

City of Albany



TO: ALBANY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
FROM: BARRY MILLER, GENERAL PLAN CONSULTANT
SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
DATE: DECEMBER 10, 2014

REQUEST

This is the 18th Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on the Albany 2035 General Plan Update. This Study Session will include two parts. Part One will address the 2015-2023 Housing Element and is the subject of a separate staff report. Part Two will address the Community Services and Facilities Element and is the subject of this staff report. An opportunity for public comment will be provided for each part.

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 has been conducting monthly or bi-monthly Study Sessions on the Albany 2035 General Plan Update for the last 18 months. About half of the Study Sessions thusfar have related to the Housing Element—including the 2007-2014 Housing Element, and more recently the 2015-2023 Housing Element Update. The remaining Study Sessions have been topic-based, covering a different chapter or “element” of the Plan at each session. To date, study sessions have been held on land use, transportation, housing, open space, conservation/sustainability, and environmental hazards (safety and noise). The December 10 session will focus on the Community Services and Facilities Element. A February 2015 Study Session will cover the Waterfront Element. Following the February study session, the Planning and Zoning Commission will move into study sessions and public hearings on the entire General Plan (e.g., the consolidated document, including all elements).

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Legal Requirements

California Government Code Section 65302 identifies the seven mandatory chapters—or “elements”—of a General Plan. These are land use, transportation, housing, open space, safety, conservation, and noise. Cities are also encouraged to add “optional” elements to their plans to address issues of local importance. While Albany’s 1992 General Plan did not include any optional elements, the 2015 General Plan will include two. One of these is a Community Services and Facilities Element (the other is a Waterfront Element).

Including a Community Services and Facilities Element allows the City to express policies and action programs on topics such as police and fire services, schools, City facilities, child care, arts and culture, and utilities. Some of these policies address the impacts of growth and may be referenced as mitigation measures in the General Plan EIR. Others provide a benchmark for decisions about capital improvements, budget priorities, or collaborations with other service providers, such as the County and local utility districts. Once an “optional” element is adopted, it carries the same legal weight as a “mandatory” element.

Community Services and Facilities Policy Audit

As noted throughout the General Plan Update, the City’s is using the existing (1992) Plan and other adopted plans and programs as the benchmark for new General Plan policies and actions. Because there is not a Community Services and Facilities Element in the 1992 Plan, most of the policies in this Element are brand new. Other documents with potentially relevant policies were also reviewed, including the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Public Arts Master Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan, and various departmental and citywide strategic plans. These plans are footnoted as “sources” for the proposed policies and actions in the new Community Services and Facilities Element.

Draft Goals, Policies, and Actions

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

Six goals have been identified:

- 1. Schools.** Work with the Albany Unified School District to sustain exceptional schools that provide comprehensive learning opportunities in a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment.
- 2. Public Safety.** Provide quality police, fire, and emergency medical services to Albany residents and businesses through efficient and professional service delivery and strong community partnerships.
- 3. Civic Facilities.** Provide high-quality community facilities that are a source of civic pride and support the delivery of outstanding public services.
- 4. Children, Youth, and Seniors.** Respond to the special needs of children, youth, and seniors in the delivery of community services.

5. **Arts and Culture.** Recognize the potential of the arts to strengthen local identity, promote freedom of expression, create richer urban places, contribute to the social and economic vitality of the City, and enhance awareness of the value of art and the creative process.
6. **Infrastructure.** Provide water, sewer, storm drain, energy, and telecommunication facilities that are safe, reliable, well maintained, efficient, sustainable, and responsive to current and projected needs.

Commission Discussion

The Planning and Zoning Commission will be asked to walk through the draft Community Services and Facilities goals, policies, and actions at their study session. As the Commission considers this material, the following questions will be asked:

- Do the policies as stated provide appropriate direction on the topic?
- Are there “missing” topics related to community services and facilities that should be added?
- Are there additional implementation measures (“actions”) that should be considered?

An opportunity for public comment will be provided at the Study Session. Members of the public are encouraged to share their thoughts on the questions above.

