

SECTION 4 – Demand Analysis Summary

4.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the demand analysis (e.g., household survey and public workshop). Each of these is summarized on the following pages: For more detailed analysis, please refer to Appendix D.

4.2 Household Survey

A survey of public attitudes, recreation interests and recreation participation characteristics was made in the City of Albany during the fall/winter of 03/04. Questionnaires were distributed to selected households in the city limits of Albany. Each member of the household aged 10 and over was asked to fill out a separate questionnaire.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Obtain resident opinions on the current state of Albany’s park, recreation and open space system and their services.
- Begin to develop an understanding what improvements are needed at the existing parks, and what services and/or programs should be emphasized or prioritized.

Sample Design and Selection

Based on the random sample method used, community-wide results are statistically accurate within an expected maximum error range of approximately five-percent (95 percent confidence interval). In other words, if the sample were randomly selected 100 times, it would be expected that for 95 times, the results would vary no more than 5 percent from the results if everyone in the city were surveyed. However, Albany received a larger sampling. Based on the **321 returns**, the **maximum margin of error is 5.42 percent**. This was higher than the 5 percent deviation the sample was designed for.

Results of the survey process are shown below.

Table 4-1
Survey Summary
City of Albany

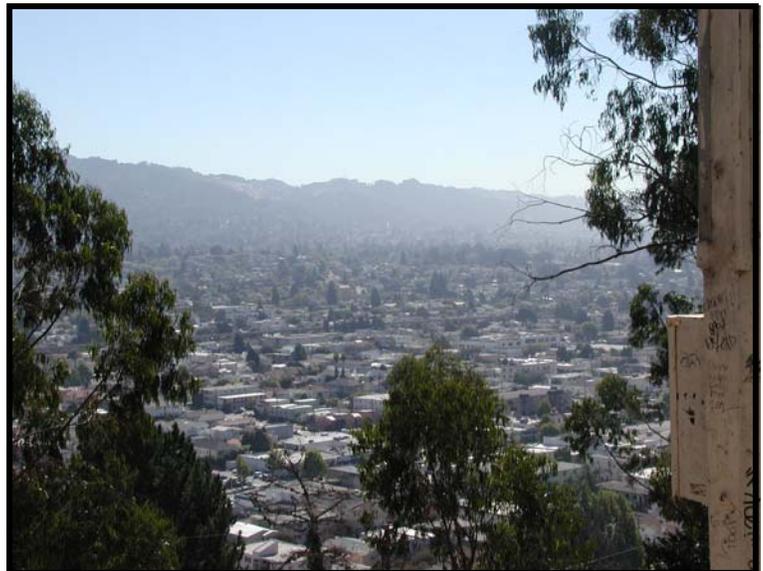
Survey Summary	Results
Number of Households Surveyed	355
Number of Questionnaires Distributed	668
Number of Questionnaires Returned	321
Return Ratio	48.1%

*Summary of
Survey Results*

Listed below is a summary of the resident survey results conducted by MIG, Inc.

- Based on the resident survey results, the library receives most use of the community's indoor facilities with an average of 12.1 per capita visits annually. Recreation programs also receive a fair amount of participation with an average of 7.2 per capita visits annually.
- In terms of the parks, the Ohlone Greenway receives the most use. Eastshore State Park also receives a fair amount of use.
- The main reason residents use the parks in Albany is to "enjoy the outdoors".
- With the exception of restroom maintenance, residents appear to be generally satisfied with the quality and care of park maintenance.
- When asked what the most needed facilities in Albany were, the most frequently cited responses were cleaner restrooms/more restrooms, better sport areas/fields, more children's playgrounds and skate parks.
- Residents indicated that acquiring additional land on Albany Hill was moderately important.
- When asked how Albany Hill / Creekside Park should be used and managed, for Limited Public Use (e.g., trail systems, viewpoints, seating, picnicking) received the most support.
- When asked how to improve the Ohlone Greenway they wanted to improve security and improve the lighting. These were cited most frequently.
- When asked what additional indoor spaces were most needed, a multi-use gymnasium and space for youth activities was cited most often.
- Street tree planting was cited most often when asked what beautification projects are most needed.
- When asked what projects should have the highest priority, city beautification and sport fields were cited most often.

