

A. LAND USE, PLANNING POLICY, AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes existing land uses within the City of Albany (City), defines the existing regulatory context, identifies potential land use, policy, and agricultural resources impacts, and recommends mitigation measures, where appropriate.

1. Setting

The following section describes the existing land uses and regulatory context within the City of Albany and vicinity.

a. Existing Land Use. Albany is the northernmost city in Alameda County and is located on the east shore of the San Francisco Bay. The city borders the Contra Costa County cities of Richmond on the northwest and El Cerrito on the north, and the Alameda County City of Berkeley on the east and south. A small portion of the northern boundary abuts the unincorporated community of Kensington. The western side of Albany fronts the San Francisco Bay. Land uses, building types, and densities are similar to those in the adjacent cities. The city is generally flat except for Albany Hill, which rises to approximately 330 feet in the western part of the city.

Albany's incorporated area is 5.5 square miles. However, 3.7 square miles (67.2 percent) of this total is water, and 1.8 square miles (32.8 percent) is land. Albany's population density is almost 10,400 persons per square mile. Of the 1.8 square miles (1,144 acres), 36.6 percent comprises residential uses, 9.8 percent comprises open space and recreation uses, 4.3 percent comprises office/commercial/mixed uses, 11.6 percent comprises institutional/public/governmental uses, 1.0 percent comprises industrial uses, and 1.7 percent comprises vacant land. Approximately 291 acres, 25.4 percent of total land, consists of transportation related uses including freeway, rail, and local street right-of-ways. Table IV.A-1 provides additional details of existing land uses within the City.

Despite its small geographic area, Albany has a diverse land use pattern. The western portion of the city, consisting of approximately 180 acres west of the Interstate 80 (I-80) and Interstate 580 (I-580) freeways, consists of waterfront open space and the Golden Gate Fields racetrack. I-80 itself is a significant land use and physical presence in the city, cutting a wide swath across Albany's west side and effectively separating neighborhoods from the waterfront. A relatively narrow "belt" of industrial land uses sits alongside the freeway, running north-south and parallel to the Union Pacific railroad. Beyond this belt, Albany Hill rises in the northwest quadrant, while the southwest quadrant includes large-scale public land uses. The lower slopes of Albany Hill include high- and medium-density development, while the ridgeline itself is protected as open space. The eastern two-thirds of the city contains residential neighborhoods of varying densities, with single-family uses predominating. Two major commercial corridors cross through this area: San Pablo Avenue runs north-south through the City, while the Solano Avenue commercial district runs perpendicular from San Pablo Avenue eastward into the City of Berkeley.

Table IV.A-1: Existing Land Use within the City of Albany

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Single-Family Detached Residential	343	30.0
Single-Family Attached/2-4 Unit Buildings	35	3.1
Multi-Family Residential	41	3.6
Mixed Use (residential above retail)	3	0.3
Commercial and Office	47	4.1
Industrial	12	1.0
University Village	77	6.7
State and Federal Facilities	19	1.7
Commercial Recreation (Golden Gate Fields)	107	9.4
Schools and City Buildings	23	2.0
Institutional/Churches	14	1.2
Vacant Land	20	1.7
Active Open Space	21	1.8
Passive Open Space	91	8.0
Freeway and Rail	86	7.5
Local Streets	205	17.9
TOTAL	1,144	100.0

Source: Alameda County Parcel Data, 2014. Barry Miller Consulting, 2014.

b. Regulatory Context. This subsection describes the State, regional, and local plans and regulations that address land use and development within and adjacent to the City of Albany. A brief description of these regulatory documents is provided.

(1) State. Relevant State planning documents and regulations are described below.

California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The California Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection established the State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) in 1982. The FMMP conducts comprehensive mapping of State farmland. The intent of the FMMP is to provide decision-makers with information regarding State agricultural resources, including data on existing farmland, and farmland development trends. The FMMP compiles maps depicting important farmland, based on United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) soil surveys and other physical data, such as climate, growing season, and water supply.

