



# VOICES TO VISION

ALBANY WATERFRONT

Listen • Learn  
Consider • Contemplate  
Dream • Discuss  
Prioritize • Propose  
Analyze • Articulate

INFORMATION AND GUIDE TO PARTICIPATION IN PART ONE OF CITY AND WATERFRONT VISIONING



[www.voicestovision.com](http://www.voicestovision.com)



## INSIDE

**About the Waterfront**  
*History; maps; land descriptions; ownership*

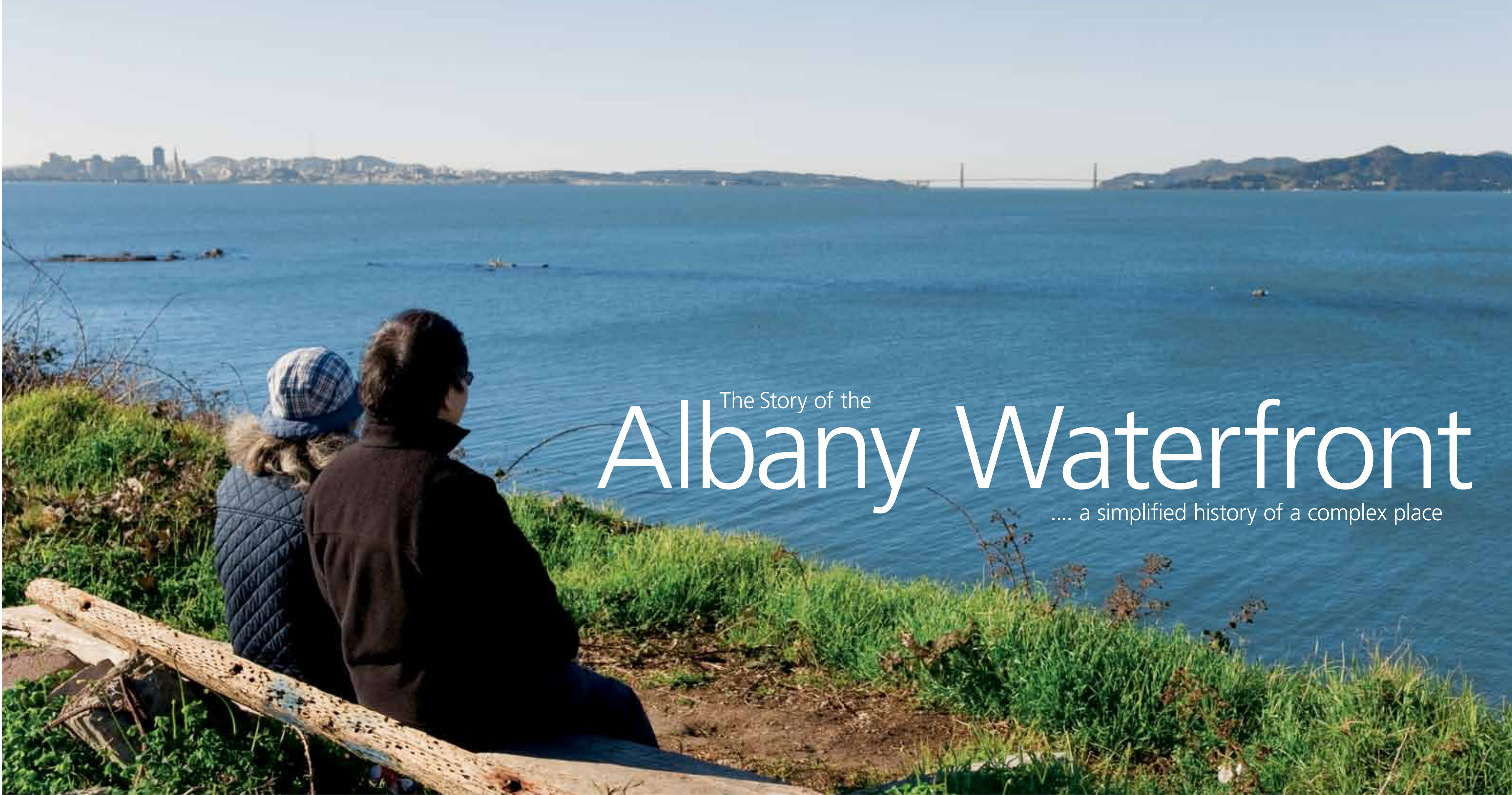
**About Albany**  
*Demographics; zoning; financial data*

**About Participation**  
*The process to create a vision for Albany and its waterfront*

**Questions, Terms**  
*FAQs; glossary*







# The Story of the Albany Waterfront

.... a simplified history of a complex place

**A**t the end of Buchanan Street, just west of Interstate 80, lies the Albany waterfront. The contradictions and complexities of the site are easily apparent. Breathtaking views of San Francisco, the Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay bridges, Alcatraz, and Angel Island can all be seen from a shoreline that has changed little since its days as a landfill site for construction debris. The southern portion includes Golden Gate Fields Racetrack and its vast parking area – often empty as a result of changes in attendance over recent decades and the increased popularity of off-track betting. The land to the north is called the “Plateau.” This large, flat, open area looks somewhat like the “overflow” parking lot it once was, but a portion is now fenced off to protect a recently-created habitat for burrowing owls. To the west is land, known as the “Bulb,” which belongs to the city of Albany, but is planned to be incorporated into the Eastshore State Park – a park that includes, and protects, most of the undeveloped land on the Bay shoreline between the foot of the San Francisco Bay Bridge in Oakland and Richmond’s Marina Bay neighborhood. On the Bulb, foot paths wind their way between large slabs of broken concrete. Volunteer plants are mixed in with fanciful anonymous art and homemade structures created by a small, dedicated community that loves this “wild,” little peninsula.

Despite numerous efforts over more than four decades by both private and public owners to address the potential of this expansive and unique acreage, there have been only two transformative changes to the Albany waterfront since the 1960s: in 1983 when the Bay fill and dumping operation was closed down, and in 2002 when the Eastshore State Park was created. The latter action further protected the public lands (e.g., Plateau and northern part of the Albany shoreline) from development. Tensions – between commercial and recreational uses, between public and private interests, and perhaps most important, between ambitious aspirations and limited resources – have led to what many call a community “stalemate” that has blocked attempts to remake the Albany waterfront. Each of the three recent owners of the Golden Gate Fields property (Santa Fe Pacific Realty Corporation, Ladbroke Land Holdings, and Magna Entertainment Corporation) have advanced ideas that would require re-zoning in order to build large-scale commercial developments on the property, and each time Albany residents have resisted, and ultimately those proposals were withdrawn.

Now, for the first time, the city of Albany has decided to stop reacting to private proposals, and instead to develop an independent vision for the kind of waterfront that residents will be proud to call their own – *one vision created by many voices*.

## Early History: The Waterfront Takes Shape

The Albany waterfront is the result of a colorful history. It was first settled by members of an Ohlone Indian tribe - the Huchiun - who left behind shell mounds and grindstones by Cerrito Creek at the base of Albany Hill. The Native American population was displaced by Mexican and Spanish settlers in the early 1800s when a large area of the East Bay, including what is now the Albany waterfront – consisting mostly of a large salt marsh and an island called El Cerrito del Sur – was granted to Luis Maria Peralta in 1820 by the Spanish governor who controlled the region at the time. The Peralta family

sold the island (which is now the site of the Golden Gate Fields grandstand) to John Fleming and what is left of that parcel is known today as Fleming Point. In 1879, the Giant Powder Company, suppliers of dynamite to the gold miners of the Sierra, selected Fleming Point as the company’s location after frequent accidental explosions made the company unwelcome in San Francisco. Dynamite factories dominated the Albany waterfront until 1905 when they were replaced with less explosive chemical factories.

The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake brought thousands of displaced San Franciscans to the East Bay. In those years, Berkeley residents used the edge of the marsh at Fleming Point as a garbage dump. History tells us that Albany was incorporated as a city to stop Berkeley from dumping its garbage there, making protection of the waterfront critical to the founding of the city (originally incorporated as Ocean View in 1908, and renamed Albany, in 1909.) Over time, the area between the shore and the island fused, eliminating El Cerrito del Sur, and creating what we know today as the Albany waterfront.

## Golden Gate Fields: Horse Racing Comes to Albany

In 1939, Santa Fe Southern Pacific Corporation, which owned most of Albany’s waterfront, leased about 130 acres to the Golden Gate Turf Club to create the Golden Gate Fields Racetrack (100 acres in Albany; 30 in Berkeley). The track has dominated the Albany waterfront and been an important part of the city for the past 70 years. To create Golden Gate Fields, the top portion of Fleming Point was removed and used as fill to build the track and parking area. The grandstand and clubhouse were built on the remaining part of Fleming Point.

In 1944, the racetrack was taken over by the U.S. Navy and used as a site to repair amphibious vehicles and to house as many as 3,000 service men. The Navy re-engineered the track area to support its repair work, and when the land was returned to Golden Gate Turf Club, a new track was constructed. Golden Gate Fields re-opened in 1947, and has been in continuous operation as one of California’s premier thoroughbred horse racing venues ever since.





PHOTO: MICHAEL LAVESKY

**4000 B.C.** (roughly) San Francisco Bay reaches current levels **1820** Spanish colonial governor grants land that includes what is now Albany to Luís María Peralta who calls the area *Rancho San Antonio* **1842** Peralta gives land we know as Albany and Berkeley to son, José; land called Codornices

THE CREATION OF EASTSHORE STATE PARK

In 1961, Save the Bay was founded by Sylvia McLaughlin, Esther Gulick, and Kay Kerr to stop the wide-spread practice of dumping garbage and fill materials into the shallow edges of the San Francisco Bay. These early efforts grew into a movement to preserve the shoreline and to provide permanent access to it by creating a shoreline park.

