

A Community Vision for Albany's Waterfront

Voices to Vision: May 2008 – March 2010

Fern Tiger Associates

April 5, 2010



"One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade."

– Chinese Proverb





The Report

- Two Sections
 - Main Body (115 pages)
 - Context; Documentation of the Process; Analysis; Recommendations
 - Appendix (840 pages)
 - Back-up: includes all *Raw Data* for Phases One and Two (and Survey), including all *comments; Demographics; All 199 maps* from Phase One; *Session Tools and Outreach Tools; Press; etc.*

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Final Report: Contents

- Cover Letter
- Executive Summary
- A Community Vision for the Albany Waterfront (*Guidelines*)
- Voices to Vision:
The Story of a Process
- Phase One Participation
- Survey
- Phase Two Participation
- Reflections
- *Appendix (separate section)*

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



**The Tug-of-War –
Development vs. Preservation**

*“The waterfront has been a
divisive issue for years.
People have been vilified. My
position: we have Measure
C; if you educate people,
they will do the right thing,
but not everyone thinks this
way.”*

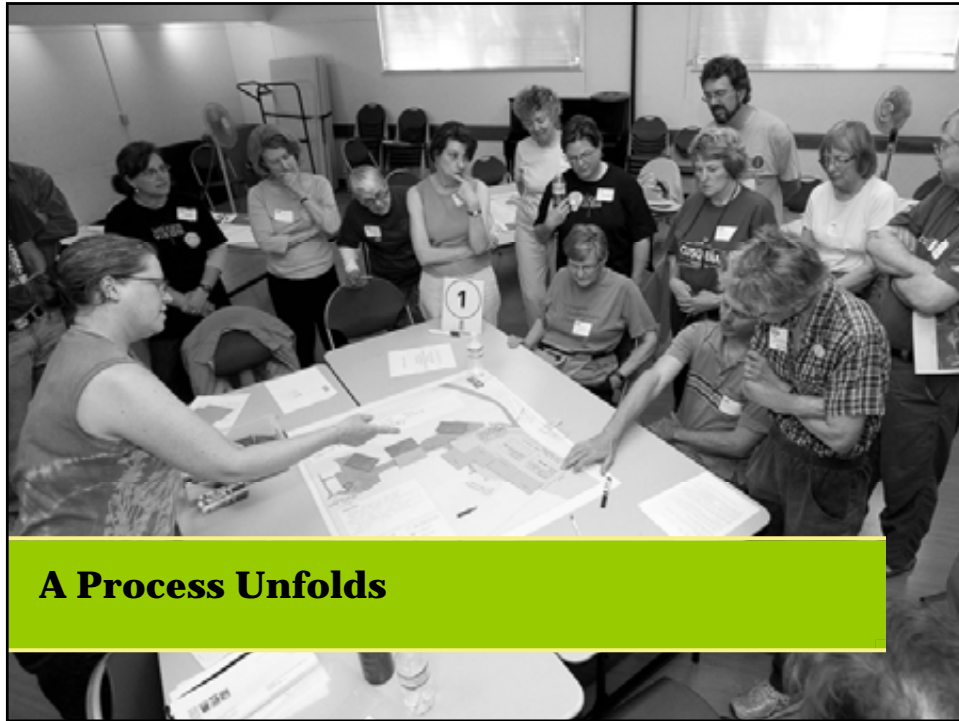




Albany Decides to Engage the Community



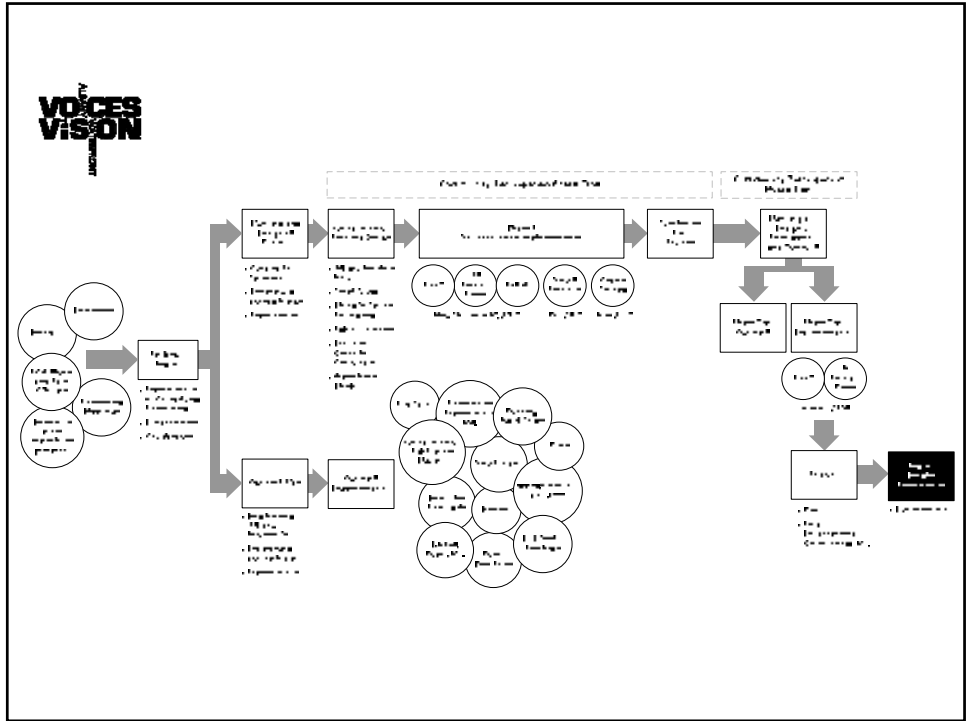
“Albany’s waterfront property is among the most desirable in the entire Bay Area. And as a community, we have a lot of power to decide what we want at that site.”



