

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: April 18, 2016
Reviewed by: PL

SUBJECT: Public Hearing to Adopt the Final Environmental Impact Report for the 2035 General Plan and to Adopt the 2035 General Plan

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SUMMARY

The City Council will hold a public hearing on the Draft Albany 2035 General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Council is being asked to approve two Resolutions, the first adopting the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Albany 2035 General Plan, and the second adopting the Albany 2035 General Plan itself.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On March 9, 2016, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted two resolutions recommending (1) adoption of the FEIR for the 2035 General Plan by the City Council; and (2) adoption of the 2035 General Plan by the City Council, inclusive of an Addendum. The Commission made a number of administrative edits to the Addendum at its hearing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Conduct a Public Hearing on the 2035 General Plan and EIR
2. Approve Resolution #2016-23 adopting the Final EIR for the General Plan
3. Approve Resolution #2016-24 adopting the 2035 General Plan

BACKGROUND

Every city and county in California is required to prepare a general plan guiding its future growth. The State requires that such plans address seven “elements,” including land use, transportation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise. Cities may add optional “elements” and are encouraged to organize their plans in alternative formats, as long as the seven mandated topics are covered. The Housing Element of the General Plan stands alone as a

separate document, and is subject to review and certification by the State (Department of Housing and Community Development). It must be updated every eight years, according to a schedule approved by the legislature. The remaining elements are not subject to State certification.

Albany's previous General Plan was prepared in 1989-1992 and was adopted in 1992. The Plan had a horizon year of 2010, and included policies to guide the City's growth through the 1990s and early 2000s. The City Council began discussing the need for a Plan Update in 2010-2012, and retained a consultant in early 2013 to manage the process and draft the new Plan.

The General Plan Update Program was initiated in February 2013. The process included the 2007-2014 Housing Element Update, which was adopted in March 2014, and the 2015-2023 Housing Element Update, which was adopted in February 2015. The process also included the update of all other General Plan elements, development of several new elements, and preparation of a revised General Plan Map. Concurrently the City prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the General Plan Update, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. These tasks were completed in 2014 and 2015.

Community input was solicited throughout the General Plan Update process. The Planning and Zoning Commission convened more than 20 study sessions, many of which focused on specific topics or "elements" of the General Plan. Other City Commissions and Committees, including Traffic and Safety, Sustainability, Economic Development and Parks and Recreation, also convened study sessions. The City Council convened a number of meetings on the project, and both the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission held hearings on the Housing Element. Public input was also solicited through community meetings (focused on housing), interactive displays at the Solano Stroll and Arts and Green Festival, presentations to community groups, and a project website.

The Draft General Plan and Draft EIR were released on November 25, 2015. The EIR was filed with the State Clearinghouse, and interested parties were notified by email of the 60-day review period for submitting written/e-mailed comments. The City Council convened a work session on the General Plan and EIR on December 15, 2015. The Planning and Zoning Commission convened a public hearing on January 13, 2016. The hearing was an opportunity for Commissioners to provide detailed comments on the General Plan and EIR, and for the public to provide oral testimony on both documents.

Other City Commissions and committees also have held study sessions on the General Plan and EIR, including the Traffic and Safety Commission (December 17, 2015), Sustainability Committee (December 16, 2015), Parks and Recreation Commission (January 14, 2016), Social and Economic Justice Commission (February 2, 2016), Arts Committee (February 7, 2016), and Economic Development Committee (April 7, 2016). The General Plan Addendum responds to comments from each Committee/Commission.

The 60-day comment period on the EIR closed on January 25, 2016. Comments were accepted beyond that deadline, and comments on the General Plan were accepted throughout February. A General Plan Addendum was published on February 26, 2016. The Addendum includes

approximately 24 pages of line-by-line edits to the General Plan in response to public comments. Also published on February 26 were several documents required by CEQA, including the Response to Comments, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and the required CEQA Findings. The Response to Comments document includes all letters and testimony specifically relating to the EIR, responses to those letters and testimony, and edited pages of the Draft EIR. Taken together, the Draft EIR and the Response to Comments constitute the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project.

