

CHAPTER

6

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

California's Government Code requires every city and county to include an open space element in their general plan. The State defines open space as including farms, forests, ranches, parks, state and federal lands, wetlands, cemeteries, quarries, and similar uses with an open or undeveloped character. The purpose of the open space element is to guide the long-term preservation of such areas. In Albany, the focus of the element is on parkland, which is the primary form of open space in the city.

Parks and open spaces are vital to the quality of life in Albany. They provide space for recreation, conservation, and contemplation. They enhance the aesthetic quality of the city, create a link to local history, and provide a connection to nature. Collectively, Albany's open spaces shape the city's character and help create its sense of place. Open space serves both to connect Albany to the cities around it and to define the city as a distinct place in the East Bay.

Adoption of this Element comes at an important moment in Albany's history. The City is on the cusp of transforming its waterfront into a new park that is larger than all other City parks combined. The waterfront park will expand the range of recreational experiences available to Albany residents while ensuring the long-term conservation of open space along the San Francisco Bay shoreline.



Photo: Doug Davidson

Albany Hill Park

At the same time, Albany is planning for the improvement of its traditional local park system. This system includes community and neighborhood parks, natural resource areas such as Albany Hill, and linear features such as the Ohlone Greenway. Continued investment in public parks is necessary to keep pace with the demand for recreational services and open space as population and employment grow.

Plans for the new waterfront park are discussed in the Waterfront Element of the General Plan. The focus of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element is on City parks and recreational services. The Element also addresses the role of other recreational service providers, including the Albany Unified School District, the University of California, and the private and non-profit sectors. The City has adopted a separate Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to provide more detailed and programmatic recommendations on these subjects.

The first part of this chapter provides background information on parks, recreation, and open space in Albany. The second part includes goals, policies, and actions guiding the use of these resources. Key topics include:

- Protecting open space and recognizing its value to the city
- Expanding the local park system to meet increasing demand
- Managing and maintaining existing parkland to respond to community needs and emerging trends
- Adapting recreational programming to meet the needs of different user groups
- Using non-City facilities to supplement City park and recreation facilities
- Improving the local trail system, particularly for recreational walking and cycling.

B. OPEN SPACE

State law requires the General Plan to identify and analyze four types of open space. These are listed below:

- **Open Space for Recreation.** This category includes the City's park system, as well as school yards and athletic fields used for recreation. The definition also includes areas of outstanding scenic, historical, and cultural value.
- **Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources.** This category includes mudflats and wetlands along the Albany shoreline, wooded areas on the slopes of Albany Hill, and conservation areas along the city's creeks. These resources are addressed in the Conservation and Sustainability Element, and in the Waterfront Element.
- **Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources.** This includes urban agriculture on the Gill Tract and other community gardens in the city.

- **Open Space for Public Health and Safety.** This includes areas where development could pose a threat to public safety due to earthquakes, landslides, flooding, wildfire and similar risks. These areas are addressed in the Environmental Hazards Element. Most areas with natural hazards are located on public land but a few are in private ownership.

In addition to the open spaces described above, most residential properties in Albany include front yards, back yards, and side yards. Collectively, these spaces create a sense of spaciousness, provide access to sunlight, and support habitat for birds and other wildlife. Landscaped roadway medians, rights-of-way, and areas around public buildings also are part of the open space network. Streets themselves provide another form of open space and present opportunities for greening, stormwater management, community gatherings, and certain forms of active and passive recreation. Open spaces also may include rooftop gardens, urban plazas, schoolyards, courtyards, and other outdoor activity areas.



Eastside Permaculture Garden in Memorial Park

Open space may be broadly classified as being “active” or “passive.” Active open space includes acreage that has been intentionally improved for recreational activities, including tennis courts, soccer fields, softball fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, un-programmed lawn space, and similar areas. It also includes schoolyards and school athletic fields. Passive open space has a more natural quality and often is managed to conserve plant and animal habitat. Such areas may provide only limited access for park users via trails, viewing areas, interpretive signs, and similar low-impact facilities.

In 2015, Albany had 43 acres of active open space and 91 acres of passive open space. Of the 43 acres of active open space, about half is associated with City parks and half is associated with public schools and University Village facilities. The passive open space is located in two areas: the waterfront and Albany Hill.

In addition to the public open spaces described above, there are a number of conservation easements. Each of the three high density residential developments along Pierce Street (Gateview, Bridgewater, Bayside Commons) is located on a parcel that extends up the slopes of Albany Hill. The upper portion of each parcel is privately owned but is maintained as permanent hillside open space. In the event the privately owned 11-acre parcel to the south of Gateview is developed, the upper slopes of this parcel would be similarly protected.

C. LOCAL PARK SYSTEM

Overview

Table 6-1 lists public open space and parkland in the City of Albany. These areas are mapped in Figure 6-1. The table excludes private open space, including conservation easements, creek protection areas, and the commercial recreation lands at Golden Gate Fields. It also excludes submerged lands and tidal areas along the shoreline. The Table is organized with sub-headings for active and passive open space.

Each park in Table 6-1 is further described using a classification system that identifies the function of the park and the types of recreational experiences it provides. Applying a classification system helps ensure that parks are used and maintained properly. Park classification can help reduce conflicts between user groups, avoid compatibility issues with neighbors, and determine the types of activities that will be permitted in a given space.

