

City of Albany



TO: ALBANY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
FROM: BARRY MILLER, GENERAL PLAN CONSULTANT
SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
DATE: JULY 23, 2014

REQUEST

This is the 14th Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on the Albany 2035 General Plan Update. This Study Session will provide an introduction to the 2015-2023 Housing Element Update, which is now underway. This Study Session will also cover the General Plan goals and policies for conservation and sustainability. An opportunity for public comment on both items 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 July 23 will focus on two topics:

First, the Commission will receive an introduction to the 2015-2023 Housing Element. As the Commission is aware, the City adopted a Housing Element in March 2014. Although the existing document was only recently adopted, an update is necessary to meet legislative requirements and plan for a new Regional Housing Needs Allocation which extends for the next eight years. The update provides an opportunity to explore possible new policies and programs, identify additional housing sites, and evaluate the City's progress on the programs adopted in March. The new Housing Element must be adopted by January 31, 2015.

Second, the Commission will consider Draft policies and actions for the Conservation and Sustainability Element. The intent of this Element is to present a description of natural resources in Albany and express the City's official policies for the preservation and management of these resources. The Element covers plants and animals, trees, hills, creeks, wetlands, mineral deposits,

soil, air and water quality and other aspects of the natural environment. The City has expanded the scope of this Element to cover sustainability, including issues relating to climate change, energy and water conservation, green building, and waste reduction.

2015-2023 HOUSING ELEMENT

The first part of the July 23 Study Session will address the 2015-2023 Housing Element.

The City is required by State law to adopt a housing element covering the period 2015-2023 no later than January 31, 2015. The Element will supersede the existing Albany Housing Element, which was adopted on March 3, 2014 and certified by the state on June 3, 2014. Once adopted, the new Element will be submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for a compliance determination. The City will submit a “working draft” of the document to HCD in Fall 2014 so they may determine if any revisions are needed prior to adoption in January.

The new Housing Element will be prepared using “streamlining” provisions established by HCD for the next round of updates. This enables the City to submit a “redlined” version of the previously adopted Housing Element indicating additions, deletions, and edits. Streamlining recognizes that the existing Element is relatively current and enables HCD to focus its review on the parts of the document that have changed. Cities receiving streamlined review must still conduct public outreach, provide an evaluation of their performance in the prior housing element period, and identify specific housing programs to be implemented in the coming years.

In its new Element, Albany will once again need to demonstrate its ability to meet its “fair share” of the region’s housing needs for the 2015-2023 planning period. The fair share is defined by ABAG through a process called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). During the 2007-2014 Housing Element period, Albany’s RHNA was 276 units. During the next period, it is 334 units. The City must show that it has the capacity for this number of units to be built during the next eight years.

As the Commission is aware, the adopted Housing Element demonstrated sufficient capacity to meet the RHNA, primarily on underutilized sites along San Pablo Avenue, Solano Avenue, and in the R-3 zoning district. The City may count the same sites when demonstrating its capacity to meet the RHNA in the next planning period. New sites may be added to the inventory in this process to reflect the higher RHNA. At the Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on July 23, we will solicit input from the Commission and the public about additional sites that could be considered.

The July 23 study session also provides an opportunity to discuss possible new action programs for the Element. Because the implementation timeline for the 2015 Element extends for eight years, the City may wish to consider programs beyond those that were listed in the 2014 document.

Staff’s goal is to bring a “Working Draft” of the 2015-2023 Housing Element to the Commission on September 24 for discussion. Additional opportunities for public input will be provided between the July 23 meeting and that date, and opportunities for input will continue beyond September 24. It is expected that an “Adoption Draft” of the Element will be presented to the Commission in December 2014, following review by the state in October and November and

revisions to respond to issues raised by HCD and the public. The City Council will act on the “Adoption Draft” in January 2015, before the statutory deadline. Appropriate CEQA documents will accompany the Adoption Draft.

It should be noted that the City is also planning a “community open house” on Tuesday, July 22 to kick off the Housing Element Update. The Commission is invited to attend the open house and participate in the conversation.

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT

Legal Requirements

Conservation is one of the seven mandatory elements of the general plan. The California Government Code 65302(d) requires that the element address “the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources.” The Government Code further indicates the element may cover land and water reclamation, erosion, watershed protection, water pollution, management of stream channels, and sand and gravel resources.

The Government Code requirements are most relevant to counties and larger communities with large areas of open space. Urbanized communities such as Albany typically complement the mandated topics with other conservation topics that are more appropriate in a built-up setting. Moreover, the Government Code requirements were drafted in the early 1970s. More recent general plans often voluntarily expand the scope of their conservation elements to address topics like renewable energy, climate change, and tree planting.

