

## APPENDIX A: DRAFT Land Use Element Goals and Policies

### GOAL 1: URBAN VILLAGE BY THE BAY

**Maintain Albany's character as an "Urban Village by the Bay" by sustaining the city's residential neighborhoods, supporting thriving walkable business districts, conserving and improving access to the waterfront, and providing parks, open space, and public facilities which contribute to the city's outstanding quality of life.**

- Policy 1.1: **New Housing Opportunities.** Create opportunities to meet the housing needs of current and future Albany residents by zoning land for a variety of housing types, particularly on underutilized commercial properties.
- Policy 1.2: **Balanced Growth.** Promote a balanced mix of housing and employment growth so that more Albany residents have the opportunity to live, work, and shop in their community.
- Policy 1.3: **Business Districts.** Maintain and enhance San Pablo and Solano Avenues as Albany's principal shopping streets. Encourage a vibrant mix of ground floor retail and service uses which meet the needs of Albany residents, enhance the local tax base, provide job opportunities, and provide a safe, walkable environment.
- Policy 1.4: **Production, Distribution, and Repair.** Provide opportunities for production, distribution, and repair (PDR) businesses in the areas along the Eastshore Highway and Cleveland Avenue, recognizing that this area has a substantially different character than the Solano and San Pablo business districts. In addition to facilitating PDR uses, land use regulations for this area should also facilitate auto-oriented uses, larger-scale retail uses, and live-work development.
- Policy 1.5: **Open Spaces.** Provide a diverse range of open spaces to complement the urbanized areas of the City, including improved parks and playing fields, conservation areas on Albany Hill and along the shoreline, a publicly accessible waterfront, natural areas along creeks, areas for community gardens and urban agriculture, and private open spaces.
- Policy 1.6: **Albany Waterfront.** Support an inclusive, transparent dialogue on all issues relating to the future of the Albany waterfront, including Golden Gate Fields. Decisions relating to the future of the waterfront shall abide by the provisions of voter-approved Measure "C."

*See the Waterfront Element for additional policies on the Albany waterfront.*

- Policy 1.7: **Sustainable Development.** Ensure that future development mitigates its environmental impacts to the greatest extent possible and is designed and constructed to advance the principles of sustainability. This should include the use of greener building practices, greater energy and water efficiency, and the design of new development in a way that encourages walking and bicycling.
- Policy 1.8: **Transit-Oriented Development.** Encourage land use patterns which support transit use, including additional mixed use (commercial and higher-density residential) development along the San Pablo and Solano Avenue corridors.
- Policy 1.9: **Income Diversity.** Recognize economic and income diversity as one of Albany's greatest strengths. Ensure that future land use decisions contribute to this diversity by creating housing and employment opportunities for persons of all incomes and backgrounds.
- Policy 1.10: **Interagency Coordination.** Coordinate land use planning with the cities of Berkeley, El Cerrito, and Richmond to address issues which cross jurisdictional lines, and to ensure that the potential impacts of development in these cities on Albany is mitigated.

Possible Implementing Actions

To be developed as needed in next draft, based on Commission discussion.

**GOAL 2: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**  
**Preserve and enhance the high quality of Albany's residential neighborhoods.**

- Policy 2.1: **Context-Sensitive Design.** Ensure that infill development in residential areas is compatible in density, scale and character with the established neighborhood context.
- Policy 2.2: **Mixed Density Areas.** In areas designated for high and medium density residential uses, ensure that new development is designed to minimize sharp contrasts in height, prevent the loss of sunlight and privacy for adjacent homes, and provide buffering and screening from nearby lower density uses.
- Policy 2.3: **Design Guidelines.** Maintain residential design guidelines and design review procedures which promote the compatibility of residential alterations and additions with existing homes and which strive to reduce impacts on neighboring

properties. The guidelines should be used to encourage high-quality, visually distinctive architecture, and the use of durable, attractive construction materials.