Albany Park and Open Space Fast Facts

43 acres of active open space

91 acres of passive open space

134 total open space acres

6 ball fields

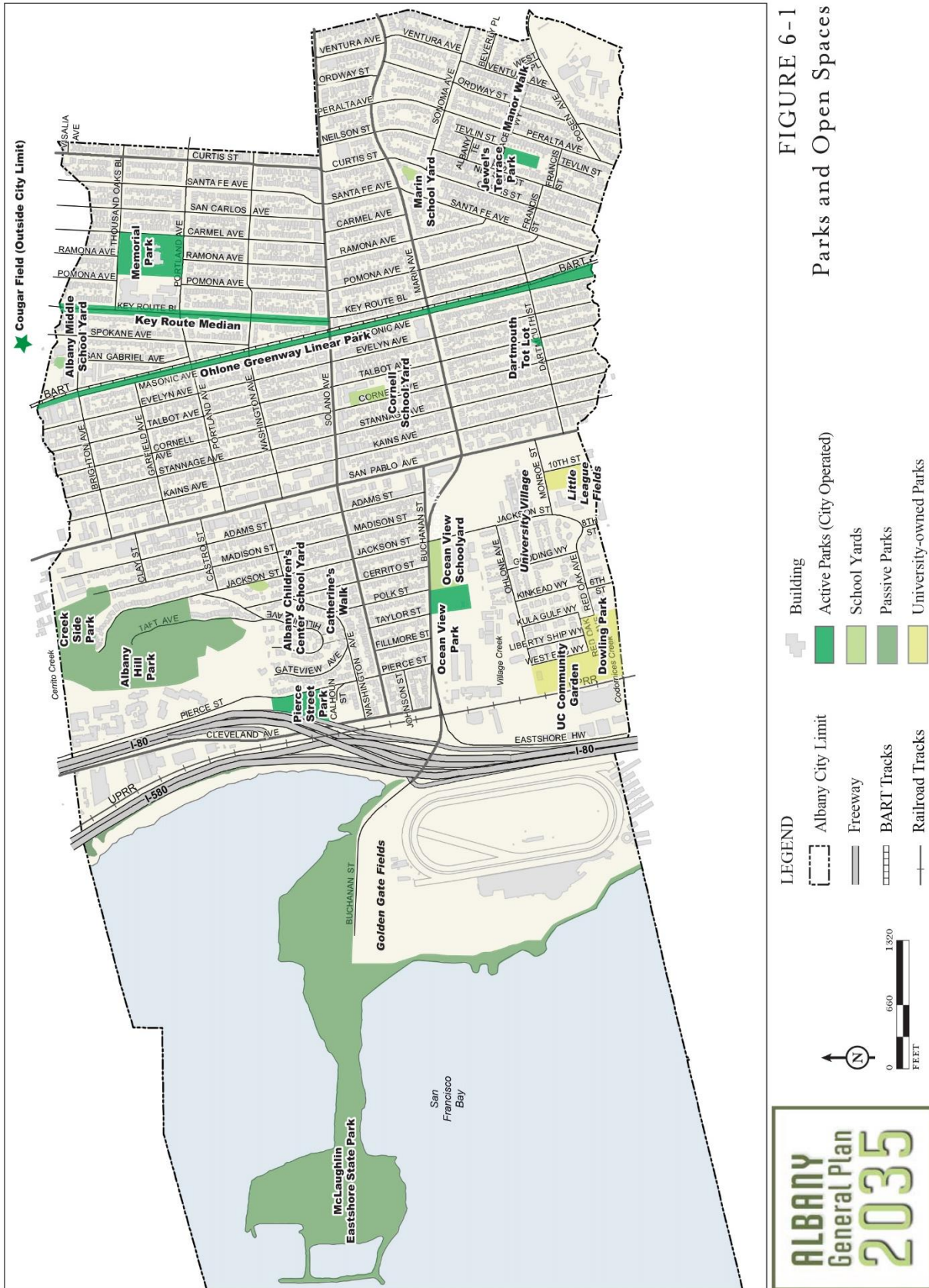
4 soccer fields

1 football field

8 tennis courts

7 outdoor basketball courts

Source: 2004 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. Includes UC Village, AUSD, and EBRPD facilities.



SOURCE: CITY OF ALBANY, 2/13/15.
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Table 6-1: Albany Park Inventory

Park Name	Type	Acreage	Comments
EXISTING ACTIVE PARK AREAS			
Dartmouth Tot Lot	Mini-Park	.07	Children's playground
Ocean View	Neighborhood	3.61	Contains lighted softball field, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, open play area, picnic area, parking, trails
Jewel's Terrace	Neighborhood	1.32	Contains 2 tennis courts, basketball court, picnic area, playground, restroom, pathway
Memorial	Community	6.75	Contains baseball field, soccer field, grassy area, children's playground, picnic area, restrooms, 4 tennis courts, fenced dog play area, Veterans Memorial Building, community garden, child care
Ohlone Greenway	Linear	8.89	Green space beneath elevated BART tracks with multi-use linear trail, lawns, benches, landscaping
Catherine's Walk	Linear	.02	Pathway and stairs
Manor Walk	Linear	.11	Mid-block pathway
Community Center	Special Use	1.04	Includes community center building and library, with extensive recreational programming
Senior Center	Special Use	0.25	Includes senior center building and adjacent house
Total Active City Park Areas		22.06	
OTHER EXISTING ACTIVE OPEN SPACE AREAS			
Schoolyards and School Athletic Fields	Schools	7.19	Includes asphalt play areas at Marin, Cornell, Vista, Ocean View, Albany Middle, and Albany High, and field at Ocean View. School buildings and landscaped/utility areas have been subtracted out.
Cougar Field	Schools	4.20	Located in El Cerrito, but serves AMS and AHS
University Village Community Garden	University	3.00	University property
UCV Playground	University	0.44	University property
Fielding Fields	University	4.10	University property
Little League Fields	University	1.70	University property
Total Other Active Open Spaces		20.63	
Year 2015 Total Active Open Space		42.69	
PLANNED NEW OR IMPROVED OPEN SPACES			
Key Route Median	Linear	1.40	Landscaped median. Not a park at this time, but could be improved through addition of trails, seating areas, etc.
Pierce Street Park	Neighborhood	4.10	Former I-80 right-of-way, planned for improvement
Total Planned Open Space Areas		5.50	
Year 2035 Total Active Open Space		48.19	

Table PROS-1, continued

Park Name	Type	Acreage	Comments
PASSIVE OPEN SPACE/ CONSERVATION AREAS			
Albany Hill	Conservation	12.75	Total excludes 7.3 acres of privately owned conservation easement land on the eastern portions of the parcels containing Bayside Commons, Bridgewater, and Gateview.
Creekside	Conservation	5.11	North end of Madison Avenue, extending to Cerrito Creek.
McLaughlin Eastshore State Park	Regional Park/ Conservation	73.00	Includes Albany Bulb, Neck, Plateau, and Beach areas. About half of this land is owned by the City of Albany and the other half is owned by EBRPD. At this time, improvements are limited to trails and a parking area. Total excludes Caltrans ROW and submerged or tidal lands.
Total Passive Open Space Areas		90.86	
GRAND TOTAL OPEN SPACE		139.05	

Source: *Albany Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, 2004. Barry Miller Consulting, 2015*

Park Classification

Mini-Park. These are small, single purpose parks designed primarily for use by small children and their parents. Facilities are usually limited to a small grass or turf area, a tot lot, and a picnic area. There is one mini-park in Albany—the Dartmouth Tot Lot located at the northwest corner of Dartmouth and Talbot. Mini-parks are typically less than one-half acre and are located in residential settings. The service area is typically less than one-half mile, with most visitors arriving on foot.

Neighborhood Park. Neighborhood parks typically combine playgrounds and grass/ turf. They are designed for a mix of programmed and non-programmed recreation activities. They are less than 5 acres in size and serve persons within an approximately one-half mile radius. Typical facilities include a children’s playground, picnic areas, trails, open grassy areas, basketball courts, and multi-use sports fields for soccer and baseball. There are two neighborhood parks in the city: Ocean View and Jewel’s Terrace. A third neighborhood park is planned in the former freeway right-of-way along Pierce Street just north of Calhoun Street.

