

City of Albany



TO: ALBANY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
FROM: BARRY MILLER, GENERAL PLAN CONSULTANT
SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
DATE: JUNE 25, 2014

REQUEST

This is the next in a series of Planning and Zoning Commission Study Sessions on the Albany 2035 General Plan Update. This Study Session will cover the General Plan goals and policies for parks, recreation, and open space. An opportunity for public comment will be provided.

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

The Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on June 25 will focus on the General Plan Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element. The intent of this Element is to summarize existing and projected park and open space conditions, identify planned improvements, and express the City's parks, recreation and open space goals, policies, and action programs. An Open Space Element is required by State law. A "parks and recreation" component is optional, but is recommended to acknowledge the importance of parks and recreation to the community.

The narrative portion of this Element is presently being drafted. It will include a description of existing open spaces in the city and provide an assessment of existing parkland and projected parkland needs. Park and open space management issues, such as park maintenance, vegetation management, joint use, and construction of new facilities also will be addressed. The Element also addresses recreational programming.

Goals, policies and actions for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space are included as Exhibit "A" of this staff report. At the Study Session, the City's consultant will walk the Commission through this material, and solicit feedback from Commissioners.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Policy Audit

The intent of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the General Plan is to integrate and synthesize existing policies, rather than to substantially change the City's park and open space policies. The General Plan is not intended to be an update of Albany's 2004 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. It is broader in its scope, and less prescriptive in its recommendations.

Because the document is largely a synthesis of existing policies, one of the key tasks in preparing it was an "audit" of existing park-related policies in Albany. Among the documents reviewed were the 1992 General Plan, the 2004 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the 2009 Albany Climate Action Plan, the UC Village Master Plan, and the plans and reports for Pierce Street Park.

It should be noted that there are numerous documents related to open space along the Albany waterfront, including documents covering Eastshore State Park, the Albany Bulb, Albany Beach, and the Bay Trail. These areas will be addressed in a separate chapter of the General Plan focused on the Albany Waterfront. The Waterfront Element will emphasize the open space value of the shoreline and will not be proposing changes in policy or changes to the General Plan Map in this area (under Measure C, such changes would be subject to a citywide vote).

A copy of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Policy Audit will be posted to the project website and may be provided on request. It is a 14-page document.

Draft Goals, Policies, and Actions

As noted above, Exhibit "A" includes the Draft Park, Recreation, and Open Space policies. This is a Working Draft for discussion only. Comments are encouraged and revisions are likely before a Draft General Plan is published.

Six goals are identified, corresponding to the following topics:

- Open Space Protection
- Park Expansion and Improvement
- Park Management and Maintenance
- Recreational Programming
- Joint Use and Collaboration
- Trails

Policies and actions have been drafted for each of the goals listed above. In each case, the source of the policy is listed in small (8 point italics) font. The source 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.

Feedback from Parks and Recreation Commission

The material being presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission on June 25 was also presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on June 12. Comments from that meeting

(including comments from the public) are included as Exhibit B to this staff report. In general, the Commission felt the goals and policies were on point and were moving the City in the right direction. A number of specific changes were suggested and will be incorporated in the next Draft. Major comments will be reviewed during the P & Z Study Session on June 25.

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 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals, Policies, and Actions

APPENDIX B: Comments from Parks and Recreation Commission on Appendix A

EXHIBIT A:

DRAFT General Plan Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element Goals and Policies

Goal 1: OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

Maximize the preservation, enhancement, and expansion of open space in Albany for natural resource protection, food production, hazard prevention and abatement, aesthetics, and recreation. *(PROS MP Goal 1, Pol 1.6, expanded)*

Policy 1.1: Green Community. Maintain Albany as a green community that integrates open space and nature with neighborhoods, protects natural habitat, and educates residents about local vegetation and wildlife. *(PROS MP Goal 1)*

Policy 1.2: Albany Hill. Designate the crest of Albany Hill for open space and require dedication of this area for conservation and public access as a condition of approval for any proposed development on parcels along the ridgeline. Albany Hill should be considered an essential and valuable regional open space resource. *(1992 GP, CROS-3 and 3.1)*

Policy 1.3: Albany Waterfront. Recognize the importance of the Albany waterfront as a multi-use open space area and a vital part of the cultural landscape of the East Bay. The City will work toward achieving the maximum feasible open space and recreational uses in the waterfront area and improved public access to and along the Albany shoreline. All future land use decisions for the area west of Interstate 80 shall be consistent with State and regional park plans, trail plans, and Bay conservation and shoreline access plans. *(1992 GP, Goal CROS-7, PROS MP Goal 4)*

See the General Plan Waterfront Element for a complete set of goals, policies, and actions for the shoreline open space area.

