

ALBANY 2035 GENERAL PLAN

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION
WATERFRONT ELEMENT

March 11, 2015

Current and Proposed Plan Structure



Current Structure

- Introduction
- Summary
- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Open Space, Recreation, and Conservation
- Community Health and Safety
- Implementation

Proposed Structure

- Introduction
- Framework
- Land Use
- Transportation
- *Housing (summary)*
- Recreation and Open Space
- Conservation/ Sustainability
- Environmental Hazards
- Community Services and Facilities
- Waterfront
- Implementation

Waterfront Element



Slide 3

- Why Prepare?
 - ▣ State law encourages “optional” elements for issues of high local importance
 - ▣ Waterfront has been the focus of extensive planning for 20+ years
 - ▣ Expresses the value and significance of the area to the city
 - ▣ Unique planning issues not present in other parts of the city
 - ▣ Opportunity to express existing City policy for the area, independent of the Land Use or Parks/Open Space Elements
- Parameters
 - ▣ No changes in use are proposed
 - ▣ Measure C requirements apply

Measure C Requirements



Slide 4

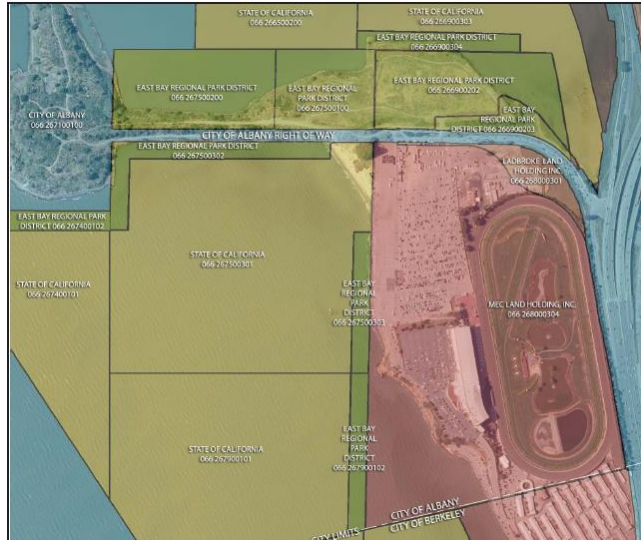
The following actions, if they authorize any use not authorized by the zoning ordinance for the Waterfront District as of the effective date of this ordinance, shall only be taken by passage of a ballot measure approved by a majority of voters voting:

1. Any amendment to the land use designations for the Waterfront Area in the City’s General Plan.
2. The establishment of any material amendment to the Waterfront Master Plan or other specific plan for the Waterfront Area.
3. Any amendment to the zoning ordinance for the Waterfront Area including changes to the text and changes to the map of the Waterfront Area.
4. The entry into any development agreement and/or any material amendment to a development agreement for the waterfront area.

Ownership Patterns



Slide 5



- City owns Albany Bulb, plus narrow strip along the “neck” to I-80
- EBRPD owns the Plateau and most of the Neck
- State owns most of the submerged lands and the beach
- Private party owns GG Fields

Sources for Waterfront Element



Slide 6

- Policies carry forward 1992 General Plan language for the waterfront, which is minimal
- Policies incorporate plans for the waterfront developed since adoption of the 1992 Plan
 - 2002 Eastshore State Park General Plan
 - 1995 Proposal for the Albany Portion of Eastshore State Park
 - Albany Beach Restoration/ Bay Trail Improvement Project
 - 2004 Parks, Rec, Open Space Master Plan
- Key policies capture the “spirit” of Voices to Vision without incorporating specific recommendations

Structure of Proposed Element



Slide 7

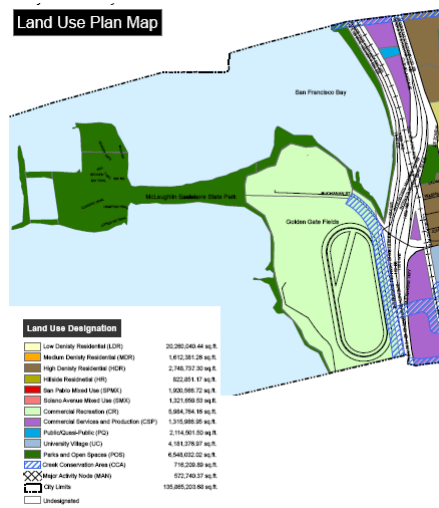
- Context and orientation
- History
- Summary of past / recent planning initiatives
- Summary of Measure C requirements
- Summary of ownership and key planning issues by owner
- Goals, Policies, and Actions

Land Use Map Designations



Slide 8

- 1992 designations apply
- Consistent with Measure C, no changes to the Map may be proposed without a vote, even if the changes show increased parks and open space.





Relation to Transition Plan

Slide 9

- Concurrent with GP Update, City is preparing a Transition Improvement Plan for the Albany Neck and Bulb
- Transition Plan focuses on specific issues relating to the transfer of property from the City to State Parks/ EBRPD
 - ▣ Construction debris, shoreline stabilization, sea level rise, resource management, public access, amenities
 - ▣ Will include specific management recommendations, cost estimates, and a phasing plan
- Waterfront Element provides a consistent framework for that planning effort, based on existing policies