- Policy 2.4: **Community Standards.** Implement construction regulations, code enforcement practices, and building inspection programs which protect neighborhood character, support responsible property management, and ensure the health and safety of Albany residents.
- Policy 2.5: **Second-Story Additions.** Ensure that second story additions to single story homes are designed to minimize increases in height and bulk, and to reduce their perceived mass from the street and surrounding yards.
- Policy 2.6: **Home-Based Businesses.** Allow home-based businesses in Albany, subject to standards which ensure that off-site impacts are minimized and the residential nature of the structure is maintained.
- Policy 2.7: **Kains Avenue and Adams Street.** Maintain Kains Avenue and Adams Street as predominantly residential streets. Land use regulations should limit the encroachment of commercial uses onto parcels that are currently developed with housing. Residential uses along these streets and in adjacent areas should be protected from the potential adverse impacts of commercial uses through special setback requirements. The use of these two streets for primary access to non-residential uses shall be discouraged or prohibited as appropriate.
- Policy 2.8: **Non-Residential Uses.** Ensure that non-residential uses in residential areas, such as child care centers, houses of worship, and group homes, are designed and operated to minimize adverse effects on nearby homes and neighborhoods.
- Policy 2.9: **Small Lots.** Recognize small residential lots (less than 4,000 square feet) as a basic feature of Albany's neighborhoods, and ensure that development regulations support the use of such lots in a productive way.
- Policy 2.10: **Second Units.** Encourage development of secondary dwelling units and recognize their potential to meet a substantial portion of Albany's affordable housing needs. Seek creative solutions to parking, design, and access issues so that second units are accommodated with minimal impacts on neighborhood character and adjacent properties.
- Policy 2.11: **Front Yards.** Encourage the management and design of front yard space, including landscaping and fences, to complement residential architecture and enhance neighborhood aesthetics.

*See the Conservation Element for policies on the use of Bay-friendly landscaping*

Policy 2.12: **Residential Beautification.** Enhance the appearance of residential areas through street tree planting, street lighting and sidewalk improvements, landscaping, and other investments which beautify local streets.

*Possible Implementing Actions*

Action 2.A: **Small Lot Standards.** Consider special zoning standards for small lots (3,750 SF or less) which reflect the smaller setbacks and higher lot coverage typically associated with such lots. One option may be to consider a new zoning district or zoning overlay for areas where the prevailing lot size is less than 3,750 SF.

Action 2B: **Multi-Family Design Guidelines.** Expand the City's design guidelines for multi-family housing to more comprehensively address residential design issues in the City's medium and high density zoning districts.

Action 2C: **Architectural Prototypes.** Develop an inventory of architectural "prototypes" which describes the prevailing design styles and features of homes in each Albany neighborhood. This information should be considered in the design of future alterations and infill development.

**GOAL 3: BUSINESS DISTRICTS**

**Maintain vibrant commercial districts that provide and an attractive, walkable environment for shopping, dining, entertainment, and services.**

Policy 3.1: **Mixed Use Development.** Encourage mixed use development combining residential uses above ground floor commercial uses along the San Pablo and Solano Avenue corridors. The City's zoning regulations should continue to provide floor area ratio (FAR) incentives for projects which include multi-family residential uses on the upper stories. State density bonus provisions for affordable housing may be used to allow floor area bonuses above and beyond those provided by the City of Albany, up to a maximum FAR of 3.0 for parcels on San Pablo Avenue and 2.0 for parcels on Solano Avenue.

Policy 3.2: **San Pablo Avenue.** Continue to foster the transformation of San Pablo Avenue from an auto-oriented commercial strip to a pedestrian- and transit-oriented retail boulevard. San Pablo Avenue should be a source of community pride, with distinctive buildings, an attractive streetscape, and a diverse mix of uses.

Policy 3.3: **Solano Avenue.** Enhance the pattern of tightly clustered retail storefronts, active ground floor uses, and specialty shopping, dining, and personal services along the Solano Avenue corridor. Any future infill development on Solano Avenue should maintain and enhance this pattern.