Policy 1.4: Urban Open Space. Incorporate a variety of small open spaces, such as pocket parks, plazas, courtyards, rooftop gardens, tot lots, and landscaped areas, into new development. *(new)*

Policy 1.5: Open Space in the Public Realm. Enhance the open space value of Albany's streets and public spaces through street tree planting, landscaping, and maintenance and expansion of the urban tree canopy *(new, adapted from PROS MP Action 2.4.2 and Goal 2-B).*

DISCUSSION DRAFT

- Policy 1.6: Open Space as a Component of Capital Projects.** In planning public improvements such as streetscape projects and public buildings, consider opportunities for public art, landscaping, community gathering places, and other open spaces that beautify the community and supplement existing recreational facilities. *(PROS MP Pol 2.4)*
- Policy 1.7: Community Gardens.** Encourage the creation of community gardens in Albany, and the use of open land for food production and urban agriculture. A variety of locations should be considered including parks, school yards, university lands, and other public and private properties. *(PROS Action 2.4.3)*
- Policy 1.8: Creeks.** Recognize creeks as an important open space element, and a means of defining the edges of the city and bringing open space and nature into neighborhoods. *(new)*
- Policy 1.9: Residential Yards.** Maintain requirements for structural setbacks and minimum yard areas on residential lots to create a sense of openness, provide space for plants and landscaping, and enhance the beauty of Albany. *(new)*

Possible Implementing Actions

- Action 1.A: Priority Conservation Area.** Maintain the undeveloped portions of Albany Hill as a regionally designated "Priority Conservation Area." *(new)*
- Action 1.B: Creekside Master Plan Implementation.** Implement the open space management recommendations of the 2012 Creekside Master Plan, including vegetation management, trail improvements, signage and other park improvements. *(new)*
- Action 1.C: Albany Hill Conservation Easements.** Work the owner of the 11-acre vacant parcel south of Gateway Towers and land conservation organizations to develop a site plan for the property which maximizes the conservation of open space on the upper slopes and ridgeline portions of the site. Continue to work with owners of other private properties on Albany Hill to reduce fire hazards and manage the Hill's unique ecosystem. *(LU Rec-2 and Rec-3 from Creekside Master Plan; PROS MP Action 1.6.1)*
- Action 1.D: Private Open Space Standards.** Maintain requirements for private open space, such as patios and balconies, for new residential units. *(adapted from UCV-MP, Pol 4.11)*
- Action 1.E: Eastshore State Park:** Actively participate in the planning and development of McLaughlin Eastshore State Park, including the ultimate incorporation of the Albany Bulb into the park area. *(PROS MP Action 4.1)*

Goal 2: PARKLAND EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT

Expand and improve Albany's park system to keep pace with population growth and meet the demand for recreational facilities in the City. *(new)*

Policy 2.1: Park Hierarchy. Maintain a hierarchy of mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks in Albany, with guidelines to distinguish the types of uses and activities appropriate in each park type. *(PROS MP Pol 1.3, 1.5)*

Memorial Park should continue be designated as a community park, intended to meet citywide needs and host citywide activities. Ocean View and Terrace Parks should both continue to be designated as neighborhood parks, as should the proposed new park at Pierce Street.

Policy 2.2: Non-Traditional Parks. Supplement traditional City parks with linear parks, special use parks, school facilities, regional open spaces, and other unique parks that complement the network. *(PROS MP)*

Policy 2.3: Per Capita Service Standards. Maintain per capita service standards (acres per 1,000 residents) for parkland. These standards should ensure that the current ratios of parkland acreage to population for Mini-Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Linear Parks, and Special Use Areas are maintained at their current levels or are increased in the future. Service standards should provide the basis for parkland dedication and in-lieu fee requirements for new development. *(PROS MP Pol 1.1)*

Question for Parks and Rec Commission: Should the 2004 standards be carried forward or changed?