ATTACHMENT A: Draft Community Services and Facilities Goals, Policies, and Actions

ATTACHMENT A

**ALBANY 2035 DRAFT GENERAL PLAN
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS**

GOAL 1: SCHOOLS

Work with the Albany Unified School District (AUSD) to sustain exceptional schools that provide comprehensive learning opportunities in a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment. *(NEW, adapts AUSD Mission Statement)*

Policy 1.1: School Facility Improvements. Support the AUSD's efforts to modernize and replace school facilities to ensure student safety and the District's ability to meet long-term academic needs. *(New)*

Policy 1.2: Coordinated Planning. Involve AUSD in the review of development proposals with the potential to generate new students or otherwise impact school campuses. Conversely, monitor AUSD enrollment trends and forecasts so that potential impacts of changes in student enrollment or school service area boundaries can be considered in land use and transportation decisions. *(New)*

Policy 1.3 Issues of Mutual Concern. Work with AUSD to address and resolve external issues associated with school operations, such as student pick up and drop off, pedestrian and bicycle safety, school security, scheduling of school sports activities and special events, and overflow parking on streets in the vicinity of schools. *(New)*

Policy 1.4 Joint Use Agreements. Support joint use agreements between the City and AUSD to improve public access to school facilities, playgrounds, and athletic fields, and to provide the School District with access to City facilities. *(New)*

See the Recreation and Open Space Element for additional joint use policies.

Policy 1.5: Schools as Neighborhood Centers. Work with AUSD and the School Board to affirm the role of Albany's schools as neighborhood centers and gathering places for the community. *(New)*

Policy 1.6 Private Schools. Recognize the contribution of private schools to the community and their potential as a community resource. Work with private schools to

mitigate their impacts on surrounding uses, foster a constructive dialogue with neighbors, and encourage their involvement in City programs. *(New)*

Implementing Actions

Action 1.A: School Impact Fees and Planning Studies. Support Albany Unified School District efforts to collect school impact fees which pay for the cost of expanding school capacity and improving school facilities. The City will provide technical assistance to AUSD as needed on nexus studies for impact fees, facility master plans, and other long-range planning documents. *(New)*

Action 1.B: Joint Study Sessions. Periodically convene joint sessions of the Albany City Council and the AUSD School Board to discuss matters of mutual interest, such as growth, impact fees, facilities planning, safe routes to school, traffic and parking, and school security. *(New)*

Action 1.C: MacGregor and Vista Sites. Work collaboratively with the AUSD and surrounding property owners to develop plans for the former MacGregor School site (Brighton and San Gabriel) which meet School District needs while respecting neighborhood context. Additionally, work with the AUSD in the development of long-range plans for Vista School on Albany Hill. *(New)*

Action 1.D: School Facility Renovation and Reconstruction. Work with the School District in the implementation of the 2014 AUSD Facility Master Plan, including the rebuilding of Marin School and Ocean View School. Explore opportunities for the inclusion of facilities which provide collateral benefits to Albany residents, such as improved playgrounds and community meeting space. *(New)*

Action 1.E: Safe Routes to Schools. Support Safe Routes to Schools programs at Albany schools, and undertake measures to improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to and from schools. *(New)*

Action 1.F: Parking Management. Work with AUSD to develop effective parking management strategies around school campuses, particularly in the high school and middle school vicinities. *(New)*

See the Transportation Element for additional policies and actions on pedestrian and bicycle safety and parking management.

GOAL 2: PUBLIC SAFETY

Provide quality police, fire, and emergency medical services to Albany residents and businesses through efficient and professional service delivery and strong community partnerships. *(new, this is the Police Department's mission statement)*

Policy 2.1: Levels of Service. Maintain police and fire services at or above current levels. Regularly explore improvements and operational changes with the potential to improve readiness, reduce crime, lower the risk of urban structure fires, improve response time, and enhance overall public safety. *(replaces GP Policies CHS-2.4 and 2.5)*

Policy 2.2: Community Policing. Support a community-based approach to police services which emphasizes communication and transparency and involves a high-level of interaction between officers, residents, local businesses, and community groups. *(New)*

Policy 2.3: Youth Relations. Maintain a positive relationship between law enforcement and Albany youth through Police Activities League programs, the Youth Academy, and other team-building programs that engender goodwill and fellowship. *(New)*

Policy 2.4: Volunteers. Maintain opportunities for Albany volunteers to assist the local police and fire departments. *(New)*

Policy 2.5: Defensible Space. Encourage pro-active measures by residents to reduce the potential for crime, such as installation of motion-sensitive lighting, home alarm systems, and landscaping and design features that support "eyes on the street." *(New)*

Policy 2.6: Traffic Safety. Maintain traffic enforcement and parking enforcement programs to ensure the safety of pedestrians, bicycles, and motorists on Albany streets, sidewalks, paths, and bikeways. *(New)*

See the Transportation Element for additional policies on traffic safety.

