

URBANST 164/EARTHSYS 160: Sustainable Cities
Winter 2017
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Project: Alisal Housing Inventory

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the City of Salinas for graciously introducing our team to the Alisal region and organizing several meetings with key stakeholders for this project. Organizations who provided guidance during this process include: Building Healthy Communities - East Salinas, Code Enforcement of the City of Salinas, CHISPA (Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association, Inc.), the Mayor of Salinas, the Deputy City Manager of Salinas, and many other employees of the City of Salinas. We especially appreciate the time and efforts of Jonathan Moore and Lisa Brinton who initiated this project from the City of Salinas and Carol McKibben for providing context on the history of the region. Lastly, we would like to thank Deland Chan for being a supportive instructor during this class and arranging these projects which helped many of us build real-world experience in the public sector.

Executive Summary

In collaboration with the City of Salinas, our team worked on two main items that will be used for the Alisal Vibrancy Plan. The Vibrancy Plan is a long-term process for revitalizing the Alisal area, a historically disadvantaged neighborhood of Salinas. Our first item is a walk-audit survey that will be conducted by community volunteers. Data from this survey will be consolidated into a housing inventory with parcel-level information on the state of housing in the Alisal region which can be used by the City for planning purposes and as evidence of housing deficiencies when applying for funding. The survey is also accompanied by a training module for volunteers that explains the features of the survey and how to complete it. The second item is an analytical report on applying for the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, other grants, and sustainability best practices. We hope both of these deliverables will be valuable to the City of Salinas in better understanding the needs of the Alisal and in initiating possible ways to finance the rehabilitation.

Project Purpose

In the city of Salinas, California is a neighborhood called the Alisal- an area notorious for lower socioeconomic status and ample housing disparities. The Alisal was annexed into Salinas in 1963, previously being an unincorporated community. 95.1% of residents in the Alisal are Hispanic, 72.6% are low or moderate income, 33.3% are in poverty, over $\frac{3}{4}$ of its housing stock was built before 1979, and 19 out of 22 of the public housing complexes in Salinas are located in the Alisal. Through a tour of the Alisal, a wide range of homeless encampments, trailer parks, pre-manufactured homes, manufactured trailers, multifamily dwellings, and single-family dwellings can be seen, varying in levels of overcrowding and visible distress. Most units are only one story because of restrictive zoning laws, contributing to the ever-increasing demand for housing. Though there is a clear demand, almost no new private housing development has occurred in the last 10 years – only 34 units, all at market price. This huge discrepancy in wealth and services between Alisal and the rest of Salinas is deep-rooted and institutionalized through historic and systemic segregation, which largely explains why it is such a complex problem to fix. The first step to resolving a problem is understanding the issue itself- specifically to our case, understanding the current condition of housing units in the Alisal.

The Community Development Department of the City of Salinas also seeks to understand the current condition of housing in the Alisal, so they can work to improve the quality of life for their residents. In 1993, they worked with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to deliver focused revitalization activities through Community Development Block Grant Funds. In October 2016, they kicked off work on the Alisal Vibrancy Plan. Recently, they completed a plan for Downtown Salinas, a new Consolidated Plan and Housing Element. Clearly, they have been and are continuing to work towards the organization's mission to “[create] a safe, healthy,

and prosperous Salinas through targeted revitalization and sustainable, well-designed land use and development” (cityofsalinas.org, 2017). Our group, in particular, has worked directly with Jonathan Moore, Associate Planner, and Lisa Brinton, Senior Planner, from the City. Their consistent support, guidance, and presence made for a very collaborative experience in service learning.

In order to sustain our effective partnership, our goals for this project have been very much in line with the goals of the Community Development Department. We set out to create a survey and training module to gather data on the current state of the housing stock in the Alisal and answer important questions: Where are specific geographical areas of need? Does the condition of housing qualify it for competitive funding sources, such as the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant? Beyond the survey itself, we also set out to maintain a focus on listening to what Jonathan, Lisa, and other experts from the City (the Mayor, the Deputy City Manager, CHISPA CEO, Building Healthy Communities Director, and GIS Experts) had to say about what their City needs. We were aware that they, along with the residents, know what is best for their community, so we made it our mission to deliver a product that all of these stakeholders would be excited to see implemented in their neighborhood. On a more personal note, each of our group members aspired to better understand how to systemically and cooperatively tackle a complex issue, deeply-rooted issue, such as housing inequality. We embodied a tangible appreciation for service-learning, community partnerships, and empathy far outside our standard circle of interaction.