Over the next four decades, Save the Bay, Sierra Club, and later, Citizens for the Eastshore State Park, successfully organized opposition to dozens of proposals for commercial development on the 8.5 miles of waterfront from Oakland to Richmond. In the 1970s, park advocates got the support of then-State Assemblyman Tom Bates and were able to pass successive rounds of state and regional bond measures to fund the creation of what is now known as the Eastshore State Park. Despite the success of the bond measures, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) was less than enthusiastic about an urban park on former landfill sites and made the park a low priority. Park advocates were able to get legislation passed in 1992, designating the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) the lead agency for acquisition and planning for the Park. This effort created an unusual, but effective, collaboration between EBRPD and CDPR that led to the purchase of the current park lands. Today, Eastshore State Park is comprised of 260 acres of dry land and 2,002 acres of tidelands, protecting most of the undeveloped shoreline sites from the foot of the Bay Bridge in Oakland to the Marina Bay neighborhood in Richmond.

Sources: Eastshore Park Project: Resource Summary. 2001; Eastshore State Park General Plan. 2002; Creating the Eastshore State Park: An Activist History. 2002. Norman La Force.

THE ADOPTION OF MEASURE C

In 1989, Albany voters approved Measure C, the Citizens Waterfront Approval Initiative, which requires a majority vote of Albany residents to change the land use and zoning regulations on any property west of I-80/I-580 within the city of Albany. Amendments to the Waterfront Master Plan or any development agreement on waterfront lands would also require voter approval.

Allowable uses (subject to use permits) include park and recreation facilities; utilities (major, minor, and underground); commercial recreation, including horse racing; restaurants and bars; marinas, boat-launching ramps; parking (non-residential); and waterfront- and sports-related commercial sales and services. Current and future owners of any part of this property will need the approval of Albany voters for any uses other than those specifically described.

Sources: Eastshore State Park General Plan. 2002; Creating the Eastshore State Park: An Activist History. 2002. Norman La Force; Albany Municipal Code: Zoning Ordinance. 2004.

Development vs. Preservation:  
The Tug-of-War over the Albany Waterfront

In the early 1960s, environmental groups, led by the newly-formed Save the Bay Association, were trying to stop fill operations that had already drained and filled thirty percent of the Bay and threatened another forty percent. In the face of this opposition, in 1963, the city of Albany granted a license to a landfill operator that permitted dumping construction debris and garden waste into the Bay at the end of Buchanan Street, north of the racetrack. In 1965, Save the Bay led the effort to create the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), a state agency that regulates fill and development on the San Francisco Bay shoreline. BCDC sued the city of Albany in 1966 to stop the landfill operation, but they were unsuccessful and the fill continued until 1983. (Ironically, it is the landfill that created most of what has become the 88 acres of public park at the waterfront, including the areas we know as the Plateau, Neck, and Bulb.)

In 1985, the Sierra Club, Save the Bay, and others created Citizens for the Eastshore State Park, later renamed Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP) – a group dedicated to the preservation of waterfront land and to the creation of a state park, along the shore from Oakland to Richmond. In the same year, Santa Fe Pacific Realty Corp. (Santa Fe), then owners of Golden Gate Fields, authorized the preparation of a “program EIR” with six scenarios, ranging from a park to 3.7 million square feet of hotel, office, commercial, and residential development, and 61 acres of parks and open space (including what we now call the Plateau and part of the Neck.) Throughout this period, support for a state park was building and money was allocated from several agencies for this purpose. In 1985, Albany secured a lease agreement to incorporate the Bulb into the future Eastshore State Park. Santa Fe – in its efforts at commercial development – was fighting an uphill battle.

In 1988, the movement to create Eastshore State Park got a major boost with the passage of bond measures for land acquisition along the shoreline, sponsored by California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). Funding was now available to bring to reality the long-standing dream of a shoreline park. During the four years (1985 to 1989) that Santa Fe’s development proposal was under formal environmental review, it became obvious to the company that it didn’t have the community support it needed to complete the development. Santa Fe withdrew its proposal in 1989 and sold Golden Gate Fields to Ladbroke Land Holdings (Ladbroke), a British-based company.

Soon after the sale, Albany citizens passed Measure C (see sidebar story) which created the additional step of voter approval to any decisions about waterfront zoning. With the enactment of Measure C in 1990 (and still in place today), any change to waterfront land use regulations requires direct approval by a majority of Albany voters.

In 1996, the city of Albany built the Albany Waterfront Trail (a segment of the Bay Trail) with a grant from the Coastal Conservancy. The Trail parallels Buchanan Street and provides wheelchair-accessible bird watching platforms that overlook the Albany State Marine Reserve to the north. Two years later, the potential for an Eastshore State Park at the waterfront greatly increased when California Department of Parks and Recreation acquired the 30-acre Plateau property. A year later, in 1999, Ladbroke sold Golden Gate Fields to Magna Entertainment Corporation (MEC), a horse racing group founded by Canadian auto parts entrepreneur Frank Stronach.

In 2002, after almost 40 years of citizen activism, Eastshore State Park was formally established – extending 8.5 miles along the shoreline from Oakland to Richmond. The park designation protects most of the undeveloped shoreline land, including 260 acres of dry land and 2,002 acres of tidelands.

Beginning in 2002, MEC attempted to develop the Golden Gate Fields property, while preserving the racetrack. The first proposal was called Rancho San Antonio – 650,000 sq. ft. of new retail, commercial, and entertainment development on the north and west sides of Fleming Point and additional development on the portion of its property that lies in Berkeley. MEC withdrew the proposal in 2004 when it failed to get a positive reception.

In 2005, working with southern California developer Caruso Affiliated, MEC advanced a conceptual plan to develop a constellation of upscale retail establishments and related mixed-use development, totaling up to 800,000 sq. ft. on 45 acres, primarily on the northern parking lot of the Golden Gate Fields property. MEC and Caruso impressed some Albany residents with their willingness to engage the community and incorporate open space and community service facilities into their plans, but others were critical and skeptical. After more than a year of concerted efforts, during which time several Albany waterfront-focused groups emerged, MEC and Caruso withdrew the plan.

The MEC/Caruso process left bitter feelings in its wake – with supporters and opponents of MEC’s plans, each accusing the other of rigidity and misinformation. In 2006, a slate of city council candidates, opposed to the type and density of development that MEC had proposed, won a hotly-contested election in which the future of the waterfront was a significant issue.

Voices to Vision:  
Shaping the Future of the Waterfront

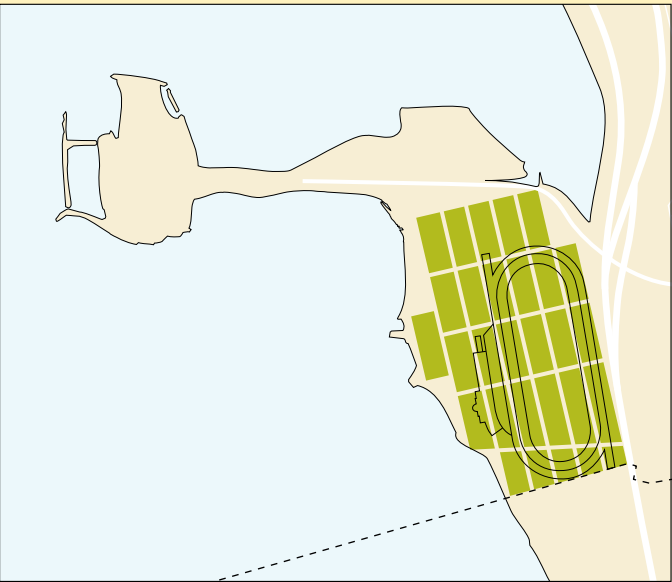
In 2007, Albany decided to engage residents in a process that it hoped would help heal the divisions that have emerged over site development issues in recent years, and also engage a broad cross-section of residents to come together to develop a shared vision for the waterfront. To create this vision, in the Spring of 2008 the city of Albany, through its Waterfront Committee, selected Fern Tiger Associates to design and implement a program to involve the broad Albany community in a participatory process through which the voices of Albany residents will formulate a clear and strategic vision for the future of the city’s shoreline.

Sources: Images of America: Albany. Karen Sorensen and the Albany Historical Society. 2007; Creating the Eastshore State Park: An Activist History. Norman La Force. 2002; The Green Loop: A Sustainable Vision for the Albany Waterfront. Susan Moffat. 2006; <http://www.eastshorepark.org>; 1995 Solid Waste Assessment Test for the City of Albany Landfill; Albany Waterfront Lands, Draft Environmental Impact Report. 1989; Eastshore State Park Project: Resource Summary. 2001; Rancho San Antonio Specific Plan Application. Magna Entertainment Corporation. 2002; Albany: The Home City. 1931; Eastshore State Park General Plan. 2002; A Selective History of the Codornices - University Village, the City of Albany and Environs. Warren F. Lee and Catherine T. Lee. 2000; Off Leash. Thomas McCabe. 2007; Visioning Processes. October 2005 - July 2006; Stories of Albany. Catherine J. Webb. 1983; Albany Municipal Code: Zoning Ordinance. 2004; <http://www.carusoafliliated.com/newsroom>; <http://www.ladbroke.com>; <http://www.parks.ca.gov>; 1999 Stock Purchase Agreement. Magna Entertainment.