Conservation Policy Audit

The intent of the Conservation and Sustainability Element of the General Plan is to integrate and synthesize existing policies, rather than to change the City’s current policies. The General Plan is not intended to be an update of the Climate Action Plan, the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan, or other planning documents that address resource conservation. It is broader in its scope than these documents, 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 conservation-related policies in Albany. Among the documents reviewed were the 1992 General Plan and the Albany Climate Action Plan. The audit also considered regional plans and programs related to topics such as air and water quality.

A copy of the Conservation Policy Audit may be found on the project website at www.albany2035.org. It is a 12-page document.

Draft Goals, Policies, and Actions

Attachment “A” to this staff report includes the Draft Conservation and Sustainability policies. This is a Working Draft. Comments are encouraged and revisions are likely before a Draft General Plan is published.

The existing 1992 Albany General Plan combined the Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Element into a single chapter. The new General Plan has separated Recreation and Open Space out as a separate chapter. Policies related to those topics (and parks) were discussed at the June Commission meeting.

The 1992 Plan goals related to Conservation were to:

1. Enhance the natural features of the City's creeks and increase public access to them
2. Increase street tree planting throughout Albany to beautify the City and purify the air
3. Preserve the crest of Albany Hill for public open space use
4. Maintain and improve the quality of the natural environment and cultural resources
5. Continue to value the importance of the Albany waterfront and shoreline as a place of scenic beauty

The 1992 plan included 16 policies under these five goals, with very brief mention of air and water quality, wildlife, energy and water conservation, watershed management, mineral conservation, and other topics typically found in a conservation element. It did not address sustainability or climate change.

The new Conservation and Sustainability Element is more expansive in scope than the existing Plan. It includes seven goals, corresponding to the following topics:

- Protection of Natural Features (including creeks, Albany Hill, and the waterfront)
- Urban Forestry (including street trees)
- Air and Water Quality
- Plant and Animal Resources
- Energy and Water Conservation
- Sustainable Development
- Waste Management

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 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 Sustainability Committee

The material being presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission on July 23 was also presented to the Sustainability Commission on July 16. Comments from that meeting (including comments from the public) are included as Attachment B to this staff report. 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 July 23.

APPENDIX A: Draft Conservation and Sustainability Goals, Policies, and Actions

APPENDIX B: Comments from Sustainability Committee on Appendix A

ATTACHMENT A

ALBANY 2035 DRAFT GENERAL PLAN CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: PROTECTION OF NATURAL FEATURES

Protect and enhance the natural features that define Albany's environment, including the waterfront, wetlands, creeks, and Albany Hill. *(92 Plan Goal CROS-4)*

Policy 1.1: Reducing Environmental Impacts. Ensure that new development is sensitive to environmental conditions and reduces impacts on the natural environment to the greatest extent feasible. *(new)*

Policy 1.2: Erosion and Soil Management. Require that construction, grading, retaining walls, infrastructure maintenance, and other earth moving activities use best management practices to reduce erosion, sedimentation, and soil loss. *(UCV MP Obj 7-9, applied citywide)*

Policy 1.3: Conservation of Albany Hill. Protect and restore natural features, native vegetation, and wildlife on Albany Hill. *(91 Creekside Master Plan)*

See also Policy XX in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element regarding preservation of Albany Hill as open space, protection of important views and vistas, and improved access to the Hill.

Policy 1.4: Albany Waterfront. Conserve the Albany waterfront and surrounding wetlands as a natural and cultural resource, a vital ecosystem, a place of scenic beauty, and a defining feature of Albany's physical environment. *(Goal CROS-5)*

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

Policy 1.5: Environmental Education. Improve public education and awareness of Albany's environment, including the characteristics of its shoreline and marshlands, its plant and animal communities, the creeks and watersheds, and its natural landscape. *(98 Watershed Master Plan)*

Policy 1.6: Respecting Natural Features. Design new development to conserve natural landscape features, such as topography, drainage patterns, and vegetation. Avoid projects which require excessive hillside grading, rerouting of streams and

drainageways, filling of wetlands, and other alterations which compromise natural resources. *(UCV MP Obj7-8)*