Beyond the scope of this class and our personal growth, this project is important because of the tangible effects it may have on policy, development, and, subsequently, social equity. The housing inventory has the potential to determine where to distribute resources for housing rehabilitation and construction, as well as guide the City in its assessment of possible funding sources for these resources. It is important to remember that the entire existence of our project and of the Community Development Department is grounded in supporting those who live in Salinas; it always goes back to the people themselves and how to best support their well-being. Since community volunteers will be the ones conducting our survey, our project advocates and empowers residents to take control of their living situation and take steps to advance it. Improving housing units where it is needed most would surely improve the health and happiness of much-deserving families and bring pride to residents who helped see this shift to fruition.

A sustainable city is conscious of environmental quality, economic vitality, social equity, and cultural continuity. Working to improve housing conditions in the Alisal is a project that incorporates all four pillars of sustainability in an integral and cohesive manner. If rebuilt, homes will be constructed with energy-efficient and environmentally-conscious materials, as has been seen with modern public housing in the Alisal. They will be affordable and take families’ economic standing into consideration in determining its pricing. Safe, comfortable, and affordable living conditions provide a solid foundation, so individuals have an equal opportunity to succeed in other facets of life. Through all of this, since community members themselves will

be a present voice through this project, the current cultural continuity of the Alisal will be regarded and respected- improving the neighborhood, not uprooting it. A sustainable city always strikes a balance between these four pillars, never looking at just one or another in isolation; it will be up to the City with the progression of the project to determine how to effectively weigh focuses on the environment, economy, social equity, and cultural continuity.

Literature Review

Walk audits and windshield surveys have been previously implemented by many local governments. While some audits have focused more on community safety or pedestrian comfort, our walk audit will be used to assess the state of housing in the Alisal area (SRTS Guide, DOT Western Australia, CDC). However, our walk audit will be using techniques that have been developed in the past. Other local governments have already created their own toolkits with suggestions for how to conduct an audit effectively and safely for volunteers. We drawn upon this expertise to help us decide what the important components of the audit should be. AARP provides several tips on their Create the Good site such as identifying neighborhoods and routes ahead of time and providing maps and cameras to volunteers so that they are prepared to complete the survey. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation suggests that audit organizers “involve potential stakeholders immediately so they have buy-in to the process and decisions,” which is something that our team has also considered during our meetings with Building Healthy Communities and CHISPA. However, both these walk audits were focused on measuring the walkability of a neighborhood rather than the housing conditions.

A more relevant source that we build upon is from Flint, which recently conducted their own survey of housing in the city. It lists the main features of the house that volunteers should examine to determine its conditions and served as a guide for our own survey. We borrowed its scale for rating homes (1 = Good, 2 = Fair, 3 = Poor, 4 = Sub-standard), but our survey also asks about issues like overcrowding, which is specific to the Alisal. We also request volunteers to not only provide an overall rating of the home, but also ratings of specific features such as the windows or the garage of the home.

Another example of cities attempting to record the state of their properties is Detroit’s efforts to combat blight through its Motor City Mapping Project. Using a Blexting app, it has motivated city residents to survey properties all across Detroit. In its first phase, all of the city was surveyed, and conditions information for 376,260 properties was recorded. This information was then used in the Detroit Blight Elimination Task Force’s report. The City of Pontiac has further borrowed this app, with funding from PNC Bank, for use in its own efforts to track blight (Oakland County Times). The hope is that these records will make the building department’s blight removal programs more efficient as multiple homes in one area can be identified to be demolished.