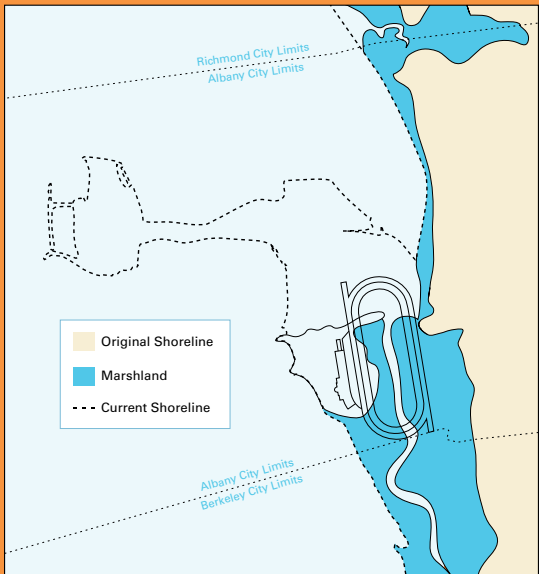
COMPARATIVE LAND ACREAGE



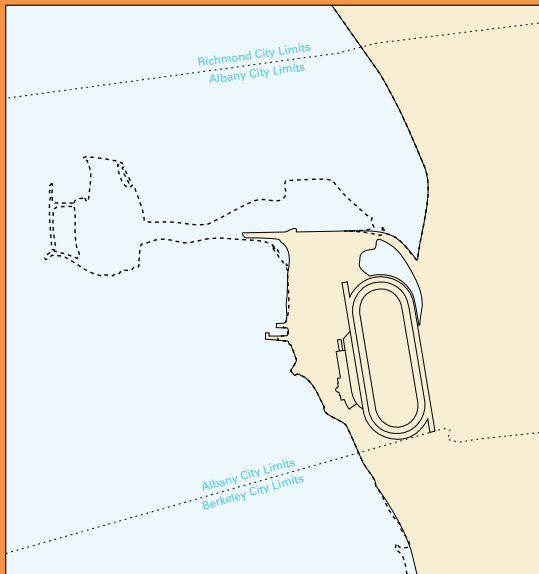
ALBANY CITY BLOCKS  
OVERLAID ON WATERFRONT



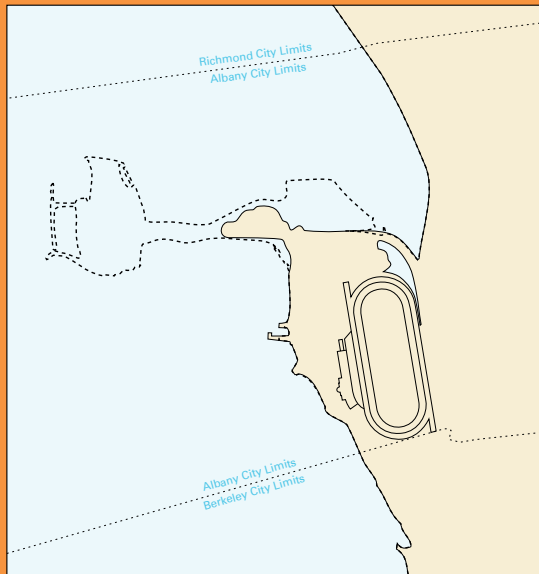
THE EVOLUTION OF THE ALBANY WATERFRONT



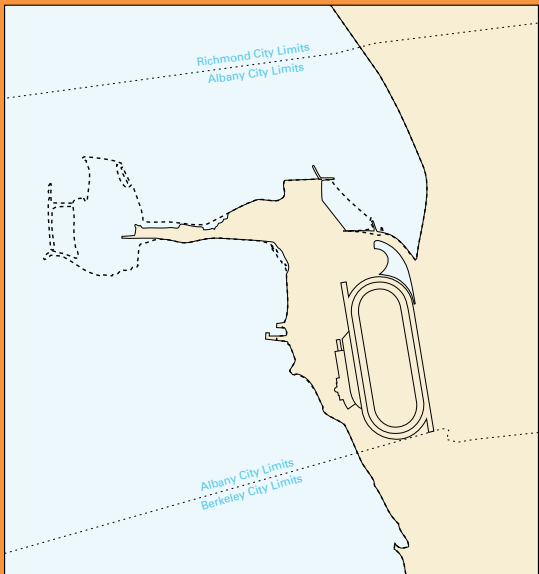
1850



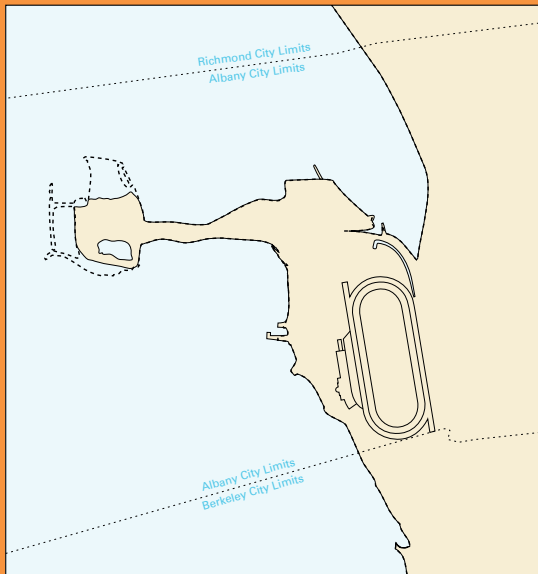
1949



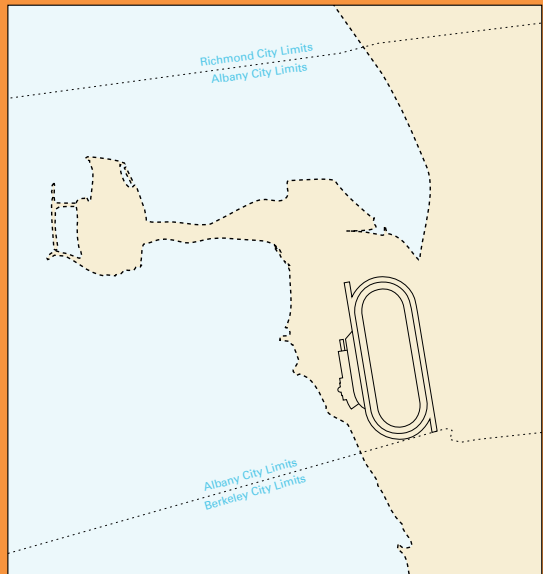
1959



1966

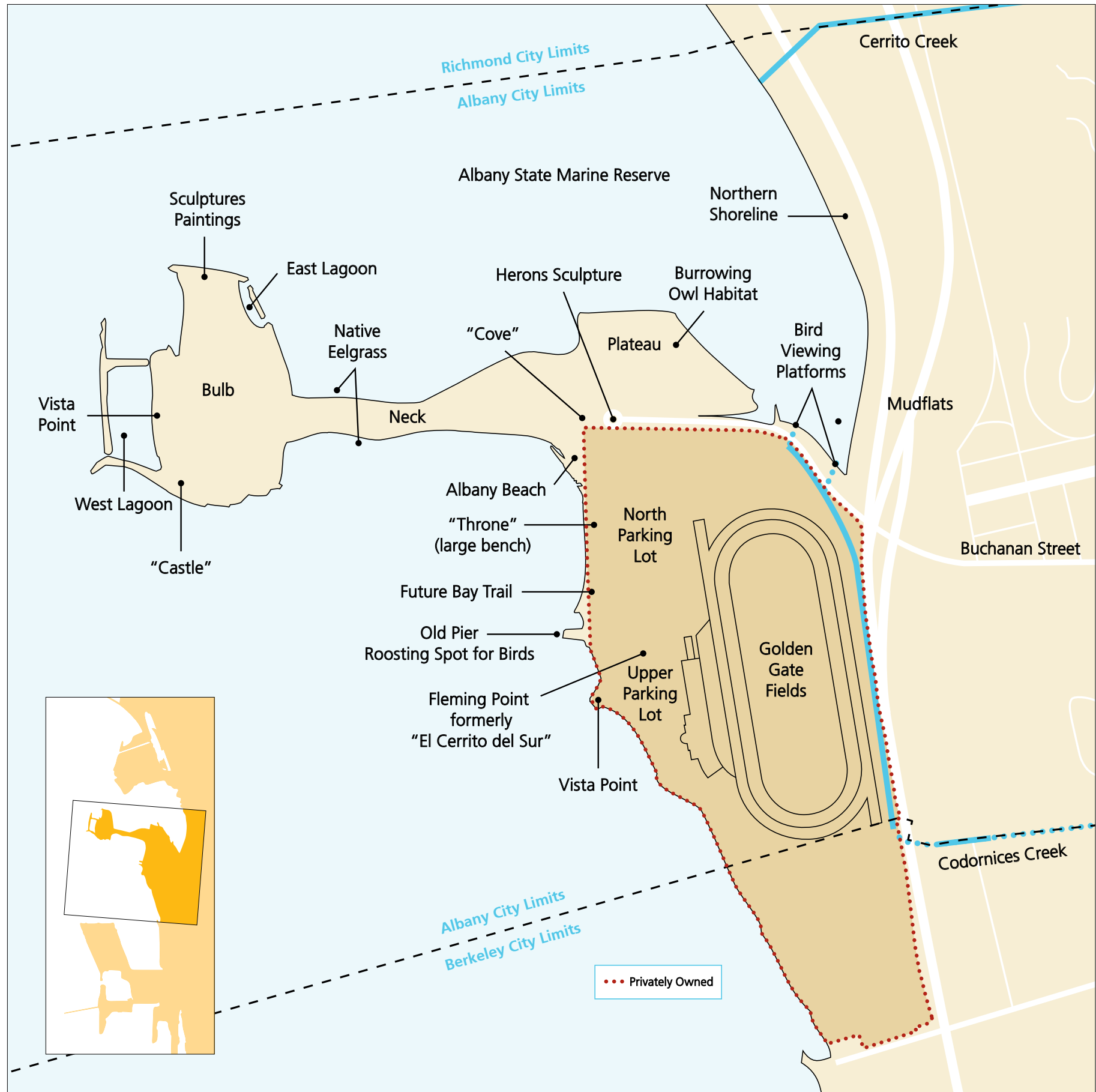


1969



2009





This series of maps is intended to provide a sense of the Albany waterfront in 2009, based on publicly-available data collected between 1989 and 2009. While some of the information is nearly 20 years old (*geological characteristics and noise levels*), other information is current (*land use designations, ownership, zoning, access, and creeks, wetlands, and mudflats*). In all instances, the information displayed here reflects the most currently available public data. In spite of the date of the older information, the maps, collectively, present an accurate and useful picture of the waterfront, with little known change to either the geological or noise references. *Waterfront Points of Interest* provides an overview of the distinct parts of the waterfront as well as some "less official" landmarks and points of note.