- Policy 1.7: Creek Restoration.** Enhance the natural characteristics of Albany’s creeks and uncover and restore (“daylight”) portions of creeks that have been placed in underground culverts and pipes where feasible. *(92 Plan CROS-1)*
- Policy 1.8: Creek Access.** Improve public access to Albany’s creeks, particularly where land adjacent to the creek is in public ownership and opportunities for linear trails or connections to parks may exist. *(new)*
- Policy 1.9: Riparian Corridors.** Maintain special development regulations for areas within 100 feet of Codornices Creek, Cerrito Creek, and Village Creek which ensure that riparian and littoral habitat is conserved, flood impacts are reduced, and the creeks are enhanced for their aesthetic and ecological value. Watercourses on private property should be kept free of trash, debris, excessive vegetation, and obstacles to the flow of water. *(92 Plan, Pol CHS-1.1 and Pol LU-9.2)*

Implementing Actions

- Action 1.A: Codornices and Cerrito Creek Restoration Initiatives.** Continue collaborative efforts with community organizations, resource agencies, and adjacent cities to restore natural conditions and stabilize banks along Albany’s creeks, particularly Codornices and Cerrito Creeks. *(92 GP Pol CROS-1.1, 1.2, 1.3)*
- Action 1.B: Watercourse Combining District.** Review the Watercourse Combining District zoning regulations to ensure that they sufficiently protect riparian habitat, reduce erosion and flooding hazards, and mitigate impacts of development on creek ecology. Compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations also shall be required for any project that could potentially impact the city’s creeks. *(92 GP Pol CROS-1.4)*
- Action 1.C: Creeks at UC Village.** Work with the University of California and the developers of projects on the UC Village property to maintain undeveloped open space easements along Village Creek and along Codornices Creek, and to plan for the restoration of the creeks as adjacent properties are developed or altered. *(92 Plan LU-7.2.B, UCV MP- Obj 7-7 and Pol 7-19)*
- Action 1.D: Creek Clean-Ups.** Support community-led creek clean-ups and restoration efforts. *(new)*

GOAL 2: URBAN FOREST

Expand Albany's urban forest. *(92 Plan Goal CROS-2)*

Policy 2.1: Trees and the Environment. Recognize the importance of trees and vegetation to improving air and water quality in the City and contributing to local efforts to reduce global climate change. *(92 Plan Goal CROS-2, CAP GI-1.1)*

Policy 2.2: Tree Preservation. Require preservation of mature trees during the review of development proposals and subsequent construction projects. Site design and construction plans should identify individual trees and groves of trees and include measures to protect them wherever feasible. When tree preservation is not feasible, require replacement trees and ongoing maintenance measures to avoid net loss of tree coverage. *(92 Plan Pol CROS-4.5, Pol LU-7.2.C, UCV MP, Pol 6-7)*

Policy 2.3: Tree Planting. Undertake street tree planting and maintenance programs to beautify the City, create shade, provide habitat for birds and other animals, and enhance the built environment. *(PROS MP, Action 2.4.2)*

Policy 2.4: Bay Friendly Landscaping. Encourage bay-friendly and drought-tolerant landscaping to enhance aesthetics, buffer residences from noise and air pollution, create privacy, reduce wind, and provide habitat. *(UCV MP, Goal 6)*

Policy 2.5: Albany Hill Vegetation Management. Protect the remaining native plant communities on Albany Hill. Vegetation on the Hill should be managed in a way that allows the eucalyptus forest to co-exist with other plant communities, including oak woodland, grassland, and toyon understory. *(Creekside Master Plan, Objectives A and C)*

Policy 2.6: Hazardous Trees. Remove trees that threaten human safety due to unstable growth, disease, hazards to life and property, or serious fire danger. In wildland areas such as Albany Hill, remove understory debris and fire ladders to reduce fire hazards and improve trail access. *(Creekside MP, Obj D, E, and K)*

Policy 2.7: Private Tree Planting. Encourage residents and businesses to undertake private tree planting and landscapes which absorb greenhouse gases. *(CAP GI-1.1.D).*

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action 2.A: Street Tree Planting Program. Continue implementation of a comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program for Albany streets, including priorities, time schedules, and species selection guidelines. Seek funding through state, federal, and non-profit urban forestry programs to support increased tree planting and maintenance capacity. *(92 Plan, Pol CROS-2.1; CAP 1.1.B and C)*

See the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Element for additional guidance on tree planting standards.

Action 2.B: Tree Preservation Requirements. Continue to study alternatives for protecting large specimen trees and addressing tree removal and preservation issues on private property. *(new)*

Action 2.C: Tree Inventories. Implement standard operating procedures requiring inventories of trees and significant site vegetation as a part of development application review. *(92 Plan Pol CROS-4.3)*

Action 2.D: Creekside Master Plan Implementation. Implement the vegetation management prescriptions of the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan, and periodically update the Plan as conditions change. *(new)*

Action 2.E: Green Albany Plan. Prepare a “Green Albany” Plan to evaluate areas in the City for carbon sequestration and enhancement of the tree canopy, and for potential “green streets” enhancements. *(CAP GI-1.1.A and 1.1.F)*

GOAL 3: AIR AND WATER QUALITY

Improve regional air and water quality.