Community Park. Community parks are designed for active sports and structured recreation as well as un-programmed recreation for individuals and families. They are larger than neighborhood parks, with more varied facilities and a service area of 1-2 miles. In suburban settings, such parks are usually 10 acres or more. In an urban setting, a size range from 5 to 10 acres is more common. Community parks typically have facilities such as rest rooms, parking, and recreation buildings. Sports fields or similar facilities are often the central focus. Memorial Park is the only Community Park in Albany.

Linear Park/Greenway. Linear parks are landscaped areas that follow corridors such as streams, railroads, power lines, and other linear features. This type of park usually contains trails, landscaped areas, viewpoints, and seating areas. Depending on their width, linear parks may also include features parks such as tot lots, par courses, picnic tables, and gardens. Such parks may also include mid-block paths and staircases. Albany’s best known linear park is the Ohlone Greenway. Manor Walk and Catherine’s Walk are also counted as linear parks, while also functioning as mid-block pedestrian paths.

Special Use Area. Special Use Areas are public lands occupied by special-purpose recreational facilities, including recreation buildings. The two Special Use Areas in Albany are the Community Center and the Senior Center. In larger cities, special use areas include unique facilities such as zoos, botanical gardens, and golf courses.

Regional Park. Regional parks serve the city and beyond. They are typically very large in area and often draw many visitors from other communities. Regional parks may have features such as beaches, forests, historic homesteads, and wetlands. Their large size means that most of the land area is used for passive recreation. However, in an urban setting, regional parks may include ballfields, pools, nature centers, and activities that also occur in community parks. The McLaughlin Eastshore State Park along the Albany waterfront meets regional park criteria. Many portions of the State Park also meet the criteria for Conservation Open Space (defined below).

Conservation Open Space. Conservation open space consists of undeveloped land left in a relatively natural state. Public access may be controlled, and recreation is a secondary objective or may not be compatible due to sensitive habitat. This type of park includes steep hillsides, wetlands, and areas with unique or endangered species. Creekside Park and Albany Hill Park are examples. The Burrowing Owl Habitat area at the Albany Plateau is another example. Hiking trails, interpretive facilities, and picnic areas are among the types of uses found in such parks, although in some cases the presence of sensitive habitat may limit facilities altogether.

School Open Space. This includes areas on public school properties dedicated to recreational use, including schoolyards, playgrounds, and sports fields. The City neither owns nor controls these properties, but they are an essential community resource. School facilities accommodate athletic and recreational activities for youth and may be accessible to the public during non-school hours as a result of joint use agreements between the City and the School District.

University Village Open Space. This category includes the Little League and Fielding Field ball fields on the University Village property, the playground area in the center of University Village, and the community garden on West End Way. These are not City-owned facilities, but they provide recreational opportunities for a subset of the population and expand the options available to Albany residents.



Memorial Park



Veterans Memorial Building, Memorial Park

Per Capita Service Standards

The adequacy of park systems is often measured using a per capita standard for the number of acres per 1,000 residents. On a national level, such standards are typically designed for growing suburban communities and are not always well-suited for densely populated cities with fixed boundaries. Nonetheless, the standards can provide benchmarks for estimating how much additional parkland may be needed to maintain current ratios, or to bring the city closer to national standards.

In 2015, Albany had 42.69 acres of active open space, including City parks and other public open spaces that were occasionally available for public use or programmed recreation (see Table 6-1). Based on a 2015 population of 18,500, this equates to 2.31 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

If passive open space is added to the standard, the per capita ratio rises to 7.24 acres per 1,000 residents. However, the active open space figure is a more useful per capita planning standard in a city such as Albany. A small built out city with fixed boundaries can create active open space more easily than it can create passive open space, and the need for active open space is more directly affected by increases in population.

The addition of 1,800 residents, as envisioned by the General Plan, would translate into a need for about 4.2 acres of additional active parkland if the existing ratio of 2.31 acres/1,000 residents is maintained. Most of this need will be met through the addition of a 4.1-acre neighborhood park on Pierce Street just north of Calhoun Street. The City's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan also calls for improvements to the Key Route median, which would increase the per capita ratio to 2.37 acres/1,000 residents by 2035.

For planning purposes, the City is adopting a per capita goal of 3 acres of active parkland per 1,000 residents by 2035. This is an aspirational target that exceeds the current ratio. The target aligns with the standard for new subdivisions allowed under California's Quimby Act, which is the state legislation that enables cities to require the dedication of new parks or payment of in-lieu fees for new development. Applying the standard of 3 acres per 1,000 to the Year 2035 projected population of 20,300 suggests the City should have 60.9 acres of active parkland and open space by 2035, an increase of 18 acres.

The City will continue to work toward this acreage goal through its park planning and capital improvement programs. Future open spaces may include non-traditional parks, such as urban plazas, pocket parks, rooftop gardens, and new trails and linear parks. It is also possible that some active open space may be created through park improvements along the waterfront.

Section 22-8.4 of the Albany Municipal Code establishes provisions for the collection of parkland in-lieu fees for large new developments. The fees vary depending on the fair market value of the land being subdivided and the estimated fair market value of the land that would otherwise be required to be dedicated. The Municipal Code requires that the fees be used on parks and facilities that bear a reasonable relationship to the residents of the project being developed. Individual homes generally do not pay a park impact fee.

Per capita acreage standards are supplemented by distance standards (in other words, the distance a resident has to walk, bike, or drive to reach a park) and standards for specific types of facilities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has a guideline that all residents should be within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of a neighborhood (or community) park. Some parts of Albany do not meet this standard, including the high-density areas along Pierce Street and the east side of Albany Hill. Construction of the new Pierce Street Park should address this deficiency.



Ohlone Greenway near Codornices Creek

Needs and Planned Improvements

The 2004 Albany Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan included a needs assessment based on household surveys, interviews with stakeholders, and a comparison of how Albany fared against national standards for different types of recreational facilities. The assessment indicated a slight need for additional ball fields and soccer fields, a need for additional trails, and a need for an indoor recreation center or gymnasium.

The 2004 Plan has been used to identify funding priorities and capital improvement needs for the Albany Park system for the last decade. Many of the projects listed in the Master Plan have been completed, while others remain unfunded. In 2007, the City completed a major renovation of Ocean View Park, including reconfigured playfields, lighting, playground facilities, a restroom, a drinking fountain, and renovation of infrastructure.

A renovation was also completed at Terrace Park, with improvements to the restroom, replacement of turf and drainage, upgrades to the picnic area, and resurfacing of paths and basketball courts. Memorial Park was also refurbished, with a reconstructed ballfield, turf renovations, new support facilities, and landscaping improvements. The Ohlone Greenway has been upgraded with new lighting, irrigation, and trail surfaces. A number of upgrades to the Veterans Memorial Building were also completed, and playground equipment was replaced at the Dartmouth Mini-Park. Playground surfaces continue to be replaced as part of on-going renovation and maintenance programs.