The Albany Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on the General Plan and EIR on March 9, 2016. The Commission made a number of changes to the Addendum and a minor edit to the CEQA findings. Following discussion, the Commission adopted two resolutions; the first recommended City Council adoption of the FEIR and related documents, while the second recommended City Council adoption of the General Plan, inclusive of the Addendum and the final Commission edits.

DISCUSSION

Overview of Document

The 2035 General Plan carries forward many of the policies of the City's prior Plan, as well as plans adopted in more recent years such as the Climate Action Plan and the Active Transportation Plan. While the General Plan Land Use Map has been "fine-tuned" to reflect current conditions, no major changes are proposed. The Plan carries forward the 1992 designation of Golden Gate Fields as "Commercial Recreation" and designates the remainder of the Albany waterfront as Parks and Open Space. It reinforces existing designations for San Pablo and Solano Avenues, as well as the city's residential neighborhoods, Albany Hill, University Village, and the Eastshore/ Cleveland Business District. The Plan includes forecasts for the next 20 years indicating the City could add 775 new households and 850 new jobs by 2035. It is worth noting that this level of growth could also be achieved under the existing (1992) General Plan and current zoning.

The Plan includes an introductory chapter and a "Framework" chapter with data about the City and guiding principles for planning. It then includes eight chapters ("elements") as follows:

- The Land Use Element describes existing land uses and land issues, and includes the General Plan Map. It includes goals, policies and actions on topics relating to neighborhoods and business districts, with a focus on areas with the potential for change.
- The Transportation Element addresses mobility in the city. It is organized using headings that correspond to different modes of travel, such as bicycling, walking, driving, and public transit. Policies cover issues such as safety, parking, and traffic calming.
- The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element covers the management of the city's open spaces and parks. It also addresses the delivery of recreational services.

- The Conservation and Sustainability Element addresses air, water, soil, plants and animals, and other natural systems. It also addresses energy and water conservation, and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Environmental Hazards Element addresses the potential for earthquakes, flooding, wildfire, and other natural hazards. It also addresses emergency preparedness, hazardous materials, and noise.
- The Community Services and Facilities Element addresses school, library, police, fire, and human services, as well as infrastructure and utilities.
- The Waterfront Element includes policies and actions to improve public access to the waterfront and implement plans for McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.

The Plan concludes with an implementation chapter.

The General Plan is subject to CEQA and was the subject of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The DEIR is a program-level EIR, meaning that it addresses the general effects of additional population and employment in the city over a 20-year period rather than the effects of a particular development project on a particular site. The DEIR includes a project description, and discussions of the existing setting, potential impacts, and recommended mitigation measures for 14 topics. These topics are land use, population and housing, transportation, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise and vibration, geology and mineral resources, hydrology and water quality, hazardous materials, biological resources, cultural resources, public services and recreation, utilities and infrastructure, and visual resources. The DEIR also considers alternatives to the proposed project.

Comments Received on the Environmental Impact Report

As noted earlier, the EIR review period ran from November 25, 2015 through January 25, 2016. Written comments were received from four government agencies (Caltrans, EBMUD, EBRPD, and Alameda County Transportation Commission), two organizations (Friends of Albany Hill, Diverse Housing Working Group), two individuals (Jerri Holan, Ed Fields), and two Planning and Zoning Commissioners (Donaldson, Menotti). Several of these comments focused on the General Plan, but referenced policies that were cited in the EIR, and thus were also treated as EIR comments.

