

**Employee and Public Suggestions
To Decrease Expenditures, Increase Revenues, Plan for the Future**

Decrease Expenditures/Do Things Differently

Shared arrangements with other cities or public agencies:

Ideas	Comments
Share department heads with other cities	Shared Fire Chief w/Piedmont started April 2011. Review in Jan. 2012. Savings approx. \$85K/yr. Feasibility of this arrangement will inform additional dept head sharing.
Share other services with other cities; For example, building inspection; contracting; public safety dispatch; fire marshal	Opportunity for shared arrangements for public safety dispatch will improve after construction of an interoperable radio system among public safety agencies in Contra Costa & Alameda County, starting 2013. The Alameda County City Managers Association is initiating a project in 2011-12 to explore feasibility, cost/benefit, etc. of shared staffing and services between cities. Fire Chief will explore potential shared arrangements for fire marshal & other duties of the Bat. Chief position
Contract for services, such as Fire or Sewer services	Emeryville hired Citygate to conduct an analysis of alternative arrangements for Fire Services, which will be informative for Albany in looking at future options. Albany has approached Stege Sanitary District in El Cerrito about possible shared arrangements; low interest at this time.
Share services/positions with the Albany School District	City & AUSD staff are exploring feasibility and cost/benefit of shared arrangements in information technology, and facilities rentals and maintenance
Share equipment with other agencies	City will start new procedure to require exploring shared possibilities before purchasing equipment not used on a daily basis. Issues to consider: Cost/benefit of savings vs. use fees and travel time.

Employee Salaries & Benefits

Ideas	Comments
<p>Review, limit, and/or reduce salaries. Ideas include:</p> <p>Salaries not exceed “the norm” for the time being; scale pay cuts to salary levels – e.g. decrease salaries 10% for those earning more than \$100,000 and 5% for those earning between \$90,000 and \$99,000; Establish lower step in pay ranges for new hires</p>	<p>Most salaries are established through collective bargaining with employee unions/associations. Through collective bargaining with employee groups, City is pursuing fiscally sustainable salaries. Council could consider reviewing/revising policy adopted in 1994 that commits to “bring salaries to the mid-range of cities in the San Pablo Corridor, as increased revenue permits, as one of the City Council’s highest priorities in regards to maintaining high quality services and employees performance in the City of Albany.”</p>
<p>If reduce compensation, cut work hours: For example, shorter work week or furlough days</p>	<p>A reduced number of work hours/year is a potential option. Challenges include: If there is not a decrease in services or expectations, public may become frustrated with slower pace of service delivery; the City is required to perform certain functions in a timely manner (i.e. paying bills and payroll; handling sewer blockages)</p>
<p>Contract for workers (salary but no pension or benefits).</p>	<p>The advantages of contract services include flexibility in scaling the amount of time and type of expertise to specific needs; it is particularly useful for short-term projects; and it does not incur workers compensation or pension liabilities; Disadvantages include the potential for there to be less direct control over the work product since the private company, not the City, is the immediate supervisor; and fewer City staff means less flexibility in assigning work (daily and during emergencies) Whether there are financial savings depends on the type of services. IN the planning and building area, contract services can increase costs to the applicant. The City of Albany has a living wage ordinance that applies to contracts over \$25,000.</p>

Ideas	Comments
Have employees pay 50% to 100% the employee share of PERS	Police employees will pay the percentage of pay equal to the full amount of the employee share starting 7/1/11. Managers, supervisors, professional staff and others in the Albany Municipal Services JPA and public safety management will pay one-half the employee share starting 7/1/11. The City's goal is for all employees to pay the full employee share of the pension cost.
Second lower tier of benefits for new hires	<p>The City is negotiating with employee groups for reduced benefits for future hires.</p> <p>The League of California Cities is undertaking a pension reform analysis with an eye towards adoption of strategies statewide. A broad approach will assist the City in remaining competitive to attract and retain employees.</p>
Modify or reduce health benefits; For example: Higher deductible or co-pay; reduce Council Members health benefits to employees' plan; cover costs for employee only or employee + one instead of family coverage; reduce support to a fixed dollar amount rather than Kaiser family rate; provide "cafeteria plan" for more individual choice in selecting changes/reductions.	The City contracts with PERS for health benefits. On the one hand, the size of PERS is a competitive advantage for rates; on the other hand, there are no local options for different deductibles/co-pays. The cost savings for reducing Council health benefits to employee plan would currently be about \$2,500/year. Options for cafeteria plans and reduced health benefits coverage can be considered in collective bargaining with employee groups.