There continue to be unmet capital improvement needs in the park system. These include a major renovation of the Veterans Memorial Building, which is owned by Alameda County. City acquisition of this facility will continue to be explored, although the building needs costly seismic renovation and accessibility improvements. The School District has also considered acquisition. Any alterations must be sensitive to the historic features of the building and should maintain public access to the interior spaces.

The Ohlone Greenway continues to be evaluated for additional improvements, including a fitness trail, interpretive signage, fruit and nut trees, game courts, and drought-tolerant landscaping. A Greenway Preferred Concept Plan incorporating some of these improvements and relying on Measure WW funds for construction is presently moving forward. Opportunities to expand existing parks through acquisition of adjacent sites is being explored at several parks, again with serious cost constraints.

Plans for a new neighborhood park on Pierce Street are moving forward. The park will include an ADA-accessible path, an area for young children, and grassy lawn areas. Further improvements are being studied, subject to available funding and community input. As noted above, the City will consider future landscaping improvements to the Key Route median and beautification projects to enhance the usability of public space. Other plans for the park system include additional linear trails along sections of Codornices Creek and further trail improvements in Creekside Park and on Albany Hill. The 2004 Master Plan also suggested a park at the Albany Children's Center site, although the site is not available for park use at this time.

Albany is also working with the East Bay Regional Park District on transition planning for the City-owned lands along the waterfront. In late 2014, a planning process was initiated to implement the Eastshore State Park Plan along the Albany waterfront. Future projects include extension of the Bay Trail, improvements to some of the existing spur trails, interpretive signage, seating areas, and improvements to Albany Beach. Site clean-up and debris removal, shoreline stabilization, and ecological restoration projects are also under consideration. Additional recreational improvements could be considered through future planning processes.

The shoreline area projects are discussed in the Waterfront Element of the General Plan.



Photo: Albany Recreation and Community Services

Albany's Hotsy Totsy Unicorns Kickball Team

D. RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Recreational services are provided to Albany residents through Albany's Recreation and Community Services Department. The Department offers activities such as yoga, Aikido, tennis, ballet, and karate, as well as special interest classes such as cooking, calligraphy, painting, carpentry, writing, math, and more. Many of the programs are targeted to specific age groups, including pre-schoolers, youth, adults, and seniors. The Department also coordinates sports programs, such as softball, kickball, basketball, running, and soccer.

Albany's Recreation and Community Services Department hosts a number of special events, including Dinner with Albany (every two years), Music in the Park, Chinese New Year, Albany Local Week., the 4th of July celebration, and Bike About Town. The Department also provides staff support to the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Arts Committee, and a number of ad hoc and special focus committees. It also coordinates City volunteer services.

Major recreational programming needs in the city include arts, crafts, lifetime sport programs, career placement programs, informal sports activities, concerts in the parks, and after school programs. The City has limited indoor spaces where such activities can be carried out.

Recreational service demands are also changing in response to shifts in demographics and trends in leisure and sports. In the last 20 years, Albany has become more culturally and ethnically diverse, leading to the demand for new types of activities. Looking to the future, the City anticipates increased demand for recreational programs serving seniors. Emerging sports such as lacrosse and rugby may also change athletic programming and facility needs.

The Recreation and Community Services Department is responsible for operation of the Senior Center, the Memorial and Ocean View After-School Care Centers, the Senior/Youth Annex, and the Community Center. Recreation and Community Services also maintains the Ocean View and Memorial Park ball fields. Most park maintenance responsibilities are assigned to the Public Works Department. Public Works also maintains medians, street trees, and municipal landscaping. City maintenance is supplemented by the activities of Friends of Albany Parks, sports organizations, and volunteers.

In general, maintenance and rehabilitation needs have increased due to aging equipment and higher facility usage. The City relies on the General Fund to cover most of these costs. Larger expenses, including major park renovations and new facilities, may be funded through the Capital Facilities Fund or through bond measures.



Photo: Albany Recreation and Community Services

Recreation and Community Services Drawing Class

E. OTHER RECREATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

As indicated in Table 6-1, almost half of the active open space in Albany is owned and operated by public agencies other than the City. These facilities round out the recreational options available to Albany residents, and complement the services provided by the City. For many residents, the closest playground or open space available is at their neighborhood school.

The City of Albany and the Albany Unified School District (AUSD) have adopted a Joint Use Agreement that formally establishes the terms and conditions for sharing facilities. Its intent is to provide the highest level of service with the least possible expenditure of public funds, and to avoid redundancies in service delivery and facility development.

The Agreement provides AUSD students with access to Memorial Field, Ocean View Field and other City-owned facilities. It also provides Albany residents with access to Cougar Field, schoolyards, playgrounds, and other AUSD facilities when school is not in session. The City and AUSD may use each other's facilities free of charge provided the terms in the Agreement are followed.

School facilities include asphalt play areas and playgrounds at Cornell, Marin, Ocean View, and Vista Elementary Schools, hard court areas at the Middle and High School, the aquatic center at the High School, and Cougar Field. Ocean View School includes a ball field which is functionally part of the City-owned ball field on an adjacent site. Cougar Field is located in the City of El Cerrito but is owned by the Albany Unified School District and serves Albany residents.

The University of California owns approximately 10 acres of recreational open space at University Village. It also operates an urban farm on a roughly 9-acre agricultural tract on the south side of Buchanan Street between Jackson Street and San Pablo Avenue. The Master Plan for University Village includes a commitment by the University to maintain some level of public access to its open space in the future. However, the level of access and the location of the open space is subject to change.

Fielding West and East Fields (soccer and softball) and the adjacent 3-acre community garden are anticipated to remain in their current locations for the foreseeable future. The fields are used by Albany-Berkeley Girls Softball League and Albany Berkeley Soccer Club, among others, and are part of a larger complex that includes the Gabe Catalfo Fields to the south in Berkeley. The two Little League Fields on 10th Street are used by Albany Little League. The UC fields provide an important complement to the City-owned facilities at Ocean View and Memorial Parks.

Albany sports organizations also utilize the Tom Bates sports complex in Berkeley, located west of Interstate 80 and south of Gilman Street. The \$7 million complex opened in 2008, with funding provided through a joint powers agreement with the Cities of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, El Cerrito, and Richmond. The complex accommodates baseball, softball, and soccer.

The City's recreational services are further supplemented by non-profit organizations such as the YMCA, and by private service providers. The YMCA of the Central Bay Area has a health and wellness center on Kains Avenue in Albany. The Albany "Y" is one of the most well-established human services organizations in the East Bay. It provides workout facilities, classes, licensed child care, and a variety of summer camps.

Private recreational facilities in the City include Albany Bowl and Golden Gate Fields. Albany Bowl (540 San Pablo Avenue) has been in operation since 1949 and is a family style bowling center with 36 lanes. Golden Gate Fields is the only remaining racetrack in the Bay Area. It has been in continuous operation since 1947. The track offers live thoroughbred racing programs, simulcast broadcasts, and a variety of special events. The oval-shaped area inside the racing lanes is roughly 36 acres, making it the largest private open space in the city.