Comments Received on the General Plan

Comment letters on the General Plan were received from St. Alban's Episcopal Church (Julie Wakelee-Lynch), Bart Grossman, Jerri Holan, Ed Fields, Friends of Albany Hill, the Diverse Housing Working Group (Alexa Hauser), and Commissioners Menotti and Donaldson. In addition, there were eight speakers at the City Council Study Session (December 15, 2015), three speakers at the Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session (January 13, 2016), and one speaker each at the Sustainability Committee meeting (December 16, 2015) and the Traffic and Safety Commission meeting (December 17, 2015).

Most comments on the General Plan were provided verbally at the public meetings described above. The Council Study Session on December 15, 2015 was more than three hours long, with Council members reviewing the document chapter by chapter while providing comments and specific edits. The December briefings to the Sustainability Committee and the Traffic and Safety Commission both resulted in substantive requests for edits and clarifications. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission spent several hours reviewing the document chapter by chapter in January 2016, with several Commissioners supplementing their oral comments with written comments.

Final CEQA Documents

In addition to the Draft EIR, three other CEQA-related documents are provided for the Council's consideration. All three of these documents have been considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission:

- The "Response to Comments" document reproduces each comment letter received, and subdivides each letter into specific points or subjects. Responses are provided to each point. The document also includes line edits to the DEIR which reflect the responses to the comments.
- The "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program" indicates steps the City will take after the General Plan is adopted to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts related to transportation and cultural resources, as noted in the DEIR.
- The "Findings" are required by CEQA and the Public Resources Code and confirm that the "project" has been modified to incorporate measures to lessen the potential for environmental effects. The Findings document describes the project and its objectives, identifies alternatives, and discusses potential significant impacts and the ways they have been mitigated.

ANALYSIS

Draft EIR Comments and Responses

Key comments, responses, and changes made a result of the EIR comments are summarized below:

- **California Department of Transportation (January, 7, 2016).** Caltrans asked that the City express its commitment to mitigate impacts to State highways, include an intersection-level traffic impact study in the EIR, elaborate on the timing of improvements to San Pablo Avenue, contribute its "fair share" to regional transportation improvements, consider an impact fee to improve transit, and adopt and monitor Transportation Demand Management programs.

Responses to each of these requests have been prepared and a number of edits to the General Plan and General Plan DEIR have been made.

- **East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) (December 30, 2015).** EBMUD's letter describes the water service requirements that will apply to future development, suggests future conditions of approval related to wastewater collection systems, and asks for a commitment to use reclaimed water and conserve water on an on-going basis.

In the Response to this comment, the various General Plan policies addressing each of these issues are cited.

- **East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) (January 25, 2016).** EBRPD's letter acknowledges the Albany Beach and Bay Trail projects, supports the City's incorporation of Eastshore State Park General Plan goals and policies in the City's General Plan, and expresses a commitment to work with the City on implementation of its waterfront policies.

No changes to the Plan or EIR were requested in this letter.

- **Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) (January 28, 2016).** ACTC's letter confirms that Albany's growth forecasts are compatible with the countywide forecasts, asks for a number of clarifications relative to the description of the County Congestion Management Program, and asks that the EIR clarify how BART ridership and parking could be affected by the Plan.

The Response addresses the specific points, and identifies where each issue is addressed in the DEIR.

- **Friends of Albany Hill (FOAH) (January 24, 2016).** FOAH's letter asks that the General Plan include a policy that open space be preserved between the crest of Albany Hill and Taft Street on the east side of the hill and to at least 400 feet downslope on the west side. The letter also identifies a number of native plants on the Hill that were missing from tables in the Biological Resources section of the EIR. The letter also asks that the General Plan include a commitment to spend Measure R funds on open space acquisition.

The Response indicates that it would be premature to prescribe a 400' open space setback from the crest of the hill on private property, and indicates that such setbacks should be based on property surveys, slope maps, and further communication with property owner(s) as part of processes following the General Plan Update. The Response also includes text amendments to both the General Plan and EIR regarding native plants, and the expenditure of Measure R funds, as requested by the commenter.

- **Diverse Housing Working Group (DHWG) (January 13, 2016).** The DHWG letter clarifies oral testimony provided on December 15. It also reiterates the request of St.