Overtime & Retirement

Ideas	Comments
Use Flex-Time approach rather than overtime pay	Can be accomplished for shifts that do not need backfilling (typically non-public safety), as long as Fair Labor Standards are followed
Cut unnecessary overtime	Police Dept. has reduced overtime over past few years Fire overtime under review.
Offer early retirement incentives; hire back some retirees on contract to reduce costs	Early retirement incentive employed for City Clerk position. Other retirements are anticipated that could result in a contract back for services at a lower cost, which by PERS rules cannot exceed 980 hours/year
Combine positions upon retirements	It is the City's practice to evaluate positions when they become vacant. For example, City Clerk duties and responsibilities are being assigned to other persons while position is held vacant.

Ideas	Comments
<u>Operate City services differently</u>	
Expand work hours and cut days by one (i.e. 4/10) to save energy costs	Potential energy cost savings are unknown.
Reduce service/counter hours (close Fridays?)	<p>Reduced service/counter hours will occur for most areas if there are furlough days or other reduction in work hours.</p> <p>The City Manager is exploring reducing service/counter hours in City Hall to reflect reduction in staffing and to provide focused time to complete work (e.g. permit reviews, agenda packets, accounts receivable, etc.)</p>
Close down between holidays – December – January 3 days	Many cities close down for a few to several days at the end of the year, such as between Christmas and New Year's. This is a potential furlough time if there is a reduced work year.
Increase volunteers – for clerical, maintenance, or other routine tasks; consider volunteer firefighters	<p>Volunteers who are reliable, able to perform certain tasks well and with little supervision are a great find. For example, many volunteers help the City at the Senior Center, special events, tree plantings, parks/landscape maintenance, passports, police reserves, and some other tasks. However, the time it takes to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers can sometimes exceed the amount and value of work produced. There can be problems when volunteers fail to appear or to perform well.</p> <p>As a cost-saving measure, the City did not fill the volunteer coordinator position two years ago. Volunteer opportunities and placements are generally handled by each department.</p> <p>City Committee members are a growing source of volunteers for research, event coordination, document drafting, and publicity.</p> <p>In 2011-12 the City plans to continue and possibly expand parks/landscaping maintenance work parties; explore the</p>

Ideas	Comments
	potential for volunteers in the Fire Dept.; and seek volunteer(s) with writing skills to draft proclamations and routine documents for the City Manager/Council/Clerks offices.
Look at restructuring public works and information technology for efficiency	Staff is exploring potential for shared services in these two areas with the Albany Unified School District.
When vehicles are replaced, move toward smaller, more energy efficient vehicles	The City has an Environmentally Preferential Purchasing Policy that applies to vehicle replacement. Options are limited for fire engines, ambulances, patrol vehicles, and certain public works vehicles. There are few other vehicles in the City's fleet, and the City extends their useful life as much as possible
Decrease GIS where not required	GIS is required for state and federal wastewater reporting. Other uses are optional, and can be evaluated on the basis of their cost benefit compared with manual mapping and data retrieval
Reduce water usage = reducing costs to EBMUD	<p>Staff recommends reducing or eliminating irrigation on the Ohlone Greenway when the BART retrofit work in Albany is within range of getting underway</p> <p>The City continues to lobby EBMUD to extend a recycled water line to the Ohlone Greenway</p>
Eliminate or reduce number of vehicles/fleet/cell phones	The City is evaluating cell phone use, and is reducing the fleet by one vehicle.