The FMMP divides land into seven categories, including: 1) Prime Farmland; 2) Farmland of State-wide Importance; 3) Unique Farmland; 4) Farmland of Local Importance; 5) Grazing Land; 6) Urban and Built-Up Land; and 7) Other Land. The majority of City of Albany is designated Urban and Built-Up Land with the exception of the Albany Neck and Bulb designated as Other Land.¹ These designations apply to developed areas that are not suitable for agriculture or livestock grazing. Figure IV.A-1 depicts Important Farmland Map for the City of Albany as designated by the California Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection. As shown, no areas of farmland have been identified in the City of Albany.

¹ California, State of, 2012. Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Alameda County Important Farmland 2012 (map). July.



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NOT TO SCALE

- Albany City Limit
- Urban and Built Up Land
- Other Land

FIGURE IV.A-1

City of Albany General Plan EIR
Important Farmland Map

SOURCES: STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, 2012; LSA ASSOCIATES, INC., 2015.

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(2) **Regional.** Relevant regional planning documents and regulations are described below.

Eastshore State Park General Plan. The Eastshore State Park (Park) extends 8.5 miles along the East Bay shoreline from the Bay Bridge in Oakland to Richmond. The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) manages and operates the Park land and facilities. The Park includes 1,854 acres of uplands and tidelands along the waterfronts of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany and Richmond. The Eastshore State Park General Plan identifies the future preservation, conservation, and recreation uses and improvements for the Park. The Eastshore State Park General Plan establishes goals and guidelines for the Albany Area Management Zone that includes Albany Beach, Albany Plateau, Albany Neck/Bulb and Albany State Marine Reserve. See Table IV.A-2 for the acres of land within the Albany Management Zone designated for preservation, conservation, and recreation uses.²

Table IV.A-2: Eastshore State Park General Plan: Albany Area Land Use Summary

Land Use Designation	Upland Area	Tideland Area	Total Area
Preservation Area	11 acres	179 acres	190 acres
Conservation Area	57 acres	18 acres	75 acres
Recreation Area	20 acres	394 acres	414 acres

Source: California Department of Parks and Recreation, *Eastshore State Park General Plan*, 2004.

San Francisco Bay Plan. The San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) is a policy tool that, under the provision of the McAteer-Petris Act, allows the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) to “exercise its authority to issue or deny permit applications for placing fill, extracting materials, or changing the use of any land, water, or structure within the area of its jurisdictions.” BCDC’s area of jurisdiction includes all the San Francisco Bay, a shoreline band extending 100 feet from the water, and salt ponds, managed wetlands, and certain waterways associated with the Bay. The Bay Plan stipulates: “Any public agency or private owner holding shoreline land is required to obtain a permit from the Commission before proceeding with (shoreline) development.”

The City’s shoreline is within the jurisdiction of BCDC and associated development activities are regulated by the Bay Plan. The Bay Plan Map 4 policies that pertain to Albany and its immediate surroundings include the following:

- **Policy 16. Eastshore State Park.** Develop Park from Bay Bridge to Marina Bay in Richmond for multiple uses, including recreation, wildlife and aquatic life protection. Protect wildlife and aquatic life values at sites such as Emeryville Crescent, Hoffman Marsh and Albany Mudflats. Provide signage regarding fish consumption advisories for anglers.
- **Policy 42. Regional Restoration Goal for Central Bay.** Protect and restore tidal marsh, seasonal wetlands, beaches, dunes and islands. Natural salt ponds should be restored on the East Bay shoreline. Shallow subtidal areas (including eelgrass beds) should be conserved and enhanced. Wherever possible tidal marsh habitats should be restored, particularly at the mouths of streams

² California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2002. *Eastshore State Park General Plan*. Available online at: www.ebparks.org/Assets/files/ebprd_eastshore_state_park_general_plan_revised_10-2004.pdf (accessed June 16, 2015). December 6. Revised October 2004.

where they enter the Bay and at the upper reach of dead-end sloughs. Encourage tidal marsh restoration in urban areas. See the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals report for more information.

Sustainable Communities Strategy/Plan Bay Area. Pursuant to SB 375, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in partnership with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), have prepared the Bay Area's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The SCS titled "Plan Bay Area," adopted in July 2013,³ will serve as the regional blueprint for transportation, housing and land use focused on reducing driving and associated GHG emissions.