**Sources:** California Department of Parks and Recreation, *Eastshore Park Project Resource Summary Map* (RS-6), 2001 and *Eastshore State Park General Plan*, 2002; city of Emeryville: *General Plan Land Use Map*; city of Berkeley, *Official Zoning Map*; city of Albany, *Official Zoning Map* and *Albany Creek Map*; city of Richmond, *General Plan Land Use Map*; *Draft Environmental Impact Report: Albany Waterfront Lands*, Exhibits 78, 94, 105, September 1989; Friends of Five Creeks: *Hydrology Feasibility Study for Expansion of Buchanan Street Marsh*, Albany, CA, 2002; Bancroft Library, University of California; *Berkeley Creek and Watershed Map of the County and Vicinity of the Cerrito de San Antonio Creek*, 1861; Oakland Museum of California, *Watershed Map of Oakland and Berkeley*, 1850; East Bay Regional Park District: *Burrowing Owl Habitat Map*, [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org); correspondence with Patricia Donald.

#### WATERFRONT POINTS OF INTEREST

(Land and tidelands west of I-580/I-80 within city of Albany)

**Albany Beach** Land strip south of Neck, west of Golden Gate Fields' north parking lot

**Albany State Marine Reserve** Mudflats and shallow bay; protected from boat traffic

**Bulb** Waterfront land that extends farthest west into the Bay; starts at the end of the Neck

**Burrowing Owl Habitat** Created at the Plateau as a mitigation related to the construction of the Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex, south of Golden Gate Fields in Berkeley

**Cerrito Creek** Forms northern border of Albany; flows north of Albany Hill and under I-80 and I-580 before emptying into the Bay north of Albany mudflats

**Codornices Creek** Forms southern border of Albany; flows from hills, under I-80, north along eastern edge of GGF Racetrack into Albany mudflats at Buchanan Street

**"Cove"** Created from recycled Solano Avenue sidewalk, through a commission from the city of Albany to sculptor Carlo Ferretti in 1999

**Eastshore State Park (ESP)** Within Albany includes Plateau, Beach, all shoreline between Fleming Point and Richmond border at Cerrito Creek (except shoreline of Bulb), and Albany State Marine Reserve (which includes Albany mudflats)

**Fleming Point** Original bedrock on which GGF club house, grandstand, and upper parking lot sit

**Golden Gate Fields (GGF)** Privately-owned property in Albany (racetrack, related buildings, and land between city's southern border and Buchanan Street, excluding strip of shoreline north of Fleming Point)

**Herons** Metal sculpture created by Mark Canepa; commissioned by city of Albany

**Lagoons** Enclosed salt water pools at west and east ends of Bulb; cut off from Bay, except in high tide; important spots for migratory and year-round roosting birds

**Mudflats** Bay mud area, north of Buchanan Street exposed at low tide; fed with fresh water by Codornices, Marin, Village, and Cerrito creeks

**Old Pier** Remains of original pier just north of Fleming Point; served water taxis in 1930s and U.S. Navy operations at GGF during World War II

**Neck** Narrow strip of land connecting end of Buchanan Street to Bulb

**Northern Shoreline** Shore north of Buchanan Street to Richmond border

**Plateau** Elevated, flat land north of western end of Buchanan Street, overlooking Albany State Marine Reserve



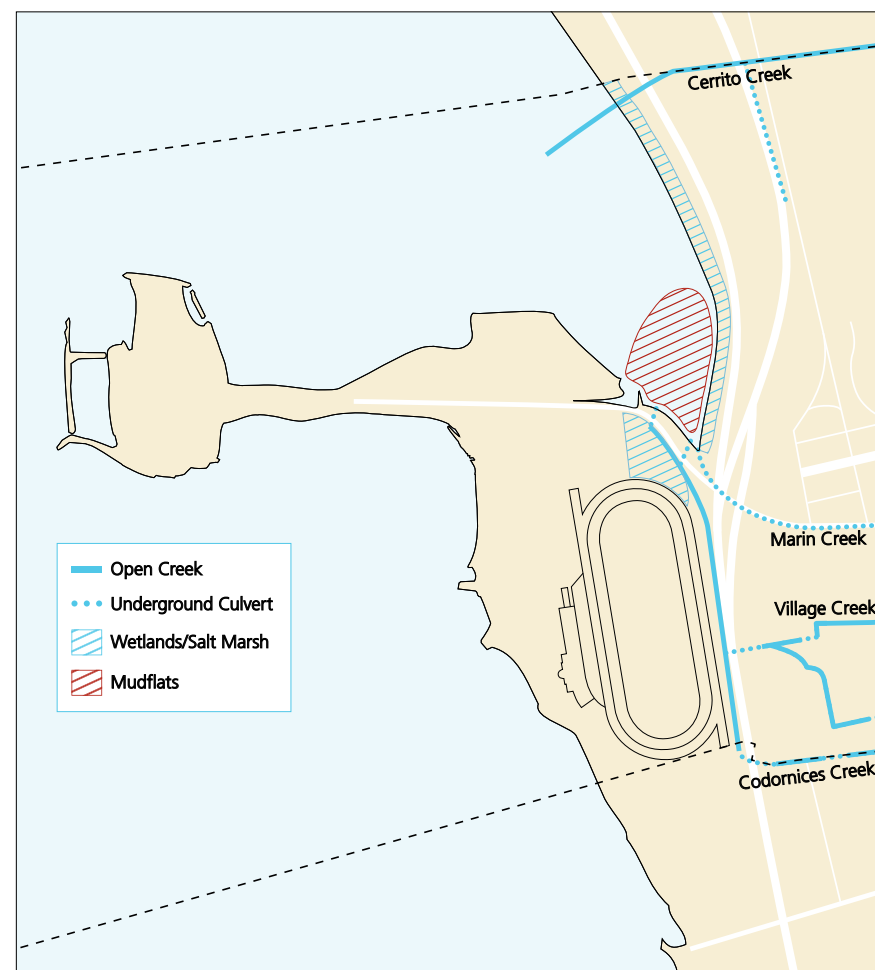
#### EASTSHORE STATE PARK MANAGEMENT ZONES 2009

Land use designations, as noted in Eastshore State Park General Plan, with additional indication of Burrowing Owl Habitat.



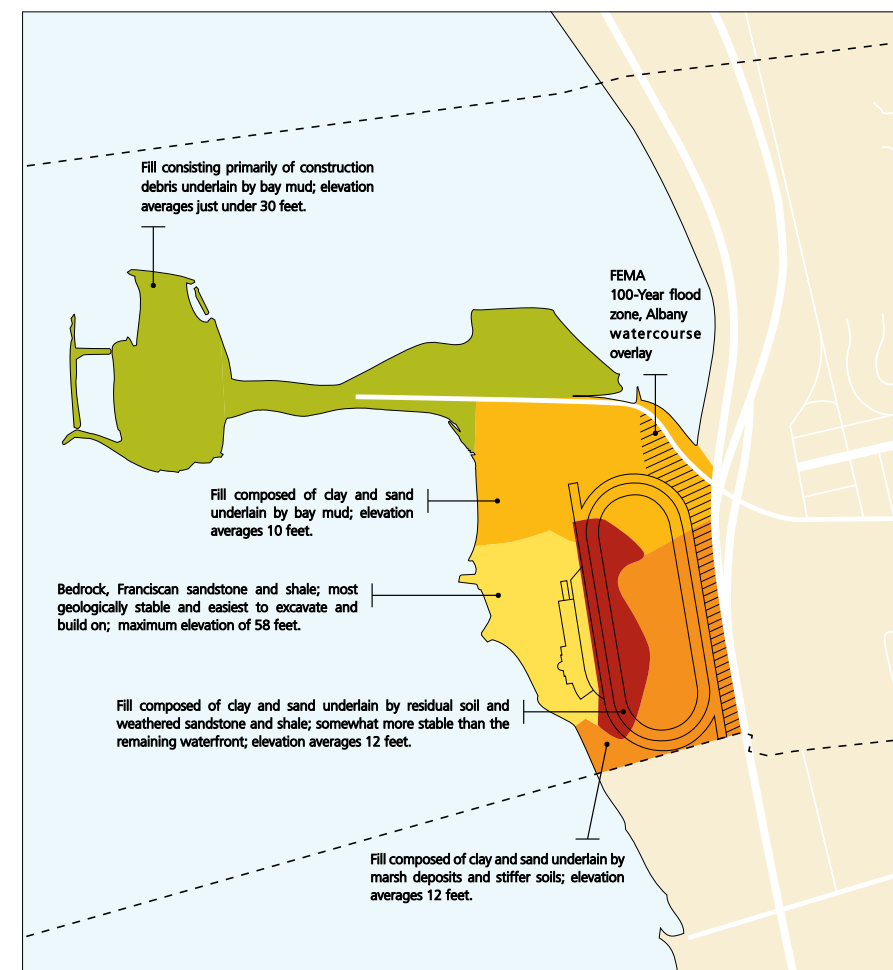
#### OWNERSHIP AND ACREAGE 2009

Privately- and publicly-owned lands comprising the 190-acre waterfront area (Note: Magna Entertainment Corporation [MEC] owns 102 acres at Albany waterfront plus additional acreage in Berkeley, where horses are stabled).



#### CREEKS, WETLANDS, AND MUDFLATS 2009

Open creeks, underground culverts, wetlands, and mudflats at Albany waterfront.



#### GEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS 1989

Soil conditions and construction challenges related to site.



#### NOISE LEVELS 1989

Indicates comparative noise levels at different parts of the waterfront, related to proximity to I-580/I-80.