Policy 3.1: Reducing VMT. Implement land use and transportation strategies which reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thereby reducing transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. *(new)*

See the Land Use and Transportation Elements for additional policies on reducing VMT and transportation-related strategies for improving air quality.

Policy 3.2: Clean Air Plan Implementation. Participate in local, regional, and state efforts to implement the Bay Area Clean Air Plan and meet state and federal air quality standards *(92 Plan Pol CROS-4.4)*

Policy 3.3: Construction-Related Air Quality Impacts. Implement measures to reduce construction-related air pollution, especially particulate matter from earth movement, construction debris, stockpiled soil, and truck traffic. *(UCV MP. 7-15)*

Policy 3.4: Stormwater Control. Eliminate non-stormwater discharges to the municipal storm sewer, and control potential discharges from spills, dumping, and urban runoff. Activities with the potential to cause or contribute to stormwater pollution shall comply with best management practices, guidelines, or requirements to reduce water quality impacts. *(Muni Code)*

Policy 3.5: Water Quality Education. Increase public awareness of the sources of water pollution in Albany's creeks, such as dumping into storm drains, oil and grease runoff, and improper disposal of household chemicals. *(new)*

Policy 3.6: Low Impact Development. Encourage the use of pervious pavement, rain gardens, bioswales, cisterns, roof drains directed to pervious areas, and other "low impact development" (LID) measures which capture and filter rainwater and reduce runoff to local creeks and the Bay. *(98 WSMP, updated)*

Policy 3.7: Municipal Regional Permit. In compliance with the Clean Water Act, participate in the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program and NPDES Municipal Regional Permit (MRP) to reduce stormwater discharges to local waterways and San Francisco Bay. In accordance with the MRP, ensure that post-runoff conditions on any development site shall not exceed pre-project rates and durations. *(new, Muni Code)*

Policy 3.8: Watershed-Level Planning. Recognize local watersheds as a logical basis for planning and implementing water quality improvements. Increase awareness of watershed boundaries and the location of creeks and drainage courses in and around Albany. *(new)*

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action 3.A: Air Quality Monitoring. Coordinate with regional agencies such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Caltrans to monitor air quality conditions along Interstates 80 and 580 and the Union Pacific Railroad. *(92 Plan Pol CROS 4-1)*

Action 3.B: Air Quality and Public Health. Consider air-quality related public health risks when locating development along the I-80/580 corridor, or when approving projects with the potential to create air quality impacts. Periodically review BAAQMD data on air quality conditions and odor complaints to identify and address potential hazards. *(new)*

Action 3.C: Trash Reduction Plan. Implement a Trash Long-Term Reduction Plan and Progress Assessment Strategy to reduce trash discharges to the storm sewer and carry out trash control measures such as street sweeping, litter control, and improved trash bin management. *(new)*

Action 3.D: Stormwater Management Plans. Implement Provision C.3 of the Municipal Resources Permit which requires stormwater management plans, runoff control measures, and stormwater treatment on large development sites. *(new)*

Action 3.E: Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program. Work collaboratively with Alameda County and nearby cities to implement the County Clean Water Program, including water quality monitoring, regulation of construction runoff, cleaning of storm drain inlets, education and outreach, enforcement of illicit discharge regulations. *(new)*

GOAL 4: BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Protect and enhance Albany's plant and animal habitat.

- Policy 4.1: Habitat Protection.** Ensure that development decisions, vegetation management plans, and open space plans enhance wildlife diversity, avoid wildlife disruption, and protect the habitat of rare, endangered, and special status species. *(adapted from Creekside MP)*
- Policy 4.2: Coordination with State and Federal Resource Agencies.** Work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and other resource agencies to conserve and restore sensitive habitat areas. Refer local projects to these agencies for review and comment as appropriate. *(new)*
- Policy 4.3: Monarch Butterfly Roosting.** Consider potential impacts to Monarch Butterfly roosting sites on Albany Hill in any future applications for development, park expansion, trail construction, and fuel reduction on the Hill. *(92 Plan, Pol CROS-3.2)*
- Policy 4.4: Hoffman Marsh.** Recognize the environmental value of Hoffman Marsh, located west of I-580 and north of Buchanan Street. Protect bird feeding and nesting areas by limiting activities in important habitat areas. *(92 Plan Policy CROS-5.3)*
- Policy 4.5: Migratory Birds.** Require compliance with state and federal regulations protecting migratory birds and their nests from destruction or disruption. *(UCV MP, applied citywide)*
- Policy 4.6: Light Pollution.** Reduce the intrusion of unwanted light and glare, particularly in settings where it may interfere with natural habitat.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

