

Identity Worksheet for the City of Albany

(Draft)

Purpose

The purpose of this worksheet is to help identify and weigh the many different elements that make up the identity of the City of Albany.

Let's define "identity"

For visitors, a city's identity is often perceived as its "look and feel." This typically includes the city's location (site), layout and character, sense of place, streetscape, retail mix, environment, population mix and general vibe. For residents, values and relationships are equally important elements of the identity.

Identity as the *experience* that a city delivers

It's now recognized that a city's identity is much more than the "packaging" of look and feel. The identity that lives on in people's minds and emotions is usually tied to specific *experiences* that a city delivers. Thus, the identity goal is to go deeper than "look and feel." A city's identity can be defined as **the unique experiences that a city delivers to visitors and to its citizens**. These experiences are what make a city (like Albany) *memorable*.

An identity that exists solely in brochures, symbols and/or a motto does not deliver many significant experiences.

What is Albany's current identity? (What are we known for now?)

How (where) does this identity fall short?

Where does it need focus?

Where does it need emphasis?

What are the unique experiences that Albany currently delivers?

1. Location:
2. Layout:
3. Character:
4. Sense of place:
5. Streetscape:
6. Retail mix:
7. Visual delight:
8. Environment:
9. Population mix:
10. General vibe:
11. Values
12. Relationships

What new/better experiences would we like to provide in the future?

**What kind of *strategic identity* would pay the greatest dividends to Albany?
(This identity would give Albany a competitive advantage vs. other cities.)**

Aside from location and physical amenities, what sets Albany apart from its neighbor communities?

1. Any particular passion?
2. Any particular competence or expertise?
3. Any particular creative talent?
4. Any particular business specialty?
5. Any cultural attribute or mix that might be leveraged?

Is Albany a "suburb"? If not, why not?

Do we want Albany to be a high-energy place? Or a laid-back place?

What is *interesting* about Albany? How can we make the following elements more interesting?

1. Solano Avenue
2. San Pablo Avenue
3. Albany Hill
4. Waterfront
5. Parks
6. Retail mix
7. Other

What makes Albany special?

Currently Albany is a *Mecca* for _____

Albany is *the only place around* where you can _____

Albany is *so cool* because _____

Albany is a jumping off place for _____

Is there any other similar-sized city that could serve as a model for Albany?

Does Albany have a sense of place? If so, what is it? Where is it? What is the focus? How can it be improved?

How does Albany's retail experience and identity compare to:

1. Fourth St. in Berkeley?
2. Piedmont Ave. in Oakland?

Do we want to model our retail mix and retail quality after any of the above?

Do we want Solano Avenue and San Pablo Avenue to be more upscale? (El Cerrito has this goal for San Pablo Ave.)

Can Albany's cultural mix be a leading factor in its identity?

Should Albany create an event-based identity that transcends Solano Stroll? (That is, we become a venue of events throughout the year.)

What kind of welcome and wayfinding strategy do we want for Albany?

1. What are the gateways into the city?
2. What is the "entrance experience" that we want to deliver?

3. Where do we want people to go?

Can we attract any new businesses (or business cluster) that could contribute positively to Albany's identity?

We can develop an identity strategy to deliver target revenue to the City's bottom line. What might that revenue target be?