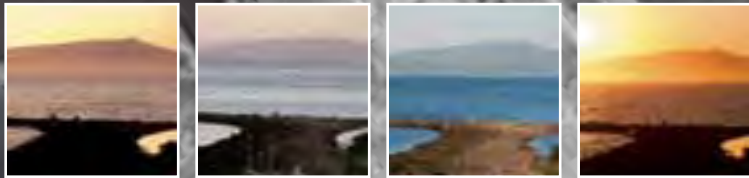


#### ACCESS 2009

Detailed information related to paths at waterfront, as well as paths that connect waterfront to populated and commercial areas of Albany east of I-580/I-80 (not shown: auto access at Buchanan and Gilman streets).



*“We have an incredible opportunity to have a great park that would connect to other park and habitat areas, and to have a great shoreline that’s publicly used and available and open.”*

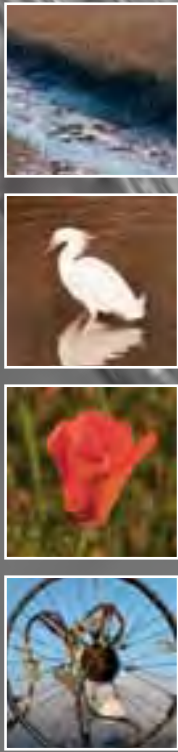


*“Whatever happens, I just hope the Bulb is left alone. It’s a one-of-a-kind place, and I worry that any changes to nearby land will ruin this unbelievable resource.”*

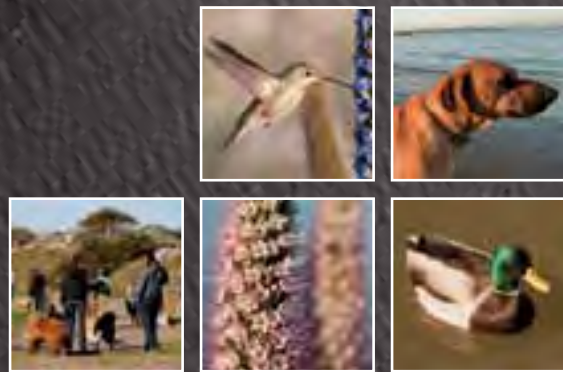


*“I think it’s the most beautiful place in the world.”*

*“This property is among the most desirable in the entire Bay Area. As a community we have a lot of power to decide what we want at this site, and I believe we can make happen what we want here.”*



*“It’s a beautiful site that has the opportunity to offer many things to many people, including cafes, a hotel, shopping, and still be a park.”*



*“I’d like to see linkages and connections and reason to go there. There’s nothing there for the average person now.”*



*“The Albany waterfront needs to be exemplary. It should set a standard for urban waterfronts and the urban interface.”*

SOURCE: INTERVIEWS WITH, AND COMMENTS BY, ALBANY RESIDENTS, 2008. FERN TIGER ASSOCIATES





1963 License granted to dump in Bay at end of Buchanan Street 1965 Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) created 1966 BCDC sues to stop Albany andfill; city countersues; and wins 1969 Albany adopts *Albany Isles* plan 1974 City Council forms Waterfront Committee 1976 Albany Waterfront Master Plan adopted

# VOICE YOUR VISION

A Step-by-Step Guide to finding your time and location to participate in creating a Vision for Albany and its Waterfront

- 1

Find your residence on the map and note the zone number (1-31).
- 2

Check the Sessions List to find the time and location for your zone.
- 3

RSVP to [rsvp@voicestovision.com](mailto:rsvp@voicestovision.com) or call (510) 444-4567.
- 4

Come to the session, participate, and *voice your vision*.

Please make every effort to attend the session designated for your neighborhood (zone), as the number of facilitators and meeting room sizes are limited. If, for some reason, you cannot come on your date and time, or if you have special requirements (language or child care), please call as soon as possible to discuss options that work for you and your family.

Please RSVP as soon as possible, but no later than five days before your session. All locations subject to change; will be confirmed at time of RSVP.

## VOICES TO VISION

A process designed to engage the Albany community in an informed dialogue about its vision for the city and its waterfront

- WHO

Albany residents and other concerned individuals
- WHAT

A highly participatory process with small groups
- WHEN

May 16 through June 30 (approximately six opportunities to participate each week — weekends and evenings — one time only per person )
- WHERE

At public places such as the community center, schools, senior center; the city has been divided into 31 “zones” or mini-neighborhoods; each zone is invited to a particular session, although you can request alternate dates or times if necessary
- WHY

To ensure maximum participation and meaningful discussion; to gather input from residents about their vision for Albany and its waterfront; and to educate and inform Albany residents about opportunities and challenges related to the Albany waterfront. (There are also sessions specially designated for local business owners, Albany youth, and regional stakeholders who do not live in Albany, but who would like to participate\*\*)
- HOW

Small group sessions — approximately two hours in length, professionally facilitated — featuring interactive, sequential activities designed to challenge participants to consider important information (facts and assumptions) and individual perceptions as they reflect on their own vision for the Albany waterfront, and how that vision matches or differs from others in the community. The process will be supported by data and visual materials, created specifically for these sessions, which have been designed to encourage participation. Sessions are divided into three main parts: Visions for Albany; Facts and Assumptions — Agreeing to Agree or Disagree; and Creating a Vision for the Albany Waterfront

\*\* Call 444-4567 (e-mail: [rsvp@voicestovision.com](mailto:rsvp@voicestovision.com)) for information about session dates for local business owners, Albany youth, and for session dates for non-Albany regional stakeholders.



## SESSIONS LIST, BY ZONE \*\*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Tuesday, June 30<br>7:00 - 9:00pm, Senior Center | 17 Sunday, June 14<br>10am-noon, Senior Center       |
| 2 Tuesday, May 26<br>7-9pm, 555 Pierce St.         | 18 Saturday, June 13<br>10am-noon, Cornell School*   |
| 3 Saturday, May 16<br>2-4PM, Ocean View School     | 19 Wednesday, June 13<br>7-9pm, Comm. Center/Library |
| 4 Saturday, June 20<br>1-3pm, Senior Center        | 20 Sunday, May 24<br>5-7pm, Comm. Center/Library     |
| 5 Wednesday, June 3<br>7-9pm Village Comm. Center  | 21 Saturday, May 16<br>10am-noon, Senior Center      |
| 6 Thursday, June 11<br>7-9pm, Comm. Center/Library | 22 Saturday, May 23<br>1-3pm, Marin School*          |
| 7 Thursday, June 18<br>7-9pm, Comm. Center/Library | 23 Thursday, May 21<br>7-9pm, Comm. Center/Library   |
| 8 Sunday, May 31<br>5-7pm, Comm. Center/Library    | 24 Sunday, May 31<br>2-4pm, Comm. Center/Library     |
| 9 Saturday, May 30<br>10am-noon, Senior Center     | 25 Sunday, June 21<br>2-4pm, Comm. Center/Library    |
| 10 Saturday, June 20<br>10am-noon, Senior Center   | 26 Thursday, June 25<br>7-9pm, Comm. Center/Library  |
| 11 Sunday, May 24<br>2-4pm, Comm. Center/Library   | 27 Sunday, June 14<br>1-3pm, Senior Center           |
| 12 Saturday, June 13<br>1-3pm, Cornell School*     | 28 Saturday, May 23<br>10-noon, Marin School*        |
| 13 Sunday, June 7<br>5-7pm, Comm. Center/Library   | 29 Saturday, May 30<br>1-3 pm, Senior Center         |
| 14 Sunday, June 7<br>2-4pm, Comm. Center/Library   | 30 Sunday, June 21<br>5-7pm, Comm. Center/Library    |
| 15 Saturday, June 6<br>2-4pm, Comm. Center/Library | 31 Saturday, June 6<br>5-7pm, Comm. Center/Library   |
| 16 Wednesday, May 20<br>7-9pm, Senior Center       |  |