Policy 2.4: Site Design and Planning Standards. Observe standards for the design and development of parks and open space areas as presented in the Albany Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. The site plan for each park should be appropriate to its specific conditions and context, and should maximize public access and visibility. *(PROS MP, Pol 1.2)*

Policy 2.5: New Parks. Pursue the development of new parks that accommodate services and facilities not present in Albany today and that respond to increased demand for park and recreational space and facilities. *(new)*

- Policy 2.6: New Facilities in Existing Parks.** Balance the demand for new recreational facilities and structures with the need for unprogrammed open space that meets other recreational needs. Where possible, the development of new recreational facilities and amenities should avoid displacing or crowding out other activities. Maintaining a mix of passive and active open spaces is important to the function and aesthetics of community, neighborhood, and regional parks. *(new)*
- Policy 2.7: Resource Preservation.** Design and plan new parks in a manner that preserves and enhances natural resources, protects trees and significant topographic features, and is consistent with the sustainability principles articulated in the General Plan Conservation Element. *(UCV MP Pol 4.5)*
- Policy 2.8: Recreational Land Use Compatibility.** Ensure that park design and activity programming is sensitive to adjacent land uses, taking into consideration both the effect of the park on nearby uses and the effect of nearby uses on the park. This would include efforts to reduce noise and lighting conflicts due to potentially loud or night-time park activities near sensitive receptors (such as schools or homes), as well as consideration of parking and other impacts. *(new)*
- Policy 2.9: Park Expansion.** Explore opportunities to expand existing City parks on to vacant or underutilized land on the perimeter of each park site. *(new)*
- Policy 2.10: Public Participation.** Engage the public in the design and review of proposed new parks and park improvements, including public meetings and other activities which secure broad participation. *(PROS MP Pol 6.1)*
- Policy 2.11: Private and Non-Profit Recreational Facilities.** Encourage the development of additional private and non-profit recreational facilities that are open to the general public, and that complement the array of leisure-time activities available to Albany residents. *(new)*

Possible Implementing Actions

- Action 2.A: Parkland Fees and Dedication.** Maintain park in-lieu fees and/or dedication requirements to ensure that new development pays its fair share or otherwise provides for the demand for parkland and recreational facilities it creates. *(new)*
- Action 2.B: Pierce Street Park.** Develop a new park on the 4.5-acre former freeway right-of-way site bounded by Pierce Street, Cleveland and Washington Avenues and the I-80 freeway. Development of the site should be phased based on the availability of funds and community input. *(adapted from PROS MP Action 1.4.1)*

DISCUSSION DRAFT

Action 2.C: Design Standards. Continue efforts to establish recreational facility design standards, potentially including specifications for signage and the types of equipment, models and materials to be used in park development (*PROS MP Action 6.2.5*)

Action 2.D: Master Plan Updates. Periodically update the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to identify specific projects, funding sources, and time schedules for implementation. This should include detailed improvement and maintenance plans for the City's parks, which are coordinated with the five-year Capital Improvements Program. (*92 GP, Policy CROS-6.1*)

Goal 3: PARK MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain and enhance Albany's parks so that they provide attractive open spaces and high-quality recreational facilities that serve children, youth, families, and seniors. *(PROS MP Goal 3)*

Policy 3.1: Planning for Diverse User Groups. Ensure that Albany's parks are designed to provide for residents of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and physical capabilities. This should include outdoor spaces for varied activities which serve the needs of different user groups. *(new)*

Policy 3.2: Modernization. Continue to enhance and modernize recreational buildings such as the pre-school building and the senior center. *(PROS MP-Actions 3.3.1, 3.5.1)*

Policy 3.3: Sports Fields. Renovate and maintain City sports fields and continue to collaborate with areawide sports field users on field programming and maintenance. Explore opportunities to create new sports fields, including fields on locations outside of Albany, through joint powers agreements, and joint efforts with field users. In addition, to increase the usefulness of athletic fields, encourage field designs and configurations that can accommodate multiple sports rather than one sport alone. *(adapted from PROS MP Pol 3.1)*

Policy 3.4: Outdoor Cultural Space. Provide flexible outdoor spaces in City parks that can be programmed for community gatherings, art displays, performances and other cultural activities. *(PROS MP Pol 2.3, Action 2.3.1)*