Plan Bay Area is a long-range plan that specifies the strategies and investments to maintain, manage, and improve the region's transportation network – which includes bicycle and pedestrian facilities, local streets and roads, public transit systems, and highways. Plan Bay Area also calls for focused housing and job growth around high-quality transit corridors, particularly within areas identified by local jurisdictions as Priority Development Areas (PDAs). PDAs in Albany are identified along San Pablo and Solano Avenues. This land use strategy is anticipated to enhance mobility and economic growth by linking the location of housing and jobs with transit, thus offering a more efficient land use pattern around transit and greater return on existing and planned transit investments.

(3) **Local.** Relevant local planning documents include the 1992 General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

1992 General Plan. The 1992 General Plan includes a Land Use Map that identifies the desired patterns of land use in Albany by the Plan's horizon year of 2010. Figure IV.A-2 shows the 1992 General Plan Land Use Map. The categories provide the foundation for Albany's zoning map and regulations and have helped shape development decisions for the last 23 years. In most cases, the General Plan Map matches existing land uses; however, in a few locations (e.g., the 11-acre parcel south of Gateview Towers), the map designations reflect desired changes to existing use. In 2004, the General Plan was amended to add a new category for Residential Towers, and to modify a number of the category definitions.

The following categories are listed in the 2014 Albany Land Use Baseline Report⁴ and will be superseded once the new General Plan is adopted:

- Low Density Residential. Consists of single-family residences at densities up to 17 dwelling units per net acre.
- Planned Development (6 dwelling units/acre) & Planned Development (9 dwelling units/acre). This category has been applied to Albany Hill to allow for creative residential design which responds to the natural landform and the desire to retain open space on the ridgeline. Residential density was reduced from 12-18 dwelling units per acre to 6-9 units per acre through a voter initiative in 1994.

³ Association of Bay Area Governments, 2013. Metropolitan Transportation Commission, *Draft Plan Bay Area, Strategy for a Sustainable Region*. March. Adopted with revisions July 18.

⁴ Albany, City of, 2014. *2014 Albany Land Use Baseline Report*.



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FIGURE IV.A-2



SOURCE: CITY OF ALBANY, 2015.

City of Albany General Plan EIR
1992 General Plan Land Use Map, As Amended

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- Medium-Density Residential. Multi-Family Housing that includes duplexes, and 3-6 unit apartment buildings. Ranges from 17-34 dwelling units per acre, with an average of 27 units per acre.
- High-Density Residential. Multi-Family Housing Density range is 17 to 63 units per net acre, with an average of 39 dwelling units per acre.
- Residential Towers. This category was added through a 2004 General Plan Amendment to recognize that the existing densities at Gateview (555 Pierce) are 87 dwelling units per acre. It applies only to the 466-unit Gateview development.
- General Commercial. Region-serving commercial land uses. Improvement to visual appearance and intensification of uses are both desired. Allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.95, with a 38-foot height limit. In 2004, this category was amended to specifically note that residential and mixed-use development is allowed, with an FAR of 2.25 (and bonuses allowing up to 3.0), provided the commercial portion does not exceed 0.95.
- Community Commercial. Main Street character, with a variety of local-serving retail, service, and office uses, interspersed with apartments. Recommended maximum FAR is 1.25, with a 35-foot height limit. In 2004, this category was amended to allow mixed-use development with an FAR up to 2.0 and to allow projects that are mostly residential up to a FAR of 1.25, with a note that “housing on the ground floor of the Solano Avenue frontage is not encouraged.”
- General Commercial/Community Node. This designation was created through a 2004 amendment to the General Plan Nodes which were identified around the intersections of Solano Avenue with San Pablo Avenue, Masonic Avenue, and Santa Fe Avenue. There are areas where more intense pedestrian-oriented retail and mixed-use development could be considered.
- Planned Residential Commercial (PRC). This category encourages redevelopment of existing commercial uses on the San Pablo corridor with mixed-use developments comprised of street-level retail with high-density residential uses on rear street frontages and second floors. These areas are seen as suitable for high-density housing given the proximity to services and transit. In addition, PRC areas provide a transition from commercial uses on San Pablo to medium-density residential uses on adjacent streets. No density range is given in the 1992 Plan.
- Commercial/Service/Light Industrial. Permits a variety of retail, repair, manufacturing, and live-work uses. Generally located along the railroad tracks.
- Commercial Recreation. This designation applies to Golden Gate Fields and its environs. A maximum FAR of 0.5 applies.
- Public/Institutional Research. This designation applies specifically to the USDA Research facility located on Buchanan Street.
- Public/Institutional/Residential-Commercial. Medium residential densities up to 34 units/acre, plus retail and office development at a maximum FAR of 0.95.
- Public/Institutional/Residential-Recreational. Medium residential densities up to 34 units/acre, including recreational facilities and community centers, with FAR up to 0.95 for recreational buildings.