A Process Unfolds



... Based on History, Research, Findings



Four Key Issues: *Four Solutions*

- **History of conflict**
 - *hear, reflect, respect diverse opinions*
- **Lack of trust**
 - *Welcome/acknowledge viewpoints; be open to input, respond to questions quickly, be neutral/respectful facilitator*
- **Widespread misinformation**
 - *create comprehensive public education materials, backed by research and disseminated to every household*
- **Fear that “outsiders” dominate process**
 - *focus on Albany residents*

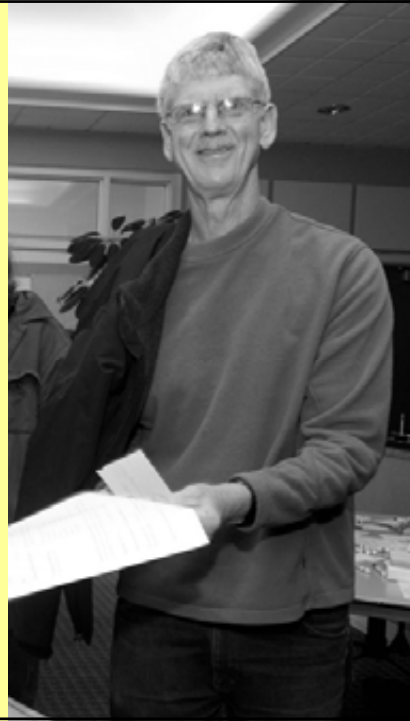
©Fern Tiger Associates 2010

A woman with glasses and a black t-shirt with the "VOICES VISION" logo is standing at a podium, holding a piece of paper and gesturing as if presenting. She is in a room with a whiteboard in the background.

A Block by Block Approach

- Build community
- Work in small group sessions (10 to 50 per session); five or fewer in table groups; Albany residents only
- Ensure “safe” place to voice opinions

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Phase One



Phase One Participation

- Outreach to Albany residents
- Design of Community Sessions
- Voicing Visions: May/June '09
- Envisioning the city in 2030
- Creating community visions for the waterfront
- Analysis (of Phase One)

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Reaching Albany Residents

- 20-page tabloid publication to *all* Albany addresses
 - *History, Maps, Charts, Glossary, FAQs*
- www.voicestovision.com
- Model of the waterfront
- Banners, posters, flyers
- Press
- Site Tours
- Schools

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Designing the Sessions

Sessions designed to:

- reveal what makes Albany special
- prompt thinking about city's future
- allow participants to review waterfront's physical / economic realities; *what kind of place do you want it to be*
- lead to common ground/vision
- provide for continued discussion

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



The Sessions... “not your typical meeting”



"I'm impressed with how the exercises really became concrete and it was great to work with others who have different points of view.. I'm impressed with my fellow Albanians."

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



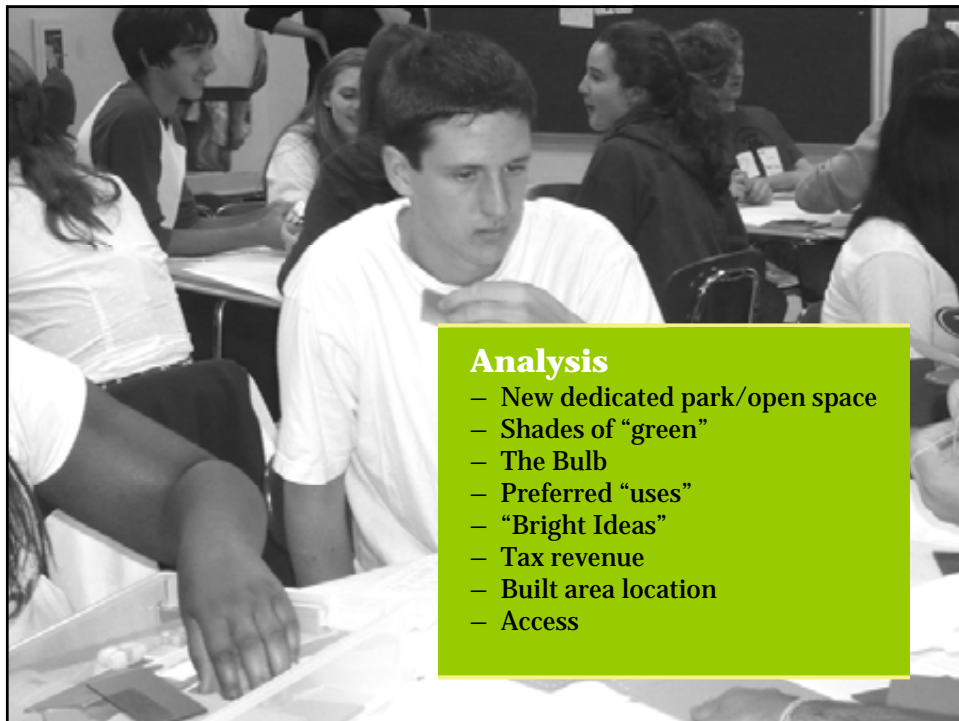
38 Identical Meetings (May/June 2009)