Alban's Church that the General Plan include a commitment to leverage future development to generate affordable housing units or funding for affordable housing.

While this comment pertains to the General Plan rather than the EIR, the Response notes the addition of a new policy and amendment of another policy (see the Plan Addendum).

- **Fields, Ed (December 14, 2015 and January 13, 2016).** The first letter from Mr. Fields asks for clarification of land use category definitions, amendments to ensure that San Pablo Avenue is treated with the same sensitivity as Solano Avenue, clarifications on UC Village Master Plan references, and updating of information on Monarch Butterfly surveys. The second letter asks for clarification on statements regarding affordable housing, and correction of a data table in the EIR.

The Response addresses each point raised, and makes a number of edits to both the General Plan and the EIR to correct or clarify information presented.

- **Holan, Jerri (January 2, 2016).** Ms. Holan's letter suggests specific edits to General Plan language on historic preservation. These edits would call for the City to adopt a historic preservation ordinance, preserve the prevailing design styles of Albany's homes, require historic evaluations for proposed demolition and major alteration of structures built before 1965, and identify several notable buildings and all MacGregor homes, as potential historic resources.

The Response to this comment includes proposed edits to two General Plan actions, the first amending the City's Design Guidelines to address historic preservation and defining the important architectural elements of Albany's homes, and the second suggesting that the City pursue a historic preservation program and consider amendments to its zoning ordinance to establish protections for historic buildings. The EIR Response notes that establishment of a local historic buildings register could happen after the General Plan is adopted, but does not call for such buildings to be formally "listed" through the General Plan Update process.

- **Menotti, Val (oral comments on January 13, and letter of January 24, 2016).** Commissioner Menotti's letter on the EIR asks for an explanation of the difference between the General Plan forecasts and the ABAG forecasts, and clarification of CEQA requirements for a parking ballot measure. His comment on January 13 addressed the potential for a Capitol Corridor station in Albany. Other comments relate to the General Plan rather than the EIR.

The EIR Response notes that the ABAG forecasts can still be achieved with the General Plan land use designations and policies, and that the General Plan forecasts are considered more realistic based on trends and market data. The Response further notes that a traffic and parking study may be required if specific changes to the parking standards are proposed.

- **Donaldson, Doug (oral comments on January 13).** Commissioner Donaldson’s comments include several corrections, observations, and clarifications. A request to add language on pipelines to the “Hazards” section was made. Additional information on visual resources was requested.

The Response indicates that the requested corrections and clarifications have been made in the FEIR. Language on pipelines has been added, and visual resources text has been supplemented.

General Plan Addendum Highlights

An Addendum to the General Plan has been prepared identifying line edits to the November 2015 Draft. The Addendum responds to comments on the General Plan received in writing and in oral testimony and the multiple hearings on the document. After the General Plan is adopted, it will be updated so that the Addendum edits are flowed into the main document.

Highlights of the Addendum are presented below, with the commenting body in parentheses:

Framework (Chapter 2)

- P.13 The importance of sustainability as an underlying principle for growth has been further emphasized. (Sustainability Committee)

Land Use Element (Chapter 3)

- P.9-14 The definitions of the categories that appear on the General Plan Map have been clarified. The clarifications relate to the maximum density allowed in “High Density Residential Areas,” the fact that density bonuses are permitted in all areas where housing is allowed (and not just on San Pablo Avenue), and the limits of the City’s land use authority on state and federal land. (Fields)
- P.16-17 The categories have been slightly re-ordered so that “Creek Conservation Area” appears as an Open Space designation, and “Major Activity Node” appears as a Commercial/Mixed Use designation. (P&Z Commission)
- P.17 A definition has been added for “undesignated” areas (the Freeways and Railroad), noting that the City wishes to improve the visual quality of these areas, and ensure their safe, productive use. (Council)
- P.18 The description of “Priority Development Areas” clarifies that they are locally designated. (P&Z Commission)
- P. 23 The discussion of future land use changes acknowledges that such changes are likely to be requested at Golden Gate Fields before 2035. (Council)
- P.24, 39 Provisions for urban agriculture at UC Village have been clarified. (Council, Fields)
- P.29, 42 Climate resilience and the potential for sidewalk damage have been acknowledged as important considerations in the selection of appropriate street trees. Action LU-6.C has been edited to also recognize these concerns. (Council)
- P.32 Policy LU-1.1 has been amended to note that new development should be leveraged to create opportunities for affordable housing. (DHWG)
- P.35, 42 Action LU-2.G has been changed to call for an update to the City’s Residential Design Guidelines to address historic preservation. Action LU-6.D has been edited to