- Public/Institutional/Residential-Recreational-Commercial. Medium residential densities up to 34 units/acre, including recreational facilities and community centers, with FAR up to 0.95 for recreational buildings, retail, and office development.
- Public/Quasi-Public/Church & Public/Quasi-Public/City Property (PQ). Includes schools, churches, utilities, and City property with a maximum FAR of 0.95. The General Plan Map further calls out which PQ parcels are City properties (City Hall, library) and churches. A 2004 amendment added Caltrans, Union Pacific, and BART lands to this category, although Caltrans properties still appear “undesigned” on the General Plan Map.
- Parks. This category includes City parks, including portions of Albany Hill and the waterfront. Buildings up to 35 feet in height are permitted, with a maximum coverage of 25 percent, on a case-by-case basis.
- Private Open Space. This category applies to permanent private open space set aside when the Gateview, Bridgewater, and Bayside Commons developments were approved. It also includes two parcels owned by the University of California including the 9.5 acre Natural Resource Research land and Dowling Park.

The General Plan Map shows a “Watercourse Overlay District” which runs along Codornices and Cerrito Creeks and a portion of Village Creek. A Creek Conservation zoning overlay has been applied and has been mapped along Codornices and Cerrito Creek, corresponding to the Watercourse Overlay District.

Table IV.A-3 shows the acreage in each of these categories as of 2014, reflecting the 1992 General Plan as amended. The total acreage exceeds the land area shown in Table IV.A-1 by about 30 acres since it designates partially submerged wetlands to the west of I-580 as “parks and recreation.” The principal difference between the totals shown in Table IV.A-3 and Table IV.A-1 is that streets are included in each category in Table IV.A-3. Thus, the planned “Low-Density Residential” acreage in Table IV.A-3 is about one-third greater than the existing “Single-Family Residential” acreage in Table IV.A-1. There are also several unique categories in Table IV.A-3 not identified in Table IV.A-1. For instance, University Village is divided into three separate sub-categories in the 1992 General Plan, and churches and City properties are identified as specific land uses. The 1992 General Plan also identifies a “Planned Residential-Commercial” designation on the Albany Town Center Shopping Center and the Albany Bowl/Alta Bates Medical Center sites (along San Pablo Avenue) and a “Commercial Node” around the San Pablo Avenue/Solano Avenue intersection.

Just over half of Albany’s land area (50.2 percent) has a residential General Plan designation. Of this total, about three-quarters is “Low-Density” (less than 17 dwelling units per acre), while the remainder is either in higher density categories or in special categories for Albany Hill. Approximately 6 percent of the city is designated with commercial categories, while 3 percent is designated with commercial-light industrial. The “Commercial Recreation” designation is applied to 11.7 percent of the City’s land area, encompassing not only Golden Gate Fields but much of the plateau area now owned by EBRPD. Changing the designation on the EBRPD land to Parks and Open Space could potentially require a citywide vote under Measure C.

Table IV.A-3: Acreage in 1992 General Plan Land Use Categories (as Amended through 2014)

1992 General Plan Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total
Low-Density Residential	467.8	39.8
Medium-Density Residential	37.0	3.1
High-Density Residential ^a	60.1	5.1
Tower Residential	4.7	0.4
Planned Development (6 dwelling units/acre)	8.7	0.7
Planned Development (9 dwelling units/acre)	15.3	1.3
General Commercial	28.0	2.4
Community Commercial	29.3	2.5
Planned Res/Commercial	7.1	0.6
Commercial Node ^a	4.8	0.4
Commercial Recreation	137.4	11.7
Commercial Service/Lt Industrial	34.5	2.9
Institutional Uses		
<i>Public/Quasi-Public (General)</i>	39.3	3.3
<i>Research</i>	17.1	1.5
<i>Residential/Recreational/Commercial</i>	11.5	1.0
<i>Residential/Commercial</i>	18.9	1.6
<i>Residential/Recreational</i>	44.3	3.8
<i>City Property</i>	4.2	0.4
<i>Churches</i>	1.5	0.1
Parks and Recreation	131.0	11.1
Watercourse Overlay District ^b	—	—
Undesignated (Freeway)	72.4	6.2
Total ^c	1,174.9 ^d	99.9 ^e