- ice breaker
- visioning the city's future
- reviewing waterfront facts
- selecting the "driver"
- visioning the future of Albany's waterfront: "the game"
- presentations of solutions to other participants



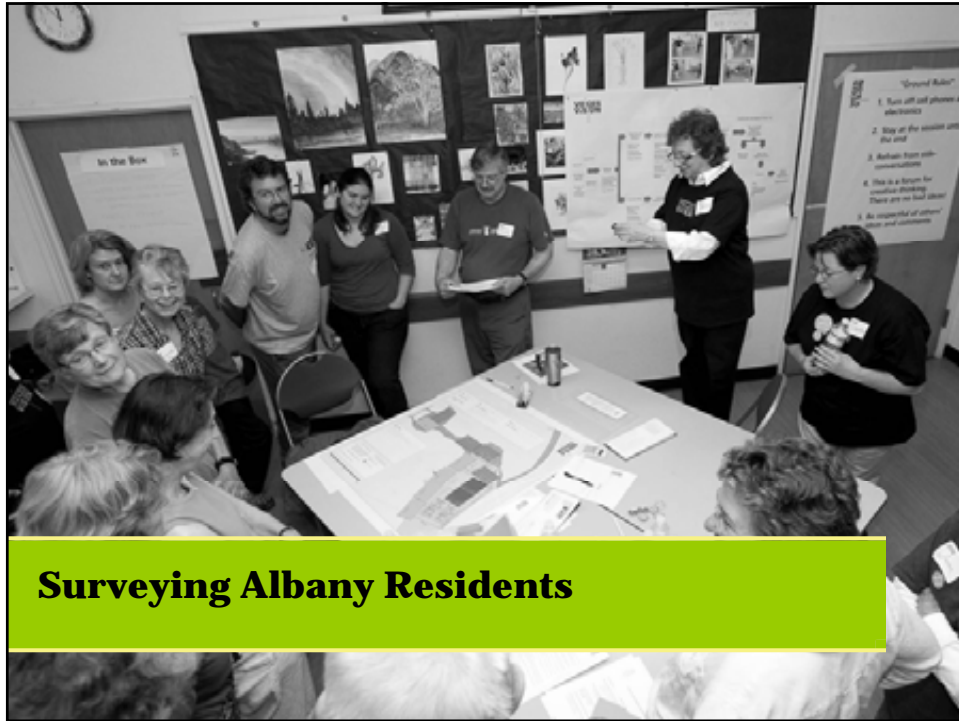
The Waterfront Game

- Site maps at 1" = 200'
- Game pieces
- Creating the maps



Analysis

- New dedicated park/open space
- Shades of "green"
- The Bulb
- Preferred "uses"
- "Bright Ideas"
- Tax revenue
- Built area location
- Access



Surveying Albany Residents



“Thanks for adding an on-line part to Voices to Vision for people like me who like providing comments electronically; sometimes it’s difficult to find time to go to meetings.”

Key Survey Results

- Uses at the waterfront
- The “Bulb”
- Dogs
- Bikes and pedestrians
- Sense of place

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Phase Two



Phase Two Participation

- Reaching out for January 2010 sessions
- Designing the sessions
- One weekend in January (+ one regional session a week later)
- Analysis

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Reaching Out (for Jan '10)

- Lawn signs
- Postcard mailed to every Albany household
- E-trees
- Community access television

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Designing January Sessions

- Continued the multiple meeting format, with one-time only participation
- Repeated the Albany-only attendance
- Small table group (6) discussions, but with opportunities for individual input
- Exercises that “flowed” from previous input and provided quantifiable and qualitative data

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



The January Sessions

- PowerPoint presentation of findings from Phase One and Survey + additional new information
- Explanation of Preliminary Site Standards that would be expected to be included in any plan for the waterfront
- Small group discussion
- Individual assessments of particular “elements” of each scenario; scenario comparisons
- Messages to owner