While this app is very easy to navigate, our team decided against using it for the Alisal Housing Inventory as it seems many resident volunteers may not own the technology needed to use it. Our project also requires more specific questions than those asked on the Blexting app, so we would prefer to use a method that is customizable and geared toward the issues that the Alisal faces. The Alisal particularly has a long history of overcrowding. The levels of overcrowding in the Alisal are twice those of the rest of the city, and households in this area tend to be farmworker households who are living in poverty and members of minority groups (City of Salinas). The majority of homes include 5 or more people, despite the fact that many families are living in rental apartments. Because of the prominence of overcrowding in the Alisal, we feel there is a gap in the literature that will be addressed with this housing survey.

Current sources focus on the numerical aspects of overcrowding such as the number of people per room (HUD). However, in the American Housing Survey conducted by the Census, many of the residents of the Alisal may not accurately report the number of people living in a house out of fear they may be removed from their homes. Therefore, we cannot depend on this data to assess overcrowding. Other measures are needed that are more qualitative in nature, and a goal of this project is to develop those measures with the information we have received from the City and code enforcement. So far, we have considered features such as limited parking, signs of habitation in a detached shed or garage, and other structures that may be used to house a person. We hope this research will continue to inform city governments in their development of future housing inventories.

Methodology

When we were introduced to the project, we did not have much data on Alisal. We were shown the map of the area by Jonathan, who also explained the demographic and socioeconomic status of the area. As mentioned above, the goal was to come up with a database that could later be used to rigorously analyse the merits of applying for the HUD Neighborhood Choice Grant.

We initially met with Monterey County Housing Authority who provided us with the Structural/Site Conditions Form that looks at the structural components of a housing unit (i.e. roof, wall foundation, gutters, windows) and captures the degree of deterioration or dilapidation of each component. We also met with Code Enforcement to determine and implement any ways to exteriorly determine other housing quality factors such as overcrowding and illegal garage conversion, which can be more difficult to assess from just an outside view of the unit. With the form as a starting point, we researched what other cities and counties had done similar projects.

Given Detroit's efforts to combat blight through its Motor City Mapping Project using a blexting app, we initially sought to apply the same surveying methodology. However, when we met with The Mayor, The deputy city manager and the Director of Building Healthy Communities, it became apparent that an app would not be a good fit for the city. While the app

would provide for easy synchronization of data into multiple databases including GIS, the volunteers recruited may not either have the technology required or be willing to use their mobile data to gather the information.

With such feedback, we resulted in developing a paper based surveying methodology similar to what Flint did. We also borrowed its scale for rating homes (1 = Good, 2 = Fair, 3 = Poor, 4 = Sub-standard) and customized it to capture more nuanced details like overcrowding and types of garages. This method was welcomed by all three stakeholders we had earlier met with and also on principle matched what the Monterey County Housing Authority was using; though not as technically detailed. The paper survey was settled upon mainly because of its ease of use and did not require any technology backing. Moreover the resident volunteers would only need a pen; saving their personal mobile data for personal use. However, it involves lots of paper and will in the long run become hectic to identify and pull out a specific house inventory. It is our hope that the City council will fully support this project and provide necessary resources to see it through.

Deliverables

From our collaboration with the City of Salinas, our goal was to provide the city with three deliverables: a structured housing inventory survey, a training module for volunteers conducting the survey, and a grant analysis for the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant which the city would like to pursue. Final copies of each can be found in the Appendices at the end of the report.

Alisal Housing Inventory Survey

Our major deliverable and means of answering our research questions of interest is the Housing Inventory Survey we have created. The purpose of the survey is to be able to identify “distressed” housing that can be used to qualify for the HUD Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant. The survey will be used to assess the quality of housing from a purely external analysis. To do this we started by borrowing the framework of Structural/Site Conditions Form provided by the Monterey County Housing Authority.

The Structural/Site Conditions Form looks at the structural components of a housing unit (i.e. roof, wall foundation, gutters, windows) and captures the degree of deterioration or dilapidation of each component. This original Site Conditions form is very cluttered and intimidating, something that would not be ideal for community volunteers. We wanted to create a survey that is simple, straightforward, and can be used by community residents with no previous background in evaluating housing stock. To ensure that the survey we created was user-friendly and viable for the volunteer community residents, we met with Building Healthy Communities, an organization with much more experience in working alongside communities and

understanding their perspective. This provided us with guidance on how to make our survey approachable along with what to include in the training module for the survey.