Photo: Doug Davidson

Ohlone Greenway path

F. TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

Walking and cycling are among the most popular recreational activities in the city and contribute to the health and wellness of Albany residents. The city's trails and paths provide opportunities for recreation and non-motorized transportation. The trails and pathways discussed here are those that are designed primarily for recreational uses. Bike lanes, bike routes, and sidewalks within street rights-of-way are discussed in the Transportation Element.

The design of trails varies depending on their location, topography, soils, and intended function. Some trails may be left in a natural condition. Others may be supplemented with gravel, bark chips, sand, or another pervious material. Trails may also be hard surfaced, using materials such as concrete or asphalt. Regardless of materials, trails should be designed to protect the natural environment, ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and enhance the user experience.

Ideally, trails should provide a range of challenges, from easy walking on level terrain to more strenuous hiking on steeper slopes. Albany is a compact city with limited terrain and open space, but it offers opportunities for such variation.

The city's trails include:

- short, relatively informal dirt paths through wooded areas on Albany Hill
- paved paths along segments of Cerrito and Codornices Creeks
- the paved Ohlone Trail, which extends from Richmond to Berkeley in a greenway beneath the elevated BART tracks
- the main spine of the Bay Trail, which has been completed along the shoreline from Buchanan Street northward
- Spur trails off the Bay Trail, including trails along the Albany Neck and Plateau, and informal trails at the Albany Bulb.

Some of these trails are local, others serve multiple cities, and the Bay Trail is regional. The City's goal is to maximize the functionality and usability of these trails by connecting them to one another so that they serve as an integrated network. Connecting the trails can improve access to the shoreline, schools, shopping areas, and recreational facilities from Albany's neighborhoods, while providing a variety of recreational experiences.

Future projects include completion of the Bay Trail and improvement of the spur trail network within McLaughlin Eastshore State Park. The Bay Trail is planned to extend from Buchanan Street southward, following the shoreline west of Golden Gate Fields over Fleming Point, linking to existing segments of the trail south of Gilman Street in Berkeley. Albany's Active Transportation Plan also raises the possibility of a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge between the shoreline and University Village, spanning Interstate 80 and the railroad. However, the cost of such a project is substantial and no funding source or location has been identified.

Other planned improvements include the extension of trails along Cerrito and Codornices Creeks. Opportunities for such trails exist west of San Pablo Avenue, where much of the land on the Albany side of the creek is already in public ownership. The planned senior housing development at University Village will include trail improvements along Codornices Creek, linking San Pablo Avenue to the existing trail further west. There is also a potential to improve the trail system along Cerrito Creek within Creekside Park, and to the east near El Cerrito Plaza. Opportunities for creekside trails are much more limited elsewhere along these creeks, since they are located in private backyards.



Cerrito Creek Trail

Trail improvements are also planned on Albany Hill and on the Key Route median. On Albany Hill, the goal is to create an integrated system of loop trails that provides access between the top of the hill and Cerrito Creek on the north, Pierce Street on the west, and the residential neighborhoods to the south and east. In the event the 11-acre vacant parcel on the southwest slopes of the hill is developed, a trail easement should be included to provide access through the parcel. Along Key Route Boulevard, the median trail would extend from Solano Avenue north into El Cerrito, providing access to the High School and Memorial Park.

F. GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL PROS-1: OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

Preserve and enhance open space in Albany for natural resource protection, food production, hazard prevention and abatement, aesthetics, and recreation.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-1.1: Green Community

Maintain Albany as a green community that integrates open space and nature with neighborhoods, protects natural habitat, and educates residents about local vegetation and wildlife.

Policy PROS-1.2: Albany Hill

Designate the crest of Albany Hill and adjacent upper slopes for open space and require dedication of this area for conservation and public access as a condition of approval for any proposed development on parcels along the ridgeline. Albany Hill should be considered an essential and valuable regional open space resource.

Policy PROS-1.3: Albany Waterfront

Recognize the importance of the Albany waterfront as a multi-use open space area and a vital part of the cultural landscape of the East Bay. The City will work toward achieving the maximum feasible open space and recreational uses in the waterfront area and improved public access to and along the Albany shoreline. All future land use decisions for the lands west of Interstate 80 shall be consistent with State and regional park plans, trail plans, and Bay conservation and shoreline access plans.

See the General Plan Waterfront Element for a complete set of goals, policies, and actions for the shoreline open space area.

Policy PROS-1.4: Urban Open Space

Incorporate a variety of small open spaces, such as pocket parks, plazas, courtyards, rooftop gardens, tot lots, and landscaped areas, into new development.

Policy PROS-1.5: Open Space in the Public Realm

Enhance the open space value of Albany's streets and public spaces through street tree planting, landscaping, and maintenance and expansion of the urban tree canopy.

Policy PROS-1.6: Open Space as a Component of Capital Projects

In planning public improvements such as streetscape projects and public buildings, consider opportunities for public art, landscaping, community gathering places, and other open spaces that beautify the community and supplement existing recreational facilities.

Policy PROS-1.7: Creeks

Recognize creeks as an important open space element, and a means of defining the edges of the city and bringing open space and nature into neighborhoods.

Policy PROS-1.8: Residential Yards

Maintain requirements for structural setbacks and minimum front yard areas on residential lots to create a sense of openness, provide space for plants and landscaping, and enhance the beauty of Albany.

Policy PROS-1.9: Stormwater Management

Recognize the importance of open space in managing stormwater, improving water quality, and reducing flooding hazards.

See the Conservation and Sustainability Element for policies on community gardening, urban agriculture, and urban forestry.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action PROS-1.A: Priority Conservation Area

Maintain the undeveloped portions of Albany Hill as a regionally designated “Priority Conservation Area.”

Action PROS-1.B: Creekside Master Plan Implementation

Implement the open space management recommendations of the 2012 Creekside Master Plan, including vegetation management, trail improvements, signage and other park improvements.

Action PROS-1.C: Albany Hill Conservation Easements

Work with the owner of the 11-acre vacant parcel south of Gateway Towers and land conservation organizations to develop a site plan for the property which maximizes the conservation of open space on the upper slopes and ridgeline portions of the site. Continue to work with owners of other private properties on Albany Hill to reduce fire hazards and manage the Hill’s unique ecosystem.

Action PROS-1.D: Private Open Space Standards

Maintain requirements for private open space, such as patios and balconies, for new residential units.

Private open space is intended to complement public open space and meet the needs of individual households, particularly in multi-family and mixed use projects.

Action PROS-1.E: Rooftop Open Space

Develop guidelines or standards for including usable rooftop open space in new multi-family, mixed use, and commercial projects.

