

Citizens' Planning Initiative to Protect Albany's Shoreline

Albany Shoreline's Future Is Now At Stake.

The city of Albany is preparing to process an application from the Los Angeles developer Caruso Affiliated to build a shopping mall on the north parking lot at Golden Gate Fields. Because this project would have broad, long-term consequences for Albany's entire waterfront, it should be considered in the context of a plan for the *whole* shoreline. We should not allow piecemeal development but should instead formulate a comprehensive plan for the entire waterfront. This plan should address Albany's future needs and take into account possibilities such as Golden Gate Fields' closing. A comprehensive shoreline plan should reflect the views of the majority of people in Albany that Albany's shoreline should be an open space resource with limited development to meet Albany's revenue needs. A community process should be undertaken that Albany controls. The citizens of Albany have already rejected at least 2 shoreline plans proposed by developers; it is time that the city proactively developed a plan for its waterfront rather than continuing to react to plans from developers.

Citizens Have Asked For a Waterfront Planning Process, But the City Council Has Ignored Us.

Many citizens have asked for a community planning process for the Albany shoreline. The city's own Waterfront Committee recommended a comprehensive planning process overseen and paid for by the city, but the City Council ignored this recommendation. It is time to take matters into our own hands and ask the voters to approve a citizens' planning process to protect Albany's shoreline.

What does the Citizens' Planning initiative do?

The *Citizens' Planning Initiative to Protect Albany's Shoreline* will appear on the November 2006 ballot if enough signatures are gathered to qualify it. The initiative requires that the City Council create a Citizens' Committee composed of 15 Albany registered voters selected by various community stakeholders to develop a Specific Plan for the waterfront. The Citizens' Committee meetings would be public and open.

The initiative also sets the following parameters for the planning process.

Shoreline Setback

To ensure that Albany's shoreline is protected as open space, the initiative requires a setback of 500 feet inland from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission line (that line is 100 feet from the water's edge), and southward from the neck of the Albany Bulb to the Berkeley border. This setback is to protect enjoyment of views and protect offshore wildlife (e.g., migrating and other waterfowl), allow natural expansion of the sand dunes behind Albany Beach, and preserve the last natural outcropping along the Bay shore at Fleming Point.

Café, Interpretive Center, Water Sports, Ballfields, and other Recreational Uses

The citizen's planning initiative calls for recreational amenities such as small launches and docks for kayaks, sailboards, and small sailboats as well as the possibility of a nature interpretive center with a small café (like the interpretive center at San Francisco's Crissy Field, for example). Areas would be set aside for ballfields. Other goals include restoring Codornices Creek and wetlands, building an off-leash dog park, and improving public access by completing the Bay Trail and putting in restrooms and drinking fountains at the beach.

The Land Between the Setback and I-80

The Citizens' Committee would plan, for the land between the setback and the freeway, sustainable development that would replace lost revenues to the city if the racetrack closes and that would enhance and complement our Solano Avenue "downtown." Development on the land between the setback and the freeway should be sufficient for a property owner to realize its investment.

Measure C Stays in Effect.

Measure C, passed by Albany voters, requires that any change in waterfront zoning be put to a vote of the people. The Citizen's Planning Initiative mandates that any plan developed by the Citizens' Committee MUST go the voters for their vote and MUST comply with Measure C.

Moratorium on Any Development

No development may proceed on the waterfront while the planning process is in effect so that the people of Albany can plan the future of the waterfront without interference.

Who is Sponsoring the Initiative?

The Citizens' Planning Initiative to protect Albany's Shoreline is sponsored by the Citizens for the Albany Shoreline (CAS), Citizens for Eastshore Parks (CESP), and the Sierra Club and has been officially endorsed by the Sierra Club.