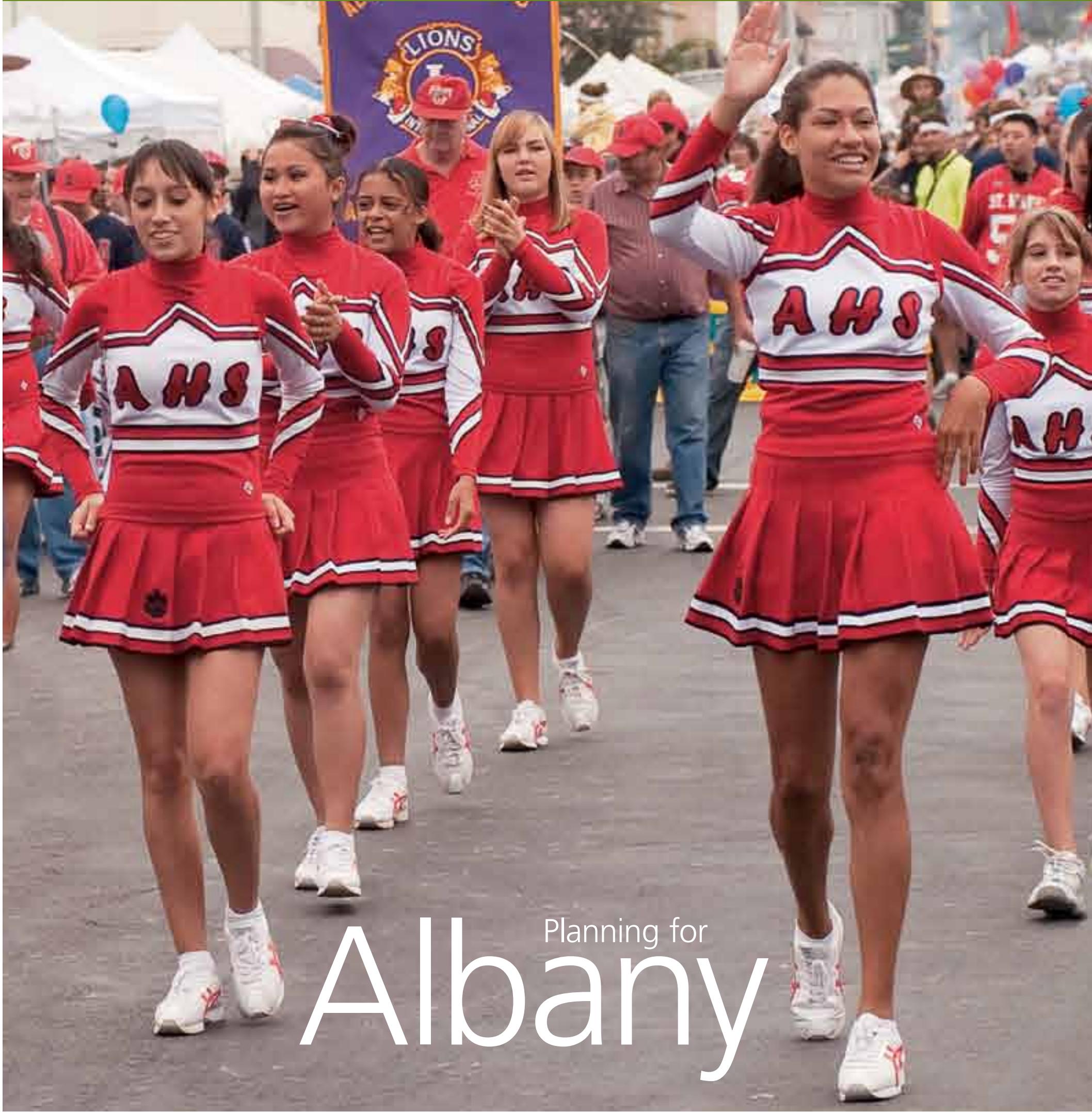
\* Location pending

\*\*Call 444-4567 (e-mail: [rsvp@voicestovision.com](mailto:rsvp@voicestovision.com)) about sessions with child care.

\*\*Llame al 444-4567 ([rsvp@voicestovision.com](mailto:rsvp@voicestovision.com)) sobre juntas en Español y juntas con cuidado infantil.

\* [rsvp@voicestovision.com](mailto:rsvp@voicestovision.com) or call 444-4567

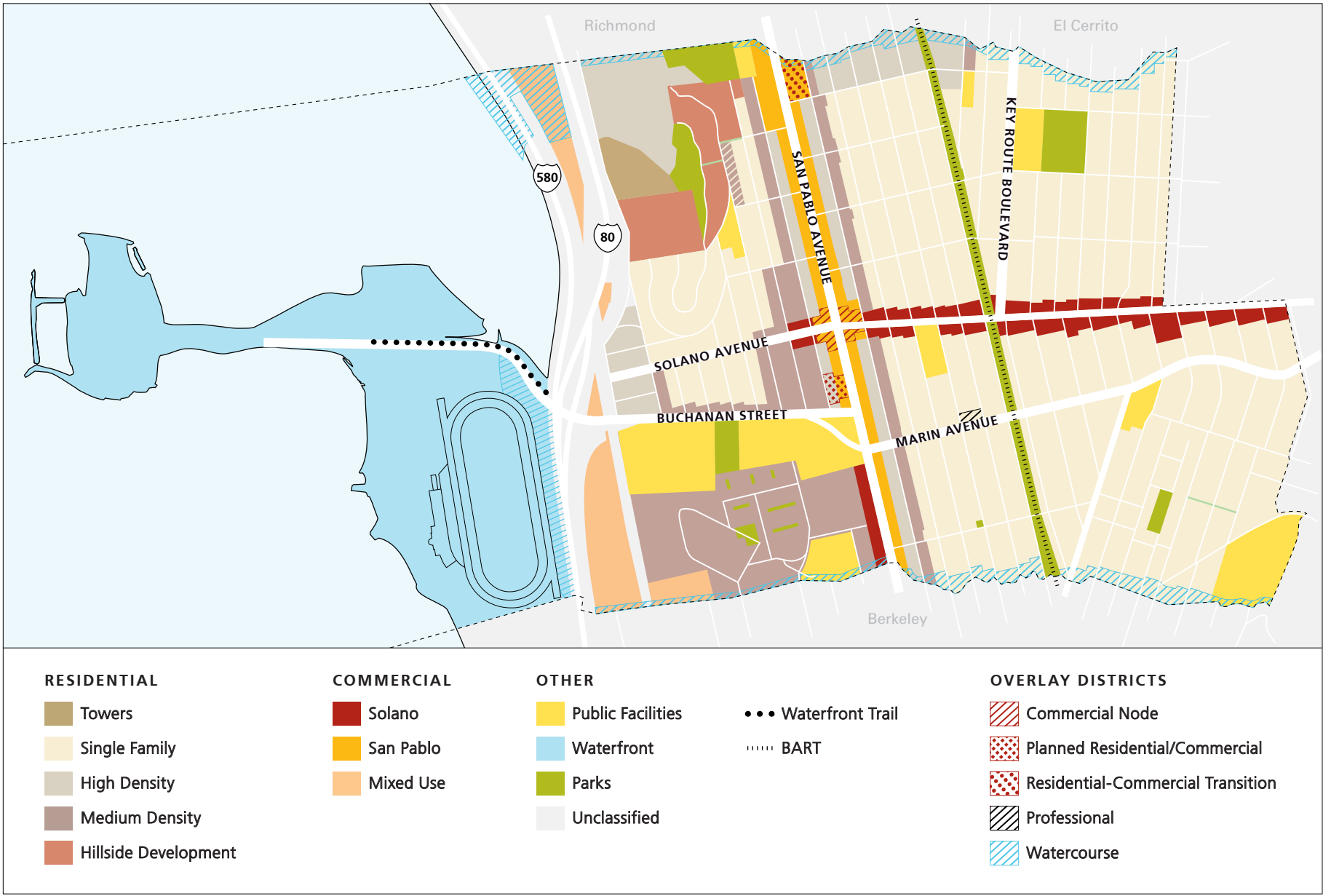




# A

s Albany works on a wide range of efforts to shape its future – programs designed to both expand the city’s economic viability and retain an exceptional commitment to environmental sustainability and attractiveness to families – it is beginning to create a framework for the next twenty years through the revision of the Albany General Plan. General plans are considered the foundation for decisionmaking about housing, business, and industrial development; locations for roads, parks, and infrastructure; environmental protection and conservation; and noise, density, and other land uses. They outline a city’s vision for its future and create a comprehensive and internally-consistent set of policies to promote the realization of that vision. City-level general plans first appeared in 1927, when the California Legislature authorized them for incorporated cities. Over the years, numerous “elements” evolved as important components, and general plans – as we know them today – have been required since 1971. Over the past three decades, state planning law has been revised to reflect current standards and best practices, requiring that development decisions be consistent with the general plan. Currently, there are seven required elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Revising Albany’s General Plan offers the opportunity to ensure that future development and decisionmaking about land use build on the values of the community.

## PLANNING DESIGNATIONS



## Albany “Prepares to Prepare” for the Next 20 Years

Albany’s *General Plan 1990 - 2010* was adopted in 1992; the *land use element* was amended in 2004 to reflect new priorities and emerging opportunities.

To prepare a general plan, cities begin with a review of existing data and engage in research, community education, and gathering of public input. Coordination with regional and state agencies is required, resulting in an often lengthy process. For that reason, Albany is starting now — to develop *General Plan 2010-2030*, a document that will guide the city as it makes decisions that will affect the adult lives of our children and grandchildren.

Albany’s current plan combines the seven state-required “elements” into five broad sections: land use; circulation; housing; conservation, recreation, and open space; and community health and safety – with policies to support the goals of each section. Discussions about the housing component – being led by the Planning and Zoning Commission – are already underway, including the challenge of finding locations for 276 new housing units (the number deemed necessary to accommodate anticipated changes in the local population).

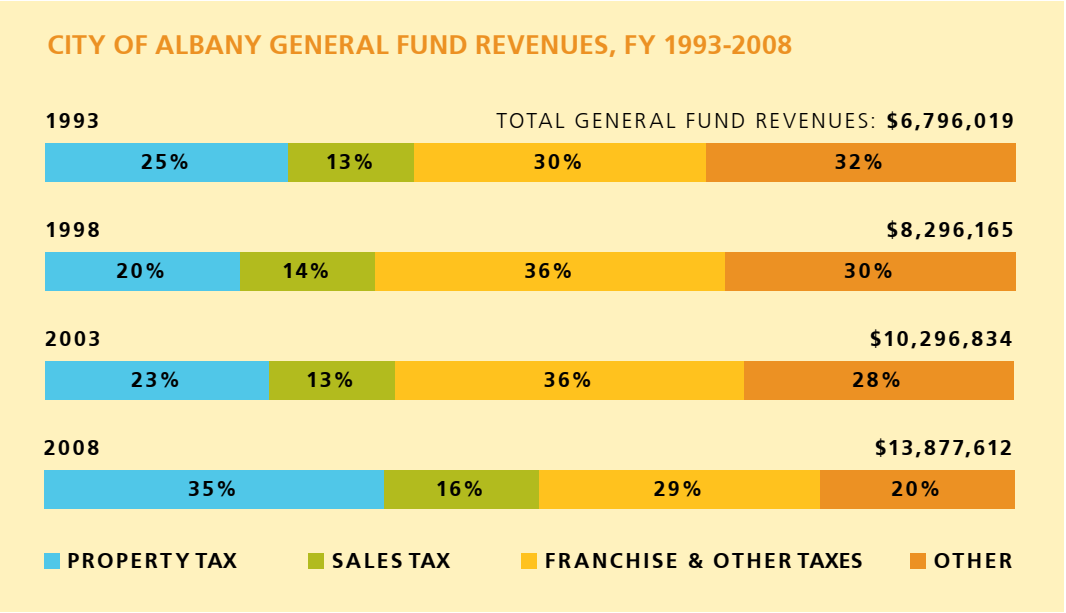
As the general plan process unfolds, there will be opportunities for Albany residents to make suggestions about what the city should look like in years to come. A well-thought-out plan prescribes the order, patterns, and characteristics of future growth, based on data and the community’s vision. For Albany, the core issues are wide ranging and include: maintaining the quality of life residents consider critical; ensuring sustainability and high standards for commercial and residential development; taking a leadership role in climate change policies; preserving and potentially expanding open space and areas for recreation; supporting first-class education; reducing vehicle miles traveled; maintaining commercial vitality; protecting ecologically-sensitive areas; increasing the availability of affordable housing; ensuring public safety; and supporting municipal fiscal stability.

