

# EMAILS RECEIVED REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

## CITY OF ALBANY, CALIFORNIA



ALBANY CITY HALL  
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE  
ALBANY, CALIFORNIA 94706

***Study Session:  
Strategic Plan***

CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
JANUARY 22, 2019

**From:** [Judy Kerr](#)  
**To:** [City General Mailbox Account](#)  
**Subject:** email submission for 1/22/19 agenda  
**Date:** Friday, January 18, 2019 3:02:59 PM  
**Attachments:** [Notes for 2019 Strategic Plan Update.docx](#)

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Please include the following notes in the agenda. Thank you.

To: City of Albany

From: Judy Kerr

Subject: Notes for 2019 Strategic Plan Update Meeting 1/22/19:

Item 1.

Proposed Revision to

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~~Page 1:~~ Mission statement:

The employees, staff, and elected officials of the City of Albany ~~is dedicated to maintaining its small town ambience, responding to the needs of a diverse community, and providing a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment.~~ strive to support policies and programming that measurably improve the health, safety, and sustainability of a growing and diverse community.

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Item 2.

PLEASE NOTE THE PHOTO UNDER THE MISSION STATEMENT APPEARS TO BE TAKEN FROM LAWRENCE HALL OF SCIENCE AND DOES NOT DEPICT ALBANY.

Item 3.

1.2 – Promote housing availability

D. Conduct information survey on urban land trusts. Consider engaging consultant to explore feasibility of land trust funding to be used support the development low income senior housing in Albany. Target interested Albany residents over 55 living in single family homes that are owned outright who want to move to more accessible housing within the community. Consider focus on historical homes built before 1940.

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Item 4.

2.2 – Continue to promote communitywide inclusivity

A. Create an annual point time measure of inclusivity that records and reports on age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, racial and language diversity of all city employees, staff, elected officials, appointed officials, and program participants.

B. Measure progress toward increased diversity to annually.



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**From:** [Bart Grossman](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Strategic Planning  
**Date:** Saturday, January 19, 2019 2:23:32 AM

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Members of the City Council,

I would like to offer several comments based on the City Council work session of January 7th and relevant to the upcoming Strategic Planning Study Session of January 22nd:

1 - With regard to housing development, clearly we need more housing but I would encourage the Council to be very skeptical of the notion that building market rate or high level "affordable" housing will, in any way, alleviate the problem of low income people being driven out of the Albany rental market. The effect of market rate housing in San Francisco and Oakland has been to accelerate rent increases in the surrounding communities. The effect of transit centered housing development in some communities has been to drive out low income residents who actually rely on public transportation and do not own cars. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's latest definition of the "low" income level to qualify for certain affordable housing programs stands at \$89,600 per year for a household of four people in Alameda County. The threshold for "very low affordable" for a family of four is \$58,100. The average rent for a 2 bedroom apartment in Albany according to [Trulia.com](#) is \$3300 a month for a two bedroom and \$2700 for a one bedroom. The average cost of a house is now \$721 per square foot. Many so-called affordable units are pitched to the highest levels of affordability resulting in people paying significantly more than 30% of income. HUD defines families who pay more than 30% as cost-burdened. As rent review goes into effect we will learn more about what is happening to people as rents increase in our community.

2 - Do not rely on the recent parking study as an accurate measure of parking needs in Albany. The study ended too early in the evening to catch the effect of individuals arriving home from work and seeking parking. Many people will tell you that if they don't arrive home by 6 PM, street parking near their home is frequently unavailable. In 2015 there was an average of 1.74 cars per household in the Bay Area. Based on an increase of about 2 million people, even if the number of vehicles per household stays constant, there will be a 21% increase in cars by 2040. (Matt Williams - Troubling disclosures in Plan Bay Area 2040: too many cars 1/2/2018 Sierra Club, San Francisco Bay Chapter). Where will 1.1 million new cars park as cities drop parking requirements for new construction?