The Alisal Housing Inventory Survey (**see Appendix A**), took several iterations to finalize. After meeting with Building Healthy Communities it was clear that survey needed to be translated from digital to paper format in order to meet the needs of the community volunteers. Our initial surveys took from the Structural/Site Conditions Form and added questions on overcrowding and garage types, but needed a more narrowly defined and qualitative way to evaluate housing. We took from the Flint housing survey model to implement a 4-point scale to assess the housing units. Following this model, we provided a key that more thoroughly describes what attributes constitute each number rating of a house's external condition.

The Alisal Housing Inventory survey is now multi-methodological: incorporating the 4-point scale for a few crucial structures of the house; a final global score for the housing unit and whether it is in general considered good (1), fair (2), poor (3), or sub-standard (4); and multiple answer measures of housing type, garage type, and signs of overcrowding. These components of the survey were finally reformatted to a landscape layout survey that allows for volunteers to record and survey multiple houses per sheet of paper survey. This allows for more sustainable and cost-effective surveying and synergizes well with the model of street-by-street surveying. Volunteers will first include the street name on the top of their sheet and then only have to fill out the address number of each unit as opposed to re-writing every full address (as many as 14 per page) as they go down a street.

The vision for this survey is for volunteers to be handed a stack of survey sheets, along with a cover letter, the training module, which will provide detailed instructions and the housing quality rating key.

Training Module

Given that the City of Salinas would be recruiting resident volunteers to conduct the actual survey, we made a training module to accompany the Survey (**see Appendix B**). The purpose of the Training module is to provide easy and quick guidance for the volunteers in filling out the survey fast and effectively. It provides pictures, examples and the scoring rubric for houses being surveyed. It also provides guidance on procedures to be followed if and when the volunteers do interact with residents in the neighborhood.

Grant Analysis

Our final deliverable is a grant analysis of the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant (**see Appendix C**). According to our analysis, the City of Salinas currently has much of the documentation necessary to successfully apply for federal grants to revitalize the Alisal NRSA area. The Alisal is eligible in that 33 percent of all residents live in

poverty, 37% of all households are overcrowded, and the Alisal sees a disproportionate fraction of all violent crime in the City of Salinas.

A specific criterion for this grant application, however, is that a public or assisted housing project within the neighborhood that is severely distressed must be identified to be rehabilitated. Due to the Housing Authority's active attempts to maintain the state of public housing in Monterey County, most public housing projects are in fair conditions (at least structurally) in Salinas. Some more feasible routes to receive funding may be to identify any federally assisted housing projects that are currently in disrepair within the Alisal area, or further identify the degree to which Alisal housing units are distressed by overcrowding.

Moving Forward

The next steps for the project lies with the Alisal Vibrancy Plan Team in Salinas. Particularly:

1. Recruit and train volunteers.
2. Survey, collect and document actionable data in Alisal with regards to the housing conditions.
3. Perform a merit analysis on development grants that Alisal qualifies for, including but not limited to The HUD Neighborhood Choice Grant.
4. Apply for funding.

Conclusion

There exists many action items to consider following the conclusion of our project. If given the time and resources, our team could have conducted runs of the walk audit to gather data and analyze the survey's usefulness in efficiently doing so. We ourselves would have learned tremendously from trial runs, to understand how our previous assumptions on the survey were false when faced with reality. Additionally, we would have worked further with the City of Salinas to secure a HUD Choice Neighborhood's Grant, by first identifying a distressed housing unit to be rehabilitated such that the city meets all application criteria. Lastly, although the survey was in paper format for the accessibility of all volunteers, the translation of the handwritten data to a technological platform--specifically one that maps features over the real geospatial area--for widespread data visualization and distribution is something that we could have helped the city's GIS experts in doing. However, given the scope of the project and the underlying idea that our role as Stanford students is help without claiming ownership, perhaps our team's transient presence in the Alisal is ultimately for the best. There are many roadblocks to achieving sustainability in all four of its aspects, and for a neighborhood like the Alisal working to reach even one pillar of sustainability (without trampling on any other pillars in the process) poses many challenges. After working with the City of Salinas and understanding the

figures and facets that move the Alisal along, our team has full faith with the City in upholding the dignity and longevity of today's Alisal, and the Alisal of the future.