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



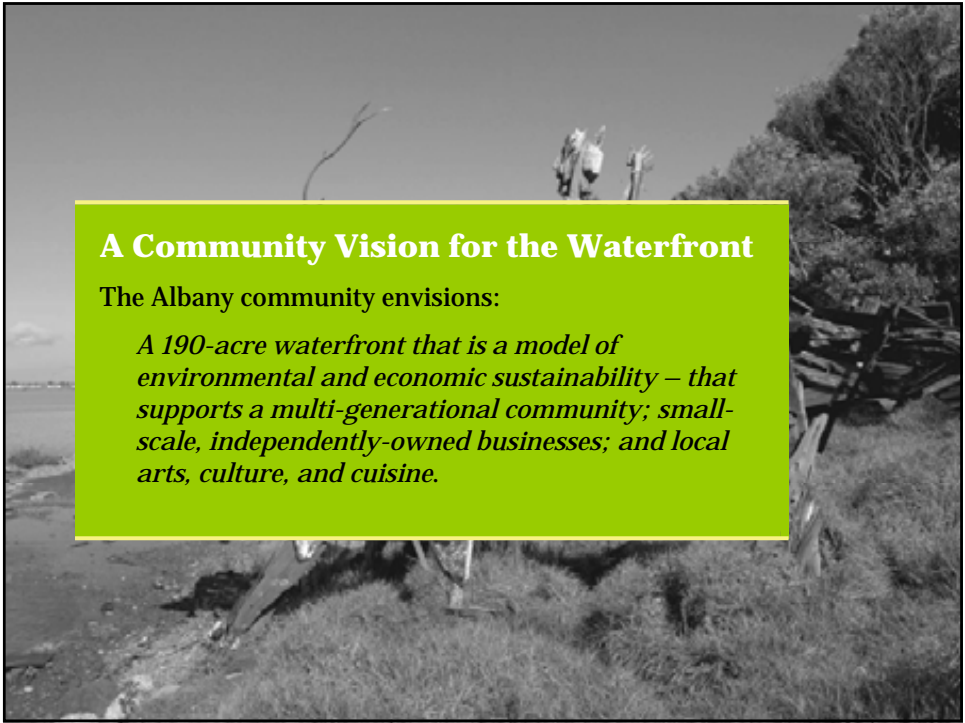
Analysis of January Sessions

- Open space and wetlands restoration
- Building heights
- Building locations
- Use and building types
- Financing and tax revenue
- Overall favorite scenarios
- Messages
- Misc. concerns

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Outcomes of the Community Process



A Community Vision for the Waterfront

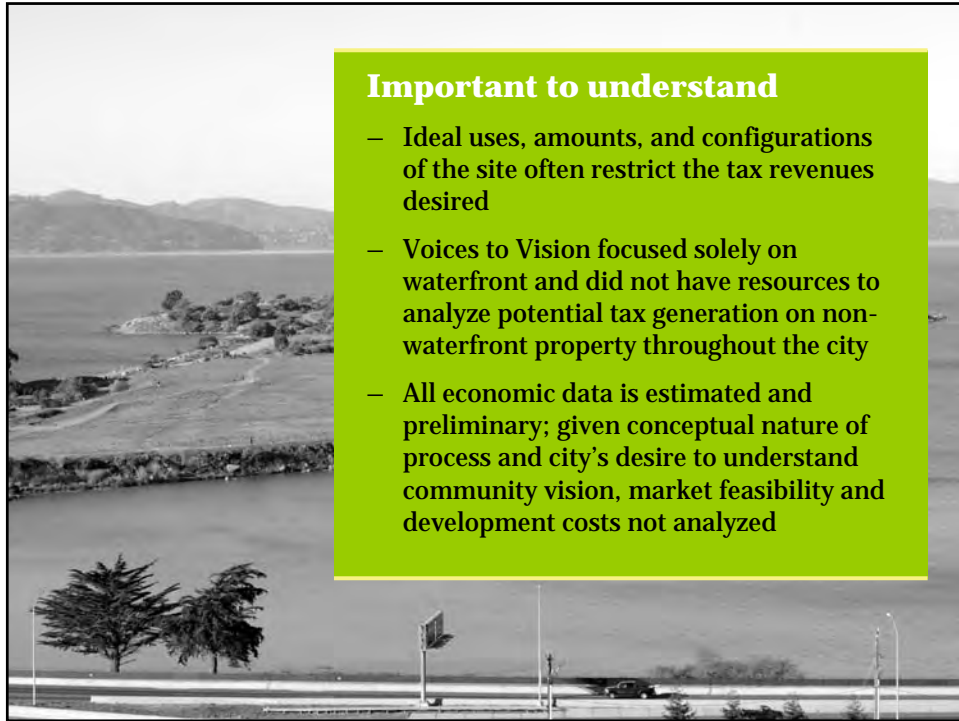
The Albany community envisions:

A 190-acre waterfront that is a model of environmental and economic sustainability – that supports a multi-generational community; small-scale, independently-owned businesses; and local arts, culture, and cuisine.

