all income levels.



La Goría Apartments Courtyard.



Multifamily Housing, Riker Street Apartments.

Housing Assets

- Each year, the City manages millions of dollars in federal housing grants (e.g., Community Development Building Grant [CDBG], Emergency Solutions Grant [ESG], and HOME Investment Partnerships Program) and actively pursues State and other funding sources, such as Project Homekey and California Emergency Solutions Grants to support affordable housing.
- In 2023, the City applied for the “Prohousing Designation” Program through the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which would allow the City to apply for additional grant funding for housing programs.
- The City was allocated \$15.6 million through the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. As of January 2023, approximately 1,000 Salinas households received financial assistance through this program.
- In 2019, Salinas adopted an ordinance to encourage accessory dwelling unit (ADU) construction by waiving development impact fees for a five-year period and providing a selection of pre-approved ADU plans for property owners.
- More than 8,000 new housing units were approved through the West Area (adopted 2019) and Central Area (adopted 2020) Specific Plans.
- The City has built collaborative relationships with quality nonprofit developers, such as Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association (CHISPA), MidPen Housing, and the Monterey County Housing Authority Development Corporation (HDC) to increase affordable housing development.

Housing Challenges

- Housing production and income growth have not kept pace with population growth.
- Renters and homeowners face housing cost burdens.
- High housing costs contribute to overcrowding and homelessness.
- Rising construction costs slow the development of new housing.

Household Characteristics and Tenure

Housing tenure refers to whether a housing unit is owned or rented. Communities need to have an adequate supply of units available both for rent and for sale to accommodate a range of households with varying incomes, family sizes, composition, and lifestyles. Approximately 48 percent of Salinas households were owner-occupied and 52 percent are renter-occupied as of 2020 (Figure 8).

Households in Salinas tend to be relatively large, with three to four people per home making up the largest proportion of both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units. Households of five or more people represent the second-largest share of households by size, and that share has grown in the last decade. During the same period, the share of one-person and two-person households has decreased. Over three-fourths of households in Salinas are family homes (80 percent) and many are multigenerational. About 42 percent of all households are families with children, and nearly a third of households have at least one elderly member (60+ years).



Single Family Homes.

Housing Stock and Conditions

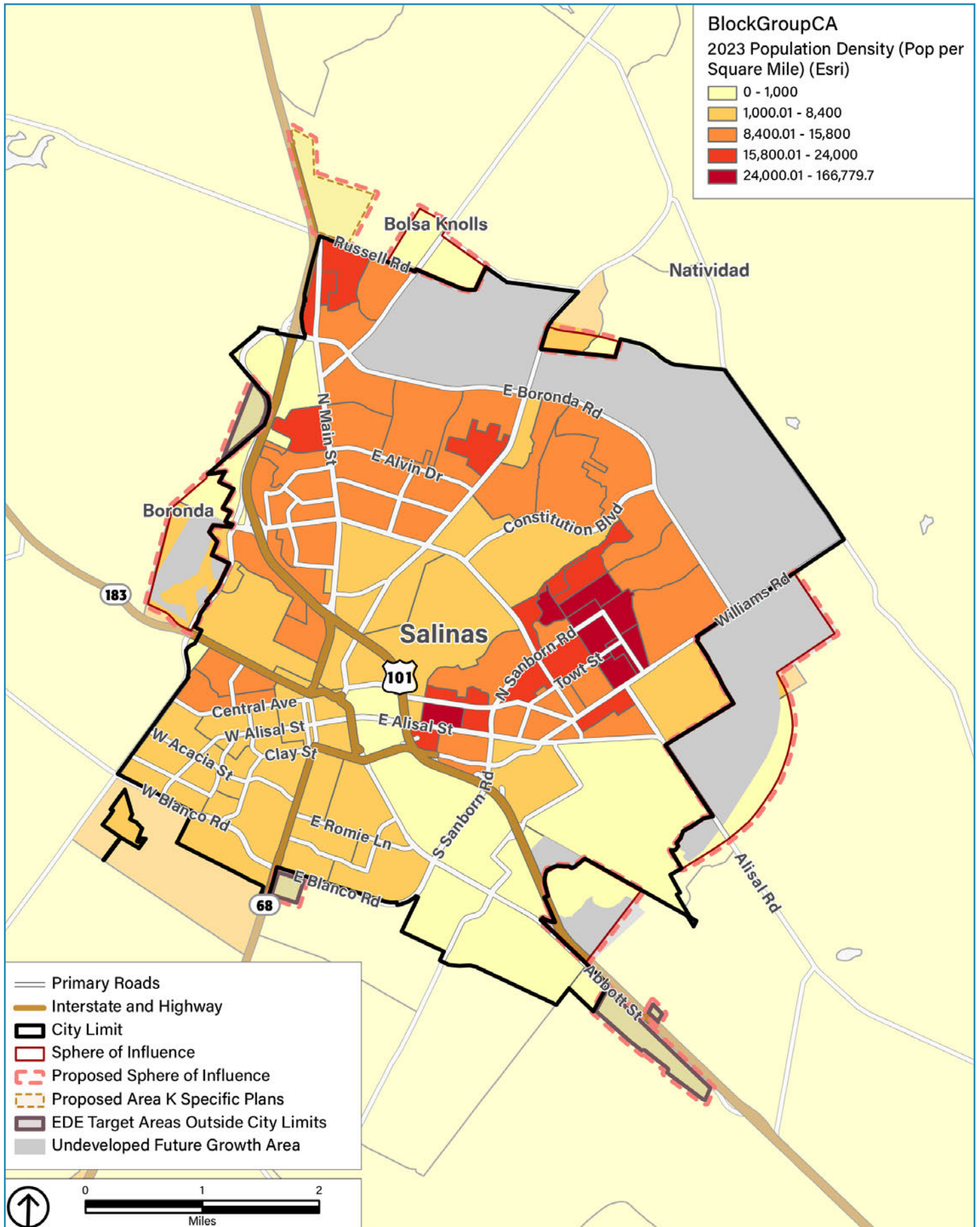
Approximately 60 percent of the housing stock in Salinas is single-family homes and approximately 35 percent is multifamily housing. Mobile homes and other housing unit types make up the remaining portion (approximately 5 percent) of housing in the city. Most homes (60 percent) in Salinas were built before 1980, with approximately 22 percent built before 1960. The age of housing is often an indicator of overall housing conditions. Typically, housing that is 30 years or older may need repairs based on the life of materials. Housing over 50 years old is considered aged and is more likely to need major repairs. By 2030, the majority of housing units throughout the city will likely need major repairs, which may cause financial hardships for some homeowners.



Figure 8: Salinas Housing Tenure, 2020

Data Source: 2020 American Community Survey, 5 year estimates.

Figure 9. Population Density



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2021; 2021 American Community Survey, 5 year estimates.

Density and Overcrowding

Although low-density, single-family housing is the main land use type in Salinas, the city has a relatively high average population density of approximately 7,000 people per square mile (Figure 9). This population density is similar to the medium/high-density urban conditions that are typical of much larger cities, such as Anaheim, California; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Buffalo, NY. It is also nearly three times the density of the city of Monterey. The high-density rates are paired with challenges of overcrowding in part due to large family sizes, multigenerational households, and high housing costs (Figure 10). Overcrowding is defined as a home with more than one occupant per room on average. In Salinas, approximately 19 percent of all housing units are considered overcrowded, compared to 14 percent of units in Monterey County as a whole.

Housing Costs

High housing costs and lower wages make Salinas unaffordable for many households. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “cost-burdened” families or households as those who spend more than 30

percent of their income on housing. Oftentimes, cost-burdened families may have difficulty affording other necessities, such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. In Salinas, approximately 30 percent of homeowners and 43 percent of renters are considered cost-burdened (Figure 11).

Recent Housing Efforts

To proactively address these challenges, the City of Salinas has invested in affordable housing development, approved transitional housing projects, provided rental assistance, and eliminated development impact fees for accessory dwelling unit (ADU) construction as ways to encourage housing production. Through the Visión Salinas 2040 public engagement process, residents also expressed a desire to see more “missing middle” housing, such as duplexes, rowhomes, or courtyard apartments, as well as more affordable housing and mixed-use development that includes housing. This valuable community feedback provides an opportunity for Salinas to review existing housing policies and find creative ways to increase the development of different housing types for all income levels.



ADUs can help provide more housing in existing neighborhoods.



Through Project Homekey, the City received \$9.2 million to acquire the Good Nite Inn and transform it to 101 units of permanent supportive housing.

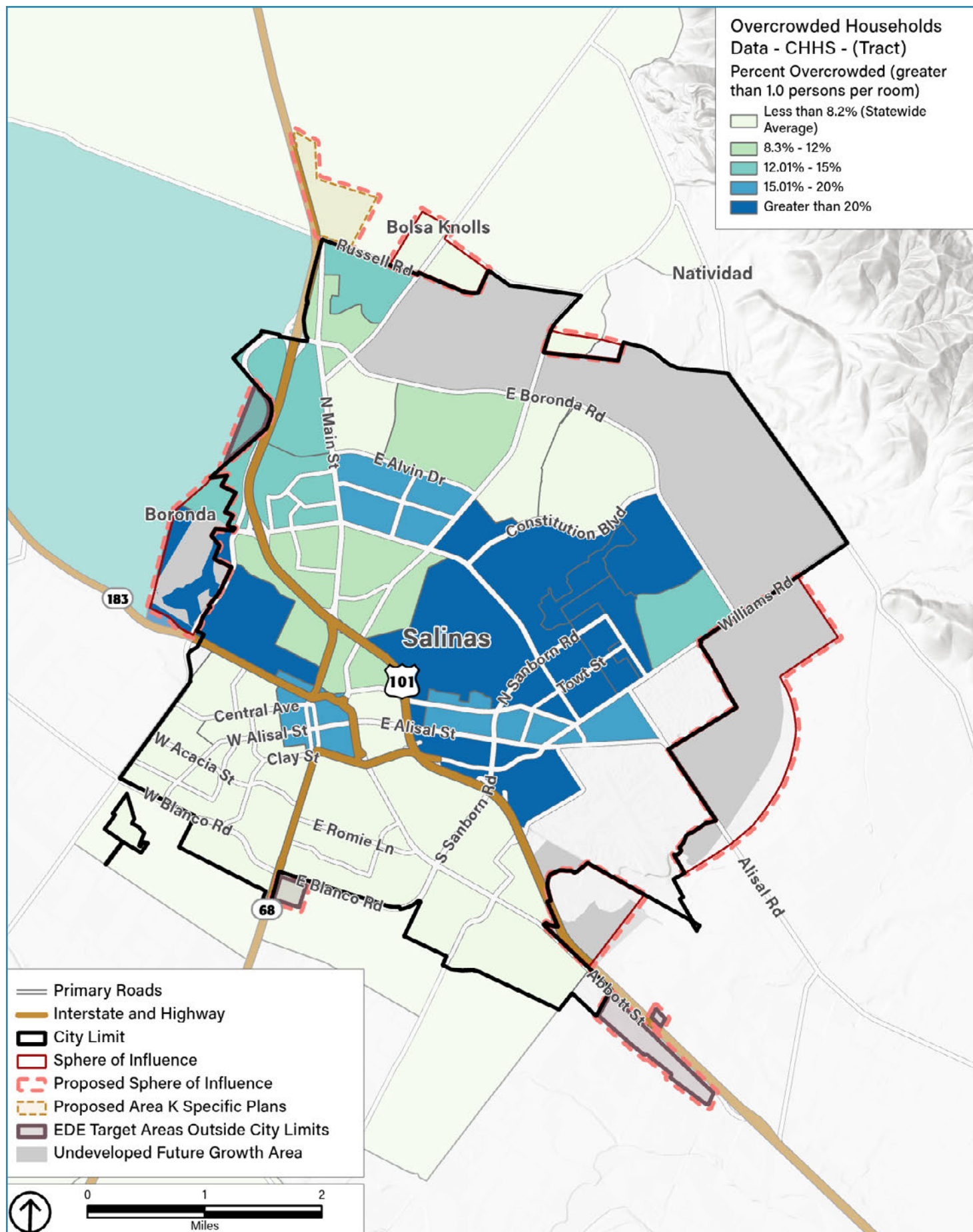


\$666,250

-Median home price November 2021

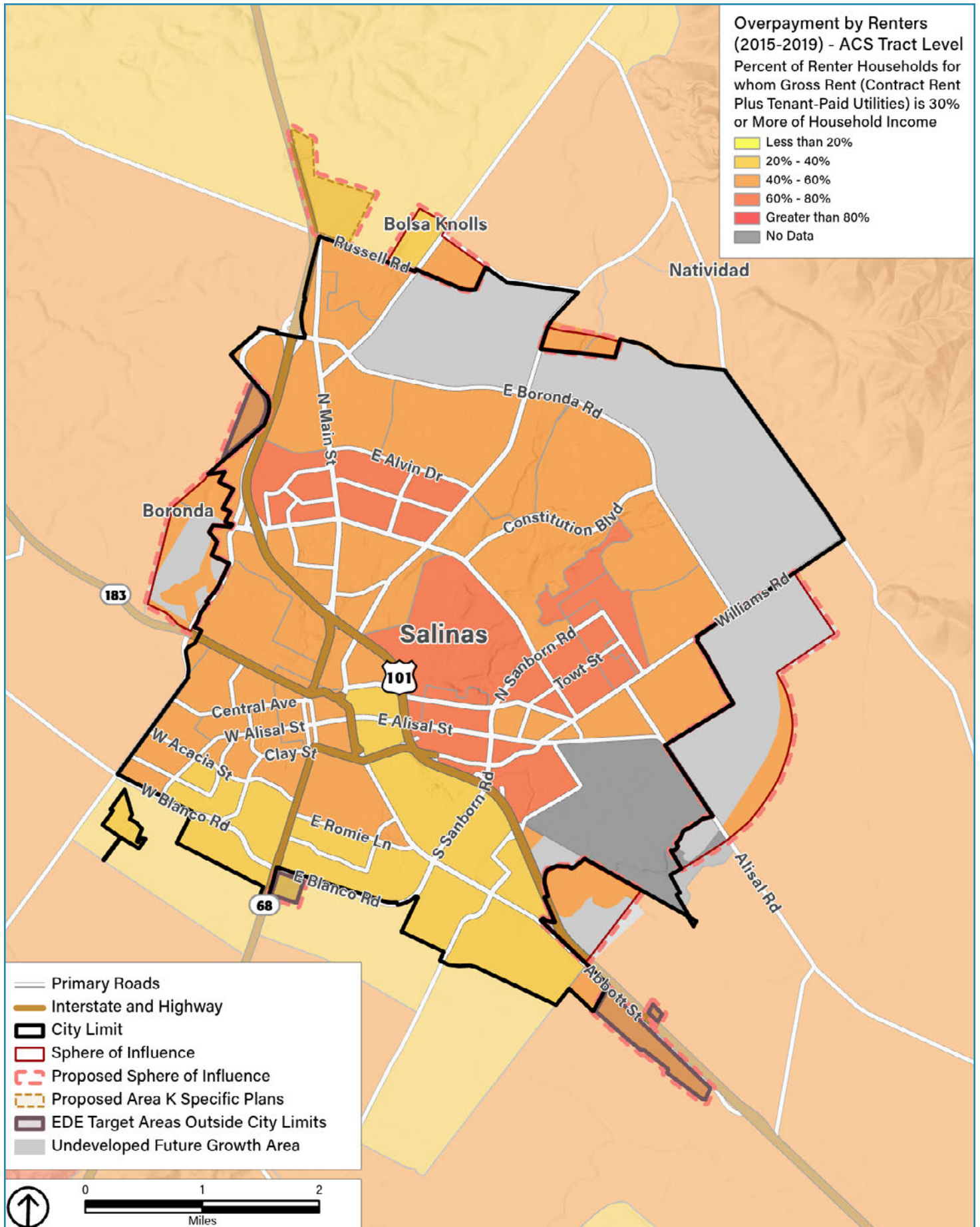
Data Source: 2019 American Community Survey, DQNews.com

Figure 10. Overcrowding in Salinas



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2021; California Health and Human Services, 2020.

Figure 11. Overpayment by Renters in Salinas



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2021; 2019 American Community Survey, 5 year estimates.

Circulation

Overview

Circulation refers to the way residents or visitors move throughout the city, whether by cars or alternative modes such as buses, and bicycles, and it includes the network that supports each transportation mode. The City of Salinas is a regional transportation hub and therefore hosts regional bus and rail lines, and major highways. The City also has a local network of bus lines, roads, and bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

Circulation Assets

- The Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center offers the only Amtrak rail services in Monterey County and is within walking distance to the Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) bus station and downtown employment centers.
- The City's Vision Zero Program and Plan was adopted in 2020. The plan has a goal of reducing traffic-related injuries and fatalities and proposes policies to improve safety for all users by implementing "complete streets" design principles.
- The Downtown Complete Streets project on West Alisal Street (from Blanco Street to Front Street) was completed in 2021 to create a safer street for all – vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists alike.
- The City's local traffic mitigation impact fee distributes the cost of transportation projects and improvements across new developments.
- In partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Ecology Action, the City of Salinas is developing a Safe Routes to School plan to identify and alleviate transportation barriers to safe access to all K-12 public schools.

Circulation Challenges

- The City lacks multimodal transportation options that are safe and convenient for residents to get to work, school, shopping, or other services.
- It is difficult to maintain and modernize infrastructure for a rapidly growing population.
- The City lacks traffic signal synchronization, which results in traffic congestion, especially during peak commute hours.
- Homes are overcrowded, resulting in limited street parking in neighborhoods.





MST is a key transportation partner and service provider in Salinas.

Regional Transportation

The City of Salinas serves as a regional transportation hub for the Monterey Bay area. Regional rail and bus services are provided by Amtrak and MST with stations near downtown. Highways 101, 68, and 183 run through the community, providing access west to the coast, north to the San Francisco Bay Area, and south towards Southern California (Figure 12). Upcoming regional transportation projects affecting Salinas include the Capitol Corridor Extension to Salinas, which is a planned Amtrak extension of passenger-rail service from Santa Clara County to Salinas and includes the revitalization of the downtown Salinas train station. The AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy also outline expanded express or commuter-based service in Monterey South County, including Salinas. Additionally, the Marina-Salinas Multimodal Corridor is a multi-jurisdictional project developed in response to the need for a regional route through the former Fort Ord area. The future corridor is expected to increase roadway capacity by prioritizing high-quality transit, bicycling, and walking as viable alternatives to driving.