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Appendix B: Housing Inventory Survey Training Module

Alisal Housing Methodology Survey: Training Module
City of Salinas
California

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for participating in the 2017 Alisal Housing Survey Methodology. The purpose of the survey is to identify “distressed” housing throughout the Alisal such that the city can receive grants (HUD Choice Neighborhood’s Grant) to renovate the neighborhood’s distressed structures. This module aims to (1) instruct volunteers on the best practices when using the survey out on the field, (2) describe the survey in more specific detail, and (3) help define what makes a structure “distressed.” Please read this module in its entirety before conducting any walk audit surveys.

IMPORTANT—Please take time to read and understand the following crucial points of conducting a walk audit survey:

- To ensure your safety and the safety of the locals, please remain on the public sidewalk at all times while filling out the survey, without exception. If there is no sidewalk, please carefully remain on the street while conducting the survey.
- Please do not engage with the residents of the street you are surveying. This is to ensure your safety and the consistency of the walk audit survey’s results.
- **Never conduct a walk audit survey alone. Always go out with at least 1 other person and stay together at all times.**
- Each unit should take no longer than 1-3 minutes to complete.
- Before leaving to conduct the survey, check the weather and the time when the sun sets. This is so that you ensure you have enough time to complete the survey before nightfall and in good weather condition.
- Please contact us if you are unsure or hesitant to navigate your designated road for any reason. Trust your intuition above all. Remember, your safety is our firstmost priority!

- Housing Type**
- 1 - Single Family
 - 2 - Duplex
 - 3 - Apartment
 - 4 - Trailer



- Garage Type**
- 1 - Detached
 - 2 - Attached
 - 3 - None



1-Substandard. Major Cracking, Holes in structure, Collapsed, broken windows, condemned, Fire damaged, etc.



2. Poor. Minor cracking, No holes, Some broken or boarded windows, Minor fire damage, Needs painting,



3. Fair. Solid Foundation, some peeling in roof, no broken windows (may be boarded), No fire damage, may need painting.



4. Good. Sound roof
 No broken or boarded windows
 No peeling/ minor peeling in paint.



Wall, Windows, Roofs
1- Substandard
2- Poor
3- Fair
4- Good

Signs of Overcrowding
1-Limited parking (cars in yard, full driveway, no spots on street)
2-People living in garage
3-Illegal structures added to home
4-Overflow of trash/ junk

1- Limited Parking: To many vehicles and no assigned parking for them.



2- Clear indications of people living in garage (may only be visible with garage door open.)

3- Illegal additional structures may include: gazebos, additional rooms, any structure near/on a building that is uncommon compared to other homes on the street. Look for unusual and

4-Junk Overflow



If you have any questions or concerns regarding this module or the survey, or would like more detail on the implications of this survey, please don't hesitate to contact NAME at [EMAIL](#).

Lastly, thank you so much for your time and effort towards helping to revitalize the Alisal. With your help, we can look after the future of the Alisal and ensure it is environmentally sustainable for years to come.

THANK YOU!

Appendix C: HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Analysis

Alisal Housing Grant Analysis and Sustainability Best Practices URBANST 164: Sustainable Cities

Team: Johnstone Kipyator, Jocelyn Keipp, Laura Zhang, Ilde Gonzalez, Soraya Karimi

Overview of the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant

Choice Neighborhoods is designed to address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public housing and/or other HUD-assisted housing, including certain Indian Housing, through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. The program helps communities transform neighborhoods by revitalizing severely distressed public and/or assisted housing and investing and leveraging investments in well-functioning services, high quality public schools and education programs, high quality early learning programs and services, crime prevention strategies, public assets, public transportation, and improved access to jobs¹.