Notes:

- ^a General Plan Amendments in 2004 added the “Residential Towers” category and the “Commercial Node” category.
- ^b Watercourse Overlay District is an “overlay” category and the area with this designation is counted in other rows in this table.
- ^c Most of the differences between acreages in Table IV.A-1 and in Table IV.A-3 are attributable to the inclusion of street right-of-ways within the total for each category Table IV.A-3. Streets are not a 1992 General Plan land use category.
- ^d Total shown here exceeds total in Table IV.A-3 due to assignment of “Parks and Recreation” designation to approximately 30 acres of partially submerged wetlands on the perimeter of Hoffman Marsh (west of I-580).
- ^e Please note column does not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Barry Miller Consulting, City of Albany, 2014.

Public and institutional uses also represent 11.7 percent of the land on the 1992 General Plan Map. This land use includes most of University Village, the USDA Lab, the Orientation Center for the Blind, public and private school properties, City-owned facilities, and churches. Another 11 percent of the City is designated for Parks and Recreation, including the Albany Hill ridgeline, Eastshore State Park, and City-owned parks. Just over 6 percent of the City, corresponding to the I-80 and I-580 right-of-ways, appears to be “undesignated” on the 1992 General Plan Map. However, a 2004 amendment clarified that this area had a “Public” designation.

Zoning Ordinance. The City’s Zoning Ordinance acts as an implementation tool for the General Plan’s Land Use Element. The Zoning Ordinance is located in Chapter XX, Section 20.04 of the Albany Municipal Code and regulates development type, density, and land use through development standards. Development standards found in the Albany Zoning Ordinance include

setbacks, lot area, lot width, density, floor area ratio, site coverage, landscaping and open area requirements, height limits, storage, and parking. The Zoning Ordinance organizes zoning districts into four categories: residential; commercial; other; and overlay.

2. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following section presents a discussion of the impacts related to land use and planning policy that could result from implementation of the Draft General Plan. The section begins with the criteria of significance, which establish the thresholds to determine if an impact is significant. The latter part of this section presents the impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project and the recommended mitigation measures, if required. Cumulative impacts are also addressed.

a. Criteria of Significance. Development of the proposed project would result in a significant impact related to land use, planning policy, or agricultural resources if it would:

- Disrupt or physically divide an established community;
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;
- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract; or
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

b. Project Impacts. The following section provides an evaluation and analysis of the potential impacts of the Draft General Plan for each of the criteria of significance listed above.

(1) Divide an Established Community. The physical disruption or division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as an interstate highway or railroad tracks) or removal of a means of access (such as a local road or bridge) that would impair mobility within an existing community, or between a community and outlying areas. For example, the construction of an interstate highway through an existing community could constrain travel from one side of the community to another. Such a feature could also impair travel to areas outside of the community.

In the context of a general plan, physical divisions within a community could also result from large-scale land use changes. For instance, the conversion of a large swath of a residential district into an industrial area could isolate residential uses from other nearby residential neighborhoods. No major land use changes are proposed as part of the Draft General Plan. Changes to the land uses categories in the Draft General Plan primarily consist of commercial corridor designation changes, renaming land use designations, or changing designation based on existing use.

The Draft General Plan includes no large-scale infrastructure projects such as new freeways or rail lines that would divide an established community. Likewise, critical transportation infrastructure linking one neighborhood to another would not be removed as part of implementation of the Draft General Plan. The Draft General Plan focuses on the link between land use and transportation and seeks to balance the mobility needs of all users of the transportation system. Policies seek to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve connectivity. Complete streets and sustainable transportation policies are included within the Draft General Plan. These changes to the physical environment would not divide an established community, and would enhance multi-modal mobility within the City.

(2) Conflict With Any Applicable Land Use Plans, Policy, or Regulation. This section includes a discussion of potential conflicts between the Draft General Plan and the applicable planning documents described in the setting section. Please note that planning documents that pertain to specific technical topics (e.g., Transportation and Circulation) are discussed in those topical sections of this Draft EIR. Figure III-2 in Chapter III, Project Description identifies the proposed Draft General Plan Land Use Map.