Policy 2.7: Fire Protection Capacity. Ensure that fire protection facilities such as hydrants are regularly inspected and that water pressure and system capacity are sufficient to meet local fire-fighting needs. *(New)*

Policy 2.8: Mutual Aid. Maintain collaborative relationships with police and fire departments in adjacent cities and with Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, to more effectively protect public safety and respond to major emergencies. *(New)*

Policy 2.9: Emergency Medical Services. Ensure the provision of high quality emergency medical response services. *(New)*

Policy 2.10: Development Review. Engage the police and fire departments in the review of major development applications to ensure that concerns about emergency vehicle access, crime prevention, and fire safety are adequately addressed. *(New)*

Implementing Actions

Action 2.A: Technology and Crime Prevention. Use mapped data on crime and traffic accidents to improve crime-solving capacity and keep the public informed of criminal activity in the community. *(New)*

Action 2.B: Code Updates. Periodically update city codes to incorporate State fire prevention requirements and other measures deemed necessary to reduce the risk of fires and the risk of structure damage or casualties in the event of a fire. *(New)*

Action 2.C: Balancing Complete Streets and Emergency Vehicle Access. Work with the Fire Department to ensure that the implementation of “Complete Streets” and traffic calming initiatives do not reduce the ability to effectively and quickly respond to emergencies, or otherwise compromise emergency vehicle access. *(New)*

See the Environmental Hazards Element for Emergency Preparedness policies and actions

GOAL 3: CIVIC FACILITIES

Provide high-quality community facilities that are a source of civic pride and support the delivery of outstanding public services. *(new)*

Policy 3.1: Quality Facilities. Maintain excellent City administrative, public works, and community services facilities which meet existing and projected needs and convey a positive image of the city. *(adapted from 2013 Council goals)*

Policy 3.2: Coordinated Planning. Align facility planning, operations, and strategic planning across all City departments with the City's long-range plans for growth and development, and any relevant standards in the General Plan for municipal facilities and services. *(New)*

Policy 3.3: Collaborative Services. Explore collaborative agreements with other jurisdictions where the provision of a beneficial service by the City of Albany or capital facility within the City of Albany is not feasible due to limited local resources and/or land. *(New)*

Policy 3.4: Public Library. Sustain outstanding library services to meet local needs. Continue to support the Alameda County Public Library in the improvement and modernization of its Albany branch. *(New)*

Policy 3.5: Consideration of Operating Costs. Ensure that the costs of ongoing maintenance and operation are fully considered when planning and designing new capital facilities. *(New)*

Policy 3.6: Funding. Explore a variety of funding strategies to generate revenue for capital improvements, including voter-approved bond measures, parcel taxes, general fund allocations, grants, and donations. To the extent feasible, capital facilities fees and other impact fees should be collected to recover the cost of developing or improving the civic facilities made necessary by new development. *(New)*

Policy 3.7: Co-location. Consider opportunities to co-locate compatible community services when developing new facilities, or when another agency develops a facility within Albany. Given Albany's relatively small size and limited land resources, this could improve the feasibility of certain facilities that would not otherwise be viable. *(New)*

Policy 3.8: Coordination with the University of California. Maintain regular communication with the University of California to discuss community facility needs and opportunities for projects at or near UC Village which provide community benefits. *(New)*

Policy 3.9: Creating “Community.” Continue to develop and carry out programs which engage the community such as Dinner with Albany, movie nights, July 4 celebrations, Music in the Park, and other community events. Similarly, continue the City’s commitment to using local media, social media, broadcast of public meetings and other Albany-oriented programming to reach residents. *(Adapted from 2013 Council Goals)*

Implementing Actions

Action 3.A: Strategic Planning. Periodically prepare strategic plans and convene Council goal-setting workshops to ensure that City services reflect the community’s priorities and values, and are responsive to changing demographics, emerging technologies, and budgetary conditions. *(New)*