Policy Audit



Slide 10

1 Albany General Plan Policy Audit					
2 WATERFRONT: ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICIES					
3 Doc	Ref #	Existing statement	Topic	Evaluation	
4 92 GP	Pol CROS-5.3	Recognize the value of the Hoffman Marsh, located north and west of the Buchanan Street/I-80/580 interchange and protect bird feeding and nesting areas by limiting activities and preserving important habitat areas.	Biotic	Superseded by State Park Plan policies on the mudflats and Marine Reserve	
5 92 GP	Pol CROS-7.2	Consider the important surrounding wildlife and vegetation resources that must be adequately protected when developing the alignment of the Bay Trail.	Biotic	also in Rec-OS. Part of broader policy to ensure that waterfront improvements minimize their environmental impact	
6 95-Alb Portion-EastshorePk	Wildlife/Habitat Protection	To minimize disturbance of water birds: (a) no public access along the northern shoreline of the plateau and neck; (b) barriers/buffers between the trail and the mudflats and along the northern edge of the plateau; (c) no boating in the waters north of the plateau, neck, and bulb	Biotic	Still valid to discuss limits on activities and measures to protect wildlife and water birds	
7 95-Alb Portion-EastshorePk	Wildlife/Habitat Protection	To enhance roosting habitat, consider measures such as (a) turning small peninsulas into islands by excavating their connection to the mainland/ prevent public access to western and northern levees; (b) adding rock or other material to roosts to raise them above higher tides; (c) design the pedestrian path along the west end of the bulb to minimize disturbance of the birds	Biotic	Also, relate this to more specific plans to create roosting islands and other habitat off the Albany Neck (per the more recent plans for the Beach area)	
8 95-Alb Portion-EastshorePk	Wildlife/Habitat Protection	Protect upland area habitat by (a) preserving the neck, bulb, and northern plateau in their existing state (other than bay trail spur, ped path, and safety measures such as removal of rebar and concrete; (b) limiting bicycles to trails and paths; and (c) requiring that dogs--if allowed--be leashed	Biotic	Good to have a general policy about protection of upland habitat throughout the waterfront area	
2002 Eastshore St. Park GP	Policies PLANTS 1 through 4	(applies to the entire 2,200 acre park area) Preserve and enhance native plant communities. As soon as possible, develop a control plan for the most invasive plant species, especially those that invade wetlands. Implementation of the control plan should be a high priority collaboration	Biotic	Good to have an overall policy about invasive species control and revegetation with native species.	

1 McLaughlin Eastshore State Park



Slide 11

Transform the Albany waterfront into a State Park that provides opportunities for recreation, inspiration, environmental education, and enjoyment.

- Designate Preservation, Conservation, Recreation areas
- Locate new facilities where they will be least impactful
- Emphasize environmental education
- Plan for appropriate support facilities
- Establish a clear design identity
- Protect scenic views and aesthetic qualities
- Remediate hazards
- Consider operating costs as a planning factor

2 Waterfront Recreation



Slide 12

Plan for a wide range of recreational activities at the waterfront, complementing the recreational options currently available to Albany residents.

- Accommodate visitors of all ages, ethnicities, incomes, education levels, and physical abilities
- Improve hiking and picnicking opportunities
- Provide ancillary facilities at Albany Beach
- Close park during evening hours
- Manage water activities to balance recreation needs and environmental goals
- Coordinate with nearby cities and EBRPD
- Consult with stakeholders in developing plans

3 Shoreline Access



Slide 13

Connect Albany residents to their waterfront, while facilitating pedestrian and bicycle access along the shoreline itself.

- Emphasize non-motorized access
- Improve the trail system
- Provide better connections from Albany's neighborhoods to the Bay Trail
- Manage parking supply to avoid induced demand
- Improve water access
- Complete the Bay Trail
- Develop wayfinding signage

4 Waterfront Ecology



Slide 14

Preserve, enhance, and restore the unique ecology of the Albany waterfront.

- Support preservation/enhancement of native plants
- Protect wetland and upland plant communities
- Preserve marine habitat and mudflats
- Enhance roosting habitat for shorebirds
- Create buffers between trails and sensitive areas
- Limit access to the most sensitive areas
- Provide interpretive signs and exhibits

5 Sustainable Shoreline



Slide 15

Create a safer, more resilient shoreline that is better integrated with the Bay's hydrologic and biological systems.

- Balance increased access and recreation objectives with ecological and shoreline protection objectives
- Consider carrying capacity as a planning factor
- Apply green construction principles
- Create more stable shoreline
- Plan for sea level rise
- Design for water quality improvements
- Emphasize recycled materials and reuse

6 Golden Gate Fields



Slide 16

Ensure that any change of use at Golden Gate Fields is consistent with Albany's values, protects the shoreline as a place of scenic beauty, and advances principles of economic and environmental sustainability.

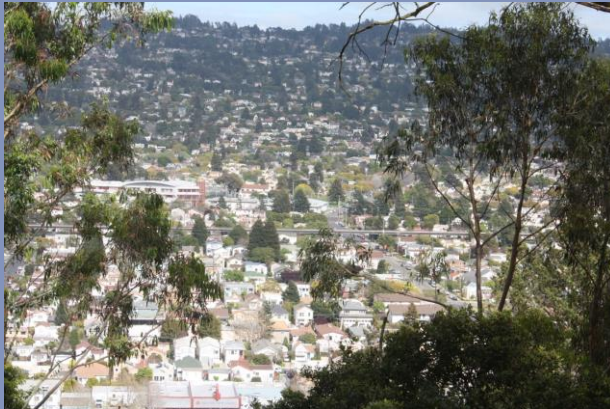
- Maintain and enforce Measure C requirements
- Consider Voices to Vision input as starting point for future dialogue, recognizing it is not a "plan" per se
- Protect scenic and aesthetic qualities
- Emphasize small-scale, local, sustainable activities

Discussion Questions



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- Are there missing goals or policies?
- Do the policies provide the right direction?
- Are there additional action programs needed to implement the policies?



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