- Roughly 19% of the respondents indicated they participate in recreation programs sponsored by the City of Albany.
- When asked what additional programs should be offered they suggested educational/special interest classes, and arts and crafts. These received the most support.
- Special interest classes and a place for youth to gather or hang out received the most responses when asked what types of programs or facilities are most needed for the teenage population.
- When asked what cultural arts programs are most needed, performances or concerts in the parks and performing art classes received the most support.
- Participation in the 40 identified recreation activities by Albany residents is roughly 36% higher than the MIG average.
- The activities with the highest latent demand (defined as activities they would like to participate in if the facilities were more available) included:
 - * Bicycling for Pleasure
 - * Fairs and Festivals
 - * Arts (painting/sketching)
 - * Soccer
 - * Drama (attend)



4.3 Public Visioning Meeting

On October 21, 2003, the City of Albany Recreation and Community Services Department held a Public Visioning meeting. Approximately, 115 Albany residents attended the meeting at the City of Albany Community Center.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Begin to develop a vision for the City's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, using feedback from community members.
- Gather resident opinions on the current state of Albany's Park, Recreation and open space system, where improvements are needed, and what services and programs should be emphasized or prioritized.

Community Vision

Albany residents attending the meeting participated in a large group visioning exercise and brainstormed how they see Albany 10-15 years from now. The visions were graphically recorded on a large piece of butcher paper in the front of the room. From these notes, five distinct themes emerged and these are captured in the vision statements below.

Residents of the Albany envision their city as:

- A cultural and artistic center, with open space for art and musical performances, beautified boulevards, and community gardens.
- A location for premier sports and recreation facilities that accommodate children, youth, families, and seniors year-round and at all times of day.
- A city that maintains high quality services that support clean and quiet atmospheres.
- A naturalistic environment that supports native habitat and educates residents about local vegetation and wildlife.
- An accessible city with a multitude of pedestrian and bike paths and easy and safe access to the waterfront.

Small Group Discussions

After the large-group visioning exercise, residents were broken up into five separate groups for small group discussions. Each group had a facilitator and a recorder comprised of Park and Recreation Commissioners and the consultant team. The purpose of the discussions was to gather feedback from the community on a series of questions that will help formalize recommendations for the Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

Below is a summary of each group's major highlights and most important issues that emerged in their discussions of all six questions.

Group I:

Group I generated an in-depth list of priorities for Albany. The group highlighted the importance of focusing on maintenance and upgrading of existing properties first (e.g., expand or upgrade the library and retrofit the Veteran's Memorial Building). The group also encouraged the City to build more indoor and outdoor recreation space such as a teen center, quality play fields, better outdoor lighting, and stronger pedestrian and bike connections. They discussed the City developing more of a regional focus.

Group II:

Group II also emphasized that the maintenance of park and recreation facilities needs to be improved. Although the group stated the number of general facilities is sufficient, they focused on the need for existing facilities to cater to more diverse groups and to be more accessible to people with disabilities. Group II highlighted the need for multi-use fields and better field maintenance.

Group III:

Group III also chose the need for improved maintenance as the highest priority concerning parks, recreation and open space. The group also stressed the need for improved sport fields for all sports and better pedestrian and bike access to the waterfront. Group III expressed the desire to see more creeks day-lighted and a greater emphasis placed on developing and expanding parks.

Group IV:

Group IV also stressed the need to improve maintenance and suggested the community assist in maintenance. The group also prioritized the need for more sport fields and the renovation of existing parks. The group expressed a desire to locate regional facilities in Albany, and also recommended that activities for senior citizens be dispersed throughout the community and the City as a whole and place a greater emphasis on wildlife.

Group V:

Group V prioritized maintenance as the key issue facing Albany Park, Recreation and Open Space. The group also focused on the need for better access throughout the community for all residents and the need to build safe travel corridors for pedestrians and bikes.

*Summary of
Workshop Results*

Listed below is a summary of the small group workshop responses facilitated by MIG, Inc.