Action 3.B: Community Surveys. Conduct periodic surveys, workshops, and other outreach tools to determine how City services can be more responsive to local interests and needs. *(New)*

Action 3.C: Facility Assessments. Periodically evaluate the adequacy of City facilities through physical assessments and long-range planning studies. Over time, public facilities should be adapted to incorporate more sustainable technologies for heating, ventilation, energy and water consumption, and power generation. *(Adapted from Council goals)*

Action 3.D: Community Engagement in Capital Facilities Plans. Ensure community engagement in the review process for capital projects, including planning, design, and construction. *(Parks/Rec Master Plan Pol 6.1)*

GOAL 4: CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND SENIORS.
Respond to the special needs of children, youth, and seniors in the delivery of community services.

Policy 4.1: Expanding Child Care. Increase the range of child care programs and expand child care opportunities by committing adequate resources and funding for child care facilities and programs. *(92 General Plan Goal CROS-8)*

Policy 4.2: Coordinating Child Care Service Delivery. Continue working with the Albany Unified School District, the YMCA, UC Berkeley, the private sector, and other child care service providers to develop and coordinate child care programs for persons of all income groups. Strive to keep child care affordable to persons of all incomes. *(92 General Plan Pol CROS-8.1)*

Policy 4.3: Awareness of Child Care Programs. Increase awareness of local child care programs by providing easily accessible information about resources and programs, improved facilities, and outreach to persons of all economic and cultural backgrounds. *(adapted from 92 General Plan Pol CROS-8.2)*

Policy 4.4: Youth Programming. Maintain and expand after school programs, special interest programs, and youth sports programs oriented to teens and pre-teens. Strive to increase enrollment in teen-related activities. *(from City Council Goals)*

Policy 4.5: Senior Programming. Encourage the delivery of services and programs oriented toward seniors, including health care, education, transportation, housing, nutrition, recreation, and social programs. *(replaces 92 General Plan Pol CROS-9.1)*

Policy 4.6: Intergenerational Activities. Encourage intergenerational activities which allow children, youth, adults, and seniors to work together. *(New)*

Implementing Actions

Action 4.A: Senior Center Improvements. Secure funding for the renovation, expansion and improvement of the Albany Senior Center. *(from City Council goals)*

GOAL 5: ARTS AND CULTURE

Recognize the potential of the arts to strengthen local identity, promote freedom of expression, create richer urban places, contribute to the social and economic vitality of the City, and enhance awareness of the value of art and the creative process. *(adapted from Public Arts MP Goal)*

Policy 5.1: Supporting the Arts. Enhance Albany's reputation as a center for arts and cultural activities, with expanded indoor and outdoor spaces for art displays, performances, and exhibits. *(adapted from Parks Master Plan Goal 6)*

Policy 5.2: Arts Visibility. Increase the visibility of the arts through partnerships with other agencies and organizations, and collaboration with art, business, education, civic, and recreation organizations. *(adapted from Parks Master Plan Action 2.1)*

Policy 5.3: Outdoor Space for Arts. Consider opportunities for adding space that can be programmed for performances and other cultural activities when local parks, streets, and public spaces are designed. *(adapted from Parks Master Plan Policy 2.3)*

Policy 5.4: Public Art. Encourage public art which reflects Albany's heritage and cultural diversity, is appropriate for the setting and context, and showcases the work of local artists. Public art should help define and beautify major City gateways and entry points, activity centers, and open spaces. *(Adapted from Public Arts Master Plan)*

Policy 5.5: Public Art Requirement. Maintain a public arts requirement and in-lieu fee which provides a mechanism to expand Albany's inventory of public art, enhance the City's visual character, and express the creative spirit of the community. *(replaces 92 Plan Goal CROS-10)*

Policy 5.6: Funding Support. Pursue grants and donations to support public art, arts programming, new arts and cultural facilities, and special events such as concerts and performances. *(new)*

Policy 5.7: Arts and the Economy. Recognize the potential for the arts to contribute to Albany's economy. This could include an expanded presence for arts organizations, galleries, and performance spaces in the community, and additional events such as concerts, open studios, and film festivals. *(new)*