Data Source: 2020 American Community Survey, 5 year estimate.

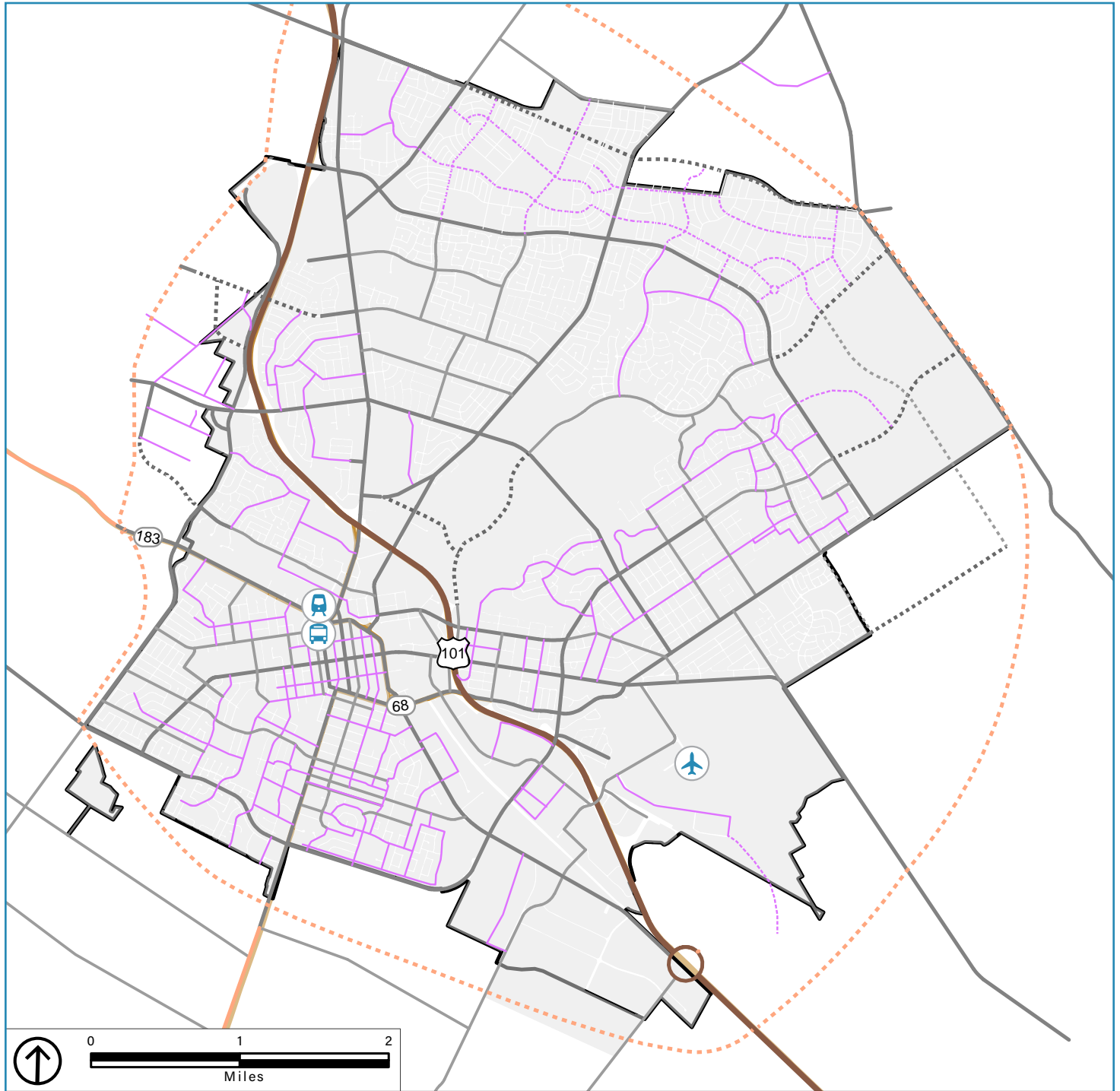
Local Roadway System and Safety

The average commute time for Salinas residents is approximately 25 minutes, which is slightly less than the national average of 27.6 minutes. The majority of residents (83 percent) commute to work by single-occupancy vehicles or carpool (Table 1). In contrast, only about 1 percent of residents walk or bike to work.

Table 1. Mode of Transportation to Work

	Mode Share
Vehicles	83%
Public Transit	1%
Taxi	0.1%
Motorcycle	0.0%
Bicycle	0.1%
Walk	1%
Other	12%
Worked from home	3%
Total	100%

Figure 12. Current General Plan Circulation System and Transportation Hubs



- Transportation Hubs**
- Intermodal Transit Center
 - Salinas Municipal Airport
 - Salinas Transit Center
- Circulation System Diagram**
- Road Class**
- Freeway/New Interchange
 - Highway
 - Highway (Proposed)
 - Major Arterial
 - Major Arterial (Proposed)
 - Minor Arterial
 - Minor Arterial (Proposed)
 - Collector
 - Collector (Proposed)
 - Local
 - Interstate and Highway

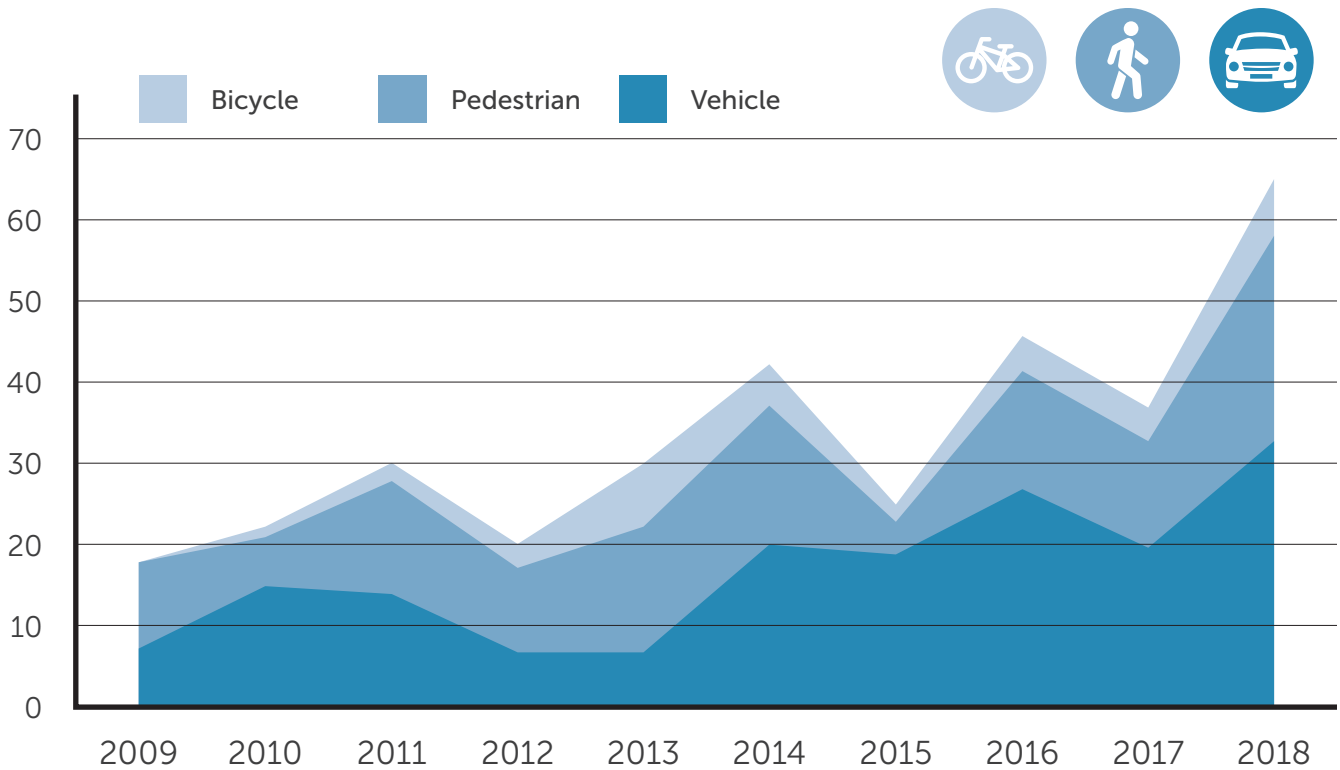
Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021.



In 2021, the City adopted the Vision Zero Action Plan to address road safety by committing to a strategy to eliminate traffic-related serious injuries and fatalities. As part of this work, the City developed a High-Injury Network (HIN) map that identifies corridors with the highest levels of fatal and severe traffic injuries (Figures 13 and 14). Fifty-three percent of citywide traffic injuries that are fatal or severe occur within the HIN.

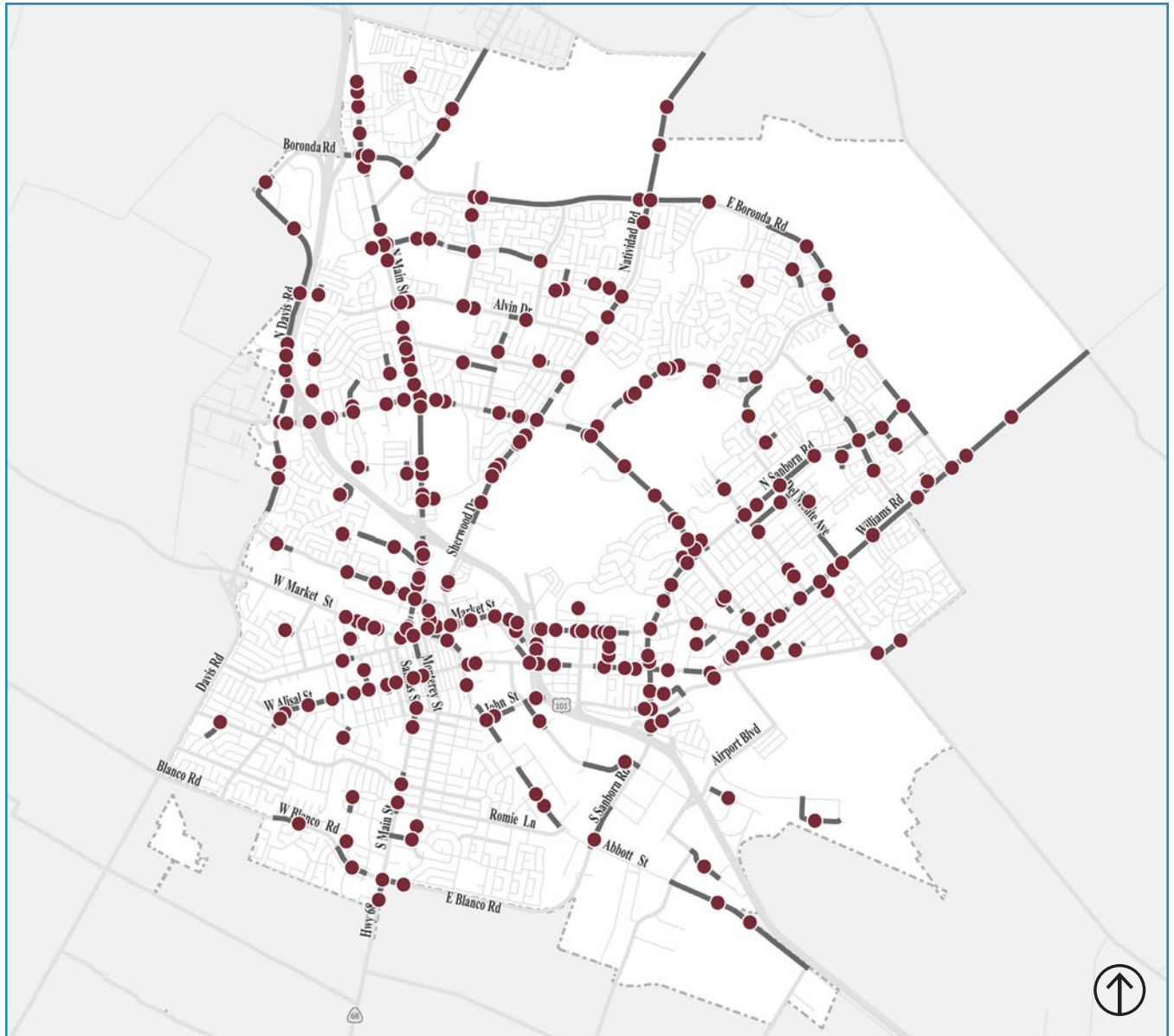


Figure 13. Number of Collisions where someone was killed or severely injured (KSI) per year



62 Vehicle crash fatalities in Salinas from 2008-2018

Figure 14. High-Injury Network and Severe or Fatal Collisions



Data Source: City of Salinas, Vision Zero Action Plan, 2021.

- Killed or Severe Injury Collisions
- High Injury Network (HIN)



Another challenge for local roadways is insufficient street parking in neighborhoods due to overcrowding of homes and limited affordable housing options. This issue highlights the interconnectedness between all elements of the built environment. When planning for circulation, it is equally important to consider the impacts to and effects of land uses and housing.



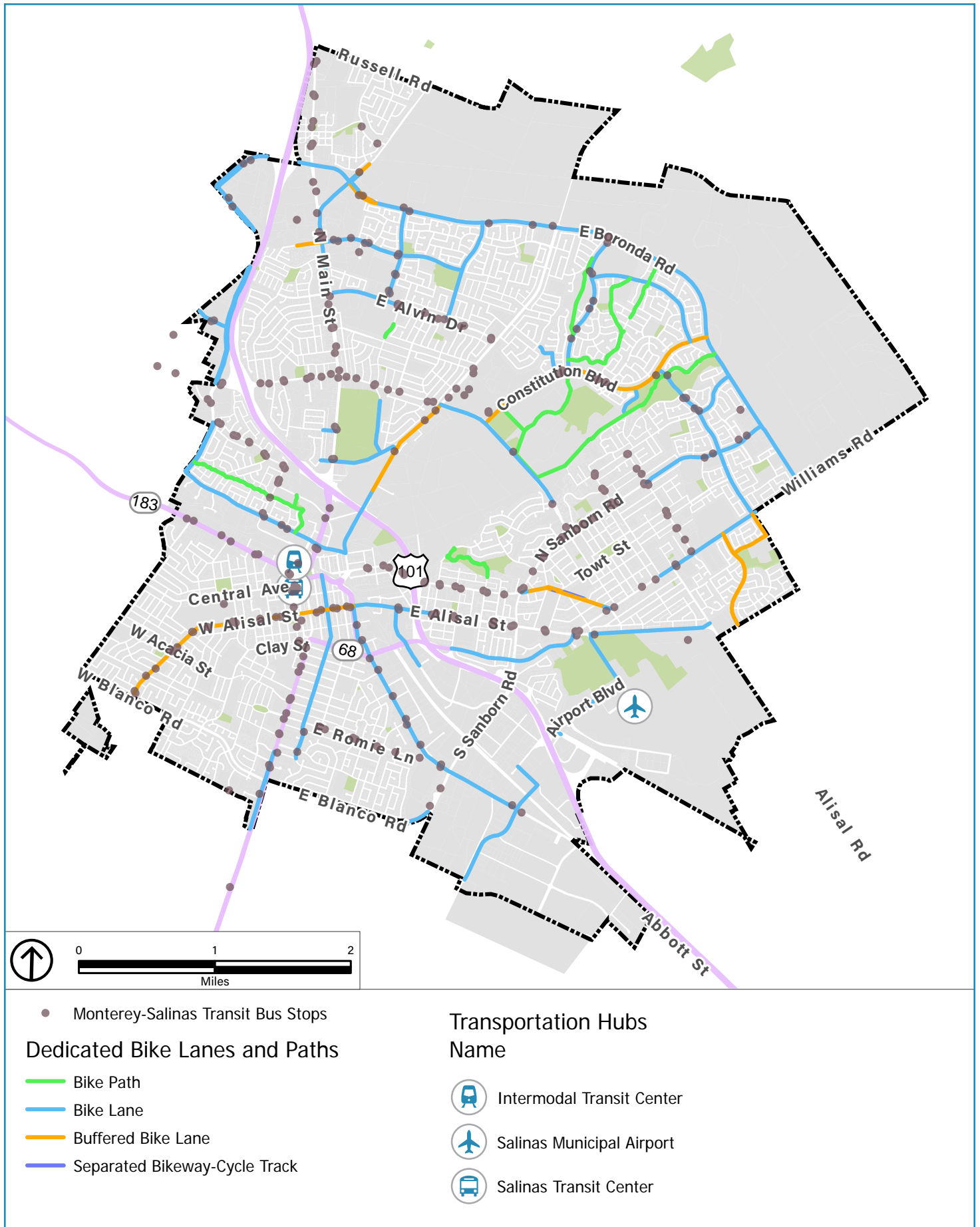
Public Transportation

MST operates the local bus service in Salinas. The Monterey-Salinas Airbus offers connections from Salinas to the San Jose and San Francisco airports, and Greyhound offers service to neighboring and major cities from the Intermodal Transportation Center. Upcoming local transportation projects affecting Salinas include the SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which is intended to create fast, easy travel from Salinas Valley to Downtown Monterey and several points in between with the creation of a new six-mile, bus-only roadway. The project will also connect existing local transit lines to increase service. The project is expected to be completed in 2027.

Active Transportation Network and Safety

During the Visión Salinas 2040 meetings, community members noted that they do not feel safe biking or walking throughout the city, which likely explains why many residents choose driving over active-transportation alternatives. While Salinas has a growing bicycle and pedestrian network for local trips (Figure 15), there is potential to expand access to, and safety of, these routes. The 2020 Vision Zero Program and Plan promotes policies like “complete streets” design principles that focus on improving safety for all users, especially cyclists and pedestrians. Increasing the active transportation options for the Salinas community would help reduce vehicle dependency and GHG emissions, which contribute to climate change.