- When asked what park and recreation facilities are most needed, most of the responses could be grouped in to the following categories: 1) develop additional bike/ pedestrian paths, 2) re-focus on the waterfront, 3) increase maintenance (especially of bathrooms and fields), 4) build more sport fields, 5) acquire more neighborhood spaces, and 6) foster educative, artistic, and interpretive spaces.
- When asked to rate City services on a scale of 1-10, the results were as follows:
 - * Quality of maintenance – Responses ranged from 0-7 however a majority of the responses fell between 0-5.
 - * Level/Quality of development - Responses ranged from 3-7.
 - * Diversity of facilities: Responses ranged from 1-8.
- When asked what improvements were most needed in the existing parks, a majority of the responses could be grouped in to the following categories: 1) improved maintenance (of restrooms, sport fields, and overall cleanliness), 2) play spaces safe for all ages, 3) lighting and benches at the Ohlone Greenway and sport fields, and 4) the importance of improving existing facilities before constructing new ones.
- When asked to prioritize projects, the results were as follows:
 - * Sports field development (32 votes)
 - * Maintenance of existing parks (25 votes)
 - * Upgrade and/or renovate existing parks (25 votes)
 - * Recreation programs (11 votes)
 - * Acquire additional open space along Albany Hill (10 votes)
 - * Trail development along creeks (8 votes)
 - * Indoor facility development (2 votes)
- When asked if the City should offer additional programs, Albany residents expressed a great interest in more recreation programs. General comments included: 1) the need for additional recreation facilities (gym, pool), 2) more programs for adults and seniors, 3) more community-driven programs, and 4) a higher diversity of outdoor and experiential programs and classes such as gardening, environmental education, and art.
- When asked if the City should acquire the Veteran’s Memorial Building, a majority of Albany residents expressed a desire for the City to acquire the underutilized Veteran’s Memorial Building once the conditions and safety of the building, as well as the costs of restoring the building, are analyzed. Potential uses for the building included a community theater, meeting space for community organizations, and a gymnasium or space for indoor sports.

4.4 Organized User Groups Input

As part of the input processes, each of the organized sport groups was contacted to obtain participation characteristics and solicit comments on needs and/or issues associated with their particular sport.

Albany Little League:

The Albany Little League offers coed baseball programs for youth. The league has indicated there are currently 39 teams representing 501 players in their league. While the league encompasses the geographic areas of Albany, Kensington and North Berkeley area, only 48% or 19 of these teams originate from the Albany area. Teams practice once a week and play two games a week, due to the lack of field space. The league utilizes 4 fields in Albany for games and practices.

In general, the league indicated there is a significant shortage of field space. The league indicated that Oceanview field is barely acceptable and the field at Memorial is in poor condition. The two Village fields are in good condition due to the efforts of their league.

Albany Berkeley Soccer Club:

The Albany Berkeley Soccer Club offers youth soccer programs for ages 5-18. The league has indicated there are currently 27 teams (24 recreation and 3 competitive) representing roughly 1000 players in their league. The league encompasses the geographic areas of Albany, Kensington and Berkeley and North Oakland. Currently, only 35% or 27 teams originate from the Albany area. Teams practice twice a week and play one game a week.

The league indicated that the quality and quantity of the fields are inadequate.

Albany Berkeley Girls Softball League:

The Albany Berkeley Softball Club offers girls softball programs for ages 5-15. The league has indicated that there are currently 24-28 teams representing roughly 320-340 players in their league. The league encompasses the geographic areas of Albany, Berkeley, Kensington, Emeryville, El Cerrito, and parts of Richmond. Currently, only 25% or 7 teams originate from the Albany area. Teams practice once a week and play two games a week.

The league indicated the fields are adequate. However, they felt the fields could be maintained more rigorously to keep them free of weeds and rocks.

Albany Lions Baseball:

The Albany Lions Baseball Club offers a baseball program. The league has indicated there are currently 12 teams representing roughly 160 players in their league. The league encompasses the geographic areas of Albany, Berkeley and Kensington. Roughly 50% or 6 teams originate from the Albany area. Teams practice twice a week and play two games a week.

*City of Albany Recreation
Leagues:*

City of Albany Recreation Leagues: The City of Albany offers a Coed Soccer program and a Men's Softball program. The soccer program has 10 teams consisting of 20 players each and softball program has 5 teams representing 12 each. The programs represent mainly Albany residents, however, there are teams from outside the City. Soccer plays one game a week with no practice and softball plays one game a week with no practice. Teams utilize Oceanview Park for their games.