Policy 5.8: Engaging Local Artists. Engage Albany-based artists in local recreational programs, educational programs, and other community activities. *(new)*

Implementing Actions

Action 5.A: Arts Committee. Maintain a City Arts Committee to advise the City Council on cultural and artistic activities, sponsor arts programs and activities, and guide fundraising events to support these programs. *(New)*

Action 5.B: Public Arts Master Plan. Periodically update the Public Arts Master Plan. The Plan identifies potential locations for public art and includes guidelines for the scale and character of art at different locations. Consult the Public Arts Master Plan when making siting decisions and evaluating proposals for various locations. *(replaces 92 Plan Pol CROS 10.1)*

Action 5.C: Murals and Banners. Develop guidelines for the creation of murals and banners. *(from City Council goals)*

GOAL 6: INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide water, sewer, storm drain, energy, and telecommunication facilities that are safe, reliable, well-maintained, efficient, sustainable, and responsive to current and projected needs. *(New)*

Policy 6.1: Water Supply, Storage, and Distribution. Work with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to ensure the adequacy and safety of water utilities. The City will work with EBMUD to plan for an adequate long-term water supply, the safety of the water storage and distribution system, the adequacy of the system to support fire flow needs, and the safe treatment and disposal of Albany’s wastewater. *(New)*

Policy 6.2: Sanitary Sewer System. Ensure the safe management, operation, and maintenance of Albany’s wastewater collection system. *(stated goal of 2014 Albany Sewer Master Plan)*

Policy 6.3: Achieving Water Quality Goals. Continue to prevent illicit discharges to the sanitary sewer and storm drain systems and make improvements which reduce sanitary sewer overflows. These improvements are essential to meet local and regional water quality goals and ensure the effective operation of the sanitary sewer and storm drainage systems. *(2014 Albany Sewer Master Plan)*

Policy 6.4: Sewer Inspections and Maintenance. Maintain regular inspection, maintenance, replacement, and enforcement programs for the local sewer and storm drainage systems. Ensure the proper design and construction of all laterals by contractors and other third parties. *(2014 Albany Sewer Master Plan)*

Policy 6.5: Reclaimed Water. Continue to work toward the expanded application of reclaimed water from the EBMUD treatment plant for a variety of purposes, such as landscape irrigation. *(New)*

Policy 6.6: Green Infrastructure. Encourage the development of “greener” infrastructure which is less impactful on the natural environment and supports local sustainability and climate action goals. This is particularly true for storm drainage facilities, which should be designed to restore natural drainage systems and improve water quality to the greatest extent feasible. *(New)*

See the Conservation and Sustainability Element for additional policies on water quality and stormwater management

Policy 6.7: Coordination of Improvements. Coordinate the scheduling of road, utility, and other infrastructure improvements and maintenance work to avoid repeated pavement cuts and associated disruption and costs. *(New)*

Policy 6.8: Communication Infrastructure. Work with internet, cable, and telecommunication service providers to improve service to Albany residents and businesses. *(New)*

See Also Land Use Element Action 6.F on Utility Undergrounding

Implementing Actions

Action 6.A: Capital Improvement Program. Maintain an ongoing capital improvement program that identifies infrastructure needs, priorities, timing, and funding sources for the next two to five years.

Action 6.B: Sewer Master Plan Implementation. Implement the recommendations of the 2014 Sewer Master Plan to ensure that the sanitary sewer system can support current and future needs while improving water quality. *(New)*

Action 6.C: Emergency Response Planning for SSOs. Maintain and implement Emergency Response Plans for Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs), including training, reporting, response, and clean-up procedures. *(2014 Sewer Master Plan)*

Action 6.D: Use of Technology. Use Geographic Information Systems, closed circuit video, and other technologies to improve the functionality of infrastructure, and reduce operating and maintenance costs. *(from City Council goals)*

Action 6.E: Urban Water Management Plan. Support EBMUD in regular updates of its Urban Water Management Plan to reflect current forecasts, water supply conditions, and best practices in water management. *(New)*

Action 6.F: Public Works Maintenance Center. Proceed with development of a Public Works Maintenance Center at 540 Cleveland Avenue. *(from City Council goals)*

See the Conservation and Sustainability Element for policies and actions on solid waste disposal and recycling