Policy 3.5: Dogs. Continue to work with local dog owners, park users, and community organizations to balance the demand for dog play areas with other considerations such as habitat protection, safety, and accommodation of active open space uses. Maintain a community dog park at Memorial Park and allowances for leashed dogs on city and regional park properties. *(new)*

Policy 3.6: Night Lighting and Artificial Turf. Consider the costs and benefits of night lighting and artificial turf as a means of expanding the usability of fields. *(PROS MP Policy 3.2)*

Policy 3.7: Maintenance. Maintain park and recreation facilities in a manner which keeps them safe, attractive, clean, and a positive part of their neighborhoods. In the annual budgeting process, a priority should be placed on the repair, rehabilitation and preventive maintenance of park facilities. *(PROS MP Policy 6.3 and 6.5)*

DISCUSSION DRAFT

- Policy 3.8: Vegetation Management.** Ensure that park landscaping and maintenance practices are consistent with City policies to reduce wildfire hazards and manage vegetation, especially in Creekside Park and elsewhere on Albany Hill. These practices should also reinforce City programs to conserve water and promote Bay-friendly landscaping. *(new)*
- Policy 3.9: Volunteers.** Use volunteers to supplement City staff and extend the range of recreational services that are provided to Albany residents. The City should offer volunteer opportunities for such tasks as assistance with special events, administrative tasks, and “adopt a park” maintenance and stewardship programs. *(PROS MP Action 6.2.4)*
- Policy 3.10: Security.** Ensure that the design and operation of City parks maximizes the security and personal safety of park users. *(new)*
- Policy 3.11: Integrated Pest Management.** Apply integrated pest management principles in park maintenance, with an emphasis on non-toxic, environmentally-safe pest control methods *(PROS MP Action 6.4.1)*
- Policy 3.12: Scheduling.** Coordinate the scheduling of activities in recreation centers, on sports fields, at playgrounds, and in parks in general to avoid conflicts, reduce wear and tear, and more evenly distribute activities among parks. As noted in Goal 4, this should include coordination with the Albany Unified School District. *(new)*
- Policy 3.13: Funding.** Consider a variety of strategies to increase funding for capital projects and to enhance park maintenance, such as local fundraising, grants, development partnerships, and special taxing districts such as Landscape and Lighting Assessment Districts. *(PROS MP)*

Possible Implementing Actions

- Action 3.A: Parks and Recreation Commission.** Maintain a City Parks and Recreation Commission with the responsibility for reviewing plans for parks, open space, landscaping, and street beautification, and considering public input on such plans. The Parks and Recreation Commission should also advise on park maintenance activities and other matters concerning the delivery of park and recreation services. *(PROS MP Action 6.1.1 and 6.3.3)*
- Action 3.B: Memorial Park Master Plan.** Update the 1998 Memorial Park Master Plan and identify needed improvements for the coming years. This may include improvements to the entry promenade, as called for by the 2004 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. *(new, updates PROS Action1.5.1)*

Action 3.C Park Improvement Programs. Conduct periodic needs assessments, master planning, and improvement programs for neighborhood parks , including Ocean View Park and Terrace Park, and mini-parks, including Dartmouth Tot Lot and San Gabriel Mini-Park. *(new)*

Action 3.D: Playground Improvements. Develop an improvement and/or replacement program for Albany’s playgrounds. As part of this program, consideration should be given to expanding the Dartmouth Tot Lot and developing a picnic area and shelter. *(PROS MP Action 3.4.1., expanded)*

Action 3.F: Maintenance Programs. Develop and periodically update maintenance standards and programs for parks, sports fields, and other recreational facilities, including budgets for the various tasks required to keep each park and field in good condition. *(PROS MP Action 6.3.5, 6.4.2, and Pol 6.4, Action 6.5.1 and .2, Pol 6.6, Action 6.6.1)*

Citywide budgeting practices and procedures should ensure that adequate funds are set aside for park maintenance and that line items are established for specific park maintenance activities (e.g., sports field maintenance, building maintenance, medians and traffic islands, etc.). Maintenance practices should aim for reduced costs through minor improvements such as installation of automated irrigation systems and drought-tolerant landscaping.