- Action 4.A: Environmental Review.** Use the environmental review process as a way to identify important biological resources and mitigate potentially significant impacts on plants and animals associated with future projects. Wildlife or botanical surveys shall be required for projects with the potential to alter or damage the habitat of state or federally defined special status species. *(new)*
- Action 4.B: Habitat Restoration Plans.** Support implementation of state and federal habitat restoration plans which increase the health of San Francisco Bay and bay wetlands. *(new)*

Action 4.C: Dark Skies Ordinance. Consider adopting a local “dark skies” ordinance to limit adverse effects associated with night lighting from urban uses. *(new)*

Action 4.D: Resource Conservation Overlay Zones. As appropriate, consider the use of Resource Conservation Overlay districts to protect rare, endangered, or special status species. *(new)*

GOAL 5: ENERGY AND WATER CONSERVATION

Reduce energy and water consumption, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and non-renewable resource depletion.

- Policy 5.1: Green Construction.** Adopt development standards and guidelines which support “green” construction and environmental leadership in the building industry. This includes use of the Build-It-Green checklist for new construction projects and incentives for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. Building design and site planning should incorporate measures to reduce heating and cooling costs and improve energy efficiency. *(new)*
- Policy 5.2: Energy and Water Audits.** Promote the use of energy audits and water audits by Albany residents and businesses to identify and eliminate sources of waste, conserve resources, and reduce utility costs. Lead by example by performing such audits on municipal buildings and properties, and undertaking appropriate improvements to address energy and water inefficiencies in City facilities. *(CAP Action BE-1.1.A, 2.1.B, Measure WC-1.1)*
- Policy 5.3: Energy Retrofits.** Encourage the retrofitting of residential and commercial buildings to increase energy efficiency and maximize the use of renewable energy. *(CAP Measure BE-2)*
- Policy 5.4: Cool Roofs and Pavement.** Encourage the design of roofs, pavement, and other exposed surfaces in a manner that mitigates the heat island effects of development and improves energy efficiency. *(new)*
- Policy 5.5: Solar Access.** Preserve solar access rights in a way that is consistent with state law and encourages the use of photovoltaic energy systems. *(new)*
- Policy 5.6: Green Businesses.** Create green business programs and other incentive and recognition based initiatives which encourage private enterprise to use greener practices in their operations *(CAP Action BE-2.1.C)*
- Policy 5.7: Renewable Energy.** Support low cost financing programs which incentivize private investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems. This could include measures such as solar energy empowerment districts and alternative financing for solar installations *(CAP Measure BE-2.2, 2.4)*

- Policy 5.8: Water Conservation Measures.** Conserve water in City facilities and new development by maintaining requirements for bay-friendly landscaping and water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and by continuing to support EBMUD's public information campaigns to reduce water consumption *(92 GP Pol 4.6, UCV MP Obj 6-3, Obj 6-4, CAP Obj WC-1)*
- Policy 5.9: Reducing Water Usage.** Partner with EBMUD, PG&E, Stopwaste.org and other organizations to encourage water efficiency and reduced usage and support indoor and outdoor conservation practices. *(CAP Obj WC-2)*
- Policy 5.10: Reclaimed Water.** Encourage the use of reclaimed water, both on an individual basis (e.g., gray water recycling for private residences) and on a citywide basis for landscaping and irrigation. *(new)*

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

- Action 5.A: Green Building Code.** Require new construction to meet or exceed California Green Building Code standards for energy and water efficiency. Albany's building codes should be regularly reviewed and periodically amended to meet or exceed state requirements. *(Measure BE-3.1, Action BE-3.1.A)*
- Action 5.B: Zero Emissions Municipal Buildings.** Pursue a zero emissions target for City buildings through the development of renewable energy systems, performance data displays, and energy efficiency improvements to public buildings *(CAP Obj BE-1 and Measure BE-1.1)*
- Action 5.C: Community Choice Aggregation.** Continue to explore Community Choice Aggregation, an approach to energy procurement in which the City would partner with other jurisdictions to secure alternative energy supply contracts on a communitywide basis. *(CAP Measure BE-4.3)*
- Action 5.D: Energy Outreach.** Develop outreach programs to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy investments in the city, and partner with other organizations such as PG&E and Stopwaste.org to carry out their energy education and outreach efforts. The City will continue to hold events such as the annual Arts and Green Festival to raise awareness of environmental issues and opportunities for more sustainable living. *(CAP Measure BE-2.1, Action BE-2.1.A, BE-2.1.D)*
- Action 5.E: Point of Sale Energy Requirements.** Continue to evaluate point of sale energy efficiency upgrade requirements for homes and businesses. Consider ordinances requiring such upgrades. *(CAP Measure BE-2.3, Action 2.3.A and C)*