Ideas	Comments
<u>Operate City services differently, con't</u>	
Reduce use of rental property (e.g. Maintenance Center)	The City is purchasing property on Pierce Street on which to build and own a Maintenance Center, which is the only property currently leased by the City.
Vehicles & Equipment – sell and share	From time to time the City sells its old vehicles and equipment. The City will review its vehicle and equipment list to evaluate whether any should be sold.
Combine Police & Fire into one department	The City studied the concept of combining the positions of Police Chief and Fire Chief, and found that a shared Fire Chief with another agency was preferable at the present time.
Use staff rather than consultants or contractors as much as possible; For example: try to be efficient/low cost with the General Plan update	<p>Cities with a small number of staff often have a greater number of consultants and/or contractors because staff often does not have the time and/or the expertise for a certain project.</p> <p>The City Manager will recommend that the General Plan update be prepared with the least amount of outside consultants as possible; this will mean the City being prudent and focused with the scope of work.</p>
Training/Education for employees to increase efficiency.	Training is often a line item that cities cut in lean budget times, and Albany is no exception. For employees to continually learn best practices in working faster and better means investing in training and education. The City Manager recommends that the City look to reinstate training budgets as soon as possible so that employees can keep developing skills, knowledge and abilities to best serve the public.

Ideas	Comments
<u>Modify/Reduce City Services, Projects, Policies and Subsidies</u>	
Reduce KABL cable services	<p>KABL staff currently video record and broadcast the twice/month meetings of the City Council, School Board, and Planning & Zoning Commission, and the once/month meetings of the Waterfront Committee (WFC).</p> <p>City staff working on KABL have begun merging KABL and website content in an effort to expand and improve the City's communications reach.</p>
Change to on-site childcare at schools	The cost of the childcare building is minimal. On-site care would still require staff and supplies.
Keep community engagement with CERT training, and seek reimbursement for CERT training staff time and expenses from Alameda County	Police and Fire are pursuing reimbursement and grants for CERT training and other disaster preparedness efforts by the community engagement specialist
Decrease community events and/or subsidies for community events (e.g. Solano Stroll – Fire, Police, Maintenance)	<p>For many years, City support for the Solano Stroll has included a \$5,000 contribution, the waiver of permit fees (2010: \$131), and provision of services which in 2010 included approximately \$1,900 in fee waivers for paramedic services, \$7,500 for police overtime, and \$7,000 for maintenance services (\$6,000) and supplies (\$1,000) for a total support value of \$21,531.</p> <p>There was no City cost for 2010's Dinner with Albany (which is not scheduled again until 2012). The Fourth of July event is being scaled back slightly to reduce costs. Music in the Park is funded primarily through a grant from Target. There was a minor subsidy for the Arts & Green Festival in 2011, and the inaugural Film Festival is being funded through entry fees and sponsorships.</p>

	Comments
Decrease nice but not necessary	The City Council could conduct a process to prioritize services on a scale of necessary to nice; this would require staff time and possibly a facilitator/consultant. It would provide a basis for future funding priorities, which is especially useful for times of revenue shortfalls.
Suspend work on the Climate Action Plan	The City has one Environmental Specialist who works on a variety of City policies, programs, and projects of which the Climate Action Plan is one part. She has been able to get grant funds for interns and other support. Per the City Council referral, the Sustainability Committee is developing recommendations for voters to consider a special tax for Climate Action plan implementation.
Place a moratorium on new policy issues	New policy initiatives should be evaluated against the available staff and advisory bodies' time, focus, and other resources, so that the vision, mission, and goals of the City Council get achieved.
Stronger prioritization of projects	Same as above.
Use Roundup for weed control to reduce labor time/costs	This runs contrary to the City's Integrated Pest Management ordinance and policies, and would require the City Council to make ordinance and policy changes. One of the goals of the ordinance and policy is to use plant material and methods to reduce the appearance of weeds; that approach does not work in concrete sidewalks, medians, and other hardscape areas where weeds reappear after being cut back; the weed whacking compromises the condition of concrete and asphalt. The City spends a roughly estimated 200-300 staff hours/year on this weed removal.