Action 3.F: Maintenance Assessment. Regularly evaluate the distribution of maintenance tasks between City workers and other parties, including contractors, non-profits, park user groups and neighborhood residents. Clear operating procedures should be followed for all maintenance activities, and for the delegation of maintenance tasks to entities other than City staff. *(PROS MP Action 6.5.1)*

Action 3.G: Reclaimed Water Use. Continue to explore opportunities for reclaimed water use on City parks, and on medians and planting strips. *(new)*

Goal 4: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Provide high quality services and recreational programs that meet the diverse sports, fitness, and leisure time needs of Albany residents. *(adapted from PROS MP Goal 6)*

Policy 4.1: Responsiveness to Demographic Change. Ensure that recreational programs are periodically evaluated and adjusted in response to demographic changes in the city, recreational trends, changes in technology and consumer preferences, and other factors. *(adapted from PROS MP Pol 6.7 and Action 6.7.1)*

Policy 4.2: Children and Teen Programs. Continue to provide and maintain facilities for child care, early childhood education, and teen programs operated by the City or by private interests. *(PROS MP Pol 3.3)*

Policy 4.3: Senior Services. Maintain and enhance programs for senior citizens at the Albany Senior Center and at other locations in the City. Expand off-site activities such as tours and travel. *(PROS MP Pol 3.5)*

Policy 4.4: General Interest Programs. Provide a range of recreational activities and life-long learning classes for adults, such as computer instruction, job training, crafts, sports, and fitness. *(PROS MP Pol 3.6)*

Policy 4.5: Community Events. Hold communitywide events such as concerts and festivals in City parks as a way to build community spirit, bring residents together, and celebrate the value of parks to Albany. Such events should be managed to ensure that maintenance needs, parking, noise, litter, and other impacts are addressed. *(new)*

Policy 4.6: Fitness. Support exercise and fitness programs which contribute to the health and wellness of Albany residents, including martial arts and other physical activities. *(PROS MP Pol 3.7)*

Policy 4.7: Arts and Leisure. Incorporate arts, leisure, cultural, and continuing education programming into recreational programs, to complement sports, play, and active recreation. *(PROS MP Pol 2.2)*

DISCUSSION DRAFT

Possible Implementing Actions

Action 4.A: Evaluations. Continually evaluate programs in terms of costs, fee structure, persons served, community interests, and the level of subsidy required. (PROS MP Pol 6.7 and Action 6.7.3)

See the Community Services and Facilities Element for additional policies and actions on arts and cultural programs, senior services, and child care.

Goal 5: JOINT USE AND COLLABORATION

Promote joint planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and use of park sites, school sites, UC Village open space, and other recreational and community facilities. *(adapted from 1992 GP Pol CROS-6.2)*

Policy 5.1: School District Facilities. Support joint use agreements between the City of Albany and the Albany Unified School District to increase after-hours access to school facilities for Albany residents and school day access to facilities in City parks for Albany students. *(new)*

Policy 5.2: UC Village. Work with the University of California to maintain baseball/ softball fields, a recreation center for Village residents, a community garden, and other amenities which benefit UC Village residents and Albany as a whole. Promote access to the parks and athletic fields within UC Village by Albany residents and sports teams, and encourage the University to maintain a “no net loss” policy for the recreational open space acreage within the UC Village property. *(PROS MP Action 1.6.5, Action 3.2.1, UCV MP, Pol 4.7 and 4.8)*

In accordance with the UC Village Master Plan, space should be provided for at least one youth soccer and youth softball field, and two youth baseball fields, on the UC Village property. In addition, outdoor recreation space should be provided near the UC Village Community Center.

Policy 5.3: Gill Tract. Coordinate with the University of California for mutually beneficial uses of the Gill Tract. Such plans should protect and enhance Village Creek and other natural environmental features, including significant trees. *(PROS MP Action 1.6.5)*

See the Land Use Element for additional policies on the Gill Tract.

