

City of Albany



TO: ALBANY TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMISSION
FROM: BARRY MILLER, GENERAL PLAN CONSULTANT
SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
DATE: MAY 22, 2014

Introduction

The City of Albany is updating its General Plan, the long-range planning document used to guide future growth and development. The Plan is divided into “elements” (chapters) that address land use, transportation, housing, parks and open space, conservation, safety/noise, and community facilities. The existing General Plan was adopted in 1992 and does not reflect current data, forecasts, or issues in the City. Adoption of a General Plan is required by State law, and must be completed in conformance with Government Code requirements.

The Plan Update process started in March 2013 and is expected to be completed in early 2015. The new Plan will have a horizon year of 2035. The Planning and Zoning Commission has been holding monthly study sessions on the Plan, and is the primary conduit for public discussion. Other City Commissions and Committees are also participating in the project through periodic updates and work sessions. A briefing on the General Plan was provided to the Traffic and Safety Commission in April 2013.

The Traffic and Safety Commission briefing on May 22 will focus on the General Plan Transportation Element. The intent of this Element is to summarize existing and projected transportation conditions in the City, identify planned improvements, and express the City’s transportation goals, policies, and action programs. All modes of travel are addressed.

The data collection and analysis section of the Transportation Element is presently being drafted. It will include the results of new traffic counts taken on April 30, 2014 as well as current information about the city’s bicycle and pedestrian networks, public transit facilities and services, and vehicle traffic management programs. Forecasts for 2035 will be included.

Goals, policies and actions for Transportation have just been drafted and are included as Exhibit “A” of this staff report. At the Study Session, the City’s consultant will walk the Commission through the Draft goals, and solicit feedback from Commissioners. A similar study session will be held on May 28 with the Planning and Zoning Commission. These study sessions will not be the last opportunity to comment—if needed, follow-up discussions with the Traffic and Safety Commission may be scheduled.

Transportation Policy Audit

The intent of the Transportation Element of the General Plan is not to substantially alter existing policies, but rather to integrate and synthesize policies that have already been adopted by the City. Thus, one of the key tasks in assembling the policies was an “audit” of existing transportation policies in the City. Among the documents reviewed were the 2012 Active Transportation Plan, the 2013 Complete Streets Resolution, the 2009 Climate Action Plan, and the 2000 Transportation Management Plan. In addition, the 1992 General Plan also was reviewed. Other sources for transportation policies include input from the Measure D (parking) Working Group, the long-range plans of other agencies such as BART and AC Transit, and regional planning documents such as Plan Bay Area. More than 200 goals, policies, and actions were included in the audit.

A copy of the Transportation Policy Audit will be posted to the project website and may be provided on request. It is a 21-page document.

Draft Goals, Policies, and Actions

Exhibit “A” presents draft Transportation Use goals, policies, and actions for discussion. This is a Working Draft for discussion only. Comments are encouraged and revisions are likely before a Draft General Plan is published.

Seven goals are identified, corresponding to the following topics:

- Complete Streets
- Sustainable Transportation
- Transportation Choice
- Safety
- Managing Transportation Impacts
- Vehicle Flow
- Parking

For each goal, the text includes policies and actions. In each case, the statement of origin leading to the policy or action is listed in small (8 point italics) font. The statements have been rewritten (and in some cases completely restructured) to reflect the focus and format conventions of a General Plan. In some cases, the statements are new and reflect best practices or other directives.

Study Session Format

The study session is envisioned as 60 minutes in length. There will be a short PowerPoint presentation on the goals, policies, and actions followed by discussion. Commissioners will be asked to share their thoughts about the draft policies, including additional topic areas or new policies that should be covered. Public comment will be considered before the close of the study session. Comments may also be submitted in writing after the Study Session via email or feedback on the Project website.

APPENDIX A: Draft Transportation Goals, Policies, and Actions