- Policy 3.4: **Solano/San Pablo.** Enhance the intersection of Solano and San Pablo Avenues as the “center” of Albany. Land use regulations and design guidelines should reinforce the identity of this area as a hub of pedestrian traffic, distinctive architecture, and active ground floor uses.
- Policy 3.5: **Flexibility.** Ensure that land use regulations and other City requirements are sufficiently flexible to respond to the evolving needs of local retailers, and broader changes in the retail and service industries.
- Policy 3.6: **Commercial Design.** Encourage distinctive architecture in Albany’s commercial districts, with massing, height, façade design, signage, exterior materials, and lighting used to establish a strong sense of place and orientation. New buildings should be sited to enhance the sidewalk space, with any on-site parking located to the side or rear of a structure rather than between the structure and the street (e.g., maintaining a “build to” line).
- Policy 3.7: **Buffering.** Require buffering of residential uses, particularly along Kains Avenue, Adams Street, and the perpendicular side streets that intersect Solano Avenue, from the potentially adverse impacts created by nearby commercial activities. This should include special setback and daylight plane regulations to be applied where commercial zones abut lower density zones. It may also include special use, design, and noise standards.
- Policy 3.8: **Office Space.** Support development of additional office space on commercially zoned land, especially for local-serving businesses and for Albany residents seeking to establish or expand businesses in the city. Zoning should identify areas where office space is acceptable on the ground floor, and areas where office space should be limited to upper floors so that ground floor space is used for retail activity or other more active uses.
- Policy 3.9: **Use Permits.** Maintain use permit requirements for businesses with the potential to create off-site impacts. Establish conditions of approval as needed to reduce the potential for traffic, noise, parking, odor, and other external effects.
- Policy 3.10: **Automotive Uses.** Support the continued presence of automotive businesses in the city, including auto sales, auto servicing, auto accessories, and auto repair. Where such uses are located on the San Pablo Avenue corridor, they should be designed and operated in a way that is consistent with the overall vision of San Pablo Avenue as an attractive, walkable shopping street.
- Policy 3.11: **Lot Consolidation.** Support the consolidation of underutilized parcels on the Solano and San Pablo corridors to create sites which are more viable for future mixed use development, including on-site parking. Development on larger sites

should be designed to respect the fine-grained character of nearby properties, and should be articulated into multiple smaller storefronts rather than long, unbroken facades.

Policy 3.12: **Urban Open Space.** Ensure that new open spaces, including pocket parks, courtyards, plazas and other accessible outdoor areas, are developed to meet the growing demand for open space as new mixed use development occurs.

Policy 3.13: **Parking Management.** Manage parking along the San Pablo and Solano Avenue corridors in a way that meets the needs of local businesses, provides convenience for local shoppers and patrons, and minimizes spillover parking onto nearby residential streets. The use of shared parking lots is strongly encouraged.

*See the Transportation Element for additional policies on parking*

Policy 3.14: **Albany Bowl and Vicinity.** Ensure that any future development on the Albany Bowl site, and surrounding sites along San Pablo Avenue north of Clay Street, reflects the importance of this area and its function as a northern gateway to the City.

Possible Implementing Actions

Action 3.A: **Economic Analysis.** Conduct market studies of the San Pablo and Solano business districts in order to better understand the needs of local businesses, existing uses of space, constraints to business growth, and potential changes which would improve the business climate. Specific attention should be given to the balance between retail and personal service uses in commercial districts.

Action 3.B: **Additional Nodes.** Consider the designation of intersections other than San Pablo/ Solano as “nodes” and develop appropriate land use and design regulations which reinforce the desired character at each location. The purpose of a node should be to intensify pedestrian-oriented retail, commercial and mixed use activities at key locations. Although distinctive architectural features are encouraged at such locations, the “node” designation does not necessarily mean that taller buildings are allowed.

Action 3.C: **Commercial Parking Studies.** Evaluate commercial parking requirements to ensure that they are consistent with national best practices, support shared parking and car-sharing programs, contribute to local sustainability objectives such as increased transit and bicycle use, meet the needs of local businesses, and minimize overflow problems on residential side streets.

Action 3.D: **San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines.** Update the San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines. In addition to providing direction on building scale, commercial

facades, landscaping, and public improvements, the guidelines should consider the segmentation of the corridor into “districts” which are different in their function and character. If such districts are identified, zoning code amendments should be considered to reinforce the desired character.

Action 3.E: **Building Height at Commercial Node.** Subject to additional community input and discussion, consider allowing four story construction along San Pablo Avenue within 500 feet of the Solano Avenue intersection.

Action 3.F: **Transition Parcels.** Consider special zoning regulations for the commercially zoned parcels on the perpendicular streets that cross Solano Avenue which contain existing older single family homes. Such regulations would establish specific conditions for commercial uses in these properties to minimize potential impacts on neighboring residential properties.

Action 3.G: **PRC Zone.** Consider changes to the “Planned Residential Commercial” (PRC) overlay district which further incentivize the inclusion of housing on underutilized commercial properties.