Policy 5.4: Veterans Memorial Building. Collaborate with Alameda County on the operation and management of the Veterans Memorial Building, with the ultimate goal of transferring ownership of the building to the City. *(92 GP Pol CROS-6.)*

Policy 5.5: East Bay Regional Park District. Work with the EBRPD to improve awareness of regional recreational facilities and parks among Albany residents, and to expand the regional park system for the benefit of all residents in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, including those in Albany. *(new)*

DISCUSSION DRAFT

Policy 5.6: Adjacent Cities. Continue to foster partnerships and joint use opportunities with the cities of Berkeley, Richmond, and El Cerrito to improve park and recreational services and ensure the most efficient use of local resources. *(PROS MP Action 6.2.1)*

See the Waterfront Element for a discussion of coordination with regional, state, and federal agencies on waterfront park improvements.

Policy 5.7: Program Development. Coordinate the development of recreational and community service programs with other agencies and organizations, including the School District, UC Village, the YMCA, and other service providers, to avoid redundancy and maximize the choices available to Albany residents. *(PROS MP Action 6.7.4)*

Possible Implementing Actions

Action 5.A: Tom Bates Sports Complex (Gilman Street Fields). Continue City support for joint powers agreements to operate sports facilities in nearby communities, including the Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex at the west end of Gilman Street in Berkeley. *(PROS MP Action 3.2.2)*

Action 5.B: Vista School. Work with the Albany Unified School District to explore improvements on the Vista School site which would augment the recreational options available to residents in the surrounding neighborhood *(PROS MP Action 1.4.1)*

Action 5.C: Cougar Field. Encourage the Albany Unified School District to improve and expand the use of Cougar Field to allow greater and more varied community use of the facility and to alleviate the overuse of Memorial Park Field *(PROS MP Action 1.5.2, Action 3.2.3)*

Action 5.D: Funding and Community Access Improvements at Veterans Memorial Building. Continue to explore potential funding sources for the maintenance, improvement, and acquisition of the Veterans Memorial Building, consistent with the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. Until the building can be acquired, the City will work with Alameda County on improving building operations and increasing community access. *(PROS MP Action 2.2.2, 1992 GP Pol CROS-6.5)*

Goal 6: TRAILS

Develop an integrated, comprehensive system of trails linking neighborhoods and schools to recreational facilities and open spaces, including the waterfront. *(PROS MP Goal 5)*

Policy 6.1: Trail Sustainability. Ensure that the planning and design of trails is sensitive to environmental protection priorities and issues such as sea level rise, habitat protection, and hillside erosion. If necessary, identify secondary alignments in the event trails must be seasonally closed for habitat protection purposes. *(adapted from 92 GP Pol CROS-7.2, and expanded)*

Policy 6.2: Connecting Trails. Focus trail development in Albany on improvements that connect existing pathway and trail systems and make it safer and easier to travel around the city on foot or by bicycle. *(adapted from 92 GP Pol CROS-6.4)*

See the Transportation Element for additional policies on trails and connectivity.

Policy 6.3: Trail Safety. Ensure that trails are designed to maximize user safety and reduce potential conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, motor vehicles, and trains. *(new)*

See the Transportation Element for additional policies on trail safety.

Policy 6.4: Interpretive Signage. Encourage interpretive signage and other features which educate trail users about Albany's natural resources and history. *(new)*

Policy 6.5: Waterfront Access. Improve trail connections to the Albany waterfront, particularly between the Ohlone Greenway and the Bay Trail. *(PROS MP Policy 5.2)*

Policy 6.6: Bay Trail. Work cooperatively with appropriate agencies in completing local segments of the Bay Trail, including spur trails between the waterfront and Albany neighborhoods. The City supports the long-term vision of a continuous shoreline trail for non-motorized vehicles around San Francisco Bay. *(PROS MP Pol 5.3)*

See the Waterfront Element for additional policies on shoreline access and trail improvements.

Policy 6.7: Albany Hill. Maintain and expand the system of trails on Albany Hill, including connections between Creekside Park and the neighborhoods on the hill's perimeter. *(PROS MP Policy 5.5, Action 5.5.2)*

DISCUSSION DRAFT

Policy 6.8: Creek Trails. Coordinate trail planning and improvement programs for Cerrito and Codornices Creeks with the cities of Berkeley, Richmond and El Cerrito, non-profit organizations such as Friends of Five Creeks, and appropriate county, state and federal regulatory agencies. *(adapted from PROS MP Action 1.6.3 and 1.6.4; Pol 5.6)*