- more strongly advocate for a preservation program, including possible amendment of the Zoning Code. (Holan)
- P.37, 40, 42 Policy LU-3.16 has been added to ensure that any future redevelopment of Golden Gate Fields protects the shoreline and is consistent with local values. Action LU-5.C has been added to ensure that such redevelopment also preserves environmentally sensitive areas. Policy LU-6.8 has been added to ensure that any redevelopment in that area enhances the city’s waterfront identity. (P&Z Commission)
- P.39 Action LU-3.H has been edited to note the potential for a Capitol Corridor station on the Union Pacific tracks. (P&Z Commission)
- P.40 Policy LU-5.1 has been edited to note the City’s intent to work with land conservation groups to preserve open space on Albany Hill (Council)
- P.41 The I-80 off-ramps have been added to the list of important gateways in Policy LU-6.2. (P&Z Commission)
- P.42 Action LU-6.H has been added to revise the sign ordinance and address billboards (P&Z Commission)

Transportation Element (Chapter 4)

- P.4 Information has been added on the number of households with two vehicles (Council)
- P.12 References to bike paths, lanes, and routes has been more closely aligned with to the Class I, II, and III protocol for labeling bike facilities. (P&Z Commission)
- P.12 The San Pablo Avenue cycle track has been described and San Pablo has been acknowledged as the “rapid” cycling route (T&S Commission)
- P.19 Information on Golden Gate Transit bus service and updated AC Transit service has been added (T&S Commission)
- P.23, 41 The use of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a metric for road performance has been linked to the City’s Climate Action goals. (P&Z Commission)
- P. 33 Action T-2.H has been added, supporting electric vehicle charging stations when doing streetscape improvements (P&Z Commission)
- P. 36 Action T.3.C has been edited to call for coordination with Berkeley and Caltrans as improvements to the Gilman Street interchange are completed (P&Z Commission)
- P. 36 Action T-3.H has been rewritten to incorporate the City’s recently adopted Sidewalk Policy (T&S Commission)
- P. 36 Action T-3.G has been added supporting the designation of San Pablo and Solano Avenues as “transit corridors,” consistent with AC Transit and Alameda CTC plans. (T&S Commission)
- P. 37 Action T-3.K has been edited to note that changes to the Active Transportation Plan’s bike route designations may be made without formally amending the General Plan. (T&S Commission)
- P. 37 Policies T-4.8 and 4.9 have been edited so that 4.8 focuses on personal safety/crime, while 4.9 focuses on street lighting and visibility. (P&Z Commission)
- P. 37 Action T-4.B has been edited to note that “no parking” restrictions should be enforced on sidewalks. (P&Z Commission)
- P. 38 Action T-4.G has been added on improving street lighting on pedestrian routes (Council)
- P. 38 Policy T-5.4 has been edited to note that street closures to motor vehicle traffic should be considered only as a last resort. (Council)

- P. 39 Action T-5.G has been added to update development impact fees, giving consideration to a separate impact fee for transportation improvements. (Caltrans)
- P. 40 Policy T-6.11 has been added to call for the City to participate in the funding and development of regional transportation improvements, proportional to local demand. (Caltrans)

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element (Chapter 6)