Figure 15. Existing Dedicated Bike Lanes and Bus Stops



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021; Monterey-Salinas Transit, 2021



04

Environment and Sustainability



Environment and Sustainability

Conservation and Open Space

Overview

The physical setting and natural resources of Salinas contribute to the community's unique identity. This section focuses on the interface between humans and the natural environment and covers the following topics: natural resources, air quality, parks and recreation, GHG emissions, energy conservation, environmental hazards, and environmental justice.

Conservation and Open Space Assets

- Salinas completed a GHG inventory in 2019 and is currently creating a Climate Action Plan.
- Salinas is surrounded by important farmland and is the historical home to many large agriculture companies and processing facilities.
- Salinas has a rich network of protected wildlife habitat and wetlands.
- There are 52 park sites and numerous open space parcels across 649 acres throughout the city.
- The Big Sur Land Trust, in partnership with the City, acquired a 73-acre property at Carr Lake with plans to create a 6-acre neighborhood park with a playground, skate park, basketball court, barbecues, picnic areas and more; plus a 67-acre restoration area featuring seasonal wetlands, habitat for wildlife, and trails.
- The California Department of Parks and Recreation awarded the City of Salinas a \$6.84 million grant from the for the renovation of Closter Park, a park identified as the highest local priority based on a facility needs assessment.
- The Hebron Family Center in East Alisal will be replaced with a modern 7,500-square-foot recreation center with landscaping and new parking lot. The new center will provide vital programs for Salinas youth.

Conservation and Open Space Challenges

- Reliance on groundwater and the persistent drought put local water supplies at risk.
- Salinas currently provides 1.52 acres of developed parkland per thousand residents, which is below the goal of 3 acres per thousand residents.
- Many community parks need maintenance and repairs. The 2019 Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan estimates that \$24 million is needed for park renovation and upgrades, plus \$136 million for improvements to facilities and centers.



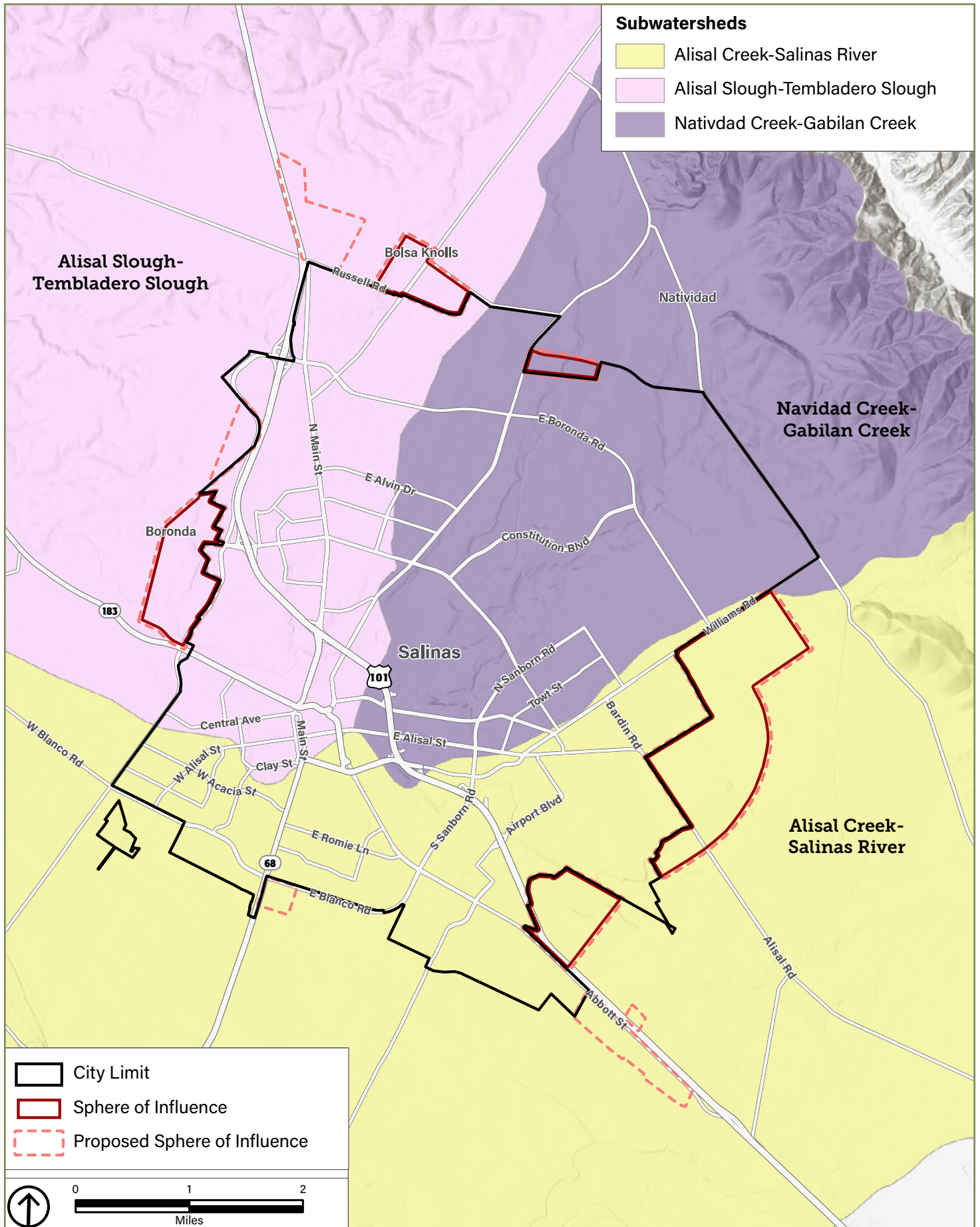
- Increased funding is needed to improve the citywide park system. The 2019 Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan found that Salinas spends approximately \$17 per capita on its parks, while most jurisdictions spend about four times that amount.
- Equity in parks access is an ongoing challenge in Salinas and the presence of vulnerable populations can inform where park and facility funds are spent.

Water Resources and Management

In the region, water typically flows from the east to the west through natural and urbanized creeks. Salinas sources surface water from three local subwatersheds (see Figure 16):

- **Alisal Creek-Salinas River.** The 113-square-mile Alisal Creek-Salinas River Subwatershed in the southern portion of the city flows from the eastern end of the Salinas Valley to the Monterey Bay, descending a total of 2,000 feet in elevation.
- **Natividad Creek-Gabilan Creek.** The Natividad Creek-Gabilan Creek Subwatershed in the northeastern portion of the city flows southwest into Carr Lake.
- **Alisal Slough-Tembladero Slough.** The Alisal Slough-Tembladero Slough Subwatershed is also in the northwestern portion of the city. The subwatershed encompasses 55 square miles and is made up of seven waterbodies, including Alisal Slough, Espinosa Lake, and the Salinas Reclamation Canal. Water flows from the northeastern higher-elevation areas to western lower-elevation areas.

Figure 16. Salinas Subwatersheds



Data Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2021.

Salinas uses groundwater as its sole water supply. For urban uses, groundwater is pumped from wells in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer and the East Side Aquifer in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (Figure 17). Agricultural users generally own and operate their own wells. Groundwater is sourced by California Water Service (Cal Water) and Alco Water Service (Alco) and is primarily recharged by the Salinas River.

High dependence on groundwater and increased water demand from urban and agricultural uses have strained groundwater supplies and caused long-term declines in groundwater levels in some parts of the Salinas Valley. Cal Water has identified several potential constraints to future groundwater supply, including water quality, overdrafting, and climate change. When groundwater is overdrafted, there can be issues related to water supply and contamination by seawater intrusion or agricultural chemicals. Overdrafting of groundwater can also lead to subsidence, which is the gradual caving or sinking of the valley floor. Cal Water predicts that the groundwater supply will be sufficient to meet projected future demands in normal conditions through 2045. However, climate change makes it difficult to predict future conditions. Increased instances of drought or heavy rainfall also make supply predictions less certain. Acting today to conserve the area's groundwater supply can help lessen the potential issues of tomorrow.

Biological Resources

Salinas has many sensitive habitats, including riparian areas (i.e., areas along major water courses) like Gabilan Creek, Natividad Creek, and the Salinas River. These riparian areas are home to woodland vegetation and a variety of wildlife species.

In-stream wetlands and seasonal wetlands along the bottom of channelized watercourses, such as the lower portions of Gabilan Creek and portions of the Alisal Slough, can also be found in the city. Wetland habitats provide important foraging and breeding areas for wildlife species. See Figures 18 and 19 for maps that show the distribution of sensitive plant and animal species.

The city preserves important biological resource areas by designating large portions of sensitive habitat along the Gabilan, Santa Rita, Alisal and Natividad Creeks, and the Carr Lake area as parks or open space. These areas also offer valuable recreation and flood-control opportunities.

Agricultural Resources

Situated in the Salinas Valley, with its rich, fertile soils, the city has historically been an agricultural community and is surrounded by prime farmlands and farmland of statewide importance (Figure 20). Top-valued crops grown in the area include leaf lettuce, head lettuce, broccoli, wine grapes, spinach, cauliflower, and celery. Farming activities inside Salinas' boundaries are currently focused within four areas: (1) Upper Carr Lake in central Salinas, (2) an area along the northern boundary, (3) the area along the eastern portion of the city, and (4) areas along the southeastern city limit.

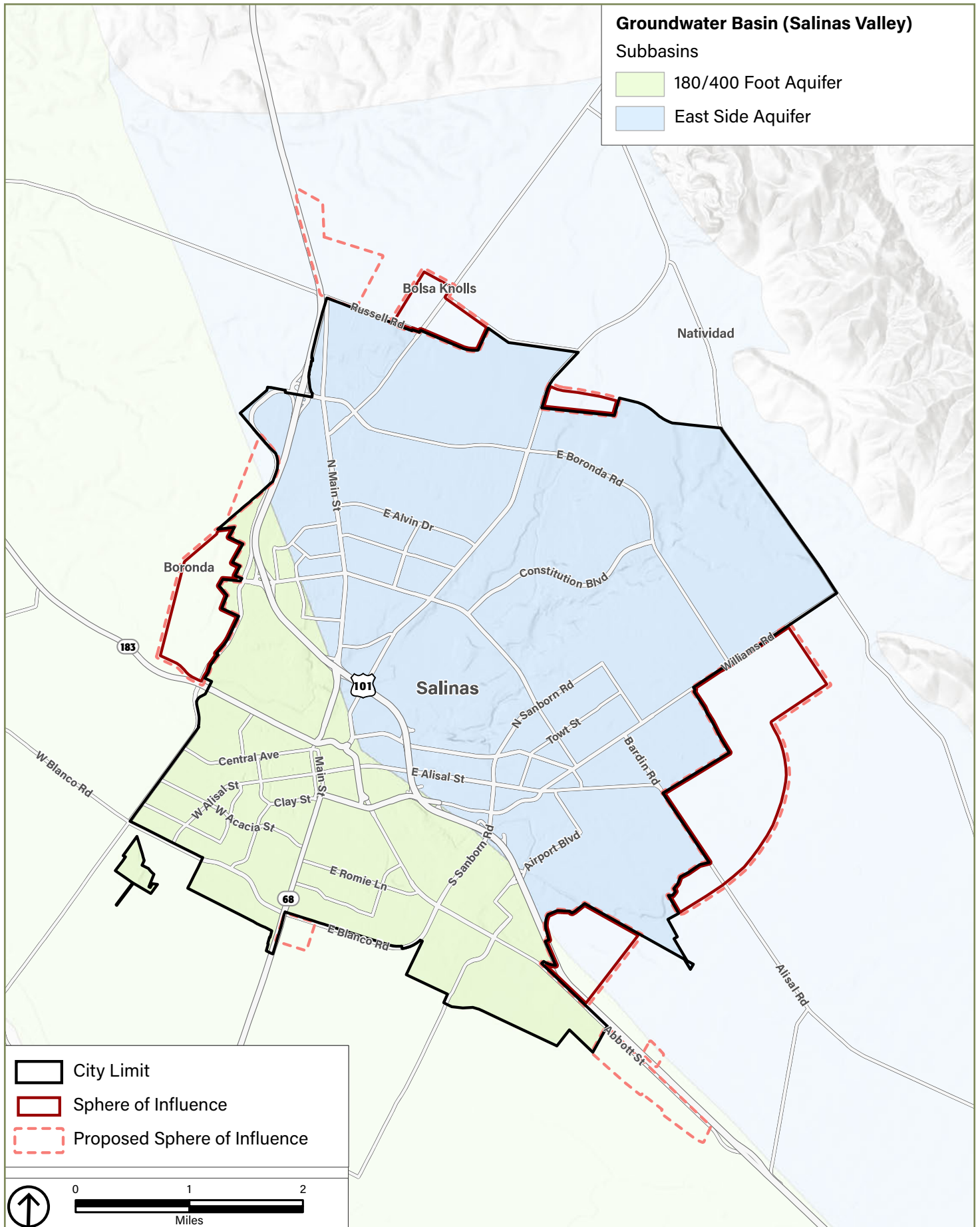
The Future Growth Area designated by the City for development, along with the Carr Lake restoration project, will reduce the amount of agricultural land within the City's Sphere of Influence. The City strives to conserve valuable agricultural land and prioritize growth in the Focused Growth Areas and within the existing urban areas.

Air Quality

Access to local highways and rail networks plays a major role in the success of the local agriculture industry operations. However, these transportation systems can also produce negative impacts on air quality and respiratory health due to truck traffic (Figure 21). The City takes social, economic, and environmental impacts into consideration when planning future transportation projects.

