

City of Albany



TO: ALBANY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
FROM: ANNE HERSCH, PLANNING MANAGER AND BARRY MILLER, CONSULTANT
SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
DATE: MARCH 27, 2013

PROJECT: General Plan Update FILE: N/A LOCATION: Citywide GP LU: N/A OVERLAY: N/A ZONING: N/A PLANNER: Anne Hersch	Original filing: N/A Date Deemed Complete: N/A Date of Notice Posted/Mailed: N/A Date of Public Hearing: N/A Total number of days to hearing: N/A
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REQUEST

This is the first in a series of Planning and Zoning Commission Study Sessions on the Albany 2035 General Plan Update. This Study Session will include an overview of the General Plan Update work program and schedule, a summary of the legal requirements for the General Plan, and a recap of the existing (1992) General Plan. The Commission will be convening Study Sessions on the Plan for the next 14 months, with the goal of producing an updated General Plan and Environmental Impact Report by Summer 2014. Each meeting will include an opportunity for public comment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is a study session and no Commission action is required.

SITE LOCATION

The General Plan applies to all property in the City of Albany.

BACKGROUND

Every city and county in California is required by State law to prepare a general plan guiding its future growth and development. The general plan is organized into chapters (called "elements") addressing seven mandated topics: land use, transportation, housing, safety, conservation, open

space, and noise. Cities may also include optional elements in their plans, addressing topics such as parks and recreation, sustainability, and historic preservation. Each chapter of the general plan includes narrative text, goals, policies, and actions. Maps are also typically included to graphically communicate key recommendations.

State law requires that general plans are *comprehensive* (meaning they cover all land within the city limits, and all topics relating to physical development), *long-range* (meaning they typically cover a 15-25 year time period), and *internally consistent*. Once adopted, the general plan provides the basis for the city's zoning map and regulations, as well as its capital improvement program. General plans are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); major plan updates typically require preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

General plans must be periodically updated to ensure that they remain relevant and reflect current conditions and issues. Albany's existing General Plan was adopted in 1992 and had a horizon year of 1992. The Plan needs to be updated to respond to new legislative requirements, incorporate data from the 2010 Census, reflect physical changes in the City over the last 20 years, and address emerging issues such as greenhouse gas reduction and "complete streets." Another important aspect of the Plan update is to incorporate direction provided by recent planning efforts such as the Active Transportation Plan and the Voices to Vision initiative for the Albany shoreline.

While the new General Plan is not likely to propose major changes to Albany's physical form, the update process provides an opportunity to revisit and potentially revise local policies on growth and development. The Planning and Zoning Commission will be the major conduit for public input as this discussion takes place over the next 14 months and will be critical to shaping the new plan's direction and recommendations. The Commission is expected to hold monthly or bi-monthly study sessions to discuss general plan topics, consider edits to existing policies, and receive public input.

At the first study session, the City's consultant (Barry Miller) will provide a PowerPoint presentation on General Plan legal requirements, a synopsis of the existing (1992) Albany General Plan, and an overview of the proposed General Plan Update work program. While this meeting is intended as an "introduction," the Commission's input is important in fleshing out key issues and ensuring that the upcoming data collection and analysis tasks are appropriately focused. The meeting also provides an opportunity for public input on the General Plan process. The City is in the process of launching a website to provide greater opportunities for public engagement and feedback.

ANALYSIS

This is an informational session, intended for input from the Commission and public.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

N/A