3 - While Maintaining Albany's small town ambiance seems increasingly quaint and out of step the qualities of life that people associate with that phrase may still be things that distinguish this City. For example, the fact that people can easily become involved in civic issues, that people will often work together to find common ground solutions to problems, that people will vote for tax increases for schools and City needs like street repair, a general sense of civility and common ownership of the community - these and other factors have made Albany an attractive community. Before we throw these qualities out in the name of a reflexive pursuit of growth, we ought to have a serious discussion in this community about what we value and what want to become.

Thank you,  
Bart Grossman  
[bg47@earthlink.net](mailto:bg47@earthlink.net)

**From:** [Preston Jordan](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** low-income tax provision utilization  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2019 12:16:10 AM

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Hello Council-

Comparing [household income estimates](#) and [household size estimates](#) from the 2012 to 2017 American Community Survey (which is the most recent) to Albany's [thresholds to qualify](#) as of last summer indicates there are about 2,200 households in Albany that could qualify. Below is a table of the number of households that have actually successfully applied over each of the last four years (provided by staff via the City Manager).

Fiscal Year	Exemption	Rebate	Total	~%
15-16	56	14	70	3%
16-17	41	2	43	2%
17-18	57	5	62	3%
18-19	70	18	88	4%

Advocacy four years ago focused on the Council setting a number of households enrolled as a goal in the strategic plan. Instead, the Council adopted the marketing of these provisions in the strategic plan. This substituted the method for the goal. Emblematic of this, to my knowledge the Council has neither requested nor received annual updates on the number of households enrolled.

The numbers in the table above indicate the marketing that has been undertaken has been ineffective. So once again, please adopt a number of households utilizing the provisions as a goal in the strategic plan. This will drive both meaningful reporting back to the Council and provide an incentive to move toward marketing that is more effective rather than performing the same ineffective marketing year after year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Preston Jordan

**From:** [Lois Brown](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Strategic Plan Update January 22, 2019  
**Date:** Monday, January 21, 2019 6:35:43 PM

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January 21, 2019

To the Honorable Members of the Albany City Council:

RE: Small Town Ambience

I would like to add to the discussion of updating the Strategic Plan, as follows:

Regarding the town of Albany's mission statement and recent suggestions to delete the wording "dedicated to maintaining its small town ambience." I would like to speak in favor of keeping that goal. I attended Cornell and Albany High. My mother attended Cornell. Albany is a small town with a history going back 100 years. It's part of my identity.

Small town doesn't mean small minded; it connotes a community that takes care of its citizenry. Albany's charm is that its character survives in the midst of exploding urban chaos—impersonal big box shopping, giant parking lots where birds used to nest., fast food eateries. It remains a town of small businesses, community support, block parties... While we are working on doing our share of providing affordable housing, let's also maintain our small town ambience. It is our identity.

Definition of "ambience"

the character and atmosphere of a place.

"the relaxed ambience of the cocktail lounge is popular with guests"

synonyms: atmosphere, air, aura, climate, mood, feel, feeling, vibrations, echo, character, quality, complexion, impress.To

sion, flavor, look, tone, tenor, spirit; More  
setting, milieu, background, backdrop, frame, element;  
environment, conditions, circumstances, situation, context;  
vicinity, locality, habitat;  
informalvibes

"the relaxed ambience of the cocktail lounge"

Lois Brown  
Gateview Ave.

**From:** [Preston Jordan](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** building height review  
**Date:** Monday, January 21, 2019 10:30:44 AM

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Hello Council-

The draft Strategic Plan for the next two years adds " study of appropriate height limits on San Pablo and Solano Avenues." I suggest adding study of maximum allowed residential density, building heights, lot coverage by building, and floor area ratios in the area north of Brighton Avenue and west of Albany Middle School as this may be the most appropriate area for an increase.

This area is already zoned R-3, which allows up to 63 residences per acre, a maximum floor-area ratio of 1.5, a maximum building height of 35 feet, and maximum lot coverage by a building of 50%. Unlike the high density zones along Solano and San Pablo Avenues, the area north of Brighton Avenue is not bounded by a local street or an R-1 (single residence per parcel) on any side. Brighton is a collector. San Pablo Avenue to the west is an arterial. To the east is the BART tracks. To the north is Cerrito Creek and El Cerrito Plaza.