Ideas	Comments
<u>Technology</u>	
Tailor services to on-line transactions; do more on-line business forms and services	The City is in the process of developing a Technology Master Plan to prioritize recommendations for technology upgrades; this includes more on-line transactions. The Recreation Department is changing to a no-fee on-line registration program.
Computerize permit system to share all information at once; use automated internet permitting to speed up the processing and earn more fees for the City.	Worth exploring.
Look for other operations' computerization to increase efficiency/services.	Worth exploring.
Renew business licenses on-line (at least for renewals with no changes)	Worth exploring
Go paperless with everything (receipts, etc.)	Worth exploring.

Increase Revenues

Ideas	Comments
<u>Economic Development:</u>	
Work to attract more business to Albany; be more active in promoting and retaining businesses to stay; hire someone dedicated to economic development; encourage Shop/eat locally (incentives/advertising); Seek these particular businesses: In & Out Burger; Dollar Store; IHOP; Denny’s; Walmart; allow destination stores like Target; bring people from outside Albany to spend \$\$ here; attract more diverse retail opportunities for higher-end market; bring revenue generating business rather than more nail salons.	The City is working with the Chamber and Solano Avenue Association to brand and market Albany as a destination retail, services and business investment location; The City has allocated part-time staff and consultant assistance; more could be done with additional resources
Develop waterfront area to increase revenue including the Bulb (i.e. Pt. Richmond, Emeryville); Hotel on Waterfront (hotel tax) Health Club – Brewery – Bike Rental – Bird/Wildlife Observation Point – Boat Dock – Convention Center Develop the Albany Bulb and sell it; allow slot machines at Golden Gate Fields; allow construction on unused parking lot at golden gate fields but only if waterfront improvements included.	The Voices to Vision waterfront planning completed in 2010 provides guidelines for what the Albany community wants on the waterfront
Seek development as opposed to open space	These are policy choices of the community; Voices to Vision planning provides guidelines on balance between development and open space on the waterfront.
Encourage development in the redevelopment areas (Eastshore, Cleveland)	Staff is working with property owners, realtors, and area economic development organizations; development in general is experiencing a “pause” due to economy
Relax parking requirements for commercial development if it spurs construction	The Planning & Zoning Commission could consider ways to reduce or streamline parking requirements

Ideas	Comments
Streamline process for independent business; expedite major projects like Safeway and Whole Foods; Find ways to expedite major revenue improvements	The Planning & Zoning Commission could consider different approaches.
<u>Fees/Fines:</u>	
Alarms: Charge fees for false burglar alarms and other alarms; charge alarm registration fees	Worth considering
Pay for parking: Install parking meters in commercial areas and on Buchanan at waterfront; Explore cost of installing parking fee boxes; put parking permit programs in residential neighborhoods; charge for residential on-street parking "Price For Parking) 2 car free – 2 cars you pay; establish and charge for preferential parking; Business owner permits for use of parking spaces	Traffic & Safety Commission is looking into parking permit programs; As for parking meters, the Traffic & Safety Commission received a presentation that gave some pause as to whether they are the revenue generators they appear to be; research and analysis for Albany locations would be needed. As advances in paying parking meters electronically evolves – making it more convenient - distaste for parking meters in business areas could diminish. Staff recommends trying paid parking with a permit/fee program for Buchanan Street at the waterfront before parking meters for the commercial district
Charge fines for storm water runoff	Worth exploring
Increase after-school program fee	Underway
Charge a sewer inspection fee	A fee is included in the building permit

Ideas	Comments
Re-evaluate all fees and raise where possible; Conduct a fine/permit fee study; Community Development/Master fees – 10-15% increase; Add 10% administrative fee on building & planning permits	Master Fee Schedule sets rates for fees, which need to reflect cost of service. Staff reviews annually; a study by a consulting firm could lead to increasing or decreasing rates
Increase garbage/cable franchise fees	City has the opportunity to do so in the next garbage franchise agreement City does not have the authority to increase cable franchise fees.
Increase park use fees	Just increased in July 2010. Not a significant revenue generator
Increase Teen Center fees	Staff is proposing reformatting the Teen Center services to enrichment programming
Charge for smoke detector installation by Fire Department for able-bodied persons	Worth exploring
Temporarily suspend permit subsidies (Solar power, seismic retrofit)	Subsidies were created to encourage these types of improvements; Council could remove subsidies for a period of time or permanently
Increase parking fines	Parking fines are set in the Master Fee Schedule and may be increased during the annual updates.
Charge “non-residents” fees	City currently charges a \$10 non-resident fee for recreation programs and services. Staff will propose raising it to \$12 in 2011-12 Master Fee Schedule. Have to consider what the market will bear since the recreation services are optional.