This might include rooftops which are accessible as recreational spaces or gardening spaces for apartment residents or employees, spaces for solar power generation and rainwater collection, and similar activities. This action is primarily aimed at larger scale development along San Pablo and Solano Avenues.

Action PROS-1.F: Eastshore State Park

Actively participate in the planning and development of McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.

The City will work closely with East Bay Regional Park District and local advocacy groups in the planning of the State Park and waterfront trail system.

Action PROS-1.G: Freeway Open Space Improvements

Work with Caltrans, Union Pacific Railroad, and other parties to explore enhancement of the underutilized open space along Interstate 80, particularly on the east side of the freeway at the Buchanan Street interchange. Use of this space for landscaping, gateway signage, public art, stormwater management, and similar improvements should be considered.



Dartmouth Mini Park

GOAL PROS-2: PARKLAND EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT

Expand and improve Albany's park system to keep pace with population growth and meet the demand for recreational facilities in the City.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-2.1: Park Hierarchy

Maintain a hierarchy of mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks in Albany, with guidelines to distinguish the types of uses and activities appropriate in each park type.

Memorial Park should continue be designated as a community park, intended to meet citywide needs and host citywide activities. Ocean View and Terrace Parks should both continue to be designated as neighborhood parks, as should the proposed new park at Pierce Street. The text of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element should be consulted for further detail on how parks are classified.

Policy PROS-2.2: Non-Traditional Parks

Supplement traditional City parks with linear parks, conservation open spaces, school facilities, regional parks, and other unique parks that complement the network.

The text of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element should be consulted for the definitions of each park category.

Policy PROS-2.3: Per Capita Service Standards

Strive for a service standard of at least 3 acres of active parkland per 1,000 Albany residents. This standard should provide the basis for parkland dedication and in-lieu fee requirements for new development.

In 2015, there were 2.31 acres of active parkland per 1,000 residents, including City, School District, BART, and University recreational facilities but excluding passive open space along the waterfront and on Albany Hill. The City hopes to raise the per capita total in the future through the development of new recreational facilities and open spaces such as Pierce Street park. Under the Quimby Act, the City may require parkland dedication or collect in lieu fees based on a standard of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.

Policy PROS-2.4: Site Design and Planning Standards

Observe standards for the design and development of parks and open space areas as presented in the Albany Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. The site plan for each park should be appropriate to its specific conditions and context, and should maximize public access and visibility.

Policy PROS-2.5: New Parks

Pursue the development of new parks that accommodate services and facilities not present in Albany today and that respond to increased demand for park and recreational space and facilities.

Policy PROS-2.6: New Facilities in Existing Parks

Balance the demand for new recreational facilities and structures with the need for unprogrammed open space that meets other recreational needs. Where possible, the development of new recreational facilities and amenities should avoid displacing or crowding out other activities. Maintaining a mix of passive and active open spaces is important to the function and aesthetics of community, neighborhood, and regional parks.

Policy PROS-2.7: Resource Preservation

Design and plan new parks in a manner that preserves and enhances natural resources, protects trees and significant topographic features, and is consistent with the sustainability principles articulated in the General Plan Conservation Element.

Policy PROS-2.8: Recreational Land Use Compatibility

Ensure that park design and activity programming is sensitive to adjacent land uses, taking into consideration both the effect of the park on nearby uses and the effect of nearby uses on the park. This would include efforts to reduce noise and lighting conflicts due to potentially loud or night-time park activities near sensitive receptors (such as schools or homes), as well as consideration of parking and other impacts.

Policy PROS-2.9: Park Expansion

Explore opportunities to expand existing City parks on to vacant or underutilized land on the perimeter of each park site.

Policy PROS-2.10: Public Participation

Engage the public in the design and review of proposed new parks and park improvements, including public meetings and other activities which secure broad participation.

Policy PROS-2.11: Private and Non-Profit Recreational Facilities

Encourage the development of additional private and non-profit recreational facilities that are open to the general public, and that complement the array of leisure-time activities available to Albany residents.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**Action PROS-2.A: Parkland Fees and Dedication**

Maintain park in-lieu fees and/or dedication requirements to ensure that new development pays its fair share or otherwise provides for the demand for parkland and recreational facilities it creates.

Action PROS-2.B: Pierce Street Park

Develop a new park on the 4.5-acre former freeway right-of-way site bounded by Pierce Street, Cleveland and Washington Avenues and the I-80 freeway. Development of the site should be phased based on the availability of funds and community input.

Action PROS-2.C: Design Standards

Continue efforts to establish recreational facility design standards, potentially including specifications for signage and the types of equipment, models and materials to be used in park development.

Action PROS-2.D: Master Plan Updates

Periodically update the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to identify specific projects, funding sources, and time schedules for implementation. This should include detailed improvement and maintenance plans for the City's parks, which are coordinated with the five-year Capital Improvements Program.

Action PROS-2.E: Signage Program

Develop and implement a uniform signage program for Albany's parks, including signage within the parks and directional (wayfinding) signage outside park boundaries.

See the Waterfront Element for additional policies on park improvements.

Action PROS-2.F: Dog Play Areas

Maintain the fenced dog play area at Memorial Park, and address the need for additional dog play areas in an update of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

Action PROS-2.G: Golden Gate Fields Open Space

Support the inclusion of new publicly accessible open space or recreational facilities in any future plans for the reuse of Golden Gate Fields.

GOAL PROS-3: PARK MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain and enhance Albany's parks so that they provide attractive open spaces and high-quality recreational facilities that serve children, youth, families, and seniors.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-3.1: Planning for Diverse User Groups

Ensure that Albany's parks are designed to provide for residents of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and physical capabilities. This should include outdoor spaces for varied activities which serve the needs of different user groups.

Policy PROS-3.2: Modernization

Continue to enhance and modernize recreational buildings such as the pre-school building and the senior center.

Policy PROS-3.3: Sports Fields

Renovate and maintain City sports fields and continue to collaborate with areawide sports field users on field programming and maintenance. Explore opportunities to create new sports fields, including fields on locations outside of Albany, through joint powers agreements, and joint efforts with field users. In addition, to increase the usefulness of athletic fields, encourage field designs and configurations that can accommodate multiple sports rather than one sport alone.



Chinese New Year tumbling performance

Photo: Albany Recreation and Community Services

Policy PROS-3.4: Outdoor Cultural Space

Provide flexible outdoor spaces in City parks that can be programmed for community gatherings, art displays, performances and other cultural activities.

Policy PROS-3.5: Dogs

Continue to work with local dog owners, park users, and community organizations to balance the demand for dog play areas with other considerations such as habitat protection, safety, and accommodation of active open space uses.

Policy PROS-3.6: Maintenance

Maintain park and recreation facilities in a manner which keeps them safe, attractive, clean, and a positive part of their neighborhoods. In the annual budgeting process, a priority should be placed on the repair, rehabilitation and preventive maintenance of park facilities.