There are three core goals of Choice Neighborhoods:

- **Housing:** Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood
- **People:** Improve educational outcomes and intergenerational mobility for youth with services and supports delivered directly to youth and their families
- **Neighborhood:** Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community

Successful applicants have in place a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy, or “Transformation Plan.” This Transformation Plan is the guiding document for the revitalization of the public and/or assisted housing units, while simultaneously directing the transformation of the surrounding neighborhood and creating positive outcomes for families. The Alisal Vibrancy Plan and the City of Salinas Housing Element provides some of the information needed for a comprehensive revitalization plan. However, specific eligibility requirements must be met to receive a grant.

¹ Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program (Technical Correction), 2016

Eligibility Information

There are three key eligibility criteria to apply for the grant.

1. Eligible Applicants - PHAs, local governments, tribal entities, nonprofits, and for-profit developers that apply jointly with a public entity are eligible to apply. As the City of Salinas is a local government, this requirement is easily met.

2. Eligible Target Housing. Each application must focus on the revitalization of at least one severely distressed public and/or assisted housing project. It must be demonstrated in the application that the targeted housing is eligible under this NOFA (i.e. is public and/or assisted housing) and meets the definition of severely distressed. If the targeted project(s) is/are not eligible housing and is/are not severely distressed, the application will not be considered for funding. During our meeting with the Housing Authority of Monterey County, it appears that most housing projects under their operation are not considered severely distressed. As the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant must be used for public and/or assisted housing, the City of Salinas must identify a housing project that would meet the criteria.

3. Eligible Neighborhoods

- With at least 20 percent of the residents estimated to be in poverty or have extremely low incomes based on the most recent data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.
 - In the Alisal NRSA (Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area), a third (33.3 percent) of all residents lives in poverty
- That are experiencing distress related to one or more of the following:
 - (1) high crime; defined as where either the Part I violent crime rate (measured as Part I Violent Crimes per 1000 persons) over the three years 2013-2015 is at least 1.5 times the per capita Part I violent crime rate (measured as Part I Violent Crimes per 1000 persons) of the city or, where no city data is available, county/parish in which the neighborhood is located over the same time frame; or the rate is greater than 18 crimes per 1000 persons; OR
 - In 2014, 17 of the 27 homicides in Salinas occurred in the 93905 ZIP code that includes the Alisal NRSA. In 2014, 15 of the 18 homicides occurred in the same area.
 - (2) high vacancy or substandard homes; defined as where either the most current rate within the last year of long-term vacant or substandard homes is at least 1.5 times higher than that of the county/parish; or the rate is greater than 4 percent; OR
 - Approximately 36.6 percent of all households in the Alisal NRSA were overcrowded and 12.2 percent were severely overcrowded. Overcrowding is significantly more prevalent among renter-households than

owner-households (Table 10). Overcrowding is significantly more prevalent in the NRSA compared to the City as a whole. In fact, overcrowding in the NRSA is more than twice the level of overcrowding seen citywide. However, a measurement of the percentage of substandard housing is still needed to fully meet this criteria.

- (3) inadequate schools; defined as where either a low-performing public school or a persistently lowest-achieving public school, as defined in section I.A.4, is in the neighborhood or at least 20 percent of the children from the target public and/or HUD-Assisted Housing attend such a school.
 - More information is needed from the City of Salinas on the state of schools in the Alisal NRSA.

Other requirements for the grant are described below:

Cost Sharing or Matching

This Program requires an applicant to leverage resources through cost sharing or matching as described below. Section 24(c)(1)(A) of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437v(c)(1)(A)) sets forth a requirement for matching funds for all HOPE VI-related grants, which includes Choice Neighborhoods. Matching funds in the amount of at least five percent of the requested grant amount in cash or in-kind donations must be secured and used by the end of the grant term.