- Action 5.F: Multi-Family Energy Use Monitoring.** Continue working with Stopwaste.org to develop and implement a benchmarking pilot program which assists landlords and tenants in gauging utility usage over time. Encourage PG&E, EBMUD, and other utilities to provide comparative conservation metrics on utility bills. *(CAP Action BE-2.3.D/E, BE-4.4)*
- Action 5.G: CAP Progress Reports.** Provide periodic progress reports on the implementation of Climate Action Plan (CAP) measures regarding building energy and water efficiency measures. Update the CAP as appropriate to reflect the completion of specified actions, the development of new actions, the availability of resources and technology, and new targets for greenhouse gas reduction. *(new)*
- Action 5.H: Irrigation Efficiency.** As funding allows, replace existing City irrigation infrastructure with more efficient infrastructure that reduces losses from evapotranspiration and creates the opportunity for the future application of reclaimed water. *(CAP Action WC-1.2.A and B)*

GOAL 6: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Achieve land use and transportation patterns which reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

- Policy 6.1: Land Use and Transportation Strategies.** Implement the measures expressed in the Land Use, Transportation, and Housing Elements of the General Plan to achieve more sustainable development and travel patterns in Albany, including:
- An expanded, safer, and more accessible pedestrian and bicycle network that reduces dependence on automobile travel and creates more walkable and connected neighborhoods
 - Greater emphasis on mixed uses along the San Pablo and Solano Avenue corridors, integrating residential uses above commercial uses and thereby reducing auto trips and trip lengths for goods and services
 - A balance between job growth and housing growth, and more opportunities for residents to live closer to work
 - Public transportation improvements (bus, BART, and possible future shuttle) which provide more viable alternatives to driving
 - Higher densities along the San Pablo corridor, enabling more development to be accommodated in the center of the region and reducing the necessity of developing “greenfields” on the periphery of the Bay Area
 - Transportation demand management programs, including flextime, telecommuting, signal synchronization, carpooling, and other measures to reduce congestion and vehicle idling and cut down on solo passenger driving.

See the Land Use and Transportation Elements for policies on these topics

- Policy 6.2: Climate Change as a Planning Consideration.** Ensure that planning and development decisions consider potential impacts associated with global climate change, including rising sea levels and potential greenhouse gas emissions. *(new)*

- Policy 6.3: Alternative Fuel Vehicles.** Plan for and develop the infrastructure necessary for alternative fuel vehicles. This should include automobile charging areas for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. Incentives for such vehicles, such as preferential parking, should be encouraged. *(CAP Measure TL-4.3)*

- Policy 6.4: Climate Outreach.** Develop outreach and education programs that increase awareness of global climate change and the steps Albany residents can take to reduce their carbon footprints. *(CAP TL-4.4.F)*

Policy 6.5: Food Production and Transportation. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food transportation by promoting local food production, urban agriculture, farmers markets, farm-to-table restaurants, and more sustainable methods of growing and transporting food. *(CAP Measure FA-1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1)*

See also Park, Open Space, and Recreational policies on community gardening and urban agriculture

Policy 6.6: Adaptation. Work collaboratively with surrounding jurisdictions and regional agencies on adaptation planning for rising sea level along the Albany shoreline. Ensure that land use and capital improvement decisions for the shoreline area consider long-term sea level projections. *(new)*

Policy 6.7: Advocacy. Continue to be a regional leader in advocating for more sustainable development practices, energy and water conservation, renewable energy use, sustainable transportation improvements, and planning for climate change. *(new)*

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action 6.A: Project-Level GHG Emission Analysis. Evaluate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with development proposals and work with applicants to reduce emissions during project review. *(CAP Measure TL-3.3)*

Action 6.B: Zero Emission City Vehicles. Improve the fuel efficiency of the City vehicle fleet by purchasing low emission or zero emission vehicles as vehicles are retired from service *(CA Measure TL-4.2)*

GOAL 7: WASTE REDUCTION

Eliminate the landfilled disposal of solid waste.