- P. 3 The description of the different types of open space has been expanded to include creeks, and to acknowledge the role of City street rights-of-way. (P&Z Comm.)
- P.11, 24 Text on the Veterans Memorial Building has been edited to note that any interior alterations should be sensitive to the building’s historic character and maintain public access. Policy PROS-5.4 has been similarly edited, and also calls for a seismic evaluation. (Council)
- P.11 Text has been updated to reflect the Greenway Preferred Concept Plan. (Council)
- P.20 Action PROS-2.E has been added to address the need for dog play areas in the next update of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. (Council)
- P.20 Action PROS-2.G has been added to support the inclusion of open space in any reuse plan for Golden Gate Fields. (P&Z Commission)
- P.22 Action PROS-3.H has been added to support the use of Measure R funds for open space acquisition on Albany Hill, vegetation management, and creek restoration. (Friends of Albany Hill)

Conservation and Sustainability Element (Chapter 7)

- P.12 The text box has been edited to note SB 350. (Sustainability Committee)
- P.16 Data on peregrine falcons has been added, and data on Monarch butterflies has been updated. (Commission, Fields)
- P.17 Information on native plants on Albany Hill has been added. (Friends of Albany Hill)
- P.19 The text on a “Building Energy Assessment and Disclosure Ordinance” has been simplified. (Council)
- P.20 The objective of “zero net energy buildings” has been added. (Sustainability Committee)
- P.24 Action CON-1.D has been expanded to call for enforcement of development agreements related to creek clean-up and maintenance. (P&Z Commission)
- P.25 Policy CON-2.2 has been edited to “encourage” rather than “require” the preservation of mature trees during development review. (P&Z Commission)
- P.25 Policy CON-2.5 has been edited to note the objective of gradually replacing the eucalyptus canopy on Albany Hill with native trees. (Council)
- P.26 Policy CON-2.A has been edited to coordinate sidewalk policies with tree policies. (Council)
- P.26 Action CON-2.B has been edited to continue considering a heritage tree policy. (Council)
- P.29 Action CON-3.1 has been added to encourage the School District to use sustainable building methods and operating practices, and support sustainability education. (Sustainability Committee)

Environmental Hazards Element (Chapter 8)

- P.13 Text has been added on the Kinder Morgan and PG&E pipelines. (P&Z Commission)
- P.24 Text has been added on the importance of sea level rise as a design factor in low lying areas. (Council)
- P.25 Action EH-1.C has been edited to consider the future feasibility of a mandatory soft-story building upgrade program. (Council)
- P.29 Action EH-4.A has been expanded to emphasize the importance of including persons with special needs, and also the business community, in emergency preparedness. (Council)

Community Services and Facilities Element (Chapter 9)

- P.15, 16 A new text section has been added to the discussion of Human Services that focuses on Special Needs Populations, including the City's efforts to assist persons experiencing homelessness. (Council)
- P.19 New text has been added acknowledging the need to plan for telecommunication facilities and new technology. (Council, P&Z Commission)
- P. 22 Policy CSF-2.11 has been added acknowledging the Fire Department's role in promoting community health and wellness. (Council)
- P. 25 Goal CSF-4 has been broadened to address Human Services. Other special needs groups, including persons with disabilities and extremely low income households, have been added. (Council)
- P. 26 Policy CSF-4.7 has been added promoting inclusive services, and responsiveness to the needs of all persons. (Council)
- P. 27 Policy CSF-6.8 has been edited to note the potential for expanding fiber optics, wi-fi, and other telecommunication infrastructure. (Council)
- P. 28 Action CSF-6.G on street lights has been edited to note the importance of balancing energy conservation/ dark sky goals with security and visibility goals. (Council)

Waterfront Element (10)