San Francisco Bay Plan. Individual development projects that could occur within San Francisco Bay shoreline areas under the jurisdiction of BCDC would be subject to BCDC's review and approval process. However, at a programmatic level, the Draft General Plan would support the key objectives in the Bay Plan of preserving open space adjacent to San Francisco Bay, protecting the water quality of the Bay, and increasing public access to the Bay and associated shoreline. All lands within the City that are immediately adjacent to the San Francisco Bay are currently designated as parks or open space; there would be no change to these designations under the Draft General Plan.

The following Draft General Plan policies would support objectives of the San Francisco Bay Plan.

- **Policy LU-1.5 Open Spaces.** Provide a diverse range of open spaces to complement the urbanized areas of the City, including improved parks and playing fields, conservation areas on Albany Hill and along the shoreline, a publically accessible waterfront, natural areas along creeks, areas for community gardens and urban agriculture, and private open spaces.
- **Policy LU-1.6: Albany Waterfront.** Support an inclusive, transparent dialogue on all issues relating to the future of the Albany waterfront, including Golden Gate Fields. Decisions relating to the future of the waterfront shall abide by the provisions of voter-approved Measure "C."
- **Policy LU-5.2: Albany Shoreline.** Work collaboratively with federal, state, and regional agencies, key interest groups and shoreline open space advocates, and Albany residents to enhance the recreational ecological, and open space value of the Albany waterfront.
- **Policy W-1.1 Preservation, Conservation, and Recreation Areas.** Utilize the Eastshore State Park General Plan designations of *Preservation Areas*, *Conservation Areas*, and *Recreation Areas* as framework for the planning and design of Albany portion of the proposed McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.

Pursuant to the Eastshore State Park General Plan, these designations are applied as follows:

- The Albany State Marine Reserve (Albany mudflats) is designated as a Preservation Area. This area has unique habitat resource values that require protection and preservation. Public access to the mudflats is restricted to safety, scientific, maintenance and controlled interpretive and educational activities.

- Albany Beach, Albany Neck and Bulb, and part of the Albany Plateau are designated as Conservation Areas. These are areas where natural habitat values will be protected and enhanced while accommodating lower intensity recreation that is compatible with and dependent on those values.
- The remainder of the Albany Plateau was designated as a Recreation Area in the Eastshore State Park Plan. Subsequent decisions resulted in the development of the Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex in Berkeley and the dedication of a large portion of the Plateau as Burrowing Owl Habitat. Future assessments of the Burrowing Owl Habitat may be used to determine if the area should retain its Recreation Area designation or should be re-designated as a Conservation Area.
- **Policy W-1.2: Site Planning Principles.** Locate visitor-serving facilities in areas that have convenient access, lower habitat value, and more suitability for higher intensity uses.

Therefore, the Draft General Plan would not conflict with the Bay Plan and no impacts would result from implementation of the Draft General Plan.

1992 General Plan. The Draft General Plan is a comprehensive update of the existing 1992 General Plan and as such would replace the 1992 General Plan. After adoption, the Draft General Plan would function as the main guiding document for land use and planning in Albany. Table IV.A-4 shows the land use designations in the 1992 General Plan and equivalent land use designations in the Draft General Plan.

Although the Draft General Plan would replace the 1992 General Plan, it builds on the over-arching principles and objectives established under the existing 1992 General Plan. The majority of proposed land use designations are equivalent to those in the 1992 General Plan. Proposed Draft General Plan policies that promote the following 1992 General Plan goals are shown in parentheses:

- **Goal LU 1:** Preserve and enhance the residential character of Albany. (Policy LU-2.1 through Policy LU-2.12)
- **Goal LU 2:** Encourage and upgrade commercial development along San Pablo Avenue in order to expand the City's economic base. (Policy LU-1.3, Policy LU-3.1, Policy LU-3.2, Policy LU-3.4)
- **Goal LU 3:** Restrict conversion of residential uses to commercial uses along specific blocks of Kains and Adams Streets where residential uses predominate and permit such conversions where commercial uses predominate. (Policy LU-2.7)
- **Goal LU 4:** Maintain and promote a mix of commercial uses on Solano Avenue that serves the community. (Policy LU-3.1, Policy LU-3.3, Policy LU-3.4)
- **Goal LU 5:** Protect residential neighborhoods from the adverse impacts of adjacent commercial uses through the creation of a transition area along Solano Avenue cross streets. (Policy LU-3.7)
- **Goal LU 6:** Increase the economic vitality of the City's industrial use areas. (Policy LU-3.5)
- **Goal LU 7:** Ensure that future redevelopment of the University of California lands is compatible with the City's long-term land use, public services, and public facilities goals. (Policy LU-4.5, Policy LU-4.6, Policy LU-4.7, Policy LU-4.8)
- **Goal LU 8:** Maintain and improve Albany's high quality educational system and other public services. (Policy LU-4.1, Policy LU-4.4)
- **Goal LU 9:** The positive elements of Albany's physical character: common architectural styles, significant views, and remaining natural features should be protected and enhanced. (Policy LU-6.1 through LU-6.7)

The Draft General Plan would promote the major goals established in the 1992 General Plan and would carry them forward rather than create policy conflicts.

Table IV.A-4: Acreage Comparison Between 1992 General Plan and Draft General Plan

Land Use Category	1992 General Plan Acreage	Draft General Plan Acreage	Difference
Low Density Residential ^a	466	467	+1
Medium Density Residential	37	37	0
High Density Residential (including “Tower”) ^b	65	63	-2
Hillside Residential (formerly Planned Development 1 and 2) ^c	26	19	-7
San Pablo Avenue Mixed Use ^d	33	44	+5
Planned Residential-Commercial	6		
Solano Avenue Mixed Use ^e	29	30	+1
Commercial Recreation	137	137	0
Commercial Services and Production (formerly Commercial Service/ Light Industrial) ^f	35	30	-5
Public/Quasi-Public ^g	62	65	+3
Parks/Open Space ^h	132	150	+18
University Village (formerly three different categories)	75	80	+5
Undesignated (Freeway/Railroad ROW)	72	53	-19
TOTAL	1,175	1,175	0

^a Increase due to the addition of several churches to this category

^b Decrease partially due to removal of Albany Middle School from the High Density Residential category, offset by increase of 1.0 acre at Pierce Street parcel

^c Decrease due to acquisition of parcels on the east side of Albany Hill as parkland

^d Increase due to University Village mixed-use development

^e Increase due to designation of AT&T facility as Solano Mixed Use

^f Decrease due to I-80 freeway realignment, Corporation Yard and adjustments to reflect the University Village Master Plan

^g Increase due to Albany Middle School and Corporation Yard addition

^h Increase due to Albany Hill, Pierce Street, University Village area addition

Notes:

– 1992 General Plan column includes General Plan Map Amendments made through 2004.

– Total excludes the Watercourse Protection Overlay and the Major Activity Node overlay, to avoid double counting.

Source: Barry Miller, Planning Consultant to the City of Albany, 2015.

Zoning Ordinance. The City’s Zoning Ordinance establishes land use regulations that, in most instances, coordinate with the General Plan designations. The State requirement that a jurisdiction’s General Plan be consistent with its Zoning Ordinance does not apply to California’s charter cities (of which Albany is one), but in practice charter cities typically follow the same policy. Policies in the Draft General Plan would require updates to the Zoning Ordinance so that the Zoning Ordinance would be consistent with the Draft General Plan and allow for land use patterns envisioned in the Draft General Plan (such as designating new mixed-use zones along commercial corridors, adjusting lot size standards, etc.). Several implementation action items (Action LU-2.A, Action LU-3.D, and Action LU-3.F) in the Draft General Plan include updating the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, after implementation of these policies in the Draft General Plan, the Draft General Plan would not conflict with the Zoning Ordinance, or vice versa.

(3) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

As described in the setting section, Albany is designated on the FFMP as Urban and Built Up land and Other Land. No areas of the City are mapped as “Prime Farmland” “Unique Farmland” and “Farmland of Statewide Importance.” There is no land within Albany that is zoned for agricultural purposes. The Draft General Plan would not convert existing farmland, designated as “Prime Farmland” “Unique Farmland” or “Farmland of Statewide Importance” because there is no farmland designated within the City of Albany. Therefore, no impact would occur and no additional mitigation measures are required.