Policy 6.9: Transportation ROWs. Continue to support the enhancement of transportation rights-of-way (ROWs) for linear parks and trails, such as the Ohlone Greenway beneath the elevated BART line. *(adapted from PROS MP Policy 5.1)*

Policy 6.10: Mid-Block Paths. Maintain existing pathways that provide mid-block connections within neighborhoods, including Manor Way and Catherine's Walk. *(PROS MP Policy 5.4, Action 5.4.1 and 5.4.2)*

Possible Implementing Actions

Action 6.A: Bay Trail Improvements. Continue implementation of the Bay Trail Plan along the Albany shoreline, and ensure that provisions for Bay Trail spurs and improvements are included in any future plans for Golden Gate Fields. The City will work with landowners, appropriate citizen and environmental groups, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, the Regional Park District, the Coastal Conservancy, and ABAG to implement this action. *(92 GP Pol CROS-7.1)*

Action 6.B: Albany Hill Trails. Provide for a dedicated trail easement through the 11-acre parcel on the west side of Albany Hill, with connections between Pierce Street, the end of Hillside Avenue, and existing trails in Creekside Park. *(Creekside MP, LU Rec1; PROS MP Action 5.5.2)*

Action 6.C: Cerrito Creek Trail. Provide for a pedestrian bridge across Cerrito Creek between Albany Hill and the north side of the Creek in El Cerrito, consistent with the adopted Creekside Master Plan. Explore options to provide additional linear creek access between San Pablo Avenue and Albany Hill, including a potential future trail easement on the north end of the Orientation Center for the Blind property. *(Creekside MP, LU Rec 4 and 5-6; PROS MP Action 5.2.1, Action 1.6.2)*

Action 6.D: Codornices Creek Trail. Continue joint planning with the University of California and the City of Berkeley on improvements to the Codornices Creek Trail. Explore options for eventual spur connections to the Bay Trail. *(PROS MP Action 5.6.1)*

See the Transportation Element for additional policies and actions on connections between the waterfront and UC Village.

DISCUSSION DRAFT

- Action 6.E: Community-Based Creek Restoration.** Continue to support the work of Friends of Albany Hill, Friends of Five Creeks, and other community based organizations to enhance the open space and trail potential of Codornices Creek, Cerrito Creek, Village Creek, and other natural areas in the city. (new)
- Action 6.F: Ohlone Greenway.** Pursue improvements to the Ohlone Greenway, such as game courts, interpretive signage (historic, natural, cultural, etc.), tot lots, toddler play facilities, and community gardens, where appropriate and compatible with noise levels, nearby residences, and other design factors. (PROS MP, Action 5.1.1 and Pol 3.4)
- Action 6.G: Key Route Median.** Pursue trail improvements, landscaping, and other amenities on the Key Route Boulevard median between Solano Avenue and El Cerrito. (PROS MP Action 2.4.1)
- Action 6.H: Active Transportation Plan Updates.** Periodically update the Albany Active Transportation Plan to update information and plans for pedestrian and bicycle trails and pathways in and around the city. (adapted from 92 GP Pol CROS-6.3)

EXHIBIT B:

Summary of Comments from Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting on Draft General Plan Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Goals, Policies, and Actions

June 12, 2014

A one-hour study session was held with the Parks and Recreation Commission to review the Draft General Plan goals, policies, and actions on parks, recreation, and open space. Jeff Bond introduced consultant Barry Miller. Barry did a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the General Plan. He walked the Commission through the six proposed park/open space goals. The public was given an initial opportunity to comment. No comments were received (two public comments were received following Commission discussion).

Comments from the Commission were requested. *Note: Comments below are listed sequentially by page and Goal/Policy/Action number, rather than in the order in which they were brought up by Commissioners and the public.*

General:

- How will these policies be used in practice? How are competing goals balanced against each other? *It was explained that the General Plan was like the City's "constitution" and that various regulations such as zoning and the Municipal Code provided the implementing tools for carrying out the policies.*
- To what extent will the General Plan be used to regulate private property? What regulations will be developed to carry out the goals?
- What is the definition of open space and how is this definition used? Is the Albany Bulb considered open space? What about parking lots, or vacant land zoned for development?
- Can the Commission have an opportunity to review Conservation and Sustainability policies?
- Any policies for Albany Hill should be mindful of constitutional issues regarding the cross on the hill (*public comment*)