The new plan will reflect residents’ needs and desires, prompting some to ask how a plan intended to give direction on physical layout can reflect values such as reduction of vehicle miles traveled or economic strategies. But Albany residents would say: “*It must, if it is to be the right plan for Albany.*”

It is hoped that *Voices to Vision*, while focusing primarily on Albany’s waterfront, will create an opportunity for residents to express opinions about a vision that lays a foundation for strategic decisionmaking and planning by the city – reflecting the values and spirit of the Albany community.

ALBANY DEMOGRAPHICS		
POPULATION		
Total 2000 Census	High school graduate or higher*	B.A./B.S. or higher*
16,444	10,854 (94%)	7,402 (64%)
Median age	17 years and under	65 and over
36.3	23%	11%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
Median in 2000	Compared to U.S.	
\$54,919	\$41,994	
EMPLOYMENT		
In labor force, 16 years and older	Children under 6, with all parents in labor force	
8,859 (67.8%)	647 (56%)	
OWNER VERSUS RENTER OCCUPIED		
Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied	
50.6%	49.4%	
COMMUTING TO WORK		
Average one-way commute	Commuters that drive alone	
33 minutes	54%	
Carpool with others	Take public transit	Walk or bike
12%	19%	9%
CITY AREA IN SQUARE MILES		
Total	Without Waterfront District	
1.7	1.4	
GREENEST CITY		
2008 UCLA report "Green Market Geography" ranks Albany #1 (Berkeley #2) "greenest city" in California; analysis of data included research on voting records on environmental issues; environmentally-preferable vehicle ownership; and inclusion of LEED-certified buildings.		
OCEAN VIEW OR ALBANY		
The original name, "Ocean View," was changed due to confusion with other towns of the same name. Albany (chosen in honor of its first Mayor's New York hometown) shares its name with more than 30 cities and towns around the world, 28 of which are located in the United States.		

\* Population 25 years and over.







**1985** Citizens for Eastshore Parks (CESP) created; Santa Fe Pacific Realty Corp. (owner of GGF) submits plan for 3.7M sq ft commercial development, 61 acres open space; lease with state to include Bulb in shoreline park **1987** Draft EIR for Santa Fe plan completed **1988** Bonds pass to acquire land for Eastshore State Park (ESP)

VOICES TO VISION

**What is “Voices to Vision?”**  
*Voices to Vision* is a process begun in 2008 to educate and engage the broad Albany community in a participatory series of activities to consider the future of the city’s waterfront. It is hoped that this process will result in community consensus and the development of guidelines and policies to shape and drive decisions about the development of Albany’s waterfront. [See pages 10 and 11.]

**How does this process differ from earlier public workshops focused on the waterfront?**  
*Voices to Vision* is a city-driven process that is proactively seeking to craft a citywide vision for the future of the waterfront without pre-conceived ideas about what might be possible in the coming years. Previous processes have focused on gathering community opinions on development proposals presented by private developers. They have been paid for by the developer and/or by the property owner.

**Who will use the results of *Voices to Vision*?**  
The city, park officials, property owners, and private developers can use the results of this community dialogue as an indication of the types of proposals Albany residents will support.

**How was the information in this publication gathered?**  
The information included in this publication was written by Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) and reviewed by city of Albany staff. FTA utilized a wide variety of primary and secondary sources in an effort to provide comprehensive and useful information. Much of the data was taken from a review of more than 5,000 pages of environmental, technical, and historical reports about the waterfront, developed over the last 50 years. Wherever possible, sources are cited. FTA welcomes relevant additional information and corrections to any data presented. Once fact-checked, new and corrected information will be posted on [www.voicestovision.com](http://www.voicestovision.com).

OWNERSHIP

**What parcels make up the Albany waterfront?**  
The Albany waterfront includes approximately 190 acres of dry land plus the tidelands within the Albany city limits west of I-80 and I-580. There are five major parts of this property: Golden Gate Fields Racetrack; the Eastshore State Park; the Albany Bulb; the Albany Waterfront Trail (which parallels Buchanan Street west of I-80); the Bay Trail (which runs along the narrow strip of the northern shoreline parallel to I-580); and Buchanan Street and its extension out to the Bulb. [See page 7.]

**What parcels comprise the Eastshore State Park?**  
The area known as “the Plateau” – the large, elevated section north of Buchanan Street; “the Beach” where people frequently play with their dogs; the shorelines of “the Neck” which connects the Bulb to the rest of the waterfront; the “mudflats” that are fed by Codornices Creek; and the shoreline to the north along I-580 are all part of the Eastshore State Park.

**Who owns Eastshore State Park?**  
The Eastshore State Park (ESP) is owned jointly by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). While CDPR owns 88% and EBRPD owns the other 12%, EBRPD is the lead agency for acquisition, planning, and management. It coordinates its activities closely with CDPR.

**Who owns the Bulb?**  
The city of Albany owns the Bulb. In 1985, an agreement was signed with the state to enable this parcel to be incorporated into the Eastshore State Park.

GOLDEN GATE FIELDS RACETRACK

**Who owns Golden Gate Fields?**  
Golden Gate Fields (GGF) is owned by Magna Entertainment Corporation (MEC), a Canadian company that is the largest owner and operator of horse racetracks in North America. MEC also owns off-track betting networks and other horse racing-related businesses, casinos, a television station, and a company that manufactures straw bedding for animals. Over the years, GGF has had several owners, including Santa Fe Pacific Realty Corp. and Ladbroke Land Holdings. The property title remains in Ladbroke’s name, but MEC is currently the legal, effective owner of the racetrack property.

**Who owns Magna Entertainment Corporation?**  
Magna Entertainment Corporation is a publicly-traded company that is controlled by its founder, current chairman, and majority shareholder, Frank Stronach. Mr. Stronach also founded Magna International Inc. (Magna), one of the world’s largest manufacturers of automotive parts and systems.

**How many racing days does Golden Gate Fields sponsor?**  
In 2008, there were 127 racing days. With the recent closure of Bay Meadows Racetrack south of San Francisco, Golden Gate Fields is projecting 181 racing days in 2009.

**How many horses are stabled at Golden Gate Fields?**  
There are 1,425 horses stabled at GGF year-round. All of the stables are located on the portion of the property located in the city of Berkeley.

**How many people work at Golden Gate Fields?**  
More than 500 people are employed by GGF.

**Why is the parking lot north of the racetrack frequently empty?**  
As recently as the 1980s, the GGF parking lots were often full. The Plateau north of Buchanan Street had to be used for overflow parking. Since then, attendance at GGF – and the need for parking – has decreased due in large part to the popularity of off-track sites where people can bet on live horse races via simulcast and also due to the increase in on-line wagering.

EASTSHORE STATE PARK (ESP)

**What is the Eastshore State Park?**  
The Eastshore State Park, which was formally established in 2002, includes a group of distinct park lands on the East Bay shoreline of the San Francisco Bay. The Park extends 8.5 miles from the foot of the Bay Bridge in Oakland to the Marina Bay neighborhood in Richmond, and contains 260 acres of dry land and 2,002 acres of tidelands. Some of the land that comprises the Albany waterfront is part of the Eastshore State Park. [See page 7.]

**How did the Eastshore State Park come about?**  
Eastshore State Park is the result of decades of citizen efforts, starting in the 1960s, to stop garbage dumping in the Bay; to oppose commercial development on the shoreline and to preserve it for public use; and to create environmental benefit on the shoreline. These efforts received crucial support from voters, elected officials, the East Bay Regional Park District, the Coastal Conservancy, and other influential entities at key moments leading to the State Park designation. [See page 4.]

**Are different parts of ESP designated for different uses?**  
The Albany section of the ESP includes “management zones” that identify areas designated for preservation (sensitive areas not suitable for regular human contact); conservation (areas suitable for low-intensity uses such as hiking); and recreation (areas suitable for higher intensity uses such as parking and facilities). The northern shoreline is designated as a preservation area. The Beach, Bulb, and shorelines of the Neck are designated as conservation areas. On the map included in the Eastshore State Park General Plan, the Plateau is designated as a recreation area (sports fields), however the plan explains that if an appropriate operator is not identified, “the Plateau will be maintained and improved for informal recreation and/or conservation purposes.” In 2008, a burrowing owl habitat was created at the Plateau as a mitigation related to the construction of the Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex. [See page 7.]

THE ALBANY NECK AND BULB

**What and where is the Bulb?**  
The Bulb is the peninsula of land extending more than half a mile into the Bay from the end of Buchanan Street. It is connected to the rest of the waterfront by a narrow spit of land called the Neck. The Bulb was created gradually from 1963 to 1983 by a landfill operation that placed construction debris progressively further out into the Bay. [See pages 4 and 5.]

**Is the Bulb part of the waterfront?**  
Yes. Albany’s Waterfront District and *Voices to Vision* define the waterfront as the land west of highways I-80/I-580 within the city limits.

**Who creates the art on the Bulb?**  
Most of the sculptures, paintings, and structures concentrated on the northern shore of the Bulb have been created using objects and materials found at the site. Osha Neumann, an attorney and muralist, with help from his son-in-law, Jason DeAntonis, is credited with having created many of the more substantial sculptures at the site.

**Why hasn’t the Bulb been incorporated into the Eastshore State Park?**  
The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) has specific requirements for land to be accepted as part of a state park. Uneven ground, protruding metal, off-leash dog walking, unregulated art projects, construction debris, and homeless encampments have been listed as obstacles to having the Bulb incorporated into the Eastshore State Park. The land must also be managed according to state park standards prior to being accepted.