Recommended Guidelines

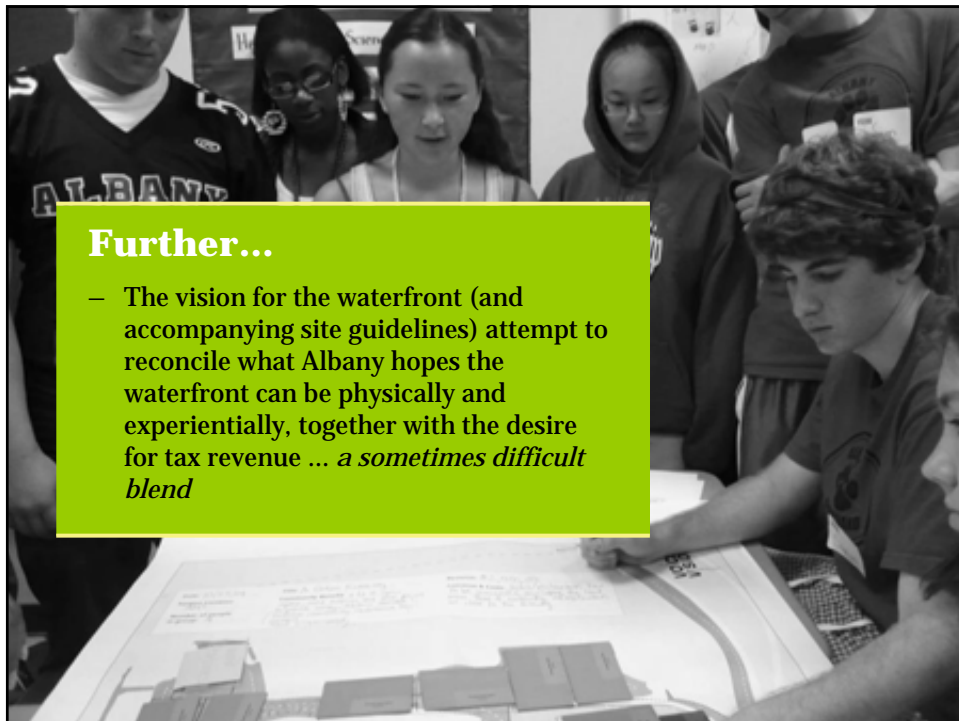
- Built area and dedicated open space
- Height limitations
- Allowable uses within the “built area”
- Site design and architectural quality
- Financial implications





Important to understand

- Ideal uses, amounts, and configurations of the site often restrict the tax revenues desired
- Voices to Vision focused solely on waterfront and did not have resources to analyze potential tax generation on non-waterfront property throughout the city
- All economic data is estimated and preliminary; given conceptual nature of process and city's desire to understand community vision, market feasibility and development costs not analyzed



Further...

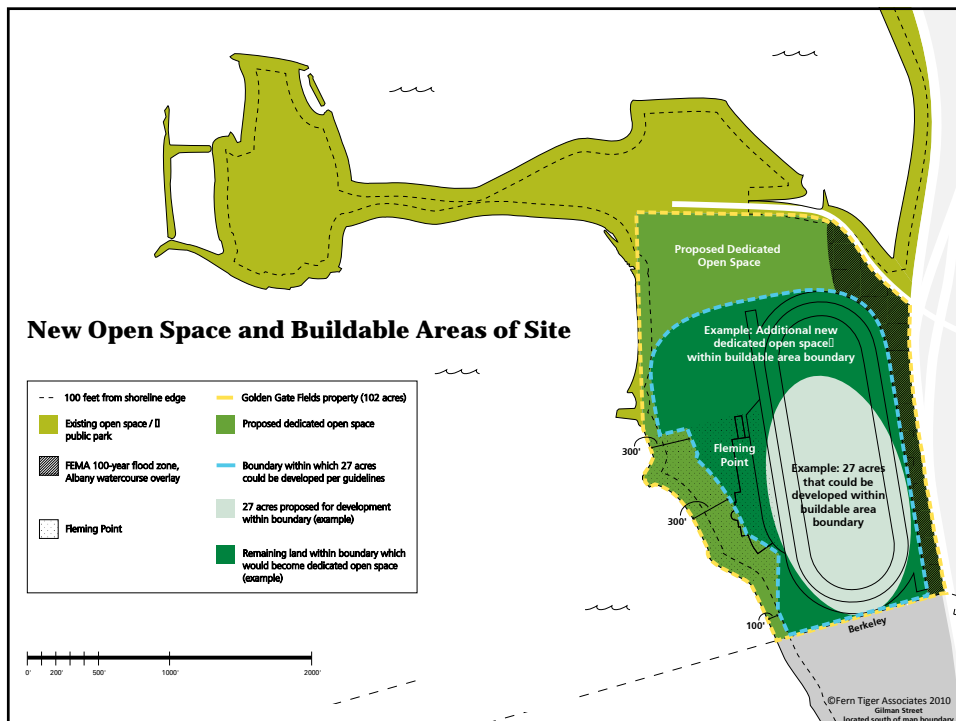
- The vision for the waterfront (and accompanying site guidelines) attempt to reconcile what Albany hopes the waterfront can be physically and experientially, together with the desire for tax revenue ... *a sometimes difficult blend*



Built Area/ Dedicated Open Space

- “Built” footprint (inc. associated roads/parking/circulation) not to exceed total of 27 acres
- Minimum new public open space 75 acres
- Minimum 300’ setback from shore at Fleming Point; 100’ BCDC on other portions
- No retail on Fleming Point
- No buildings outside of “buildable area boundary”

