

Statement from Albany Mayor Farid Javandel and Vice Mayor Marge Atkinson on the  
UC Village/San Pablo Avenue Project

After Albany spent more than four years reviewing, revising, and redesigning, and the San Pablo Avenue senior housing & grocery store/retail plan, the City Council approved rezoning the site to allow this long-awaited project to move forward. Some people are now asking “What’s in it for Albany?” and gathering signatures to put the project before voters.

Before signing such a petition, let’s pause to remember the thousands of hours that Albany residents put into making the best project possible for the community. And give some thought to the unbudgeted \$60,000 to \$80,000 that a referendum election would cost Albany from its General Fund.

For the Albany residents on the waiting list for Albany’s only senior housing, this brings the hope that they can stay in their community when they can no longer stay in their homes. Albany families can be close to their parents who need assisted living services.

For neighborhoods without a grocery store in walking distance, it means close access to fresh food and goods. A grocery store like Whole Foods provides opportunities for local entrepreneurs to sell their products.

For Albany homeowners and other taxpayers, it means tax-exempt property is put on the tax rolls, estimated to bring more than \$450,000 in gross annual revenue to the tax base, and \$200,000 per year net after the cost of added services.

For the School District, it means not building tax-exempt housing for UC students with children on this University property to add to the burden of the school system, but instead providing a tax base for bond measures, parcel taxes, and development impact fees. If the current proposal is rejected, UC could simply build more student housing without zoning changes or other approvals from the City, thus increasing the burden on the School District and adding service costs to the City without offsetting revenues.

The project also means helping support the businesses on the south end of San Pablo Avenue, among others, with revitalization of this former World War II barracks area. When completed, there will be 320 full-time new, on-going jobs created – which is critical in this economy.

For Little League, it means assurance – at last – that they will have field space. For construction workers out of work, it means a job – paid at prevailing wage. And University Village students and their families will receive much-needed rent subsidies from project revenues.

It means Albany residents continuing to work together to further improve the project as it goes through its next approval phases. Let’s move forward to bring senior housing, groceries, jobs, city revenue and other benefits to Albany as planned.

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