

STATE OF THE CITY REPORT JANUARY 2005

Summary

The City of Albany is known among its residents and businesspeople as having a small-town ambiance in an urban setting. The highly reputable Albany Unified School District attracts families to move to Albany, which has contributed to Albany's rising home prices and stable property tax revenues. The families who move and live here value a safe and healthy environment for their children, as well as sports fields and other parks and recreation services and facilities. Voters have been strong supporters of the local school system, as well as other public services and facility improvements.

To maintain or to enhance a safe and healthy environment, parks and recreation opportunities, and livability of the community requires thoughtful land use decisions, planning and funding infrastructure repair, replacement, and improvements, and the acquisition and investment of resources into a skillful workforce and sufficient equipment, materials, and supplies.

Many challenges and opportunities are currently available to the City for meeting its obligations and desires to provide the community with services and facilities. The policy trends and issues facing Albany cover a variety of services, land use policies, resources, and facilities. Chief among them are:

- Having well-qualified personnel to serve the community, within the context of rising pension and health care costs, competition with more affluent and affordable communities, and dwindling interest in government work.
- Keeping Albany safe, despite shortages in law enforcement staffing and the proximity to access arterials and higher-crime communities.
- Keeping pace with changing and growing desires for diverse and well-maintained parks facilities and recreation services.
- Acquiring funding to repair, replace, and improve City streets, storm drains, sewers, parks, and buildings

- Determining the appropriate process and content for development proposals at Golden Gate Fields, and the role and extent of increased open space and park land
- Negotiating with the University of California, Berkeley, on its planned expansion project at UC Village regarding building heights, environmental impacts, fire service, and fiscal impacts
- Pursuing affordable and senior housing to meet State requirements and local needs
- Working with State and Regional Parks, enhancing the environmental qualities of the Albany waterfront
- Augmenting the retail area in the City's redevelopment district on Eastshore Highway and Cleveland Avenue
- Supporting the viability of Solano Avenue, as a pedestrian-oriented business district
- Adapting to the growing use of the internet for information and communication

This State of the City Report is intended to provide the City Council with a backdrop from which it can establish its goals and priorities and set the direction of the City. Trends and issues facing the City are separated into four categories:

- Services
- Land Use
- Resources
- Infrastructure, Facilities & Environment

The report is not all-inclusive of every trend and issue in Albany, but identifies the significant areas of policy and decision-making for consideration by the City Council.