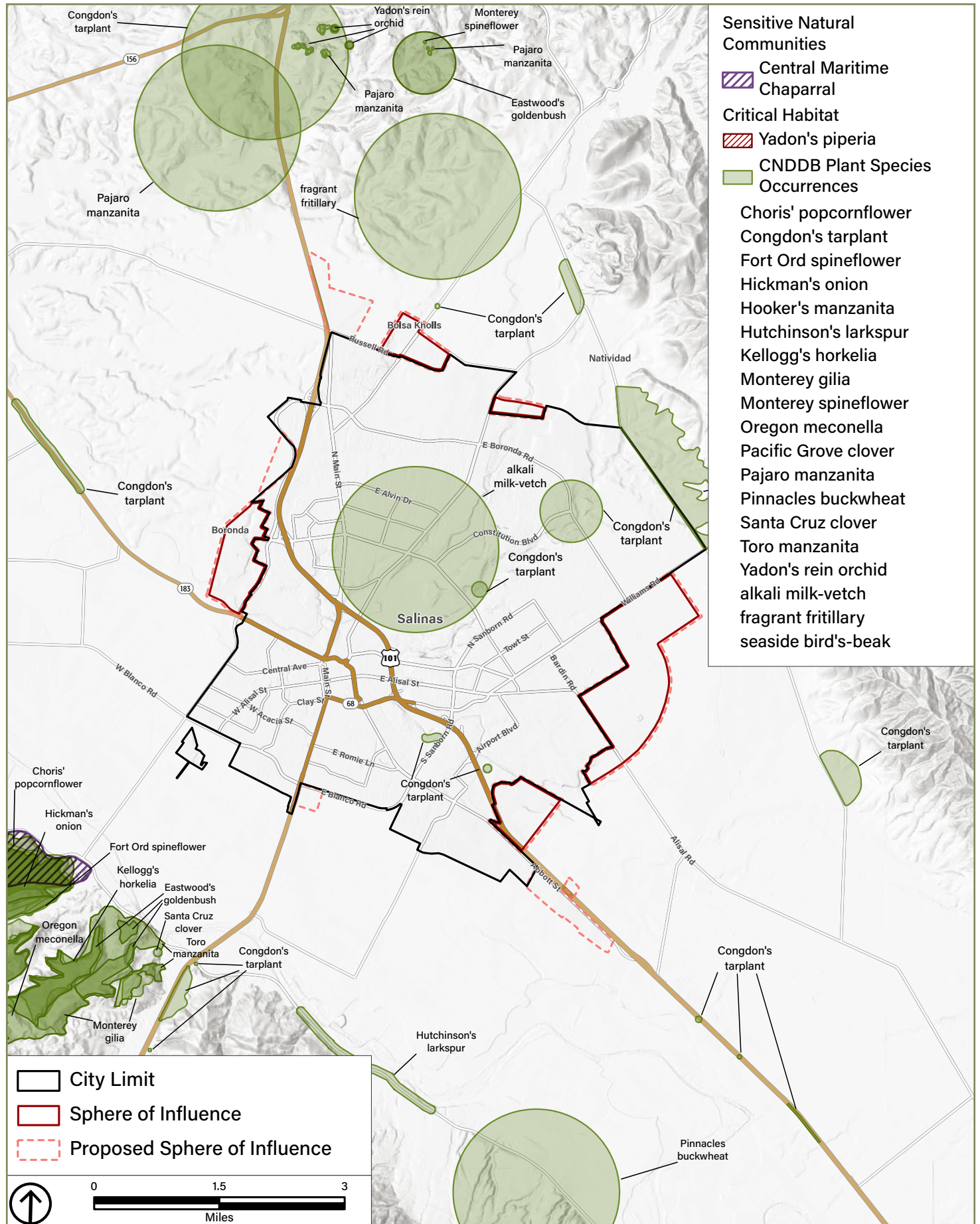


Figure 17. Groundwater Subbasins



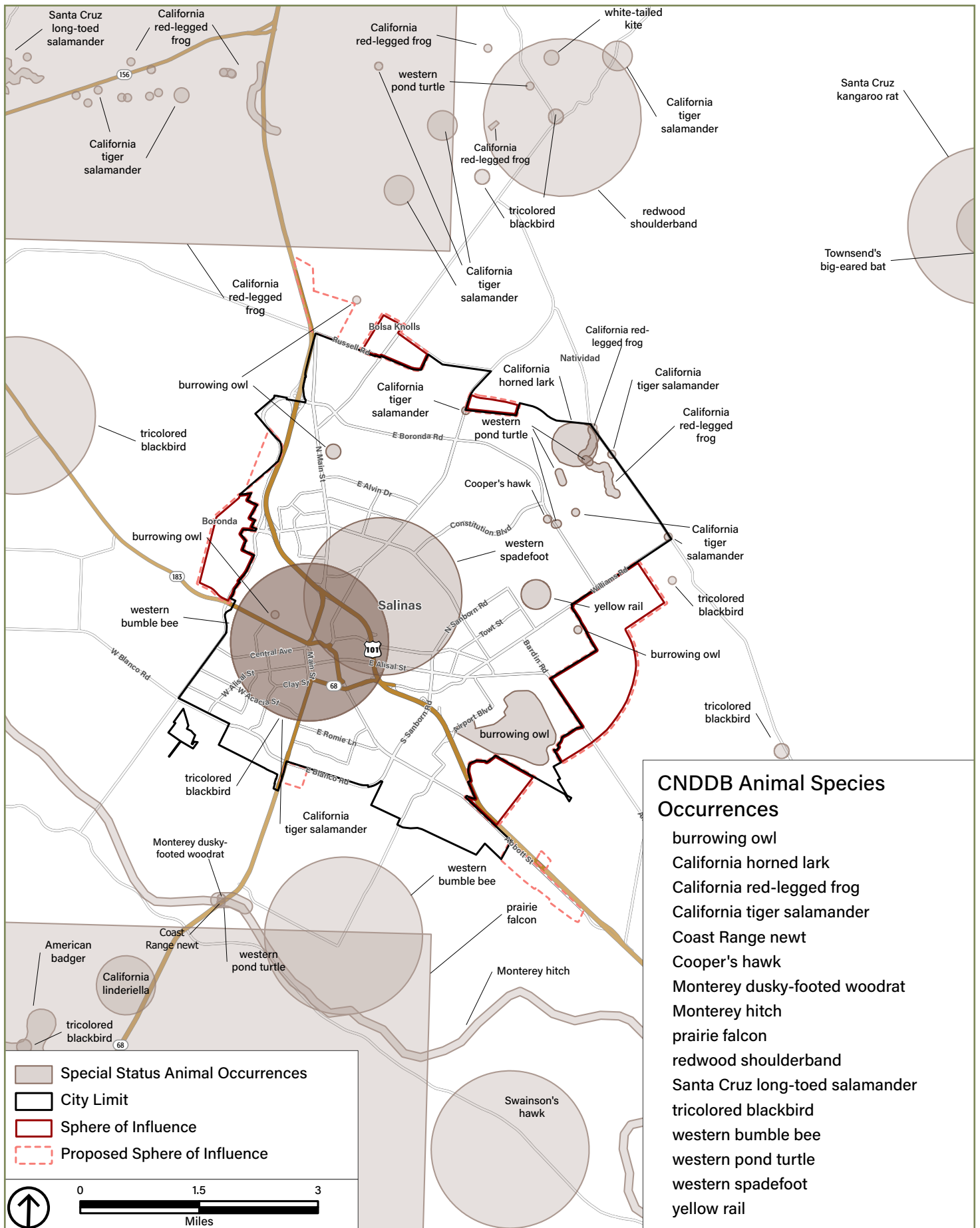
Data Source: California Department of Water Resources, 2015.

Figure 18. Sensitive Plant Species



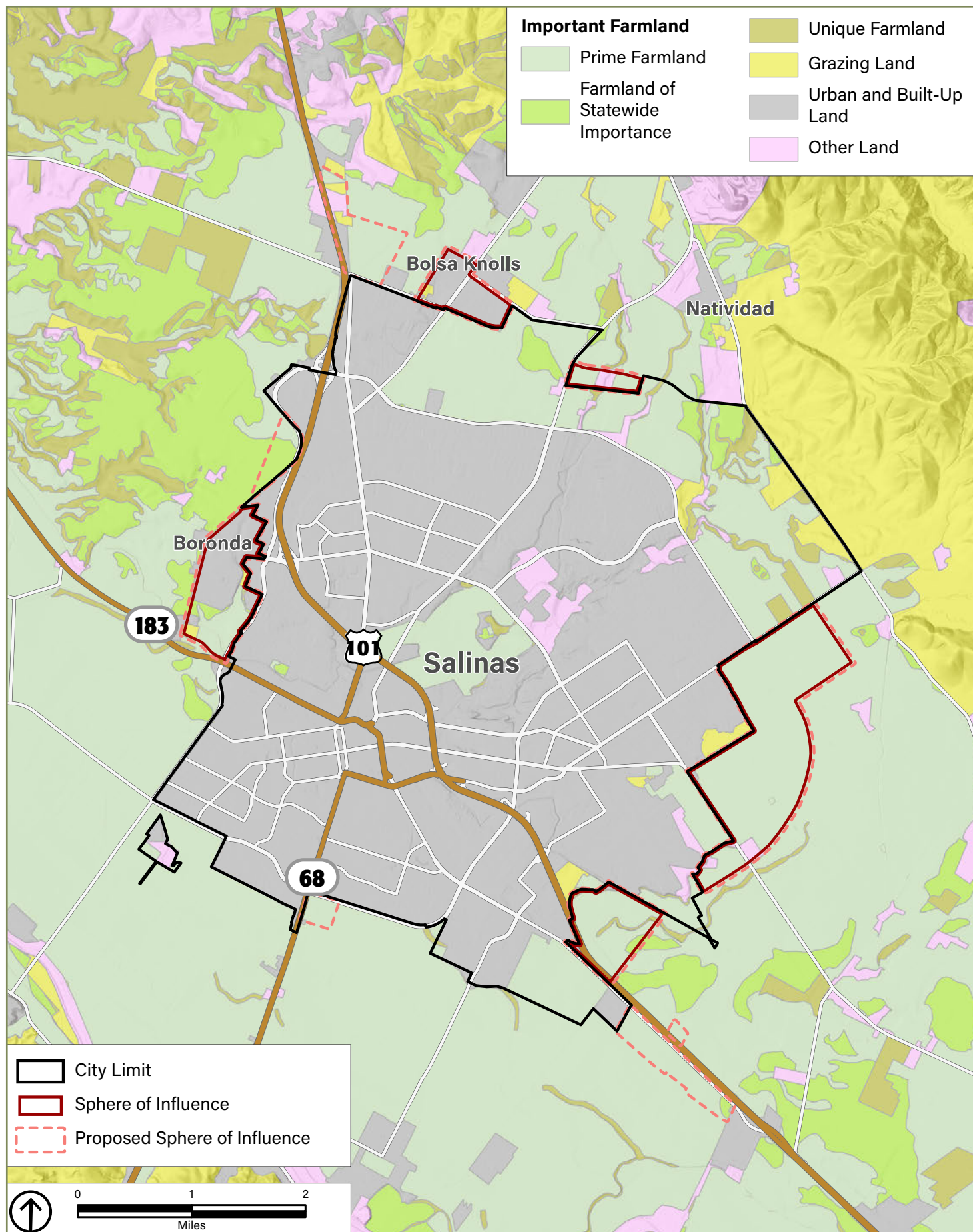
Data Source: CA Department of Fish & Wildlife; Esri, 2021; City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks 2021.

Figure 19. Sensitive Animal Species



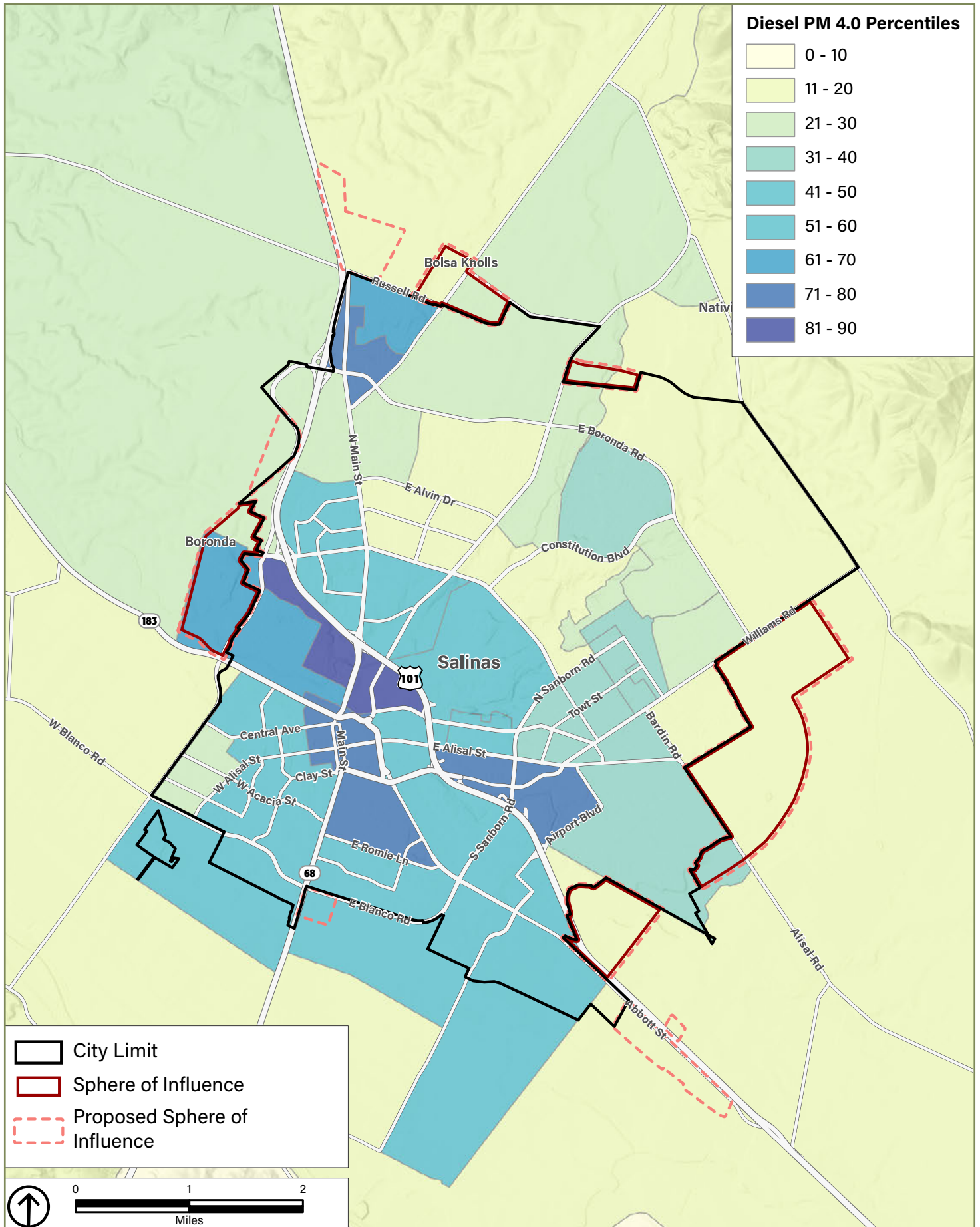
Data Source: CA Department of Fish & Wildlife; Esri, 2021; City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks 2021

Figure 20. Agricultural Land in and Around Salinas



Data Source: California Department of Conservation, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2021.

Figure 21. Diesel Particulate Matter



Data Source: CalEnviroScreen, 2021.

Emission Reduction and Energy Conservation

The State of California has adopted a goal to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2023 and achieve “net zero” carbon emissions by 2045. GHG emissions are generated by various activities like transportation, heating and cooling buildings, providing water to homes and businesses, and treating wastewater (see Figure 22). Net zero, or “carbon neutrality,” means that the amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted equals the amount of carbon dioxide that is captured or removed from the atmosphere. Each city in California must play their part in helping to achieve these goals through local actions and strategies that affect the built and natural environments.

As part of the General Plan update, the City will produce its first Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP will serve as a foundation for the City’s comprehensive strategy to reduce GHG emissions and address climate change in ways that invest in equity. The Salinas CAP will include an inventory of existing and predicted future GHG emissions, along with a plan to reduce emissions to help the city meet or exceed the State’s ambitious reduction targets. In 2019, the city produced approximately 600,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e), which represents a 21 percent decline relative to 2005 emissions levels (Figure 23).

In an effort to continue reducing GHG emissions and achieve carbon neutrality, the City of Salinas supports a number of State programs like the Renewables Portfolio Standard, the Clean Cars Standard, Title 24 Building Energy-Efficiency Standards, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, and the Innovative Clean Transit Program.

Figure 22. Sectors included in Greenhouse Gas Inventory

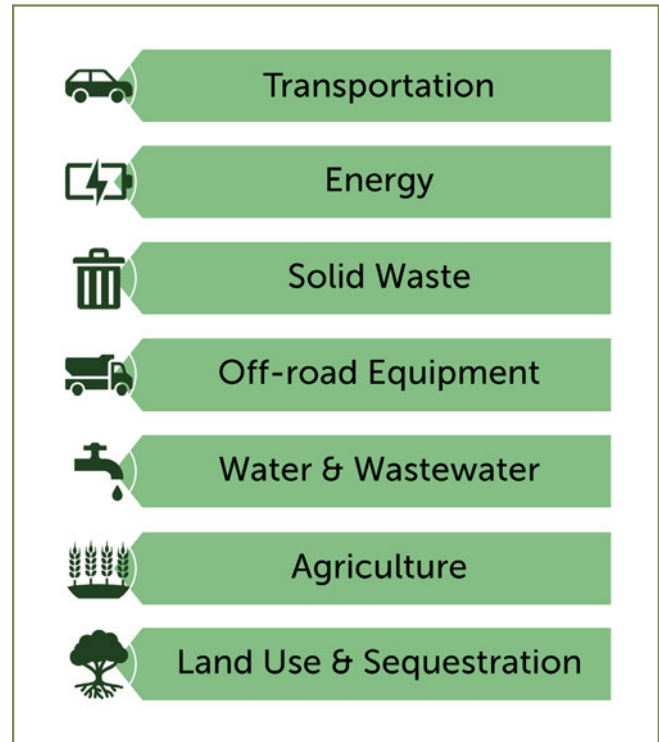
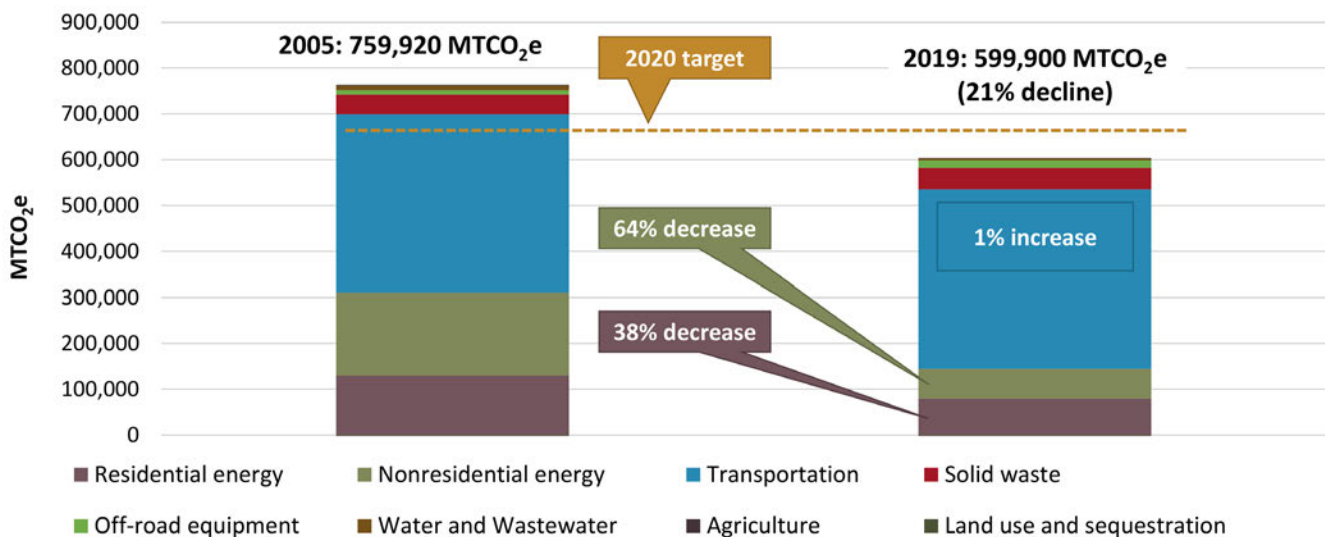


Figure 23. GHG Inventory Results, 2005 and 2019

Data Source: City of Salinas Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report, 2019.





Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Services

Areas that are designated as open space are typically managed for resource conservation, hazard reduction, and scenic value. Parks and recreational facilities support active recreation through improvements such as sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, running tracks, recreation centers, and basketball courts. The City of Salinas seeks to create an interconnected system of parks and open spaces that promotes outdoor recreation, healthy living, and environmental conservation as integral elements of a thriving city.

Salinas has a goal of providing three acres of parkland to every thousand residents. Across the entire 649-acre park system, Salinas currently provides 3.98 acres of parklands per thousand residents. However, when looking exclusively at the 247 acres of developed local and community parks, the level of service drops to 1.52 acre per thousand residents. When compared to urban communities of a similar size and population density, Salinas currently falls below the median ratio of people to developed parks.



The quality of parks and recreational facilities is just as important to consider as the supply. The 2019 Parks, Recreation, and Libraries Master Plan found that nearly all participating residents (98 percent) felt that public parks, recreational opportunities, and library services are important or essential to the quality of life in Salinas. However, most participants (63 percent) felt that there are not enough parks in the city and over half (57 percent) rated the existing park system as in either “fair” or “poor” condition. Staffing and program funding limitations have historically been seen as challenges to efficient management of the park system for the Salinas community.



Community garden in Natividad Creek Park.

As Salinas' population continues to grow, so does the increased demand for good-quality open space, parks, and recreational programming. As outlined in the Parks, Recreation, and Libraries Master Plan, the predicted growth and demand for services may present an opportunity for the City to increase staffing and to re-examine how existing services can be aligned with the community's priorities and values.



3,491

Participants in youth sports programs in 2018!