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010





Height Limitations

- No structure greater than three stories or 40 feet

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Allowable Uses w/in “Built Area”

- Hotel (100 – 300 rooms)*
- Restaurants, bars, cafes (already permitted in waterfront zone)
- Conference center, meeting facilities, and related support
- Retail (max. 250,000 sq. ft.)*
- Min. 3 acres for “education/arts”

* No retail without hotel; hotel could increase number of rooms to 400; if greater than 300 rooms, retail reduces

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Site Design/Architecture

- LEED certified/GreenPoint
- Photovoltaic/green roofs
- Pervious pavement; grey water recovery systems
- Access considerations required
- Fishing pier restored
- Water recreation supported
- Buildings to respect site, natural features, solar and wind orientation, views; appropriate materials; award winning design

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



Site Design/Architecture

- Site development to support primary objective of open space, preservation, and outdoor recreation – while enhancing the unique qualities of the Albany waterfront

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010



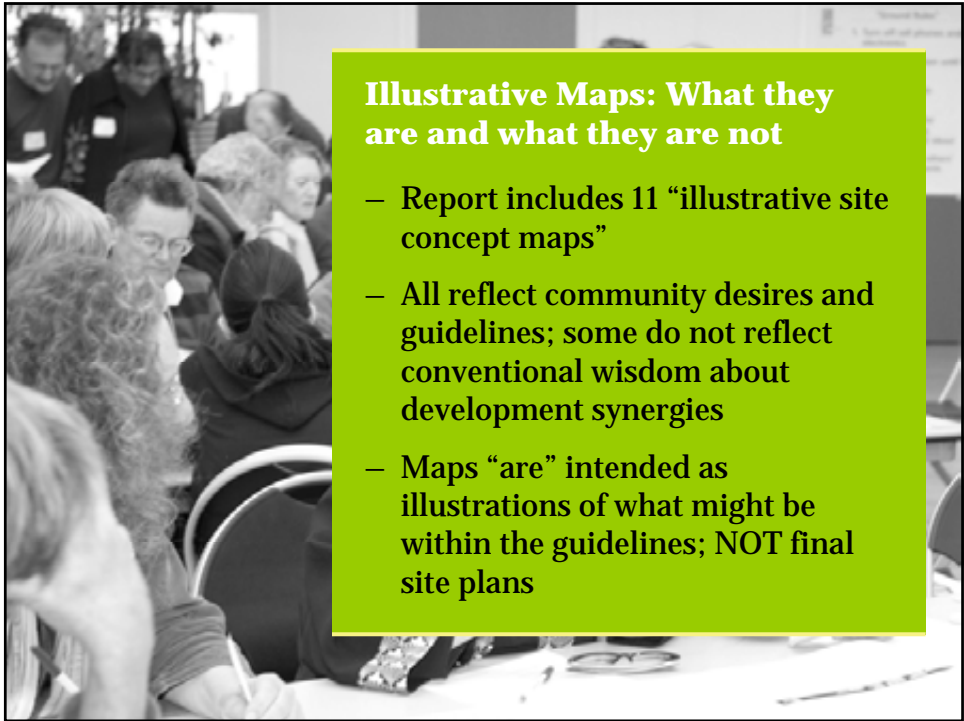
Financial Implications

- Developer expected to contribute funds toward acquisition, development, and ongoing maintenance of new, dedicated open space – in direct proportion to amount of building approved
- Developer to provide funds toward the 3-acre education/ arts amenity (museum, aquarium, amphitheater, etc.)