In addition, this area is north of any R-1 (single residence per parcel) zone and there are only parking lots north of this area. So substantially taller buildings than currently allowed would not shade any residences of lower height. Further, this is the only R-3 area in Albany within a ten minute walk of a BART station, making it the best location to consider increasing density.

Thank you for your consideration.

Preston Jordan

**From:** [Preston Jordan](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** missing rental license revenue  
**Date:** Sunday, January 20, 2019 5:02:45 PM

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Hello Council-

At the time of 2010 Census there were 3,827 residences for rent in Albany (<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/Albany.htm>). This [staff report](#) from last summer states there is 2,004 licensed residences for rent in Albany. Presuming the Census number includes residences in University Village not subject to Albany licensing, removing those [974 units](#) implies there are 2853 rental units in Albany requiring business licenses of which 849 (30% of the total) lack such license.

Information provided by City staff indicates if those units were to be licensed, it would result in \$300,000 to \$400,000 of revenue the first year and about \$100,000 each subsequent year. It would also result in additional revenue for the rent review program as that is based upon a different charge per unit. For comparison, the property tax to fund sidewalk repair passed in 2016 generates about \$200,000 per year.

I suggest establishing closing the gap in the licensing of rental units as an item in the strategic plan.

Preston Jordan



**From:** [Preston Jordan](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** space and water heating electrification  
**Date:** Saturday, January 19, 2019 5:03:37 PM  
**Attachments:** [Water Heating Decarb Paper\\_Raghavan\\_Wei\\_Kammen EnergyPolicy.pdf](#)

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Hello Council-

Congratulations on achieving Albany's 2020 greenhouse pollution reduction goal of 25% below 2004. The one Council action that really made the difference was the Council's vote to default electric accounts in Albany to East Bay Community Energy's Brilliant 100. It appears Albany is the only City in California to have done this.

Similar bold action will be needed to achieve Albany's 2035 goal of reducing its greenhouse pollution to 60% below 2004. Achieving this goal will require a substantial reduction, if not complete elimination, of natural gas-fired heating appliances. There are a number of policy options to achieve this. Please include electrification of heating (water and space) in the Strategic Plan covering the next two years in order to motivate consideration and adoption of such policy.

Study after study indicates moving off natural gas for heating must start during the next strategic plan period to minimize expense. Starting now allows natural gas-fired heating appliances to be replaced at their end of life with electrically powered heat pump appliances. In contrast, waiting to start this transition will require throwing out relatively new appliances at greater expense or missing the goal. The attached peer-reviewed journal paper co-authored by one of Albany's Climate Action Committee members in his professional research capacity provides this analysis for water heaters.

A policy step the Council should consider immediately is prohibiting natural gas heating in new buildings. Not taking this step will lock in greenhouse pollution from these buildings through and beyond 2035. This policy step is particularly important now because the reduction in parking requirements has resulted in potential applicants discussing at least three new developments with the Planning and Zoning Commission. Permit applications are processed according to the requirements in place at the time they are submitted. So it is critical to adopt an all-electric new building ordinance before applications for these prospective projects are submitted.

The City has made the properties considered for development substantially more valuable by reducing the parking requirements. It is reasonable for the City to take back some of that value in the form of requiring electrically operating heating in any new buildings on those properties. And it is not even clear that all electric heating via heat pumps is more expensive to install in a new building than natural gas heating. The avoided cost of upgrading the gas connection, metering gas to each unit, and installing the piping to each appliance can instead be put to the relatively nominal cost of a bit more wiring as well as the more substantial cost of heat pump appliances.

Thank you for considering continuing to lean forward on greenhouse pollution reduction. Please do not wait until CAP 2.0 is completed to take action on policy requiring and supporting electrifying heating as this is already known to be an essential step.

Preston Jordan