Maintenance and improvement of existing parks - #1 Community Priority



Environmental Safety

Overview

Salinas' geography and land uses can make it susceptible to environmental and climate change hazards like risk of wildfire and associated smoke, earthquake damage from nearby fault lines, flooding hazards in riparian areas, and drought that threatens the local agricultural industry and community. This section covers environmental hazards caused by human activity, along with natural hazards and the City's hazard response plans.

Environmental Safety Assets

- The Climate Action Plan and revised Safety Element will address environmental hazards.
- There is potential for more walking, biking, and transit ridership, which can reduce emissions from cars.
- Upcoming improvements to Bus Rapid Transit service will help reduce the need for private vehicles for all trips around the city or the region and encourage transit-oriented development in Salinas.

Environmental Safety Challenges

- Residents and natural resources face risks from several hazards, which can impact health, livelihoods, and habitats.
- Disadvantaged communities are more vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change, such as more extreme heat days, poor air quality from regional wildfires, and increased risk of flooding.
- The City must contend with increasing droughts and water shortages.
- Personal vehicle emissions is the largest source of GHG emissions in Salinas.

Wildfire

The City of Salinas 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan describes 22 historic wildfires around Salinas between 1950 and 2020 (Figure 24). Most of these fires were in the mountain areas surrounding the city, with only three near city limits (Stage Wildfire in 2020, Old State in 2012, and Old State in 2003). Since Salinas is an urbanized community surrounded by agricultural lands, the most common fires are urban fires. In outlying areas, wildfire risk is associated with the rangelands on the hillsides surrounding the community.

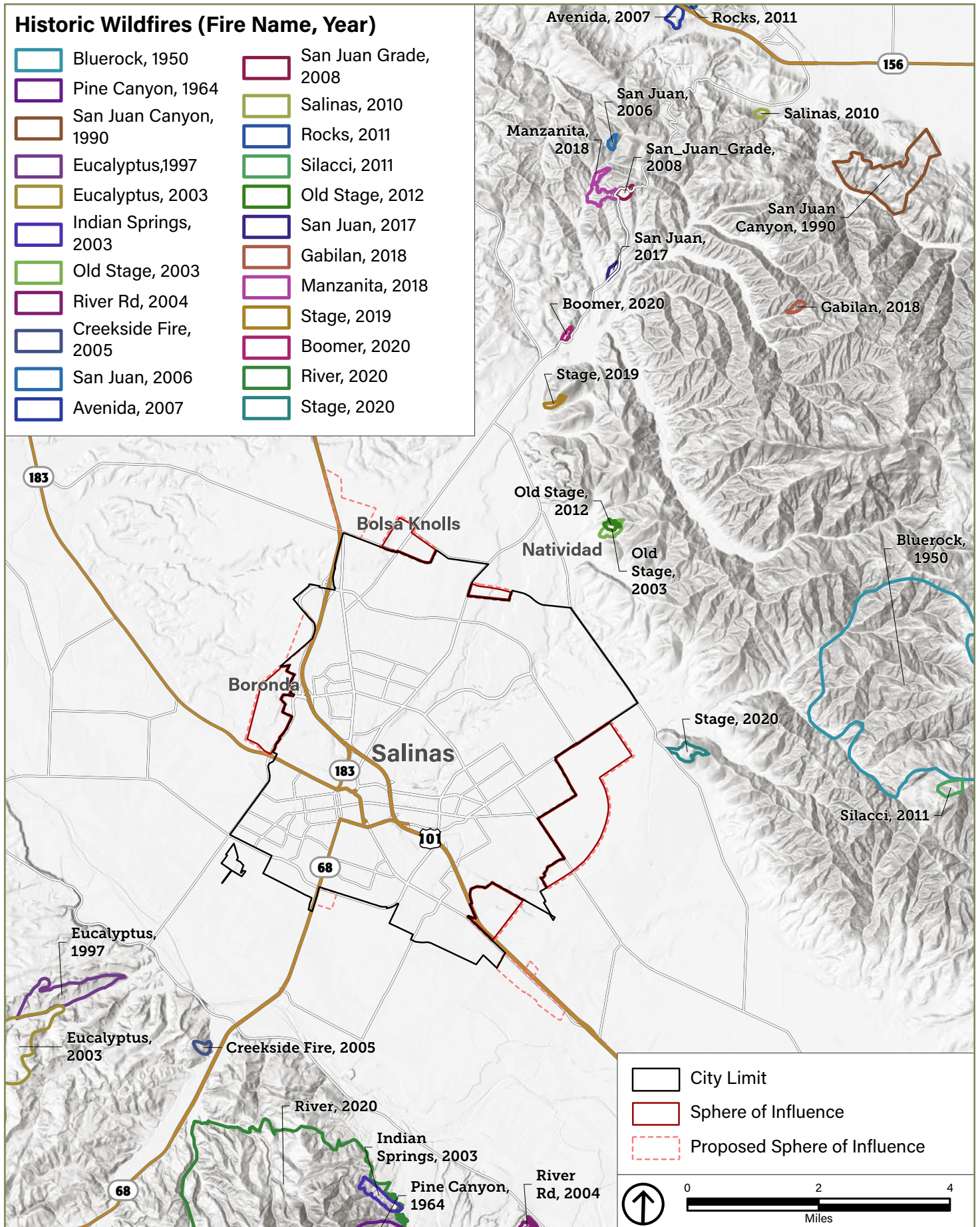
Wildfires can damage or destroy regional energy infrastructure, which can cause power outages that can last for days or even weeks depending on the severity of the event. This can directly harm the economy, essential operations, and public safety, as well as hinder wildfire recovery efforts.

In Salinas, smoke from regional wildfires also poses a significant risk. Children, seniors, and individuals with chronic illnesses are all especially susceptible to the health effects of smoke exposure. Farmworkers in particular are at greater risk of exposure to smoke and poor air quality because they work outdoors.



Wildfires in 2020 led to weeks of poor air quality in Salinas.

Figure 24. Wildfires Near Salinas, 1950-2020



Data Source: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), 2021.

Drought

The Salinas Valley is prone to prolonged drought, which poses a risk to valuable crop lands and the livelihoods that depend on it. Low levels of precipitation may hurt crop production, especially if droughts are combined with extreme heat.

Drought is also associated with increased insect infestations, plant diseases, and wind erosion. Drought conditions can lead to increases in groundwater pumping, including potential pumping from deep aquifers. Not only can this threaten reliable groundwater sources, but it also can lead to saltwater moving into the groundwater basins from the ocean, which can contaminate freshwater supplies.

Floods

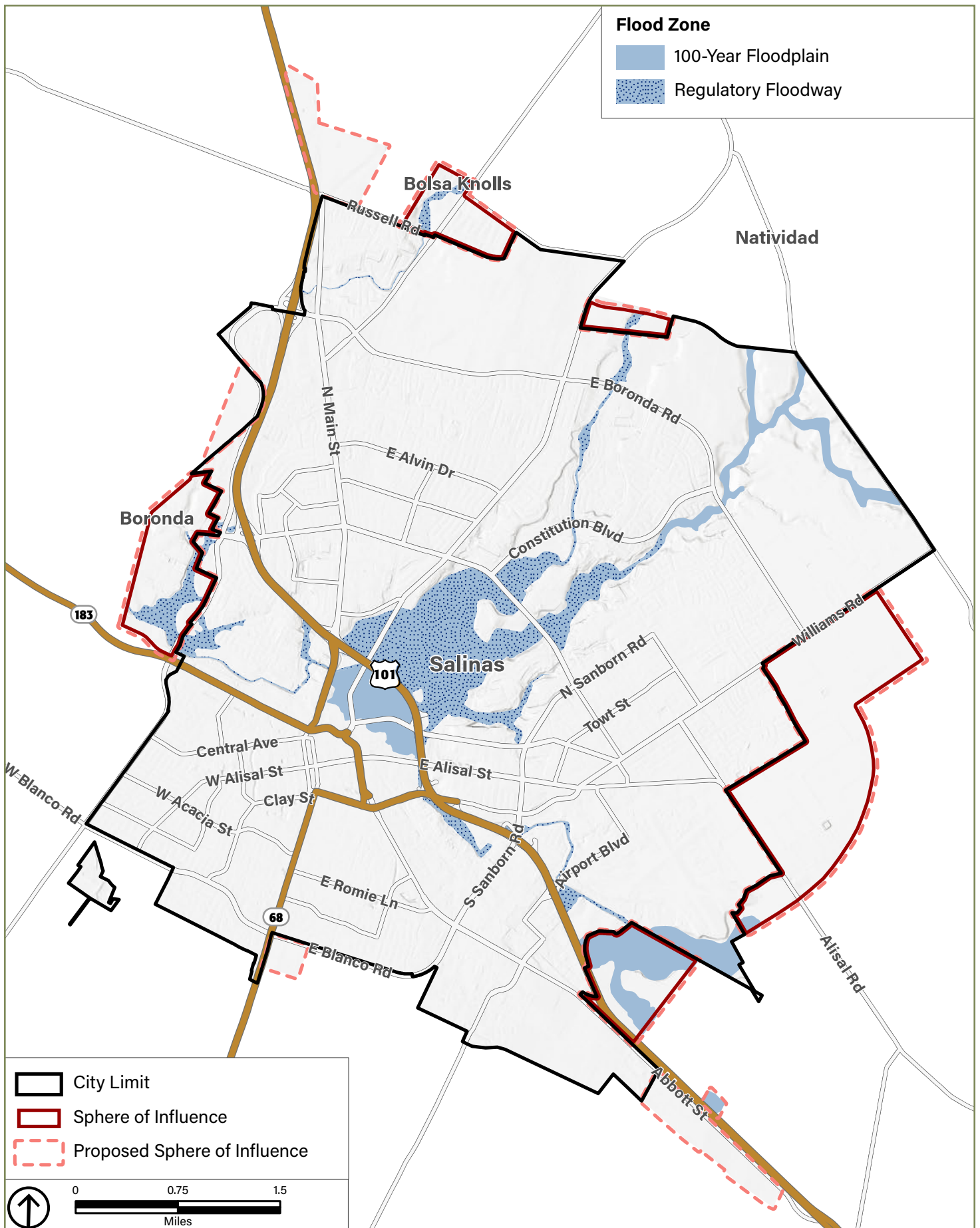
Despite the recent recurrence of drought, the Salinas River Valley is also susceptible to flood hazards from rain and recently experienced flooding during the 2023 winter storms. For a map of flood zones in Salinas, refer to Figure 25.

Local precipitation levels are expected to increase slightly from a historic average of 15.1 inches of rainfall per year between 1961 and 1990, to 17.8 inches by the end of the century. Increased rainfall is projected to coincide with a change in overall rainfall patterns, leading to less frequent but higher-intensity storms, which are more likely to cause large-scale flooding. Flooding can damage housing and other buildings, shut down the transportation system by blocking roads and hindering public transportation, and negatively impact the valuable agricultural land surrounding the city by delaying planting or destroying crops. An ongoing challenge in Salinas is the need to upgrade stormwater and flood-control infrastructure to mitigate these risks and the associated hazards of flooding.



A 2021 winter storm causes stormwater flooding.

Figure 25. Flood Zones



Data Source: USA Flood Hazard Areas, ESRI, 2021.

Earthquakes

Although Salinas lies within a region with active seismic faults, no known active faults are located in the city (Figure 26). Therefore, the potential for earthquakes and related hazards is relatively low. The King City and Gabilan Creek Faults are within the planning area and are considered “potentially active.” However, neither has had activity over the past 11,000 years nor are expected to generate seismic activity. The greatest seismic threat is related to the San Andreas and Calaveras Faults, approximately 12 and 15 miles from the City, respectively.

Extreme Heat

Salinas is also at risk of extreme heat, which is when temperatures rise significantly above normal levels (or more than 90 degrees Fahrenheit in Salinas). Warm nights are when minimum temperatures remain significantly above normal levels (59 degrees Fahrenheit in Salinas) during nighttime hours. Historically, Salinas has experienced an average of three extreme heat days and five warm nights per year. By the end of the century, Salinas is projected to experience an average of 15 extreme heat days and 102 warm nights per year. Extreme heat events impact farmworkers and other people that work outdoors, seniors and children, individuals with chronic health issues, people experiencing homelessness, and low-income households that may not be able to afford cooling their homes adequately.

Hazards Response

The City of Salinas has prepared a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, which identifies who and what in Salinas is most at risk from climate change-related hazards, including agricultural pests and diseases, drought, extreme heat, flooding, severe weather, and wildfires. The Vulnerability Assessment provides a foundation for future climate change adaptation and resilience policies to be included in the Climate Action Plan and updated Safety Element, as part of the General Plan update.

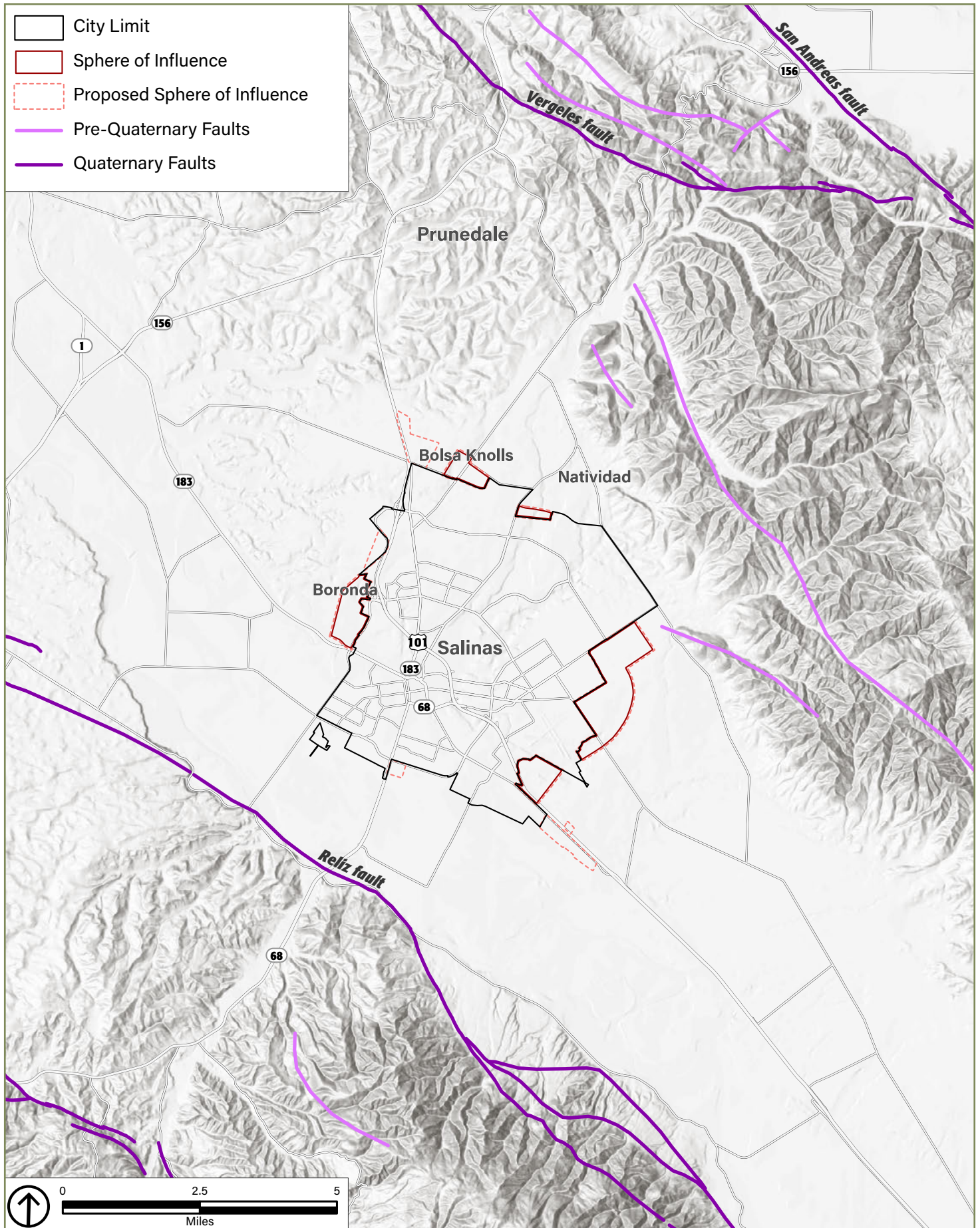
Climate Change-Related Hazards



Vulnerable populations, which may be disproportionately affected by climate change and related hazards, include children, outdoor workers, seniors, persons with disabilities, and unhoused persons. Risks identified in the Vulnerability Assessment include:

- Significant risk of crop disruption.
- Health impacts from extreme heat.
- Increased valley fever risk.
- Damage to river and creek ecosystems.
- Sea level rise expected to harm groundwater.
- Greater risk of energy disruption.
- Air quality impacts from increases in regional wildfires.

Figure 26. Fault Lines Near Salinas



Data Source: California Department of Conservation, 2020.

05

Socioeconomic Systems



Socioeconomic Systems

Health and Environmental Justice

Overview

Environmental justice is defined by State law as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”¹ People of color and low-income individuals are historically more at risk of environmental and health hazards. This is an especially important topic for Salinas considering that the median household income in Salinas is lower than that of the surrounding county and state and approximately 80 percent of Salinas residents are Hispanic.

Public health is a major indicator of environmental justice. Access to clean air, outdoor space, recreational facilities, fresh food, safe housing, and healthcare services are all aspects of a healthy community. Often, low-income populations and non-white populations are at greater risk of poor health outcomes given where they live in the city or their ability to afford goods and services. Throughout the history of the United States, these populations have been disproportionately housed near pollutant-producing heavy industry, highways, or on the outskirts of towns in areas that lack access to amenities or services.

With the passing of Senate Bill (SB) 1000 in 2016, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, all cities and counties with disadvantaged communities must ensure that their General Plan includes environmental justice analysis and policies to reduce public health risks in disadvantaged communities, promote civic engagement, and prioritize improvements and programs for disadvantaged communities.