(4) Conflict with Existing Zoning for Agriculture or a Williamson Act Contract.

Albany’s zoning ordinance does not include an agricultural designation and no land in Albany is zoned for agriculture. No land within the City is currently under an existing Williamson Act Contract. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would not result in an impact related to conflicts with zoning for Agriculture or a Williamson Act contract.

(5) Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use. The Gill Tract, which is part of University Village, currently includes a community garden and U.C. Berkeley research fields. The Gill Tract is designated as Public/Institutional Residential Commercial on the 1992 General Plan Land Use Map. The Draft General Plan has combined the 1992 General Plan Land Use Designations for University Village (Public/Institutional Research, Public/Institutional/Residential-Commercial, Public/Institutional/Residential-Recreational, Public/Institutional/Residential-Recreational-Commercial) into its own designation (University Village). The Draft General Plan designates the Gill Tract as an area within the University Village land use designation. The Draft General Plan proposes no changes in use to the Gill Tract. Furthermore, the University of California has prepared and adopted the 2004 University Village Master Plan⁵ to govern uses at University Village.

The Draft General Plan includes the following policies related to the Gill Tract:

- **Policy LU-4.6: Gill Tract.** Support future uses of the Gill Tract (San Pablo Avenue at Buchanan Street) that are consistent with the University’s academic objectives while also responding to the community’s desire to retain a substantial portion of the property for open space and recreational uses.
- **Policy PROS-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.

The Gill Tract is regulated by the 2004 University Village Master Plan. The Draft General Plan includes an implementation action (Action LU-4.A) to encourage the University to update its Master Plan for University Village.

- **Action LU-4.A: University Village Master Plan Update.** Encourage the University to update its Master Plan for University Village to reflect the completion of the family student housing redevelopment project, the approval of the retail and senior housing project along San Pablo Avenue, and the remaining opportunities for infill development and open space protection on the balance of the site.

⁵ University of California, 2004. *2004 University Village Master Plan*. June 30.

The Draft General Plan does not include specific land use regulations for the University Village or change to the uses at University Village. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would not convert existing agricultural uses to a nonagricultural use and there would be no impact to existing agricultural uses and no mitigation measures are required.

c. Cumulative Impacts. CEQA defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects, which, when considered together, are considerable, or which can compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Section 15130 of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR evaluate potential environmental impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively significant. These impacts can result from the proposed project alone, or together with other projects. Section 15355 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states: “The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects.” Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

When evaluating cumulative impacts, CEQA allows the use of either a list of past, present, and probable future projects, including projects outside the control of the lead agency, or a summary of projections in an adopted planning document. This cumulative analysis for potential land use impacts uses adopted General Plans in cities around Albany and the regional population and employment projections developed by ABAG.⁶

Expected population growth in the region would result in extensive land use changes at the regional level, which is a potentially significant cumulative impact. ABAG expects that the population of the Bay Area region will grow from 7,341,700 residents in 2010 to 9,073,700 residents in 2035. ABAG, as part of the Sustainable Communities Strategy called Plan Bay Area, has identified alternative growth strategies for the region to accommodate this growth. The preferred strategy calls for population and employment growth to be directed to urban areas close to regional transportation nodes and job centers. Increased growth is projected primarily for cities within the South Bay and Peninsula. Oakland, Fremont, Hayward, and Richmond are included in the top 15 cities for housing unit growth.

Urban growth that would occur in Albany as a result of the Draft General Plan would be consistent with the Focused Future strategy identified by ABAG. San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue are identified as potential Priority Development Areas.⁷ These are areas that require more local planning, review, and action before they become Planned PDAs. Per Draft General Plan policies, the majority of growth in the City would occur in mixed-use projects along San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue. Because the Draft General Plan would be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy and encourage transit-oriented development along commercial corridors, it would result in less-than-significant cumulative impacts related to land use.

⁶ Association of Bay Area Governments, 2013. Metropolitan Transportation Commission, *Draft Plan Bay Area, Strategy for a Sustainable Region*. March. Adopted with revisions July 18.

⁷ Association of Bay Area Governments, 2013. *Plan Bay Area: Map 6: Change in Households per Acre 2010- 2040* (page 51). July.

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