Ideas	Comments
Dog Walking Licenses; Charge for dog owners to use dog parks	The City could require a business license for professional dog walkers; The City does not have a designated dog park.
Red light cameras	The Police Dept. has previously explored this idea, conducted a review of accident data, and surveyed red light violations at intersections with the greatest number of collisions. A pilot project was deferred because the intersection was slated for reconfiguration. In the meantime, there is growing interest at the state capitol to regulate or prohibit this equipment.
Expand street sweeping coverage areas	Street sweeping compliance is currently under review for a report to City Council on potential expansion of no-parking enforcement, with an evaluation of cost/benefit
Increase facility capital replacement fees (rentals)	In the 2011-12 Master Fee Schedule, staff will recommend increasing the fee by \$2.
Bill insurance companies for fire services	This is already being done.
Evaluate tow, recreational vehicle parking & other fees; increase fines; charge a vacation watch fee; establish a vehicle impound fee program	Fees for services generally must reflect the cost of providing the service
Break even or make money on events/programs (charge instead of free)	Currently our concerts in the park are subsidized with a grant from Target. Dinner with Albany was subsidized by sponsors and the rental of tables, July 4 is partially covered by the wrist bands purchased for the rides and jump houses, the Arts and Green Festival is also subsidized by sponsors.

Ideas	Comments
"Technology fees" for building permit review – streamline process – but ONLY if permits processed in reasonable time as a result.	Worth pursuing
Charge other City APAL classes	The Albany Police Activities League is a separate entity (non-profit corporation) from the City of Albany.
<u>Sales of services/property use</u>	
Bill public for consultations (e.g. building, planning, engineering)	Possibility for a trial period
Raise fees to rent City facilities	Fees were raised in 2010-12 for uses other than Albany non-profit organizations. City should not charge more than market can bear since this is an optional service
Rent the childcare facility	City has started to rent childcare building, and Teen Center building, for birthday parties
Rent space on city property for cell towers	Would need to comply with City wireless facilities ordinance and not interfere with city operational needs.
Sell naming rights for city properties	This is usually associated with capital project improvements, but worth exploring; P&Z has been tasked with developing a naming policy. Council could consider selling temporary or permanent naming rights (ala Oracle Coliseum)
Recreation Center sponsorships/fields (advertising for fees); Advertising "underwriting" on KABL and City website	Staff recommends experimenting with sponsorships and/or advertising on KABL, the Recreation Activity Guide, and fields, with Council approval of this approach

Ideas	Comments
Teen Center – Charge for late pickups and late childcare	Done
Start an AUSD in-service day baby-sitting service	Done
Recreation – create new classes and market facility rentals more	Ongoing
UC Village – Charge for fire services	Not legally feasible at this time
Provide State Mutual aid resources	City does participate in mutual aid opportunities, which are reimbursed by the State
Voluntary subscriber program for ambulance (pay flat fee and don't get charged if use it)	Would have to be evaluated in the context of local EMS tax measures
Sell City services to other cities/agencies	Worth considering
Sell police dispatch services (e.g. Kensington)	Worth considering
Offer Notary services for a fee	Worth considering
Build parking lot(s)/garages	Could be feasible if public is willing to pay for parking in an amount that would repay cost to construct, maintain, and operate, and a suitable property is identified
Charge for speed/volume surveys for speed treatments; Charge for parking permit signs, installation, surveys, etc.	These services, materials, and supplies are currently done for free at the request of neighborhoods seeking signs or other speed treatments; the City could require neighborhoods to contribute to the cost as an indication of the block's desire for a change and to offset City costs
Offer finger printing services and charge for it	Police Department is looking into experimenting with this on a trial basis, starting with Albany residents only, by