Health and Environmental Justice Assets

- The Salinas General Plan update will include the City’s first Environmental Justice Element, which will focus on understanding and addressing environmental injustices in the community.
- The Salinas City Council allocated funds to support a healthier and safer Salinas.
- In 2022, the Salinas City Council adopted the Safe Routes to Schools Plan, which describes community-identified needs and recommendations aimed at supporting a healthy community, improving affordable transportation options for low-income and vulnerable residents, and helping the City of Salinas achieve its Vision Zero goal and statewide goals to address climate change by reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- Local volunteer groups, such as Communities for Sustainable Monterey County, are working together towards a more environmentally sustainable Salinas through community education and action.

¹ California Government Code, § 65040.12, subd. (e).

Health and Environmental Justice Challenges

- Access to healthy food is not feasible for all residents, especially those who live on the perimeter of the city and are over a half mile from grocery stores.
- Residents are concerned about healthcare access.
- Salinas lacks adequate park space to meet the needs of a growing population.
- Pesticide exposure and pollution burden are high in the city and present health risks to vulnerable populations.



Pollution Exposure and Air Quality

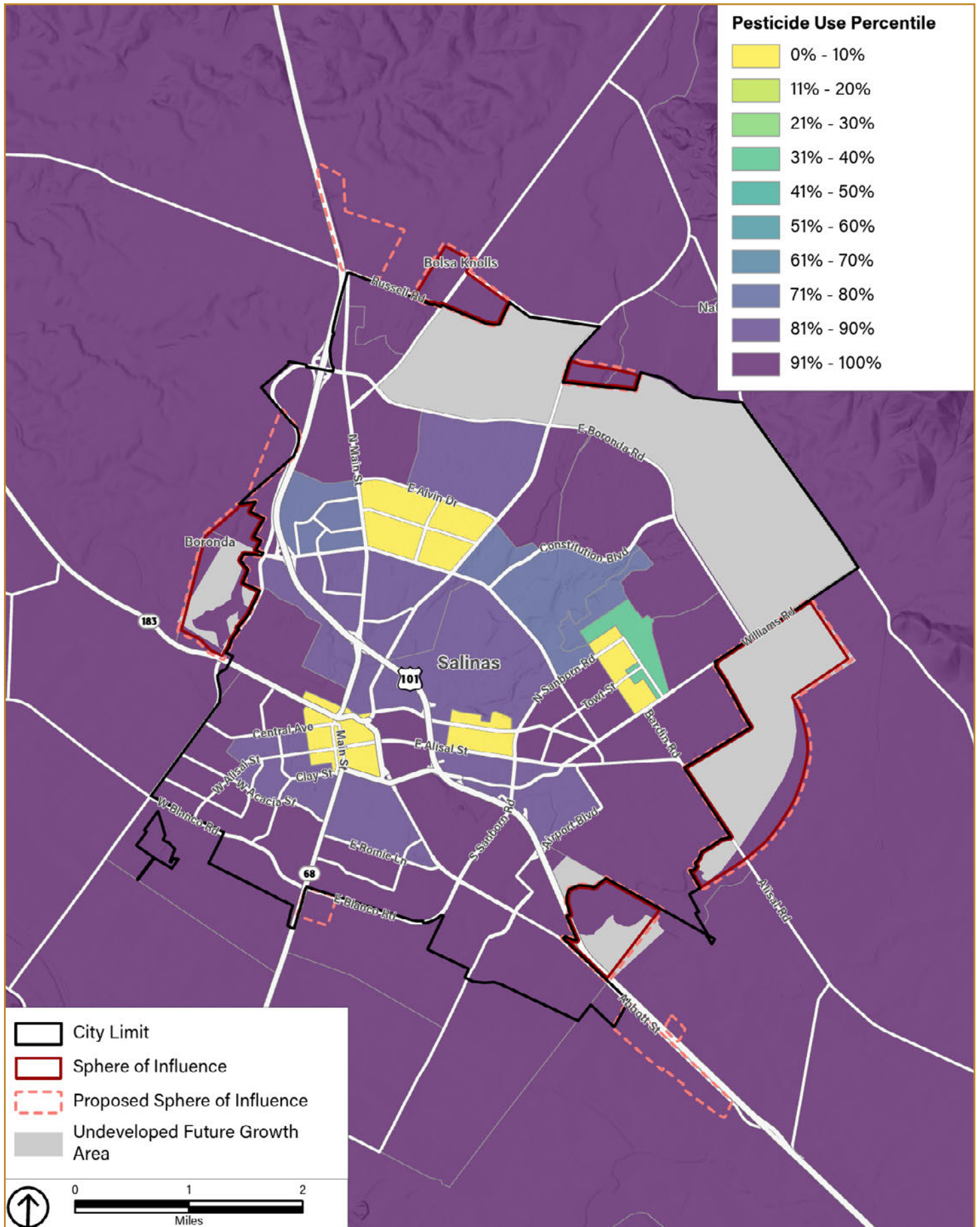
Traffic, industrial sites, and pesticide use contribute to pollution in Salinas. Transportation and residential buildings accounted for about 78 percent of GHG emissions in the city in 2019. Data from the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment also shows that in 2021 much of the city had high levels of pesticide exposure from the surrounding agricultural lands (Figure 27), with a majority of the city experiencing higher levels of exposure to pesticides than 70 percent of other Census tracts in California. Similarly, some portions of the city showed higher levels of pollution burden than 80 percent of other Census tracts in the state (Figure 28). “Pollution burden” represents the rate of potential exposure to several pollutants and the negative environmental effects caused by pollution of air, water, soil, and indoor environments.



Food Access

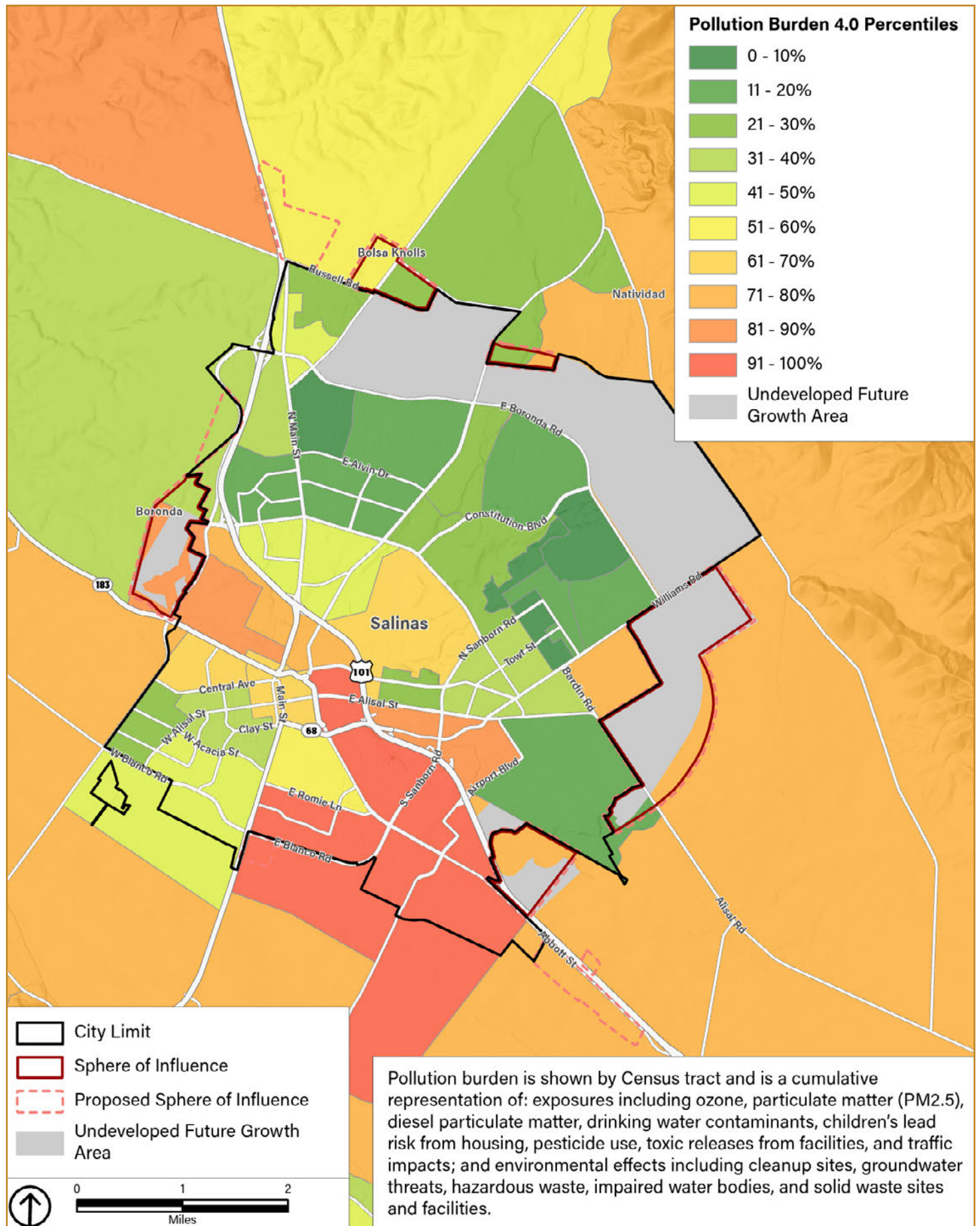
Monterey County has the highest rate of food insecurity among all 58 California counties. While the Salinas Valley is a premier agricultural growing region, access to healthy food can be an issue for some Salinas residents, especially those living along the perimeters of the city where access to grocery stores or farmers’ markets is more than a half-mile away (Figure 29). Fresh food can also be prohibitively expensive for low-income families.

Figure 27. Pesticide Use



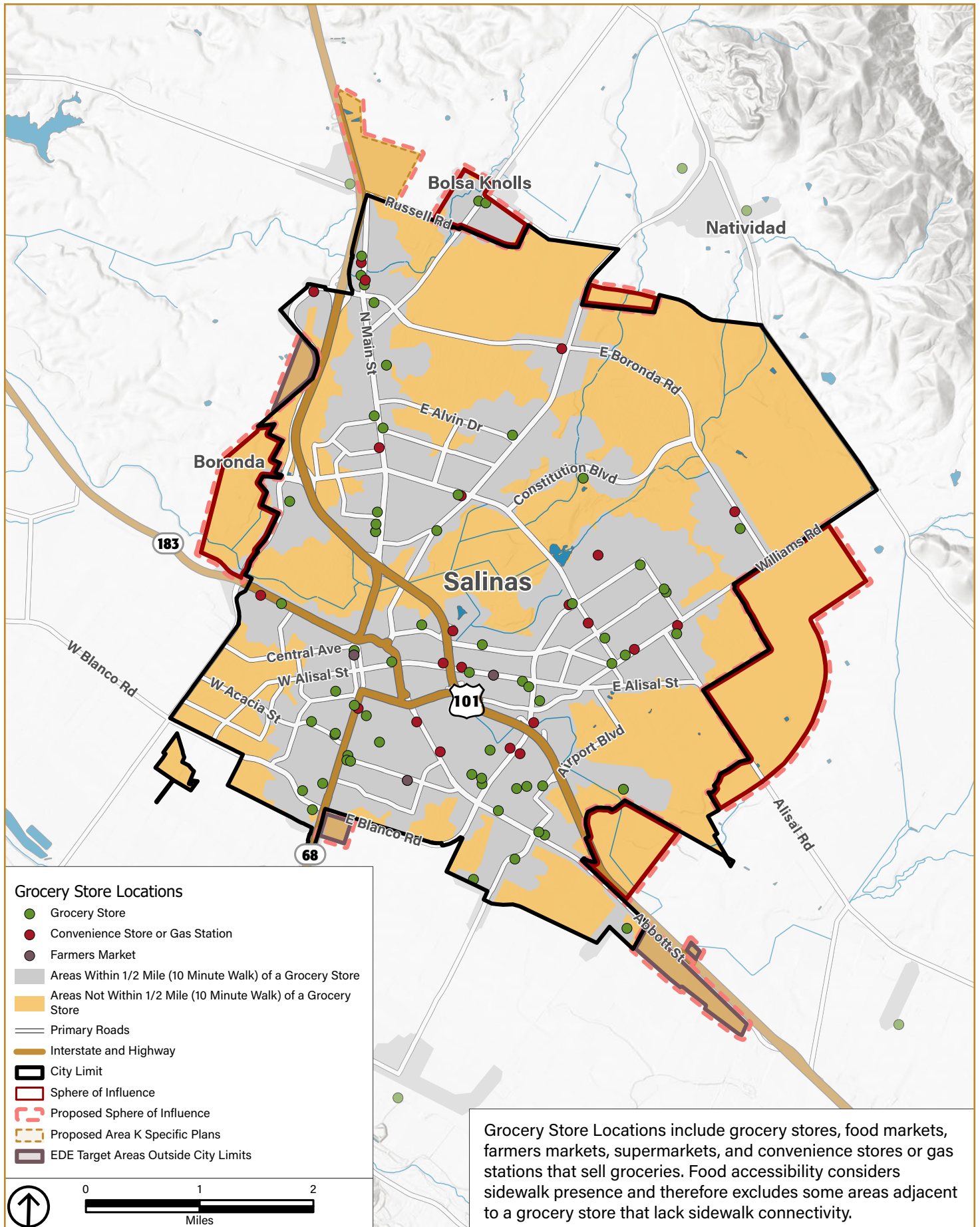
Data Source: Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2021.

Figure 28. Pollution Burden



Data Source: Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHA), 2021.

Figure 29. Food Access



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2021.



Public Facilities and Physical Activity

Access to outdoor space for passive or active recreation has been shown to be important for physical and mental health. Salinas parklands offer a variety of community recreation values from small pocket parks to larger community parks, special sports facilities, and open spaces.

In 2019, the City conducted a level of service review to understand the distribution and acreage needs for parkland. This performance review assesses how well the community can access and enjoy parks, recreation, and open space. Across the entire 648.5-acre park system, Salinas currently provides 3.98 acres of parklands (including golf courses and sports complexes) per thousand residents, which meets the adopted standard of 3 acres per 1,000 residents set by the General Plan Public Services and Facility Service Standards, the Park Classifications and Sport Facility Standards and the City’s Subdivision Ordinance/Quimby requirements. However, this ratio is still below the median for urban communities with similar population density.

When measured strictly by the combined 246.8 acreage of “core parks” (developed small, neighborhood, and community parks), the level of service drops to 1.52 acre per 1,000 residents, which is in the lower quartile for urban communities (Table 2).

Park access is defined by the Trust for Public Lands City Park Facts Report as the ability to reach a publicly owned park within a half-mile or 10-minute unobstructed walk (Figure 30). Based on the analysis of park access in the Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan, gaps in parkland distribution appear in 11 areas of the city:

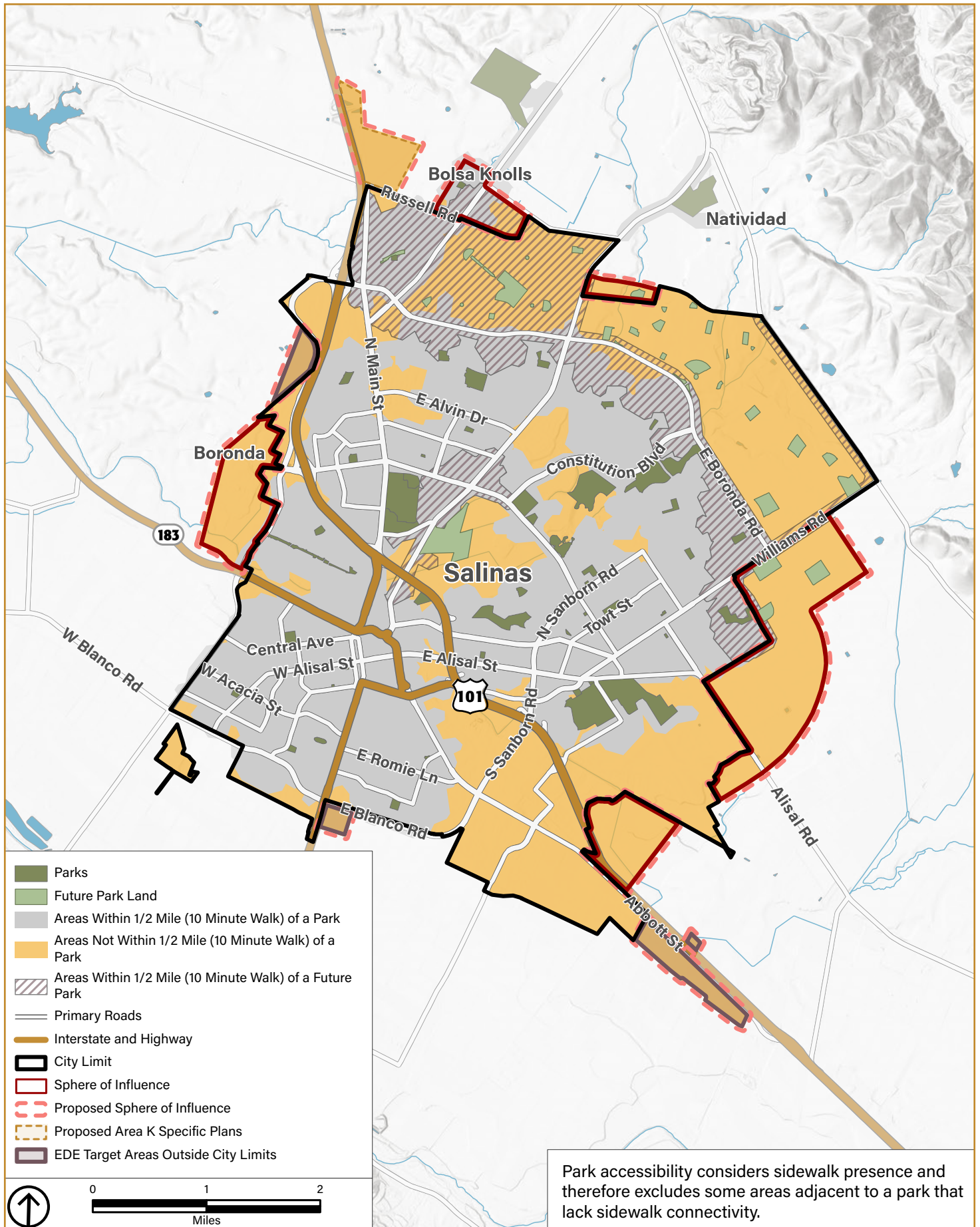
- El Paso Street near Carmel Avenue
- Romie Lane near Abbott Street
- Near Bardin Elementary
- Williams Road near Market Street
- Del Monte Avenue near Sanborn Road
- Carr Lake
- Garner Avenue near Alamo Way
- Cambrian Drive near El Sur Avenue
- Natividad Road near Alvin Drive
- School park near Harden Middle School and North Salinas High School

Table 2. Population Density per Square Mile

	All Agencies	Less than 500	500 to 1,500	1,501 to 2,500	Over 2,500
Lower Quartile	4.5 ac/1000	4.8 ac/1000	6.3 ac/1000	7.5 ac/1000	3.3 ac/1000
Median	9.9 ac/1000	9.9 ac/1000	12.1 ac/1000	12.9 ac/1000	6.4 ac/1000
Upper Quartile	17.5 ac/1000	17.3 ac/1000	19.9 ac/1000	20.6 ac/1000	13.5 ac/1000

Data Source: Salinas Parks, Recreation & Library Master Plan, 2019.