- P. 5 The discussion of land ownership on the waterfront has been simplified. (Council)
- P.10, 12 Text has been reorganized to clarify the improvements being made through the Albany Beach project versus the longer-term projects associated with the Transition Plan and the Eastshore State Park Plan. (Council)
- P.17 Action W-1.6 has been added to support an update to the Eastshore State Park Plan, along with a constructive dialogue among stakeholders regarding improvements in Albany. (Council)
- P. 25 Policy W-6.5 has been added to ensure that any future redevelopment at Golden Gate Fields provides community benefits, such as funding for affordable housing, parks, and shoreline access improvements. (DHWG)
- P. 23 The definition of "shoreline" in Action W-6.A has been clarified. (P&Z Commission)
- P.25 Action W-6.C has been added to ensure that any reuse plans for Golden Gate Fields are consistent with plans for Eastshore State Park. (P&Z Commission)
- P.25 Action W-6.D has been added to maintain communication with the owners of Golden Gate Fields and engage them in waterfront planning discussions. (P&Z Commission)

Additional Changes Made by Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission approved eight minor changes to the Addendum at their March 9, 2016 meeting. These include:

- An edit indicating housing should be considered as a possible use on the Safeway site if it is ever redeveloped (text)
- Deleting a reference to FAR limits being a disincentive to teardowns (text)
- Rewriting a proposed action so that Albany’s revised residential design guidelines address the features of all older homes and not just MacGregor homes (LU-2.G)
- An edit indicating sidewalks should be designed to accommodate a variety of tree types (in addition to trees being selected based on sidewalk conditions) (LU-6.C)
- Strengthening language to enforce laws prohibiting parking on sidewalks (T-4.B)
- Softening language calling for a transportation impact fee (T-5.G)
- Noting that Key Route median improvements should be coordinated with AUSD (PROS-6.G)
- Clarifying the official name of MacGregor High (text)

These changes are highlighted in yellow in the Addendum (Exhibit “B”). In addition, the Commission made a minor change to the required CEQA findings (also highlighted in yellow in the attachments).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

As noted earlier, a program-level Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the General Plan. The EIR determined that most potential impacts associated with growth over the next 20-years will be mitigated by policies and actions in the General Plan itself. Mitigation measures were identified for potential cultural resource impacts (archaeological and paleontological resources) and transportation impacts (implementation of traffic calming and parking programs). Supplemental environmental review will still be required for future development projects, but this review may be streamlined for topics where tiering off the General Plan EIR is possible.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

The General Plan will have a positive impact on sustainability. The Plan incorporates new sustainability policies and action program, reinforces the City’s climate action goals, and emphasizes more sustainable development patterns. The General Plan specifically promotes transit-oriented development, green building, energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems. Its policies emphasize low impact development and recapture of stormwater runoff, conservation of water and reclaimed water use, solid waste reduction and recycling, green infrastructure, access to locally grown food, and environmental education.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Adoption of the General Plan will have no direct financial impact. However, there are secondary and indirect impacts associated with the implementation of policies and action programs. The Plan is intended to guide future capital improvement expenditures and addresses the delivery of City services. It includes commitments to continue staffing various City programs and to implement new programs over the next 20 years. It calls for a variety of studies, regulatory changes, and initiatives that may require staff time and commitment of City resources. The Plan also may have positive fiscal impacts by promoting a business-friendly environment, policies conducive to economic and job growth, and attracting new uses with the potential to generate sales and property tax revenues.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Resolution 2016-23** Adoption of the Final EIR, Mitigation Monitoring Program, and CEQA-Required Findings by the City Council with:
 - Exhibit A: Draft 2035 General Plan Environmental Impact Report, November 25, 2015
 - Exhibit B: Response to Comments (amended through April 6, 2016)
 - Exhibit C: CEQA-Required Findings
 - Exhibit D: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

- 2. Resolution 2016-24** Adoption of the 2035 Albany General Plan by the City Council with:
 - Exhibit A: <http://albany2035.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FullDocument.pdf>
 - Exhibit B: 2035 Albany General Plan Addendum (amended through April 6, 2016)