©Fern Tiger Associates 2010

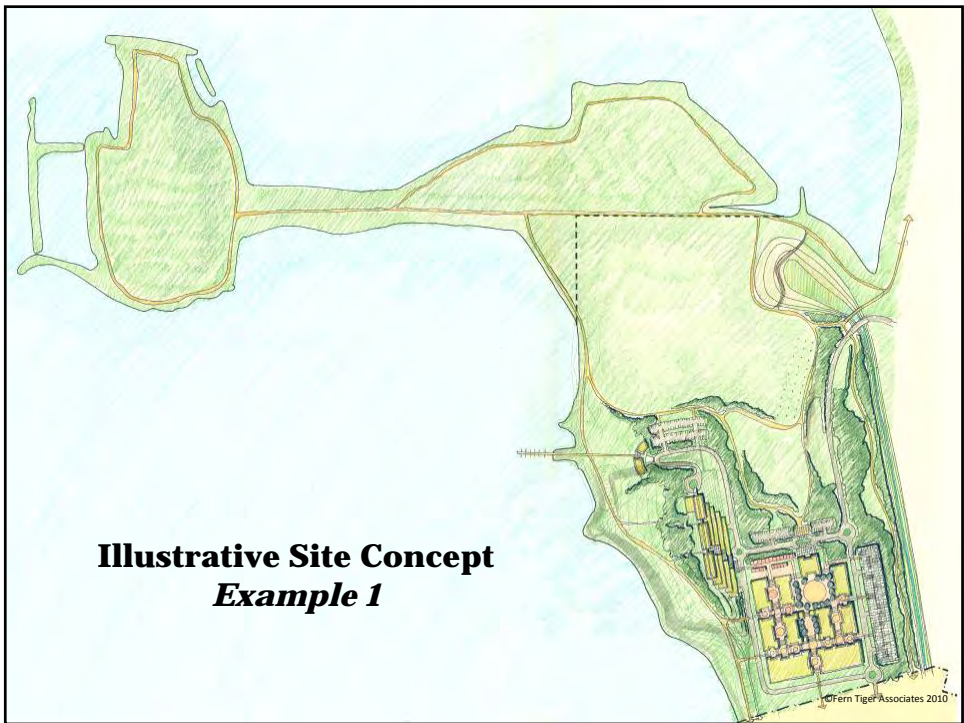


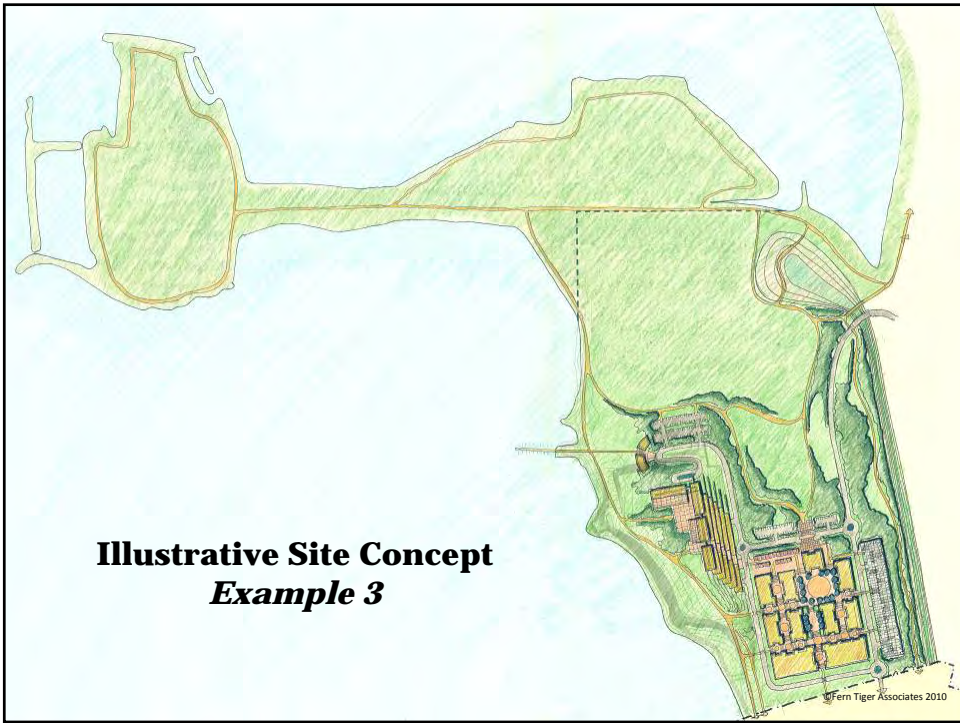
Illustrative Site Concept Maps

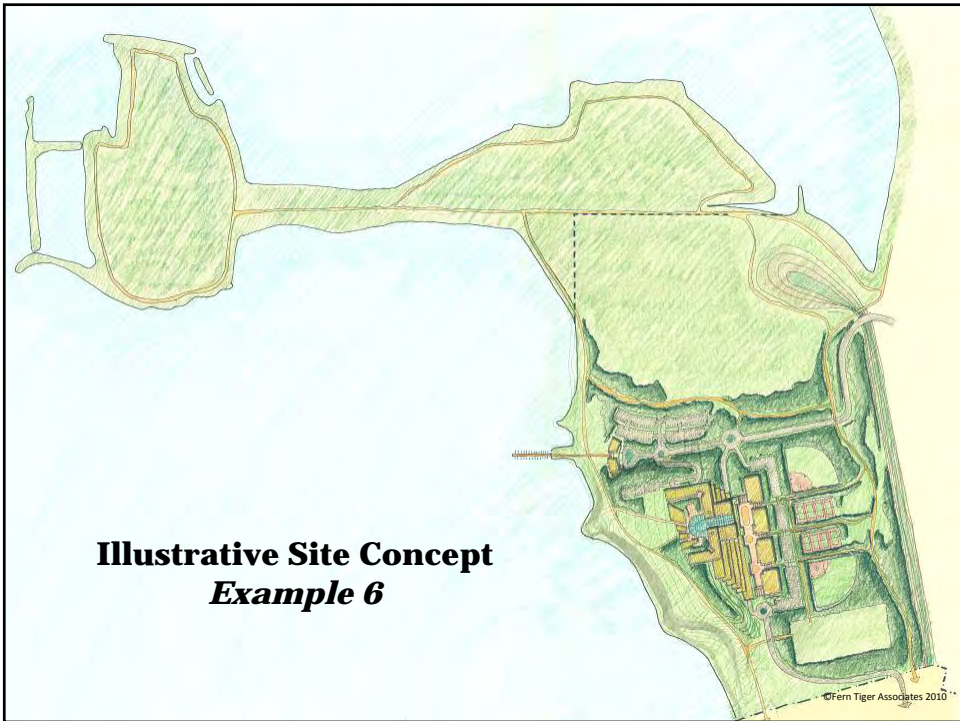
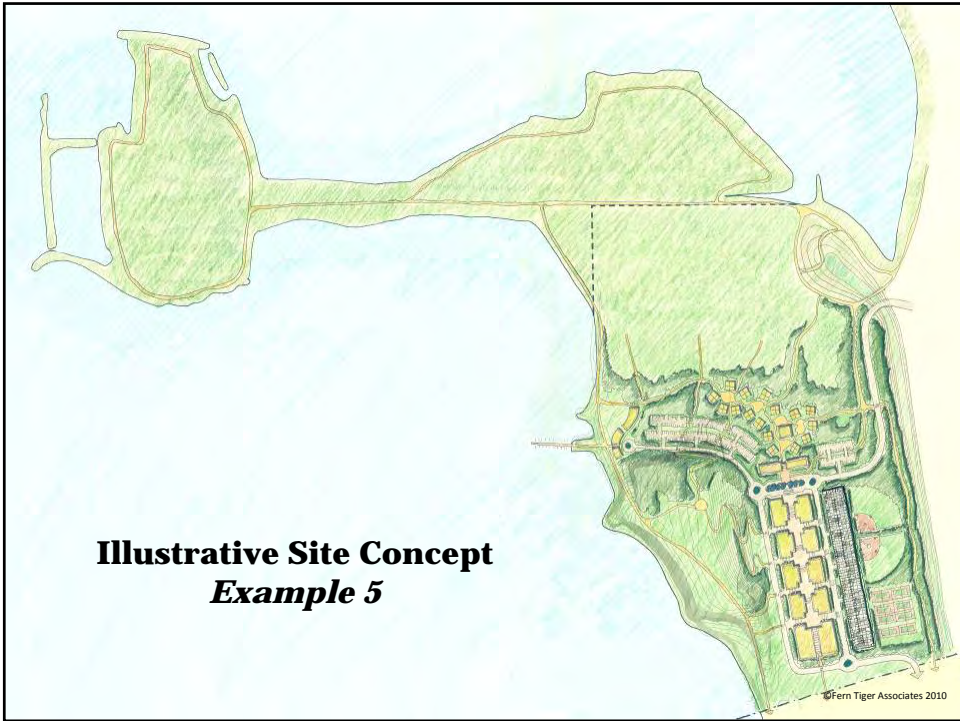


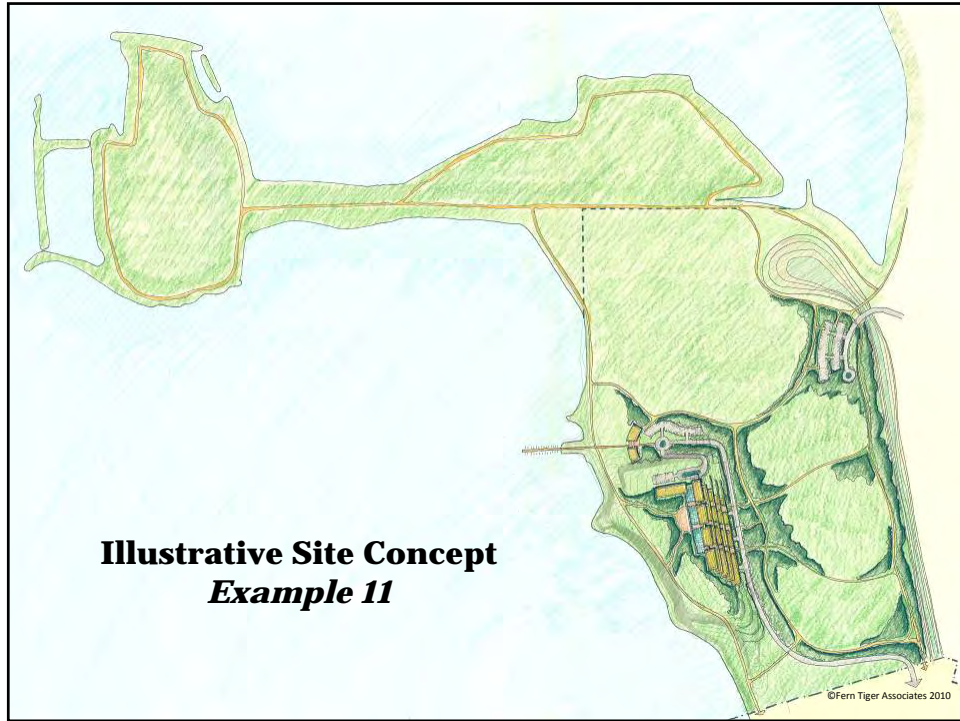
Illustrative Maps: What they are and what they are not

- Report includes 11 “illustrative site concept maps”
- All reflect community desires and guidelines; some do not reflect conventional wisdom about development synergies
- Maps “are” intended as illustrations of what might be within the guidelines; NOT final site plans









END