Comments on Goal 1:

- Is Goal 1 too strong? If we have a goal to maximize open space, does that mean we can't have any more development in the City? Does this apply to private property or just public land? Why is "aesthetics" listed here? (*Author's note: Perhaps change "Maximize the preservation, enhancement, and expansion of open space in Albany" to "Preserve and enhance open space in Albany for...."*)
- Policy 1.9: Could this be used to regulate what people do in their backyards? To address heritage trees? Two Commissioners suggested possible deletion; one Commissioner suggested this be retained. (*Author's Note: One possibility could be to change "minimum yard areas" to "minimum front yard areas."*)
- Add several policies here:

- Encouragement for rooftop open space, including green roofs, rooftop parks and gardens, solar panels, and other forms of usable open space
- Address the role of open space in stormwater management and watersheds/ water quality planning
- Look at the Caltrans ROW where Buchanan goes under I-80. There is a lot of open space there that could be improved----not really for recreation, but at least for aesthetics, landscaping, art, etc. Acknowledge the possibility.

Comments on Goal 2:

- The Commission generally agreed that per capita service standards should be adjusted to reflect an overall goal for total acres of active parkland per 1,000 residents rather than breaking the goal down by each type of park, as was done in 2004. There was also interest in clarifying which parks were in each category, and providing a clearer link between the service standards and existing conditions.
- Policy 2.3 should be clarified to note the standard is a minimum, not a maximum
- Define “special use park” and clarify what a “regional park” and “open space” are in the context of this plan and the standards

Comments on Goal 3:

- Policy 3.5: Policy on dogs has erroneous information in second sentence. Memorial Park dog play area is multi-use and not just a dog park. Also, sentence does not reflect current rules for leashed/off-leash dogs. Suggest clarifying or deleting this sentence (*Author’s note: Second sentence will be deleted.*)
- Policy 3.6: This policy appears to commit the City to artificial turf and night lighting—both of which require additional study—there is not a consensus that these are desirable. Barry noted that this is the existing (2004) City policy and the wording was conditional (“Consider...”). It was also suggested that this policy be balanced by something promoting preservation of dark skies. (*Author’s note: policy will be deleted. Dark skies policy to be included in the Conservation Element.*)
- Policy 3.8—should not limit vegetation management to Creekside Park and Albany Hill. Other parks also need management. This policy should also reference the use of recycled water for landscape irrigation.
- Add a policy calling for improvements to park signage.
- Action 3.C-add the Ohlone Greenway to the list, specifically the idea of adding a mini-field just north of the Berkeley border
- Action 3.D-there was some discussion of whether to add language calling for a bathroom in Dartmouth Mini-Park. It was noted that this was controversial and there were strong objections when this was proposed before. It was agreed that we would end the sentence with the word “tot lot” and delete the portion on developing a picnic area and shelter.

Comments on Goal 4:

- Policy 4.5: Add school facilities. Also, is there any way to engage the business community in this?
- Consider moving Policy 5.8 here, to address the relationship between City recreational programs and those offered by the School District or other entities. Or perhaps cross-reference Policy 5.8 here to make the connection.

Comments on Goal 5:

- Add an action program to periodically revisit the joint use agreement, including consideration for access to the High School pool. And perhaps the School could have occasional access to the concert stage.
- Change Action 5.A to “periodically evaluate” City support for the JPA for Tom Bates field instead of providing unconditional support into the future. Some of the Commissioners and public speakers felt the City was not getting what it had paid for. It was suggested that the City do a yearly evaluation of costs and benefits of this particular JPA.
- Potentially add an action to use the old library on Solano Avenue for additional recreational programming. There was some discussion about whether the YMCA was now using this space.
- Consider additional language on the Gill Tract.

Comments on Goal 6

- Policy 6.3/Action 6.B: Trail safety should address homeless encampments on Albany Hill and more general safety issues on the hill. Perhaps expand Action 6.B to address personal safety and other security issues.
- Policy 6.4: (*public comment*) Policy on interpretive signage should also address general directional signage, which is lacking on most trails in the City.
- Action 6.F: Add par course to the list of possible improvements in the greenway. Also add something about connecting the senior center to the greenway, as it is currently hard to get to one from the other.