Figure 30. Park Access



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2021.

Safe and Sanitary Homes

The quality and condition of housing impacts the health of residents. Poor housing conditions have been linked to negative health outcomes, such as increased asthma rates in overcrowded homes. In Salinas, approximately 19 percent of all housing units are considered overcrowded, compared to 14 percent of units in Monterey County. Homes that need major repairs can also present unsafe conditions. The majority of homes in Salinas are over 30 years old and may need repairs based on the life of materials.

Social Services

In 2022, the Salinas City Council allocated \$300,000 to enhance community prevention and intervention programs that contribute to a healthier and safer Salinas, including, but not limited to, programs for

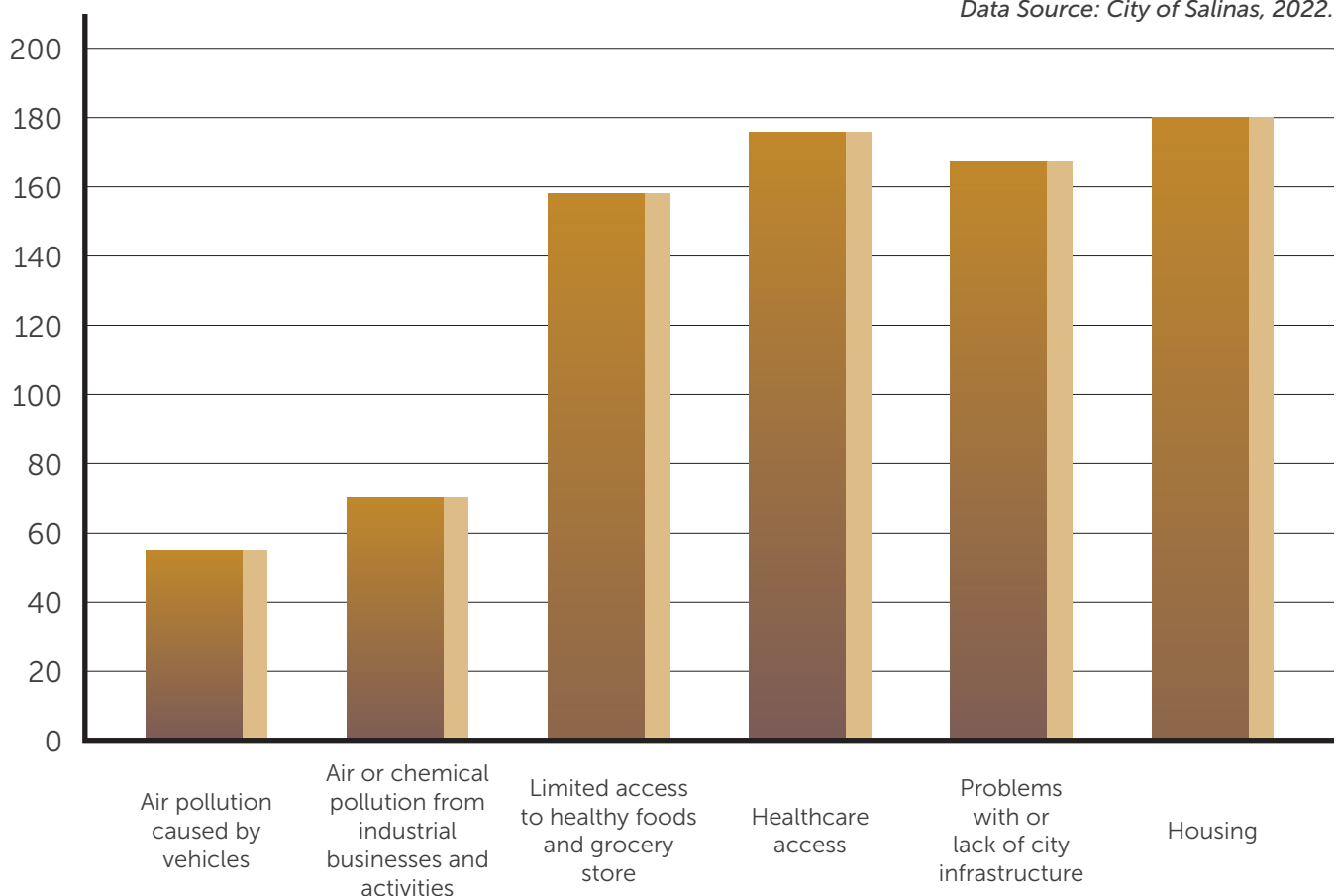
education, recreation, social work, public health, public safety, mental health, youth development, and community building.

Community Engagement

Environmental justice includes ensuring equitable involvement of vulnerable populations in the decision-making process. Outreach by the city shows that the communities' environmental justice priorities focus specifically on housing, access to healthcare, lack of physical infrastructure, and limited access to healthy foods and grocery stores (Figure 31). The City invited community members to participate in the municipal budgeting process for the 2023-2024 fiscal year through public workshops where residents could discuss the issues important to them.

Figure 31. Community Environmental Justice Priorities

Data Source: City of Salinas, 2022.



Economic Development

Overview

The Salinas community envisions itself as a leader in responsible economic development in Monterey County and on the Central Coast of California. The City aims to foster a strong and diverse economy by supporting existing industries like agriculture, promoting new small businesses, and attracting cutting-edge innovative technology. Many factors are required to achieve this goal, including a focus on education and workforce training for residents, fostering opportunities for well-paid jobs in existing and new job sectors, infrastructure that can support commercial and industrial job growth, available land for economic development opportunities, a business-friendly environment, and a safe community with amenities that attract and retain skilled workers.

Economic Development Assets

- Salinas is the regional hub for goods movement via highway, train, and air.
- The Salinas Valley is one of the world's premier agricultural regions, with an estimated economic impact of over \$8 billion per year.
- Salinas supports small businesses and innovation.
- There is a strong and growing retail scene, most notably the Northridge Mall, the Alisal, and Main Street.
- Future growth areas include retail and business locations.

Economic Development Challenges

- Some business owners are concerned that the development permit, land entitlement, and regulatory processes may not be conducive to their needs..
- Major employment sectors in the City do not provide high-wage jobs.
- Diversification of industry, improved workforce development and education, and the creation of higher-paying jobs is needed to combat a low median income relative to Monterey County and state averages .



SALINAS, CALIFORNIA

THE EPICENTER OF AGTECH



SALINAS VALLEY

#1



producer of fresh food in the U.S.

\$8 BILLION
agriculture industry

PRODUCES

60%
of the nation's leafy greens

28%
of the nation's strawberries

#1 producer
of Pinot Noir Grapes in CA

75,000+ Jobs
supported by agriculture
(Monterey County)



60 Miles From
Silicon Valley

50+
AGTECH
STARTUPS

ADDRESSING
GLOBAL ISSUES



Home to the annual
Forbes AgTech Summit

“
The Farming Town
Where Robots Reign”
-WIRED

- Food Production
- Sustainability
- Food Safety
- Labor
- Water Supply

“
One foot in the fields and the other edged
towards Silicon Valley”
-Los Angeles Times

“A city turns to lettuce fields
to grow high-tech startups”

-NPR

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Agriculture and Agriculture Technology Sectors

The nutrient-rich soil and favorable climate of the Salinas Valley make it one of the world's premier agricultural regions, with an estimated economic impact of over \$8 billion per year. The area supports growers and various operational industries that support agriculture, such as processing and distribution. In 2020, the agriculture industry was the largest employer of Salinas residents.

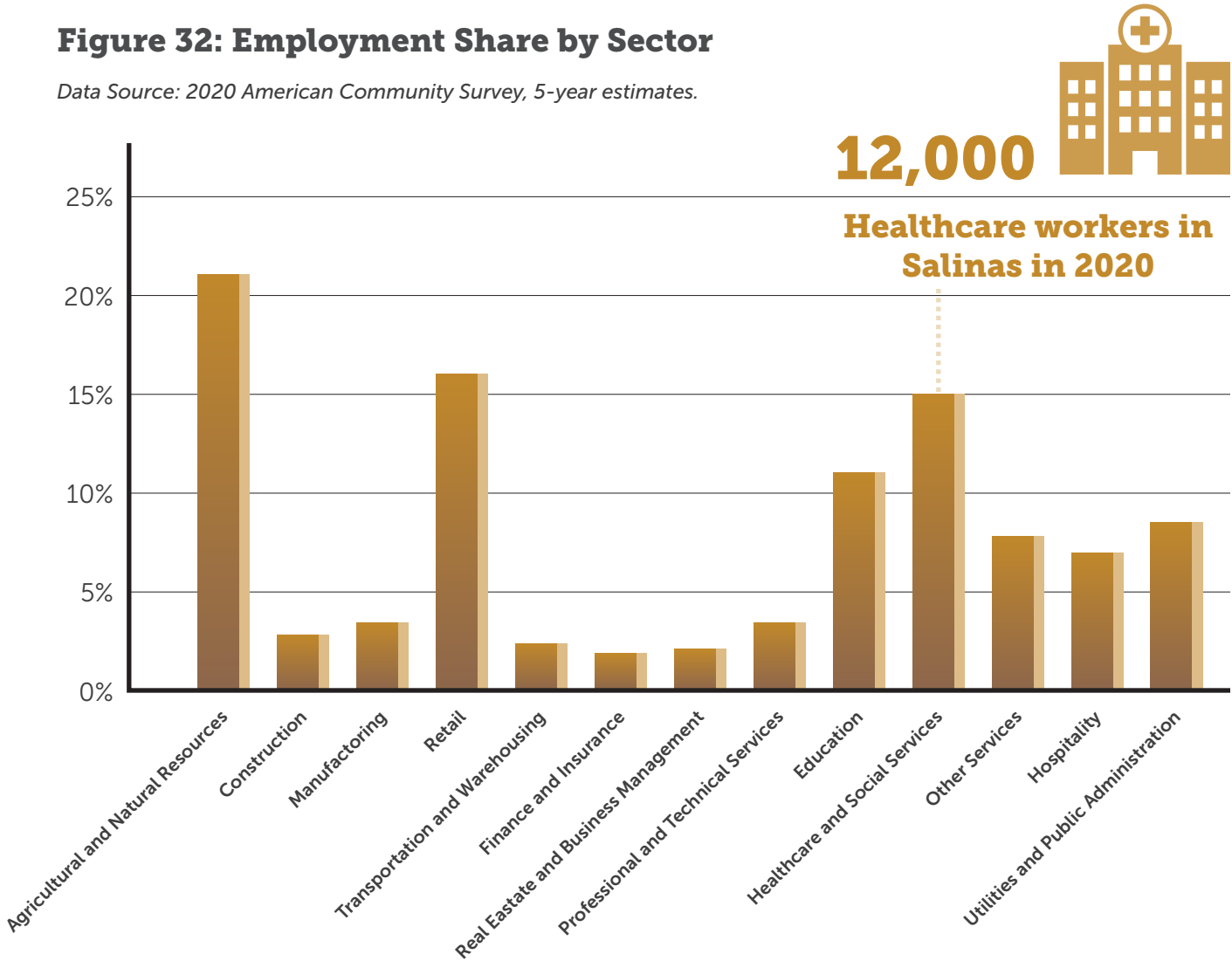
Salinas is home to major agricultural businesses like Dole, Driscoll's, and Taylor Farms, as well as new start-ups that are pushing the industry forward. Located just one hour from Silicon Valley, Salinas is also poised for growth in the Agriculture Technology (AgTech) industry. Through programs such as the Western Growers Association's Center for Innovation and Technology and the THRIVE Accelerator Program, Salinas supports startup businesses that use cutting-edge technologies to address some of the world's most critical challenges in sustainability, precision agriculture, renewable energy, and food safety.

Although agriculture is the foundation of the local economy, more than 100 manufacturing firms also call Salinas home. Healthcare and construction are also projected to be the fastest-growing industries in the city over the next two decades. There are currently more than 17,000 active business licenses in Salinas with some of the largest employers in the area being Dole Fresh Vegetable, Driscoll's, Taylor Farms, the County of Monterey, Household Credit Services, and Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Employment Share by Sector

Data Source: 2020 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

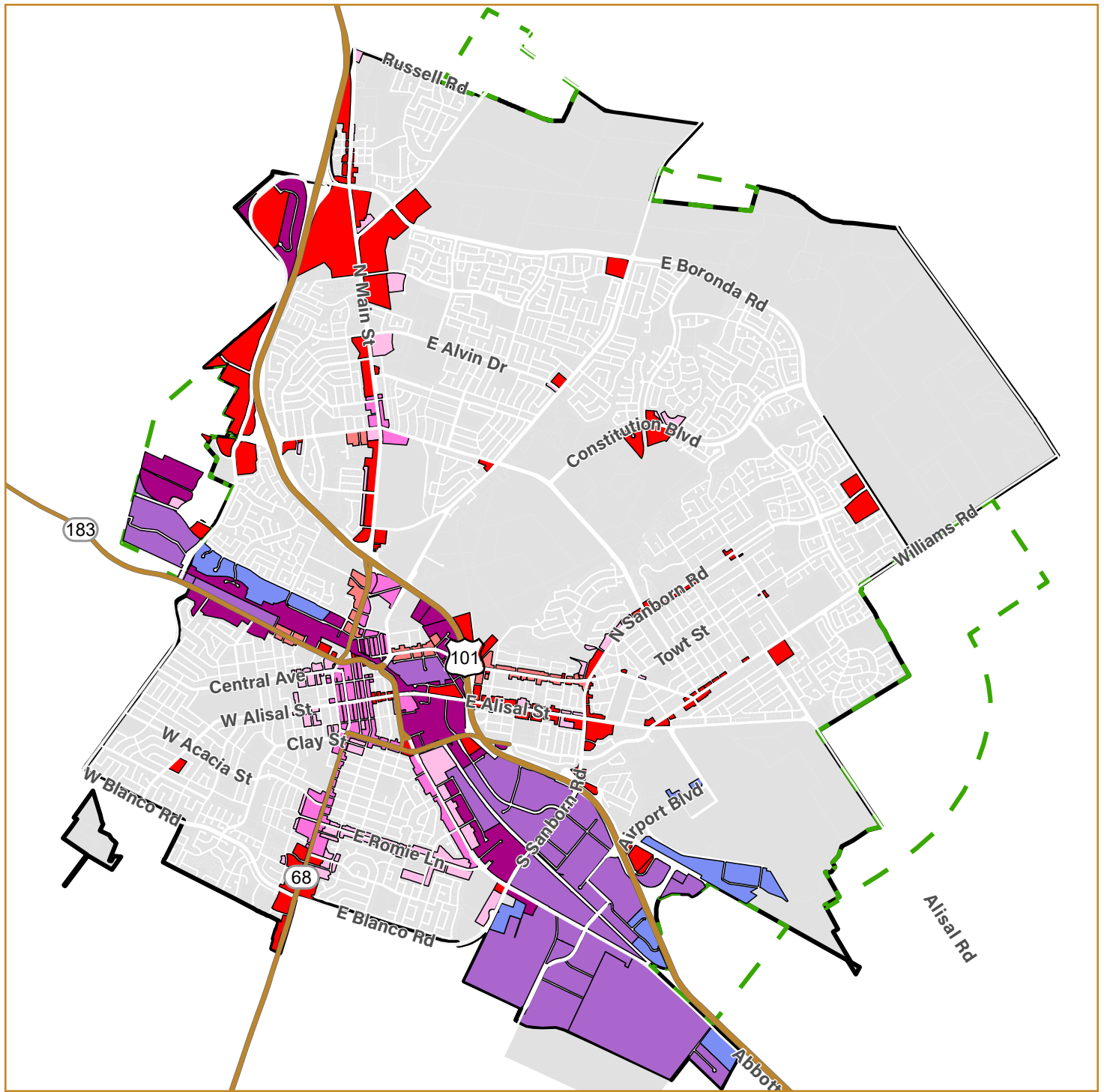


Retail Sector

Following agriculture and natural resources, retail is the second largest employment sector in the City (Figure 32). As a retail hub of the Central Coast, Salinas enjoys a wide selection and diversity of stores, even in the era of online shopping. Northridge Shopping Center contains over 120 specialty shops and four major stores – Macy’s, Sears, JC Penney, and Best Buy. Harden Ranch Plaza includes a Super Wal-Mart, Target, Safeway, specialty stores, restaurants, banking institutions, and a site for a future Lowe’s Home Center. The Westridge Shopping Center is home to Costco, another Wal-Mart, Office Max, Dick’s Sporting Goods, and a variety of national chain restaurants. The Salinas Auto Center houses nine local dealers. In October 2007, Home Depot moved its operations from Harden Ranch Plaza to the Auto Center area to join Kohl’s and other specialty stores. A new Lowe’s opened this last year in the future growth area in the northern part of the city. Additionally, Salinas’ location allows quick access to the Monterey Peninsula, as well as the San Jose area.

For a map of commercial areas in Salinas, refer to Figure 33.