Ideas	Comments
	appointment only, and subject to staff availability
Mayor could officiate weddings for a charge.	City could explore this idea for the Council Chamber or Community Center, depending on interest and availability of Mayor
Sell billboard space	City could explore allowing a billboard (such as an electronic/video billboard) on City property
<u>Taxes:</u>	
Increase sales tax	Majority approval of voters required to use revenues for general purposes. City can increase sales tax up to ½ cent (could be a smaller increment). Revenues would fluctuate with the amount of retail sales in Albany. Current estimates are that each ¼ cent could generate about \$400,000/year
Increase property transfer tax	Majority approval of voters required to use revenues for general purposes. City currently charges \$11.50 per \$1,000 of sales/purchase price, which in 2009-10 generated \$1,063,000 in revenue.
Increase hotel tax now for future use	Rate is currently 10%, although there are no hotels in Albany. Worth considering.
Increase utility user tax on telephone use	2/3 voter approval needed. Tax was lowered from 7% to 6.5% in 2010. In 2009-10, City received about \$700,000 in telephone user tax.
Increase business license tax	Majority voter approval required. Basic business license rate is \$242, plus \$50/employee, and adjusts annually with the

Ideas	Comments
	Consumer Price Index.
<u>Other</u>	
Pursue more grants; Have grant writer on percentage contract	City is active and successful in acquiring grants for transportation, climate action, creek restoration, senior services, Music in the Park, and other projects and programs. Staff time and matching funds are typically required. Most grant writers require payment whether or not grant is received.
Use Credit Card plan to receive cash back (i.e. "vanity" credit card)	Worth considering
Install donation bin for park use	Could be worth considering if funds were designated for a desirable cause and theft/vandalism issues didn't outweigh benefit
Pay pal accounts on-line	Worth considering
Fund Raising	Could be worth considering if funds were designated for a desirable cause and the cost to fund raise did not exceed funds received; would need additional staff, consultant, and/or effective volunteers

Other Ideas from April 19, 2011 Community Conversation

Other ideas to consider as Albany plans its future

- How do we make the city business friendly?
- Develop residential over commercial properties (give incentives).
- State Bill 375 will increase Albany's housing units to 2,000 and Albany needs to think long range (i.e. school, police, fire).
- Establish a citizen budget task force
- Study pros & cons of height limit along San Pablo Ave
- More cell towers that give residents better cell service and also more fees for City
- Increase transparency & accountability of all budgeting & negotiations
- Define deficit & make up difference by splitting expenses & raising taxes 50/50
- Hire someone to address economic development.
- Know revenue services/sources.
- Potential tax profile 1-2 years out.
- Prioritize importance of services.
- Salaries need to reflect the reality of not having enough money for high salaries.
- New revenue – sharing services
- Keep collaborating and collaborate more with Albany school district, coordinating complementary services – child care, adult education, community engagement, taxation.
- If the service is not cost effective it may have to be discontinued until stronger budget periods.

What is important to consider about local control? What criteria might Albany use in selecting which services to contract, if any, and with which agencies, organizations, etc.?

- Don't contract out services that generate revenue & are cost neutral.
- Commitment level.
- Quality of service.
- Need to be selective with contract service providers.
- Want to be able to re-gain local control when able to.
- Think about what services need to be geographically situated here. Ex. It could be elsewhere.
- Oversight
- This is not a path we want to start down – hard to regain control.
- Do standards of pay/benefits measure up with Albany's own values?
- Do you lose some kind of loyalty/commitments when you contract/not permanent?
- Quality! Be selective!
- Check if contracted services (i.e. animal control) can be done by another agency cheaper?
- What services possible to contract?
- Criteria, how to control costs?
- What can we share with school district? (i.e. technical, IT, facilities, maintenance)
- Utilize more contract workers instead of all staff hires with full pension and benefits. Contract workers do just as good a job with lower overall costs. Pay more flat fees instead of overtime fees.
- Utilize sharing service with El Cerrito, Berkeley, etc. to compensate for vacations, sick days, etc.
- Local control is very important!
- Share personnel and services with other cities.
- Contract services that require expertise (time response/affect) i.e paramedic.
- Control things that don't generate \$
- Purchasing together, shared resources.
- Maximize our services & potentially contract those services with outsiders to generate \$