- Policy 7.1: Zero Waste.** Work toward an ultimate target of “zero waste” by continuing to reduce solid waste generation and expand local recycling and composting programs. The City will pursue a 90 percent diversion target by 2030. *(CAP Obj WR-1, Action WR-1A)*
- Policy 7.2: Expanded Waste Diversion.** Work with stopwaste.org and other organizations to adopt local ordinances which expand the scope of recycling and waste reduction. A particular emphasis should be placed on increasing the diversion rate for multi-family buildings and commercial businesses and expanding recycling of construction and demolition debris. *(CAP Action WR-1.B)*
- Policy 7.3: Waste Reduction Initiatives.** Support regional, statewide, and national initiatives to reduce landfilled waste through such measures as eliminating junk mail, reducing excessive product packaging, increasing e-waste recycling; and expanding the market for recycled goods and products. *(CAP Action WR- 1.F and WR-1.G)*
- Policy 7.4: Education and Outreach.** Encourage additional education and outreach on the importance and benefits of waste reduction. *(Action WR-1.D)*
- Policy 7.5: Household Hazardous Waste.** Continue and expand efforts to collect household hazardous waste, electronic waste, bulky goods, and other waste that cannot be easily recycled through conventional pick-up. *(new)*

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

- Action 7.A: Municipal Waste Reduction.** Implement measures to reduce municipal waste and increase the use of recycled products and salvaged materials for City operations. This could include environmentally friendly purchasing practices, installation of recycling receptacles in parks and public spaces, city-sponsored composting programs, and environmental education initiatives. *(new)*
- Action 7.B: Waste Reduction Program.** Maintain a solid waste reduction and management program that is coordinated with the Countywide Stopwaste.org program. Components of this program include trash collection, compost and recycling collection, education and outreach, and other components to minimize landfilled waste. *(new)*

ATTACHMENT B

WORKING DRAFT FOR REVIEW BY SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Summary of Sustainability Committee Discussion on the Albany General Plan July 16, 2014

The Sustainability Committee discussed the Draft Conservation and Sustainability Element of the General Plan at its July 16, 2014 meeting. Consultant Barry Miller delivered a PowerPoint presentation, including an overview of the project and the proposed conservation and sustainability goals in the new Element. The following comments were made:

- What is the legal authority of the General Plan –is it advisory or mandatory? Is the city required to comply with its policies? (*Barry explained that it is legally binding; however, the language uses verbs like “encourage” and “support” to provide flexibility. Where a directive is mandatory, the language is firmer, using words like “require” and “prohibit”.*)
- How will “Voices to Vision” be considered in the General Plan, since it was not “adopted” per se and is not a policy document. (*Barry explained that Voices to Vision would be described in the narrative but that its recommendations did not translate easily into policies since they were aspirational*)
- Barry explained that sustainability was a “thread” that ran through many elements of the Plan. In addition to having a Conservation and Sustainability chapter in the Plan, there are also sustainability principles inherent in the Land Use Element, the Transportation Element, and so on. Committee members asked to see the other elements to understand the broader context for policies in the Conservation and Sustainability Element.

Barry reviewed the seven goals in the new Element.

- How are public health issues reflected in the General Plan, particularly those related to toxics and hazmats? (*Barry explained that public health was another overarching theme that underpinned all elements of the Plan. Specific issues relating to toxics are addressed in the Environmental Hazards Element. Other aspects of public health such as walkability are in Transportation. Air quality is addressed in the Conservation Element.*)
- The first and fourth goals seem similar—what is the distinction between them?

Goal 1 Comments: Natural Features

- What does the verb “conserve” mean in the context of natural features? Does conserve mean don’t change it ever? When you say “conserve Albany Hill” or “conserve the waterfront,” what is the intent? The context is different than saying “conserve energy” or “conserve water.”
- “Conserve” may be an old fashioned word – legally, we don’t even have to call this the “conservation” element. The language feels dated. Try and avoid “1970s” terms.
- How does one take a directive to “encourage” something and then make it legally binding? How does this work in practice? (*Barry explained that the General Plan provided broad policy direction which is followed up by regulations such as the municipal code that are more specific and tangible.*)
- It was noted that Planning and Zoning approvals are contingent on findings that the approval is consistent with the General Plan, so even policies that “encourage” carry some weight.