Figure 33. Existing Business Areas



Existing Retail, Office, Commercial, and Industrial Areas

- Retail
- General Commercial/Light Industrial
- General Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Business Park
- Arterial Frontage
- Office
- City of Salinas Boundary
- Sphere of Influence



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021.

Support for Small Businesses

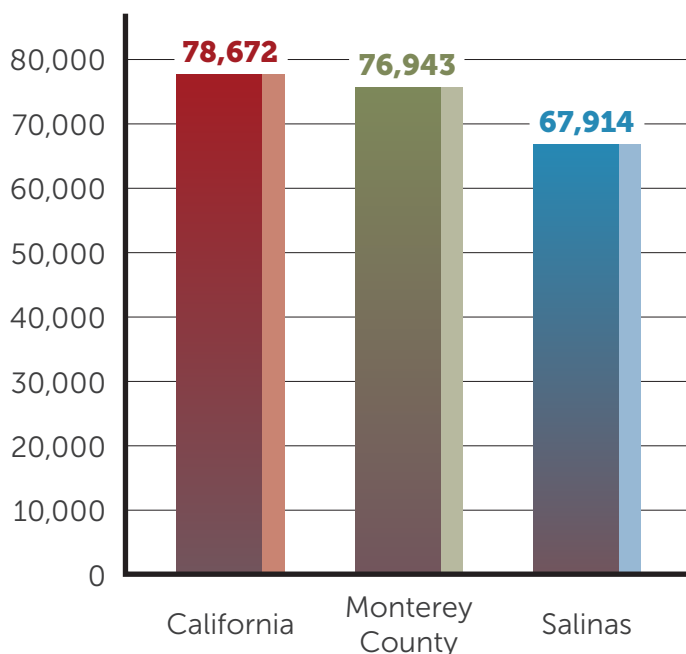
The City strives to support small, local businesses to foster a diverse economy. There are several programs in place to help local businesses with start-up funding or technical assistance. Programs for small, local businesses include the El Pajaro Community Development Corporation technical assistance program, the Grow Salinas Fund, the Small Business Hotline, and the Economic Recovery Task Force.

Median Household Income

While there are available jobs in the city, much of the population earns less than the state median income. This means that diversification of industry, increased workforce development and education, and the creation of higher-paying jobs may be needed in the near future. Households in Salinas have lower incomes on average compared to the county and state. In 2020, the median household income for Salinas was \$67,914, compared with \$76,943 in Monterey County and \$78,672 in California (Figure 34).

Figure 34. Median Household Income, 2020

Data Source:
2020 American Community Survey, 5 year estimate



Schools and Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education that an individual has completed. In Salinas, 21 percent of adults over the age of 25 have an associate's degree or higher. Forty-one percent of adults do not have a high school diploma. The quality, variety, and availability of local schooling affects educational attainment levels in communities. Salinas is served by three elementary school districts, a unified high school district, and several private schools at both the primary and secondary level. Hartnell College, a State Community College, offers two-year associate's degrees and occupational certificate programs. California State University Monterey Bay is less than 15 miles away on the former Fort Ord site and has strong local presence with a branch on North Main Street. Graduate studies through Golden Gate University, Monterey Institute of International Studies, and Chapman College are also available nearby. Also in the area are Moss Landing Marine Laboratory, Monterey College of Law, Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station, and San Jose State University.



21% of Salinas adults over 25 have an associate's degree or higher



4 - number of public school districts in Salinas



63 - public and private schools in Salinas

Public Safety

Overview

Public safety is made up of the services that reduce crime and keep residents safe. This includes traditional institutions, such as the police and fire departments, as well as community-based groups that are focused on conflict resolution and crime prevention without the need for more traditional interventions like police.

Public Safety Assets

- Overall crime has decreased in Salinas over the past several decades.
- There are six Fire Department stations, a Police Department station, the Monterey County Sheriff's Department Headquarters, and Highway Patrol in the city boundary.
- The City of Salinas and Salinas Police Department are dedicated to community building and host events, such as Coffee with a Cop and the National Night Out.
- The Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP) and the City of Salinas are working towards addressing and reducing youth violence through partnerships, interventions, and events to hear from youth, like the "My Life Story" conference.

Public Safety Challenges

- Salinas Police Department faces ongoing staffing concerns.
- Salinas' 2021 crime rate was approximately five times that of the City of Monterey.



Community Conflict Resolution and Crime Prevention

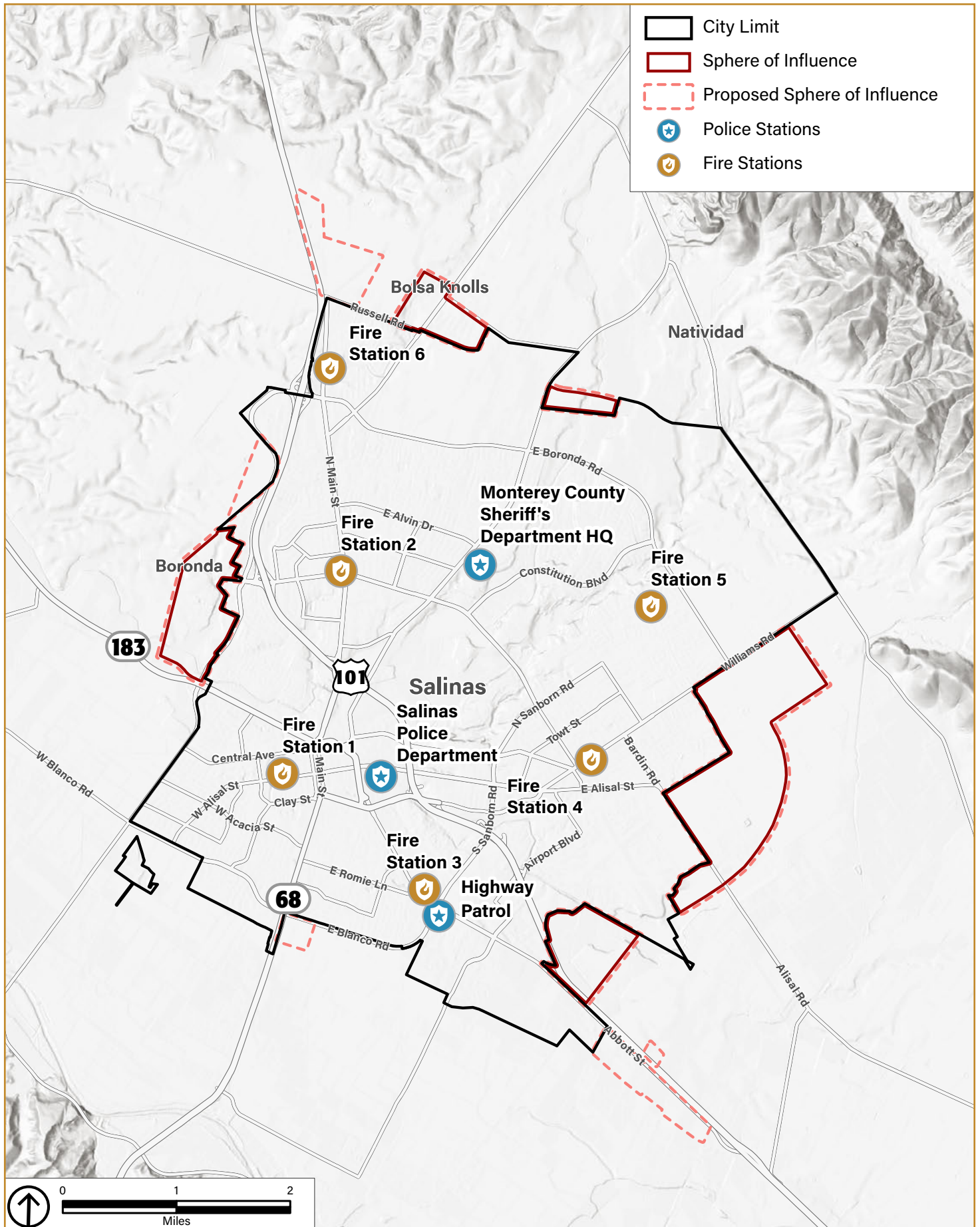
Conflict resolution and crime prevention enhance a community's safety through educational programs, peer-to-peer resolution, harm prevention programs, and environmental design. The CASP is a cross-sector organization created to address the culture of violence and youth violence through daily violence prevention, intervention, enforcement, and re-entry work throughout Salinas and Monterey County as a whole.

The City of Salinas is dedicated to the well-being and safety of the community's youth. The Salinas Community Safety and Recreation Divisions, City of Seaside, California Youth Outreach, and County of Monterey organize the annual "My Life Story" Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Conference. The conference began in 2018 and is designed to give youth and their families an opportunity to share their experiences with the programs, services, and community initiatives that have impacted their lives, and serves as a learning opportunity for agencies and service providers.

Fire and Police Services

The city's approximately 163,000 residents are served by the Salinas Police Department (SPD) and the Salinas Fire Department (SFD), which are dedicated to protecting and enhancing quality of life in the community. The Monterey County Sheriff's Department Headquarters and the California Highway Patrol Monterey Area office are also within city limits (Figure 35).

Figure 35. Fire and Police Stations



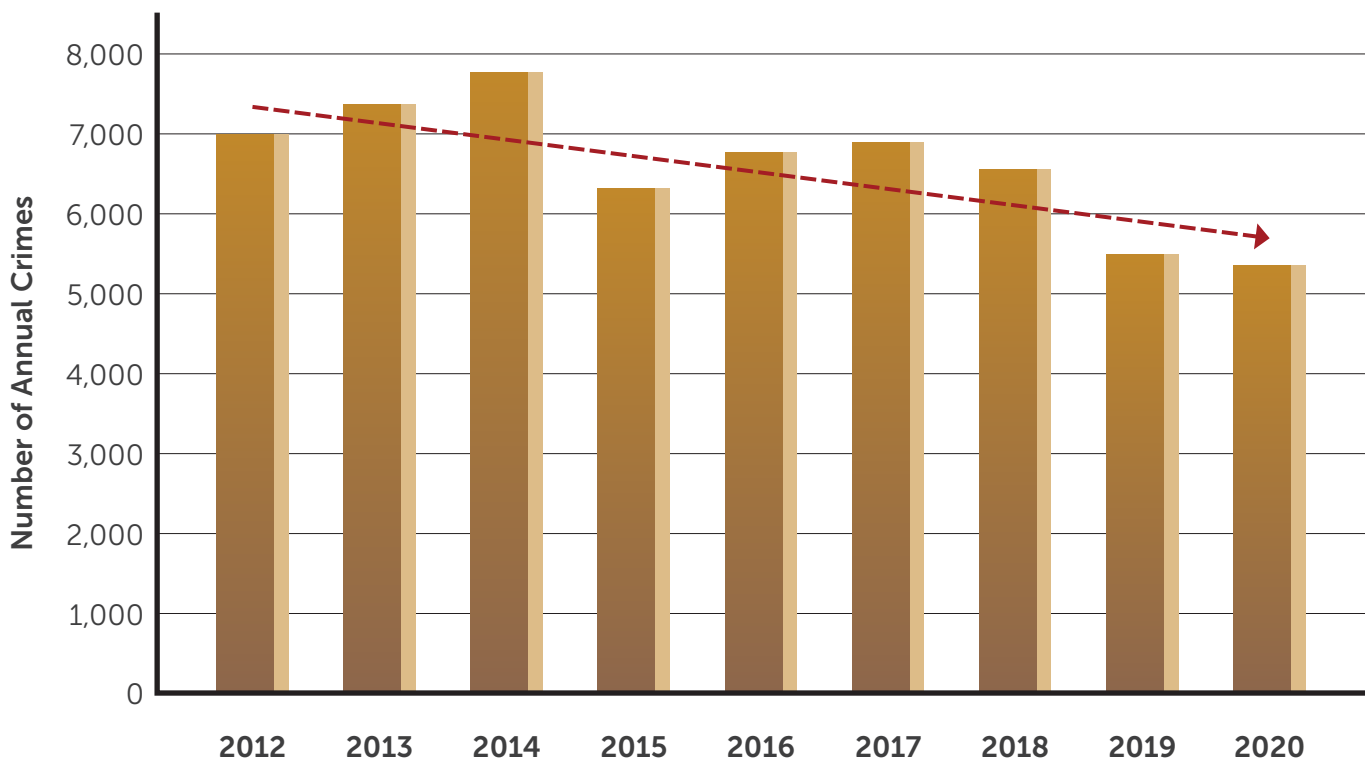
Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021.

Working in partnership with the residents of Salinas, SPD has put on events such as Coffee with a Cop and the annual National Night Out celebration to promote police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

While crimes have decreased over the past decade, the 2021 crime rate was approximately five times that of the nearby City of Monterey (Figure 36). Additionally, SPD is facing staffing shortages and recruitment challenges. Between 2019 and 2022, SPD lost 46 sworn police officers. The SPD is at critical staffing levels, and data indicates that this trend will be ongoing with police staffing continuing to steadily decrease, putting additional strain on law enforcement and response times.

SFD presently has six stations located throughout the city with plans and land allocated for a seventh station. In addition to serving the city, SFD also provides fire protection services to a portion of the Monterey County Regional Fire Protection District, bringing the total protection area for SFD to approximately 55 square miles.

Figure 36. Number of Annual Crimes in Salinas



Data Source: City of Salinas, 2021.

Arts, Culture, and Youth

Overview

Home to a young, diverse, and vibrant community, Salinas looks to its future as a colorful piece of art. The City of Salinas has pursued several initiatives to support local art, such as adoption of the Public Art Program Ordinance in 2017, approval of the Public Art Master Plan in 2020, and a Public Art Plan Grant to fund a new or existing Public Art Event in Salinas. Arts and music are also a top priority for recreation programming in the Parks, Recreation, and Libraries Master Plan in 2019, as well as the Alisal Vibrancy Plan in 2020. This section highlights existing programs for local art and cultural activities, the historic resources of the community, and efforts to foster leadership in young residents.

Arts, Culture, and Youth Assets

- The City has pursued several initiatives to support local art, including the Public Art Program Ordinance, the Public Art Master Plan, and the Public Art Plan Grant.
- Salinas has a diverse group of visual and performing art organizations.
- Salinas is home to many public murals, as well as arts and cultural events for residents and visitors.
- The City approved \$8 million for a new community center in District 5 as part of the 2022 budget.
- There are several historic buildings and educational centers throughout the city.



Arts, Culture, and Youth Challenges

- There is limited access to space for visual and performing arts organizations to rehearse and meet.
- Salinas lacks a true community urban plaza for civic and cultural events.
- Funding and support for local artists is limited.
- More work can be done to preserve and celebrate historic structures in the city.





Public Art

Salinas strives to support art as an avenue for bringing people together and honoring the stories of the land and people, especially those that have been historically underrepresented. Public art can take a wide range of forms, sizes, and scales. It can include murals, sculpture, memorials, integrated architecture or landscape architectural work, community art, digital media, and performances or festivals. The unifying aspect of public art is its purpose as a community asset .

Throughout Salinas, residents and visitors can enjoy 18 public murals, which not only transform and beautify public spaces, but also build community connections.



Cultural Investments

Salinas boasts a diverse group of visual and performing arts organizations ranging from painting, sculpting, and dance, to music. The city is also home to many arts and cultural events and festivals throughout the year for youth, families, and visitors, including the Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival, Ciclovía, the Rodeo, and the Salinas PAL Car Show. Community events like these can be opportunities to encourage pedestrian activity, revitalize neighborhoods, and spur economic development. They can also help to reinforce the identity of a community and its residents.

The Salinas arts community is focused on combatting the existing challenges of limited art space and support for local artists by pursuing grant and other funding opportunities at the local, State, and national levels. Grant opportunities include the Salinas Public Art Plan Grant, Community Foundation for Monterey County, partnerships with local organizations, and the National Endowment for the Arts grant program .

Historic Buildings and Structures

Salinas has a rich history, and the City has maintained or restored many of the local historic buildings and structures. There are currently over 20 properties throughout the city officially listed as historic resources. In 2018, Salinas adopted an adaptive reuse ordinance, which allows for creative new uses of historic buildings while still maintaining their historic look and feel. There is an opportunity for the community to further preserve and celebrate the local historic structures, such as through signs and educational placards for historic buildings that provide a unique charm to the area. There are also several places where residents can learn more about the history of Salinas and the surrounding region, including the Steinbeck House and Museum, the Boronda Adobe, and Monterey County History Centers . Below is a list of national and state-recognized historic places in Salinas.



National Historic Register¹:

- Samuel M. Black House, 418 Pajaro Street
- Peter J. Bontadelli House, 119 Cayuga Street
- Jose Eusebio Boronda Adobe, Boronda Road and W. Laurel Drive
- Krough House, 146 Central Avenue
- Monterey County Court House, 240 Church Street
- Monterey County Jail, 142 W. Alisal Street
- Sheriff William Joseph Nesbitt House, 66 Capitol Street
- Rancho Las Palmas, S. of Salinas at 200 River Road
- Republic Café, 37 Soledad Street
- B. V. Sargent House, 154 Central Avenue
- John Steinbeck House, 132 Central Avenue

California Register of Historical Resources²:

- First and Second Filipino Regiments Monument, near Sherwood Park, 920 N Main Street
- Harvey-Baker House, 20 Station Place
- Hill Town Ferry, 2 Spreckels Lane
- Jose Eusebio Boronda Adobe Casa, 333 Boronda Road
- Site of the Battle of Natividad, intersection of San Juan Grade Rd and Crazy Horse Canyon Road
- Temporary Detention Camps for Japanese Americans-Salinas Assembly, Sherwood Gardens Rodeo Grounds, 940 North Main Street

1 National Historic Register: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>

2 California Register of Historical Resources: <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/>



Youth Leadership and Development

Salinas has several programs to inspire and engage young people in the community. Programs such as the Dream Academy and the Community Alliance for Safety and Peace Youth Leadership Academy offer opportunities for young people to meet with community leaders, engage in community service, and develop leadership skills. Hartnell College also offers student leadership and professional development programs.



SALINAS

INTERO

231 MAIN STREET



VALLEY AVENUE



WALKERS PARK