Policy PROS-3.7: Vegetation Management

Ensure that park landscaping and maintenance practices are consistent with City policies to reduce wildfire hazards and manage vegetation. These practices should also reinforce City programs to conserve water, promote Bay-friendly landscaping such as native, non-invasive, drought-tolerant plants, and use reclaimed water for irrigation.

Policy PROS-3.8: Volunteers

Use volunteers to supplement City staff and extend the range of recreational services that are provided to Albany residents. The City should offer volunteer opportunities for such tasks as assistance with special events, administrative tasks, and "adopt a park" maintenance and stewardship programs.

Policy PROS-3.9: Security

Ensure that the design and operation of City parks maximizes the security and personal safety of park users.

Policy PROS-3.10: Integrated Pest Management

Apply integrated pest management principles in park maintenance, with an emphasis on non-toxic, environmentally-safe pest control methods

Policy PROS-3.11: Scheduling

Coordinate the scheduling of activities in recreation centers, on sports fields, at playgrounds, and in parks in general to avoid conflicts, reduce wear and tear, and more evenly distribute activities among parks. As noted in Goal 4, this should include coordination with the Albany Unified School District.

Policy PROS-3.12: Funding and Grants

Consider a variety of strategies to increase funding for capital projects and to enhance park maintenance, such as local fundraising, grants, development partnerships, and special taxing districts such as Landscape and Lighting Assessment Districts.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**Action PROS-3.A: Parks and Recreation Commission**

Maintain a City Parks and Recreation Commission with the responsibility for reviewing plans for parks, open space, landscaping, and street beautification, and considering public input on such plans. The Parks and Recreation Commission should also advise on park maintenance activities and other matters concerning the delivery of park and recreation services.

Action PROS-3.B: Memorial Park Master Plan

Update the 1998 Memorial Park Master Plan to reflect current conditions and identify needed improvements for the coming years. This may include improvements to the entry promenade, as called for by the 2004 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

Action PROS-3.C: Improvement Programs

Conduct periodic needs assessments, master planning, and improvement programs for City parks, including Ocean View Park, Terrace Park, Dartmouth Tot Lot, and the Ohlone Greenway.

Action PROS-3.D: Playground Improvements

Develop an improvement and/or replacement program for Albany's playgrounds. As part of this program, consideration should be given to expanding the Dartmouth Tot Lot.

Action PROS-3.E: Maintenance Programs

Develop and periodically update maintenance standards and programs for parks, sports fields, and other recreational facilities, including budgets for the various tasks required to keep each park and field in good condition.

Citywide budgeting practices and procedures should ensure that adequate funds are set aside for park maintenance and that line items are established for specific park maintenance activities (e.g., sports field maintenance, building maintenance, medians and traffic islands, etc.). Maintenance practices should aim for reduced costs through minor improvements such as installation of automated irrigation systems and drought-tolerant landscaping.

Action PROS-3.F: Maintenance Assessment

Regularly evaluate the distribution of maintenance tasks between City workers and other parties, including contractors, non-profits, park user groups and neighborhood residents. Clear operating procedures should be followed for all maintenance activities, and for the delegation of maintenance tasks to entities other than City staff.

Action PROS-3.G: Reclaimed Water Use

Continue to explore opportunities for reclaimed water use on City parks, and on medians and planting strips.

Action PROS-3.H: Measure R

Prior to the expiration of the Measure R Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (No. 1996-1) in 2020, utilize available funds to acquire additional open space and implement vegetation management programs on Albany Hill, and to undertake continued restoration of Cerrito and Codornices Creeks. If approved by voters, broaden use of Measure R funds to include additional open space projects.

GOAL PROS-4: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Provide high quality services and recreational programs that meet the diverse sports, fitness, and leisure time needs of Albany residents.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-4.1: Responsiveness to Demographic Change

Ensure that recreational programs are periodically evaluated and adjusted in response to demographic changes in the city, recreational trends, changes in technology and consumer preferences, and other factors.

Policy PROS-4.2: Children and Teen Programs

Continue to provide and maintain facilities for child care, early childhood education, and teen programs operated by the City or by private interests.

Policy PROS-4.3: Senior Services

Maintain and enhance programs for senior citizens at the Albany Senior Center and at other locations in the City. Expand off-site activities such as tours and travel.

Policy PROS-4.4: General Interest Programs

Provide a range of recreational activities and life-long learning classes for adults, such as computer instruction, job training, crafts, sports, and fitness.

Policy PROS-4.5: Community Events

Hold communitywide events such as concerts and festivals in City parks and at school facilities as a way to build community spirit, bring residents together, and celebrate the value of parks and schools to Albany. Such events should be managed to ensure that maintenance needs, parking, noise, litter, and other impacts are addressed.

Policy PROS-4.6: Fitness

Support exercise and fitness programs which contribute to the health and wellness of Albany residents, including martial arts and other physical activities.

Policy PROS-4.7: Arts and Leisure

Incorporate arts, leisure, cultural, and continuing education programming into recreational programs, to complement sports, play, and active recreation.

See policies under Goal 5 for references to the School District's role as a partner in the delivery of recreational services and programs.



Teens prepare for Dinner with Albany, 2014

Photo: Albany Recreation and Community Services

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action PROS-4.A: Evaluations

Continually evaluate programs in terms of costs, fee structure, persons served, community interests, and the level of subsidy required.

See the Community Services and Facilities Element for additional policies and actions on arts and cultural programs, senior services, and child care.

GOAL PROS-5: JOINT USE AND COLLABORATION

Promote joint planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and use of park sites, school sites, UC Village open space, and other recreational and community facilities.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-5.1: School District Facilities

Support joint use agreements between the City of Albany and the Albany Unified School District to increase after-hours access to school facilities for Albany residents and school day access to facilities in City parks for Albany students.

Policy PROS-5.2: University Village

Work with the University of California to maintain baseball/ softball fields, a recreation center for Village residents, a community garden, and other amenities which benefit University Village residents and Albany as a whole. Promote access to the parks and athletic fields within University Village by Albany residents and sports teams, and encourage the University to maintain a “no net loss” policy for the recreational open space acreage within the University Village property.

In accordance with the UC Village Master Plan, space should be provided for at least one youth soccer and youth softball field, and two youth baseball fields, on the UC Village property. In addition, outdoor recreation should be provided near the UC Village Community Center.

Policy PROS-5.3: Gill Tract

Coordinate with the University of California for mutually beneficial uses of the Gill Tract. Such plans should protect and enhance Village Creek and other natural environmental features, including significant trees.

See the Land Use Element for additional policies on the Gill Tract.

Policy PROS-5.4: Veterans Memorial Building

Collaborate with Alameda County on the operation and management of the Veterans Memorial Building. The ultimate goal should be to transfer ownership of the building to the City, pending a seismic evaluation and plan for seismic improvements. The interior of the building should be maintained as publicly accessible space and its historic features should be maintained and restored to the greatest extent feasible.

