

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

Agenda Date: December 19, 2011  
Reviewed by: BP

**SUBJECT:** Direction to the Sustainability Committee to prioritize implementing the “Green Albany” Plan identified in the Climate Action Plan, to evaluate potential sites for community gardens and urban agricultural activities within the City, including the Gill Tract.

**REPORT BY:** Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council provide direction to the City’s Sustainability Committee to prioritize implementing the “Green Albany” Plan identified in the Climate Action Plan, including a public planning process that involves interested parties, to evaluate potential growing sites within the City, including the Gill Tract, for additional community gardens and urban agricultural activities, with an initial report back to Council in two to four months.

**BACKGROUND**

In April 2010 the City Council adopted the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) which includes goals for urban greening and community gardens. Further, the CAP Implementation Plan adopted by City Council in July 2010 identifies the City’s Sustainability Committee to serve as a “CAP Implementation Task Force”.

The CAP includes development of a “Green Albany” Plan, intended to identify locations within the City to conduct urban greening, and establish local community gardens to accomplish the objectives of Green Infrastructure (GI), and Food and Agriculture (FA). Two specific measures within the CAP discuss the “Green Albany” Plan:

- Measure GI 1.1 A: Prepare a Green Albany Plan to evaluate all potential areas (e.g. parks, streets, rights-of-way, parking lots , and rooftops) for carbon sequestration, The City will prepare a Green Albany Plan to evaluate all potential “growing areas”, including parks, streets, rights-of-way, parking lots, and rooftops, for carbon sequestration.
- Measure FA-1.2 Facilitate and promote Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) organizations and services. Participating in Community Supported Agriculture organizations (CSAs) allows residents to support agriculture in the regional economy and contributes to a low carbon diet by providing seasonal foods with minimal processing and packaging. The City will maintain a list of regional CSAs

on its webpage with links and contact information to help interested residents to get involved.

- Measure FA 3.1: Establish a local community garden program to increase local food security and provide local recreation amenities. During preparation of the Green Albany Plan, the City will identify potential sites for additional community gardens and community orchards within Albany. Site evaluation will focus on lands owned by the City, School District, and State and Federal agencies and institutions. The City will work with willing agencies, community groups and individuals to develop and maintain community gardens. The Ohlone Greenway is a prime location to establish a community orchard. The City will work with BART to establish compatible fruit trees along the Greenway and will create outreach programs and events to facilitate public use of this resource. The Green Albany Plan will evaluate other locations for potential community orchards.

## **DISCUSSION**

Recent Occupy activities at the University of California Gill Tract research facility have led to increased dialogue regarding availability of land for local community gardens and urban agriculture. On several occasions during the past several weeks, the Dean of the College of Natural Resources has expressed support for the establishment of a partnership to create an urban agriculture component at the Gill Tract. The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the City Council an opportunity to provide direction on initiating a discussion with interested citizens and local non-profit institutions and schools.

It is recommended that the City's Sustainability Committee serve as the City's lead on its planning process, given the Committee's role in CAP implementation and the Committee's purview of environmental sustainability. As a part of the effort, the Sustainability Committee could collaborate with other City commissions and committees including the Parks and Recreation Commission as well as the Albany Unified School District. It is envisioned that the planning process would involve substantive and respectful community discussion on the following components:

- Engage with UC Berkeley representatives to understand opportunities and parameters associated with an urban agriculture component at the Gill Tract;
- Inventory, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding existing and potential sites for community gardens and urban agriculture, education/ interpretive centers, outreach and research;
- Identify and engage with interested parties throughout the planning process; and
- Coordinate with the City's Parks and Recreation Commission as needed on matters related to parks and open space throughout the planning process
- Collaborate with AUSD on developing education components in community gardens and urban agricultural activities.

An initial status report to Council would be scheduled two to four months.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT**

As identified within the City's CAP, identification of urban greening opportunities can help achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions while also achieving a number of co-benefits including local and regional partnerships, community building, and environmental education.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Staff time would be required to support the planning process. Costs associated with the implementation of additional community gardens can be included as part of the Green Albany Plan. It is envisioned that partnerships and/or grants would be sought to fund the establishment of additional garden sites.

## **Attachments**

1. City of Albany Climate Action Plan (excerpts)