

Interviews conducted by Dr. Frank Benest  
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## **Summary of Interviews with Albany Council Members**

### **1. From your perspective, what are one or two things that are unique about the Albany community?**

Small town character with good amenities and services (5)  
Wonderful diversity--young and old; long-time residents and new immigrants;  
multi-ethnic groups (3)  
Neighbors looking out for each other (2)  
Great schools (2)  
Unique shoreline

### **2. What is one opportunity for the City on which the City Council and staff should focus?**

UC Village Project (2)  
Pierce Street Park  
Climate action  
Regional effort to aggregate energy  
Cell phone ordinance and possible cell sites to improve cell phone coverage  
Relooking at parking restrictions and promoting mixed use development

### **3. What is one challenge for the City on which the City Council and staff should focus?**

Affordable housing (3)  
\*Locating affordable housing near transportation  
\*Promoting compact density  
\*Minimizing parking restrictions  
\*Promoting walkability  
\*Supporting climate protection  
Using Gill Tract for community purposes  
Homeless encampments at "Bulb"  
Climate change  
Ensuring that vocal minority does not block desires of majority

### **4. What is one potential change for the better that we as a City can help achieve?**

Pierce Street Park opportunity (2)  
Affordable housing  
Maintaining services

Albany Hill  
Moving Maintenance Center and lowering city costs  
Completing and implementing Transportation Plan  
Climate Action Plan  
Focusing on West Side (underserved area)

**5. What is one potential change for the worse that we as a City can help minimize or mitigate?**

Pricing out families from living in Albany (due to high housing costs)  
Further deterioration of economy  
Preventing inordinate increases in labor costs  
Avoiding regionalization of services  
Potential earthquake damage to unreinforced homes and businesses  
Homeless encampments  
Feral turkeys  
Minimizing traffic and parking problems in neighborhoods

**6. What are one or two values that you personally use to make difficult choices regarding all our City priorities?**

Best interests of City—What is in long-run best interest of City? (2)  
Best value for City—Is City getting its money's worth from proposal? Is this proposal truly worth our investment? (2)  
Fairness—Is proposal fair to most stake-holders? Have we tried to respond to all interests? (2)  
Respect—Have we listened to and respected all views and perspectives? (2)  
Practicality—What is practical, especially given our resources? (2)  
Problem-solving—Have we tried to address the problems and concerns raised?

**7. Given our priorities, what can the City let go of or stop doing?**

Invest more time and energy in shared services, positions and facilities (2)  
Continue to reorganize and streamline city operation to minimize costs (2)  
Use technology to free up resources and eliminate procedural steps (2)  
Reduce number of citizen committees  
Focus on basic services and do our best to maintain discretionary programs  
Cautious planning of Pierce Street Park

**8. As a Council member, what is one goal that you would like to achieve partnering with the rest of the Council and the staff?**

Move forward on UC Village Project (2)  
Promote affordable housing  
Upgrade Solano Avenue and improve traffic safety

- Relieve parking restrictions
- Streamline development process
- Support Safeway renovation
- Address homeless encampments
- Take advantage of real estate opportunities (Cleveland Avenue, Piece Street, Albany Hill)

**9. Five years after leaving the Council, what would you like community members and staff to say about your legacy?**

- Left legacy of recreation and sports opportunities for children and youth
- Promoted climate protection
- Improved local and regional environment
- Promoted "Voices to Vision"
- Helped develop better relations with the School District
- Listened to different factions and brought people together for overall community good
- Demonstrated ability to make tough choices and decisions in the face of different perspectives and controversy

**10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?**

- We have very good and dedicated staff (2)
- Need to engage young people and young families, newer immigrants, and ethnic minorities into civic process