Action 3.H: **Solano Avenue BART Feasibility.** Maintain a dialogue with BART and surrounding property owners on the long-term feasibility of an “infill” BART station without off-street parking along Solano Avenue (near Key Route).

*See the Transportation Element for actions on parking*

#### **GOAL 4: CIVIC, INSTITUTIONAL, AND MEDICAL USES**

**Recognize civic and institutional facilities as an essential element of Albany’s identity and an important part of the quality of life in the city.**

Policy 4.1: **Civic Facilities.** Provide outstanding schools and public facilities that meet the educational, social, and recreational needs of Albany residents. Such facilities should provide safe, attractive places for the delivery of services to Albany residents and businesses while fostering interaction among persons of all ages and interests.

Policy 4.2: **Large-Scale Institutional Uses.** Work with community institutions such as St. Mary’s College High School, the USDA Lab, and the California Department of Rehabilitation Orientation Center to address neighborhood impacts and long-term facility planning issues. Such institutions are a valued part of the Albany community and should be sustained.

- Policy 4.3: **Health Care Facilities.** Encourage the development of small-scale facilities that meet local health care and medical needs.
- Policy 4.4: **Mitigating Development Impacts.** Ensure that the effects of proposed development projects on civic uses, such as schools, parks, the Library, and other public buildings are considered before such projects are approved. Provisions to mitigate impacts and ensure that development “pays its way” through fees or improvements to public facilities should be included in project approvals.
- Policy 4.5: **UC Village.** Recognize University of California (UC) Village as an integral part of the Albany community. Land use decisions on the University’s property should be compatible with nearby uses and provide collateral benefits to Albany residents and businesses wherever feasible. Important natural features at UC Village, such as Village Creek, Codornices Creek, and significant tree stands, should be protected.
- Policy 4.6: **Gill Tract.** Support future uses of the Gill Tract (San Pablo Avenue at Buchanan Street) which are consistent with the University’s academic objectives while also responding to the community’s desire to retain a substantial portion of the property for open space and recreational uses.
- Policy 4.7: **UC Financial Support.** Work with the University of California to obtain financial and/or in kind support for City infrastructure, services, and capital facilities that are used by residents of UC Village. This could include support for public safety, public streets, parks and open spaces, sanitary and storm sewers, and similar services and facilities.
- Policy 4.8: **Coordinated Park Planning.** Coordinate planning for the park and open space lands owned by the City, the University of California and the Albany School District to improve public access, increase use, and improve traffic safety for students, pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles.

Possible Implementing Actions

- Action 4.A: **UC Village Master Plan Update.** Encourage the University to update its Master Plan for UC Village to reflect the completion of the family student housing redevelopment project, the approval of the retail and senior housing project along San Pablo Avenue, and the remaining opportunities for infill development and open space protection on the balance of the site.
- Action 4.B: **UC Village Community Facilities.** Explore opportunities for new community facilities on the UC Village site, consistent with the UC Village Master Plan.



Action 4.C **St. Mary's Enrollment Cap.** Maintain a long-term agreement with St. Mary's College High School to cap enrollment at 630 students.

Action 4.D: **Medical Marijuana Dispensaries.** To the extent permitted by law, maintain regulations which allow no more than one medical marijuana dispensary in the City. Such regulations may be amended as necessary in response to changes in state or federal law, or community initiatives.

**GOAL 5: ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS**  
**Ensure that land use and planning decisions protect the quality of Albany's natural environment and conserve environmentally sensitive areas.**

Policy 5.1: **Albany Hill.** Ensure that any future development on Albany Hill is designed and planned to respect the natural topography, minimize grading, respond to soil and drainage conditions, minimize impacts on parking and narrow streets, and protect view corridors. The entire crest of Albany Hill shall remain a forested open space area.

Policy 5.2: **Albany Shoreline.** Work collaboratively with federal, state and regional agencies, key interest groups and shoreline open space advocates, and Albany residents to enhance the recreational, ecological, and open space value of the Albany waterfront.

*See the Waterfront Element for additional policies on shoreline open space improvements*

Policy 5.3: **Albany's Creeks.** Maintain a Creek Conservation Zone (CCZ) along Cerritos, Codornices, and Village Creek. Protect the existing riparian habitat within the CCZ and restrict development as necessary to conserve the creek environment.