- The Committee suggested we use more active verbs than “encourage” to give some of the policies more teeth. Perhaps some of these should say “require.”
- Where are historic and cultural resources addressed? (*Barry notes this is in the Land Use Element*)

Goal 2: Urban Forest

- How does a policy to abate hazardous trees affect eucalyptus trees on Albany Hill? Would this compel the City to remove these trees because of the fire hazard (*Barry replied that the General Plan cross-referenced the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan on this topic, since it has detailed vegetation prescriptions for Albany Hill. Those prescriptions would still guide tree policy on the Hill.*)
- How does urban agriculture fit into urban forestry? Do the two conflict, or they complementary? (*Barry explained that they were complementary and that urban agriculture was covered in the Open Space Element and would be cross-referenced here*)

Goal 3: Air and Water Quality

- This goal sounds dated. It should address greenhouse gas reduction also. Think about renaming it “Air Quality, Water Quality, and....[something else that encompasses greenhouse gas reduction].”
- Does indoor air quality get addressed under this goal? (*Barry—we can add that*)
- What about leaf blowers—or more broadly, gasoline powered equipment? It’s a health-related issue as well as a noise issue.
- Policy 3-3 refers to construction-related impacts, especially earth movement and debris. Perhaps we should add a similar policy on day to day domestic activities that generate toxic air emissions, including leaf blowers, etc.
- There is a proposed policy here indicating the City will carry out state and federal mandates relating to air and water quality. If this policy was not here, the City would still be required to do this—so what is gained by stating it here? (*Barry noted that this particular policy was a carry-over from the 1992 Plan, and was important as an expression of City support for state and federal legislation to protect the environment and enforce these requirements once enacted*).

Goal 4: Plant and Animal Habitat

- A dark sky ordinance is a good idea. Text should provide more detail about what this would require and how it would affect lighting regulations—avoiding upward projection of light, avoiding broad spectrum street lighting, etc.
- Does the presence of a policy indicating the city’s intent to comply with CEQA on wildlife impact assessment imply that we’re not doing that now [*Barry notes that the City is already doing this, but it is not explicitly stated as a policy*]

Goal 5: Water and Energy Conservation

- Many of the CAP measures referenced in this section appear to have been expressed as policies rather than actions. What is the rationale behind that? [*Barry explains the rationale—those that were general expressions of intent, such as encouraging renewable energy use, were listed as policies. Those calling for a specific task to be completed were expressed as actions.*]

- There is no reference to the CAP GHG reduction goal for 2020. Should that be in here as a projection or a policy? (*Barry notes that the GHG reduction target would be referenced in the narrative text rather than as a policy, but we can certainly add that as a policy*)
- This is a 20-year plan, but the actions listed here express where we are right now. How can we include longer-term visionary actions that get us to 2035? In the future, we will have new data sources and technologies—we don't know what they are yet. How do we reconcile? (*Other members comment that this is addressed through future revisions of the Climate Action Plan. Barry notes that there is an action to regularly update the CAP.*)
- Perhaps make a commitment to do update the CAP every five years

Goal 6: Sustainable Development

- Policy 6.7 about being a regional leader in environmental policy seems buried in the text right now. We should bump it up and make it a bigger point—perhaps it can be one of our goals, or an overarching theme of the General Plan. It is a powerful statement.
- Are there other principles or overarching themes that can be distilled and bumped up—for example, our support for state and federal legislation on climate change?
- Where is sea level rise addressed? (*Barry notes that adaptation is addressed in this section*)
- There is a policy here to make climate change a planning consideration—this aligns with the earlier point about Albany being a regional leader.

Goal 7: Waste Reduction

- We talk about household hazardous waste here, but what about commercial waste—plastic containers, restaurant waste, cleaners, pesticides, plastic bags, etc. We should add a policy to address that as well. Perhaps replace “household hazardous waste” with “residential and commercial hazardous waste”
- Policy 7.5 is about collecting waste—where do we address reducing waste, by eliminating toxic materials etc.
- The policies under this goal address diversion, but we should also include a policy to reduce consumption so there is less waste to divert. Can we develop an absolute target for waste reduction, in addition to the 90% waste diversion target
- How can we integrate the sharing economy here—tool swaps, clothes swaps, reuse of items, the notion of a circular economy where items are shared or rented instead of purchased. This is a good way to express our aspiration to reduce consumption and waste (use less) as well as not landfilling waste (it was noted that Stopwaste has not yet tackled this issue through a quantified target).
- More broadly, how does the sharing economy get expressed in the General Plan as a philosophical theme? Are there land use and spatial implications?

Barry indicated the notes from the Committee meeting would be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Committee indicated they would like to discuss the notes at their September meeting. The Chair encouraged Committee members to review the Draft between now and the next meeting. Barry indicated he would prepare a new Draft after the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting that would be returned to the Sustainability Committee for further discussion. The Committee will consider forming a Subcommittee to discuss this further.