Other Regulatory Requirements

- Threshold Requirements
- Statutory and Regulatory Requirements
 - a. Compliance with Nondiscrimination and Related Requirements. Compliance with Fair Housing and Civil Rights Laws. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.
 - b. HUD Agency Wide or Federal Government Wide Requirements.
- Program Specific Requirements
 - Program Activities

Conclusion

The City of Salinas currently has much of the documentation necessary to successfully apply for federal grants to revitalize the Alisal NRSA. Whether the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant will be a viable source of funding however depends on the City and the County's assessment of the current state of public housing. A specific criteria for the grant application is that a public or assisted housing project within the neighborhood that is severely distressed must be identified to be rehabilitated. Because of the Housing Authority's active attempts to maintain the state of public housing in Monterey County, most public housing projects are in fair conditions. The more feasible route may be to identify any federally assisted

housing projects are currently in disrepair within the Alisal area. Other eligibility requirements on the conditions of the neighborhood are in fact met as the Alisal suffers from high crime and substandard housing conditions overall.

Other Grants Available

We recommend the City of Salinas apply for other grants for the Alisal Area that it may also be eligible for. They are listed below with a short description.

- Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (Health and Human Services)
The purpose of this program is to support the development and/or expansion of local implementation of a community infrastructure that integrates behavioral health treatment and services for substance use disorders (SUD) and co-occurring mental and substance use disorders (COD), permanent housing, and other critical services for individuals (including youth) and families experiencing homelessness.
- Research on Reducing Violence in Communities (Dept. of Justice)
The purpose of this solicitation is to support research to produce sustainable community-level reductions in violence. NIJ seeks to develop scientific evidence and build practical knowledge of the factors that contribute to achieving enduring violence reductions in communities. NIJ is interested in receiving proposals for research with both empirical and theory-building elements that will lead to practical and generalizable recommendations. These recommendations should inform community-focused efforts to produce substantial and lasting violence reductions in communities that have suffered from persistently high levels of violence.
- Safe and Thriving Communities (Youth Violence)
The purpose of Safe and Thriving Communities is to support and enhance efforts to develop comprehensive prevention and public health and safety plans to address violence in homes, schools, and communities and the consequent trauma. This initiative is intended to strengthen the capacity of selected communities to collaboratively plan, align, and execute community driven approaches focused on a shared framework of prevention; intervention and providing opportunities; and community development, along with deterrence, targeted outreach, and enforcement.

Sustainability Best Practices

From our research, a brief list of sustainability best practices is listed below.

- Marketing
 - **Market the organization and the idea of affordable housing.** Widely promoting the concept of affordable housing is an important part of cultivating a hospitable environment for projects. Nonprofit housing developers, as mission-based organizations, are particularly aware of the need to generate wider acceptance in the larger community².
 - **Be aware of land use issues and politics** in the community to win the support of others in the neighborhood.

- Environmental Sustainability
 - **Design the project to be green from the start.** When building a green affordable housing project, it is most efficient to set clear goals and start thinking green as early and comprehensively as possible. It is more expensive to add green elements later in the process and the project is less likely to achieve the energy efficiency and reductions in carbon emissions desired. Moreover, it is important to ensure that greening is not simply an upgrade that is seen as an expendable item that adds to the project cost, but rather an integral part of the design and construction. Going green incrementally is often less effective and more expensive than simply committing to green development from the start.
 - **Rehabilitate existing buildings.** Structural issues can be challenging and, in some circumstances, there may be a temptation to tear down an older, inefficient structure to start over with a new building that can readily incorporate the latest technologies. *However, there is the false economy of demolition, because it can take 20 to 30 years of energy savings to offset the energy used in tearing down an old building and constructing a new building.*

- Community Sustainability
 - **Transportation.** Connected communities are places with affordable housing options, pedestrian-friendly street designs, public spaces, and transportation

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options to access major employment centers, key goods and services, and amenities³.

- For most households, transportation is the second-largest annual expenditure after housing. Many small and mid-sized cities offer only limited public transportation options such as local bus service, shuttles, or paratransit rather than rail or bus rapid transit systems that can support a broad ridership. Limited transportation options mean reduced access to jobs, public spaces (such as parks, plazas, and campuses), and key goods and services. Decentralized employment, higher gas prices, and the continued relocation of low-income households to suburban areas further isolate these communities. The City, when building more affordable housing, should also consider the increased need for transportation infrastructure.

³ https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_research_071414.html