Policy PROS-5.5: East Bay Regional Park District

Work with the EBRPD to improve awareness of regional recreational facilities and parks among Albany residents, and to expand the regional park system for the benefit of all residents in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, including those in Albany.

See the Waterfront Element for additional discussion of EBRPD's planned improvements in Albany.

Policy PROS-5.6: Adjacent Cities

Continue to foster partnerships and joint use opportunities with the cities of Berkeley, Richmond, and El Cerrito to improve park and recreational services and ensure the most efficient use of local resources.

See the Waterfront Element for a discussion of coordination with regional, state, and federal agencies on waterfront park improvements.

Policy PROS-5.7: Program Development

Coordinate the development of recreational and community service programs with other agencies and organizations, including the School District, UC Village, the YMCA, and other service providers, to avoid redundancy and maximize the choices available to Albany residents.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**Action PROS-5.A: Tom Bates Sports Complex (Gilman Street Fields)**

Periodically evaluate existing joint powers agreements to operate sports facilities in nearby communities, including the Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex at the west end of Gilman Street in Berkeley. Ensure that the City is benefitting from these agreements and receiving services that are commensurate with the cost.

Action PROS-5.B: Albany Children's Center

Work with the Albany Unified School District to explore improvements on the Albany Children's Center (Vista School) site which would augment the recreational options available to residents in the surrounding neighborhood.

Action PROS-5.C: Funding and Community Access Improvements at Veterans Memorial Building

Continue to explore potential funding sources for the maintenance, improvement, and acquisition of the Veterans Memorial Building, consistent with the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. Until the building can be acquired, the City will work with Alameda County on improving building operations and increasing community access.

Action PROS-5.D: Joint Use Agreement Updates

Periodically update joint use agreements between the City and Albany Unified School District so that both parties have access to the greatest range of recreational services and facilities possible. Pursue future joint use or joint powers agreements with the University of California for access to University Village facilities.

Action PROS- 5.E: Former Library Site

Explore the feasibility of using the former library building on Solano Avenue (now owned by the School District and used by the YMCA) for additional recreational programs.



Photo: Doug Davidson

Waterfront Spur Trail to the Albany Bulb

GOAL PROS-6: TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

Develop an integrated, comprehensive system of trails linking neighborhoods and schools to recreational facilities and open spaces, including the waterfront.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-6.1: Trail Sustainability

Ensure that the planning and design of trails is sensitive to environmental protection priorities and issues such as sea level rise, habitat protection, and hillside erosion. If necessary, identify secondary alignments in the event trails must be seasonally closed for habitat protection purposes.

Policy PROS-6.2: Connecting Trails

Focus trail development in Albany on improvements that connect existing pathway and trail systems and make it safer and easier to travel around the city on foot or by bicycle.

See the Transportation Element for additional policies on trails and connectivity.

Policy PROS-6.3: Trail Safety

Ensure that trails are designed to maximize user safety and personal security, and to reduce potential conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, motor vehicles, and trains.

See the Transportation Element for additional policies on trail safety.

Policy PROS-6.4: Signage

Encourage directional signage along local trails, and interpretive signage that educates trail users about Albany's natural resources and history.

Policy PROS-6.5: Waterfront Access

Improve trail connections to the Albany waterfront, particularly between the Ohlone Greenway and the Bay Trail.

Policy PROS-6.6: Bay Trail

Work cooperatively with appropriate agencies in completing local segments of the Bay Trail, including spur trails between the waterfront and Albany neighborhoods. The City supports the long-term vision of a continuous shoreline trail for non-motorized vehicles around San Francisco Bay.

See the Waterfront Element for additional policies on shoreline access and trail improvements.

Policy PROS-6.7: Albany Hill

Maintain and expand the system of trails on Albany Hill, including connections between Creekside Park and the neighborhoods on the hill's perimeter.

Policy PROS-6.8: Creek Trails

Coordinate trail planning and improvement programs for Cerrito and Codornices Creeks with the cities of Berkeley, Richmond and El Cerrito, non-profit organizations such as Friends of Five Creeks, and appropriate county, state and federal regulatory agencies.

See the Conservation and Sustainability Element for policies on creek restoration and daylighting.

Policy PROS-6.9: Transportation ROWs

Continue to support the enhancement of transportation rights-of-way (ROWs) for linear parks and trails, such as the Ohlone Greenway beneath the elevated BART line.

Policy PROS-6.10: Mid-Block Paths

Maintain existing pathways that provide mid-block connections within neighborhoods, including Manor Way, Catherine's Walk, and the Jackson Street steps.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**Action PROS-6.A: Bay Trail Improvements**

Continue implementation of the Bay Trail Plan along the Albany shoreline, and ensure that provisions for Bay Trail spurs and improvements are included in any future plans for Golden Gate Fields. The City will work with landowners, appropriate citizen and environmental groups, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, the Regional Park District, the Coastal Conservancy, and ABAG to implement this action.

Action PROS-6.B: Albany Hill Trails

Provide for a dedicated trail easement through the 11-acre parcel on the west side of Albany Hill, with connections between Pierce Street, the end of Hillside Avenue, and existing trails in Creekside Park. Future trail alignments on Albany Hill should be sensitive to topography and avoid excessively steep grades.

Action PROS-6.C: Cerrito Creek Trail

Provide for a pedestrian bridge across Cerrito Creek between Albany Hill and the north side of the Creek in El Cerrito, consistent with the adopted Creekside Master Plan. Explore options to provide additional linear creek access between San Pablo Avenue and Albany Hill, including a potential future trail easement on the north end of the Orientation Center for the Blind.

Action PROS-6.D: Codornices Creek Trail

Continue joint planning with the University of California and the City of Berkeley on improvements to the Codornices Creek Trail. Explore options for eventual spur connections to the Bay Trail.

See the Transportation Element for additional policies and actions on connections between the waterfront and UC Village.

Action PROS-6.E: Community-Based Creek Restoration

Continue to support the work of Friends of Albany Hill, Friends of Five Creeks, and other community based organizations to enhance the open space and trail potential of Codornices Creek, Cerrito Creek, Village Creek, and other natural areas in the city.

Action PROS-6.F: Ohlone Greenway

Pursue improvements to the Ohlone Greenway, such as game courts, interpretive signage (historic, natural, cultural, etc.), tot lots, toddler play facilities, a par course, and community gardens, where appropriate and compatible with noise levels, nearby residences, and other design factors.

Action PROS-6.G: Key Route Median

Pursue trail improvements, landscaping, and other amenities on the Key Route Boulevard median between Solano Avenue and El Cerrito. These efforts should be coordinated with the Albany Unified School District, who own a portion of the median.

Action PROS-6.H: Active Transportation Plan Updates

Periodically update the Albany Active Transportation Plan to update information and plans for pedestrian and bicycle trails and pathways in and around the city.