*See the Conservation Element for additional creek conservation policies*

Policy 5.4: **Archaeological Resources.** Protect Albany's archaeological resources, including remains and artefacts from Native American settlement. The City will coordinate with local tribal representatives and follow appropriate mitigation, preservation, and recovery procedures in the event that important resources are discovered during development.

Possible Implementing Actions

Action 5.A: **Albany Hill Vacant Parcel.** Work with the owners of the vacant 11-acre parcel on the west side of Albany Hill to cluster the site's allowable development in a way that enables a majority of the property to be conserved as open space.

**GOAL 6: COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

**Retain and enhance the positive elements of Albany's visual character, including prevailing architectural styles, locally important landmarks, significant views, and natural features.**

Policy 6.1: **Historic Preservation.** Encourage expanded recognition, public education, and appreciation of Albany's large inventory of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century homes and commercial buildings. Such buildings help define Albany's sense of place and identity.

Policy 6.2: **Gateways.** Maintain high standards for the appearance of buildings, properties, and public space at the major entrances into Albany, particularly along Buchanan Street east of I-80 and on San Pablo Avenue at the Berkeley and El Cerrito borders. Such areas should convey a positive impression of the City and create a sense of arrival which distinguishes Albany from adjacent cities.

*See the Community Services and Facilities Element for policies on public art*

Policy 6.3: **Views and Vistas.** Protect and enhance character-defining views, including views to San Francisco and the Golden Gate, views to Mount Tamalpais, views of Albany Hill and the Bay, and views of the Berkeley Hills.

Policy 6.4: **Streetscape Improvements.** Improve the visual character and safety of heavily traveled Albany streets through streetscape improvements such as lighting, signage, landscaping, sidewalk extensions, public art, and tree planting.

*See the Transportation Element for additional policies and actions on "complete streets"*

Policy 6.5: **Signage.** Treat commercial signage as an integral part of building design, and an opportunity to enhance the visual character of the city.

Policy 6.6: **Lighting.** Manage exterior lighting to reduce potential light and glare impacts, improve public safety, enhance night time visibility, complement local architecture, and enhance the character of the city.

- Policy 6.7: **Activating Public Space.** Support activities such as the Albany Farmers Market on Solano Avenue, outdoor concerts, street fairs, and other programmed events which activate public space and provide gathering places for Albany residents.
- Policy 6.8: **Waterfront Identity.** Improve Albany's identity as a waterfront city, particularly through measures which safely connect Albany neighborhoods to recreational areas and trails along the shoreline. The City should work to improve pedestrian and bicycle access across the Union Pacific Railroad and Interstate 80 so that residents can more easily access existing and planned shoreline improvements.
- Policy 6.9: **Commercial Property Upgrades.** Support the upgrading of older commercial properties, particularly along San Pablo Avenue, and Eastshore Highway/ Cleveland Avenue.
- Policy 6.10: **Wireless Communication Facilities.** Minimize the visual impact of wireless communication facilities by: (a) concealing wireless facilities in existing structures where possible; (b) using camouflage and screening techniques to hide or blend such facilities into the surrounding area; (c) designing facilities to be aesthetically pleasing and respectful of neighborhood context; and (d) concealing related mechanical equipment and devices in underground vaults or other unobtrusive structures.

Possible Implementing Actions

- Action 6.A: **San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Master Plan.** Update the San Pablo Streetscape Master Plan to reflect an emphasis on transit-oriented development, and improved provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Action 6.B: **Public Improvements.** Identify public improvements for San Pablo and Solano Avenues and identify funding for such improvements in the City's Capital Improvement Program. This should include enhanced public spaces along both streets.
- Action 6.C: **Street Tree Program.** Develop a comprehensive street tree master plan and planting program, including desired species and maintenance practices. Apply for grants and other funds which enable such a plan to be prepared and implemented.
- Action 6.D: **Preservation Advocacy.** Explore the feasibility of a formal historic preservation program for Albany. Such a program would include a potential register of locally important historic buildings, markers and plaques which acknowledge key landmarks and sites, provisions to protect and enhance the defining qualities of the City's older buildings, and education and outreach on local resources and the benefits of preservation.

Action 6.E: **Façade Improvements.** Consider opportunities and potential funding sources for design assistance, façade improvement programs, and other measures which help local businesses and property owners update commercial buildings.

Action 6.F: **Utility Undergrounding.** Continue to pursue funding for utility undergrounding, consistent with PG&E Rule 20A procedures.

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