**Are there homeless people living on the Bulb?**  
In the mid-1990s, there were more than 75 people living in homemade structures on the Bulb. In 1999, as part of the effort to incorporate the Bulb into the Eastshore State Park, Albany passed an ordinance banning camping on the property. The city gradually enforced the ban and moved many of the Bulb residents into shelters and temporary housing. Albany residents indicate they continue to see people living illegally on the Bulb, but the numbers appear to be small.

**Is safety a problem at the Bulb?**  
The waterfront is no less “safe” than other parts of Albany or nearby communities. But the waterfront is a unique area, because it is a remote location within the city limits. The most frequent calls to police about the waterfront involve auto break-ins or auto theft. Occasionally, there are confrontations involving violations of park rules (related to alcohol, fires, curfew, animals, etc.). The Albany police patrol the park periodically during both daytime and nighttime hours, but the distances and span of the area are vast, and officers might not see a person in need of assistance as easily as they do on city streets. Public safety routes have been created through most areas of the waterfront to aid emergency responders, but the condition of the roads and trails could slow response times.

THE BAY TRAIL

**Who manages the Bay Trail?**  
The plan for the Bay Trail includes a 500-mile continuous bike and recreational path that will encircle the San Francisco and San Pablo bays. A little more than half of the trail has been completed. In Albany, it currently runs north of Buchanan Street to the Richmond city boundary, but doesn’t yet connect to the portion in Berkeley. The Bay Trail as a whole is coordinated by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The Albany section is maintained by the city of Albany.

**When will the gap in the Bay Trail between Buchanan and Gilman streets be completed?**  
The East Bay Regional Park District has been in negotiations, for several years, with the owners of Golden Gate Fields to complete the trail along the shoreline behind the track. EBRPD is currently assessing potential locations for the trail, but the options involve substantial construction costs. To make this investment, EBRPD requires a long-term right-of-way agreement, which the owners of GGF have not yet granted. Currently, GGF allows cyclists and pedestrians to cross the property to connect the two ends of the trail.

SITE/SURROUNDINGS

**What is the nature of the waterfront land?**  
Much of the area where I-80 is located today was tidal marsh. The area was filled in to create the present shoreline. The only part of the original shoreline that still exists in Albany is the hill called Fleming Point, where the Golden Gate Fields grandstand sits.

**How was the waterfront we see today created?**  
From the 1880s to 1983, the Albany waterfront was shaped by landfill operations that replaced tidal marsh with solid ground. The area that is now the southern end of the racetrack was filled from the late 1880s to the early 1900s. To create the grandstand in the early 1940s (which includes the northern part of the racetrack and the northern parking lot), the top of Fleming Point was removed and used as fill material. Most of the area north of the Golden Gate Fields parking lot – now the Eastshore State Park and the Albany Bulb – was filled in the 1970s and early 80s, predominantly with construction and demolition debris. [See maps on pages 4-5.]

**Are there plans for a ferry at the Albany waterfront?**  
The San Francisco Water Emergency Transit Authority (WETA) has plans to run a ferry system between the Berkeley/Albany area and San Francisco. WETA has been looking at four possible sites: three in Berkeley and one in Albany. The Albany site is the Old Pier. In a December 15, 2008 letter to WETA, the Albany City Council supported ferry service, but opposed building a ferry terminal at either the end of Gilman or Buchanan streets. These locations would require dredging and would impact traffic and future land use.

**How accessible is the Albany waterfront to wheelchairs and people who have difficulty walking?**  
The Bay Trail parallel to I-580 north of Buchanan Street and the 2,000-foot Albany Waterfront Trail parallel to Buchanan Street west of I-80 to just west of the “Cove,” are paved sections of the public waterfront. There are two wheelchair-accessible viewing platforms that overlook the mudflats, serving as prime bird-watching spots. The Plateau and Bulb both have wide fire roads, but they are currently unpaved and difficult for anyone who isn’t a strong walker. [See page 7.]

**Are there any creeks or streams on the Albany waterfront?**  
Codornices Creek flows down from the hills above Albany, crosses beneath I-80 just south of Target, and turns north to flow between the racetrack and the highway where it is joined by Village Creek, before emptying into the Bay through culverts underneath Buchanan Street. The outflow of Cerrito Creek marks the northern edge of the Albany waterfront. Marin Creek also empties into the Bay underneath Buchanan Street.

**Has Codornices Creek always followed the channel it follows today?**  
According to historic maps and Friends of Five Creeks, an environmental group dedicated to the protection and restoration of creeks in the East Bay, Codornices Creek didn’t originally flow into the Bay. It was absorbed by the wet, gravelly, flat lands before reaching the tidal marsh at the edge of the Bay. The section of Codornices Creek on the waterfront is entirely man-made to redirect the creek around the racetrack. Restoration projects on portions of Codornices Creek are underway and some are completed in both Albany and Berkeley. None of these restoration projects are located west of I-580.

**Is there cultural or aesthetic value to the waterfront?**  
The 1989 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) states that “no known cultural resources are recorded within the site’s boundaries.” This statement strikes many Albany residents and others who visit the waterfront as inconceivable, but the statement may be technically correct. The finding of “no known cultural resources” means that there is nothing on the site that meets the legal definition of an “object of historical or aesthetic significance” to trigger special protections under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which governs the preparation of EIR reports.  
That said, the aesthetic value of the waterfront land in Albany is appreciated by many who note the unique qualities of the site, including the unrestricted and commanding views of the Golden Gate. Many people describe their experience at the Albany waterfront as “spiritual,” although some find it difficult to attribute cultural significance to the location of a former landfill. And there are undisputed cultural and historic attributes. Fleming Point was a landmark for Spanish settlers in the Peralta period. The pier served as the location of a water-taxi service that brought San Franciscans to Golden Gate Fields. Today, waterfront visitors find value in the creation and appreciation of the art on the Bulb; the pleasure of calm in a hectic urban landscape; and the serenity of watching shorebirds and wildlife.

ENVIRONMENTAL

**Since the Albany waterfront is comprised primarily of landfill, is there a concern about toxins?**  
The 1989 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) found elevated levels of some environmental toxins (particularly ammonia, consistent with degrading organic waste), but not in concentrations known to be harmful to life in the Bay. The landfill materials consisted primarily of construction debris and landscape wastes. In 2005, the Regional Water Quality Control Board stated “no threat to water quality has been identified or is anticipated based on existing monitoring and analysis” and did not require the site to be sealed or capped before being considered safe for human and wildlife contact.

**Are there any wildlife preserves on the waterfront?**  
The small bay off the northern Albany shoreline is designated as the Albany State Marine Reserve. In this bird sanctuary, boat traffic and human contact is restricted to protect wildlife, especially shore birds that feed at the mudflats.





**1989** New Draft for Santa Fe (later Catellus) submitted, withdrawn; GGF sold to Ladbroke for \$41 million **1990** Voters pass Measure C placing waterfront decisions in hands of residents **1992** EBRPD lead agency for ESP **1996** Albany Waterfront Trail built with Coastal Conservancy grant **1998** 30-acre Plateau acquired for inclusion in ESP

#### Is there wildlife on the waterfront?

Despite its proximity to a major urban highway system, there is a surprising abundance and diversity of wildlife on the waterfront. The 2001 Eastshore State Park Resource Summary lists dozens of species of shore birds (including oyster catchers and terns), raptors (including kites, harriers, and barn owls), and numerous small mammals, reptiles, and insects. At least 16 types of rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife have been observed in the Park, including the California least tern, which was seen nesting in the Albany mudflats in 2000. The mudflats are also home to American avocets, and cormorants are found in the lagoon at the west end of the Bulb. The tidal marshes, ponds, and wetlands also contain a variety of marine life including barnacles, gum plant, pickleweed, and eelgrass that is a critical component of habitats for small fish.

#### Why are there so many birds at the waterfront?

The Bay Area is on the Pacific flyway for hundreds of thousands of birds. From mid-October to March, the Albany waterfront serves as resting and feeding grounds for numerous migrating birds. Where and when birds rest on the waterfront depends on the wind and tides. The Old Pier is a favorite roosting spot for birds at high tide, as is the west lagoon.

#### When is the best time to see birds at the waterfront?

The best time to see birds at the waterfront is 20 minutes after high tide in the mudflats at the mouths of Codornices and Marin creeks, from the viewing platforms on the Albany waterfront and the eastern edge of the Plateau.

#### Are the plants on the waterfront native?

According to the 2001 Eastshore State Park Resource Summary, the vegetation on the Plateau and Bulb is designated as “ruderal scrub” (mostly non-native shrubs and grasses), and is dominated by coyote-brush. French broom and cotoneaster are also common, as are native grasses and wildflowers in varying densities. The only “relatively-native” vegetation community is a small area of northern coastal scrub on Fleming Point.

#### What happens to the waste from the horses at GGF?

Nearly all of the straw bedding containing solid waste is recycled at a northern California mushroom farm. Wastewater runoff from the barn area is sent through a series of chlorinated aeration ponds located in the infield of the racetrack.

#### What are the weather conditions at the waterfront?

Directly across from the Golden Gate, the Albany waterfront is buffeted by strong winds coming off the San Francisco Bay. According to the 1989 Albany Waterfront Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), daytime winds are predominantly from the west and southwest, shifting to off-shore winds from the east at night. The air is calm only ten percent of the time, with average wind speeds from the southwest reaching 13.7 mph. While those who windsurf or fly kites often take advantage of these atmospheric conditions, walkers tend to bundle up, especially when the fog rolls in, as it does during the summer months. Maximum temperatures average in the low- to mid-70s during summer and in the mid-50s in the winter. Air quality at the site is high with clean, cool air blowing in from the ocean.

#### How might climate change affect the Albany waterfront?

According to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the 2006 report from the California Climate Action Team, a mean sea level rise between one and three feet is projected to occur within the next hundred years. A 1987 topographical map indicates that the lower areas of the waterfront (Golden Gate Fields Racetrack and GGF northern parking lot) average ten feet above sea level. The Plateau, Neck, and Bulb average 30 feet above sea level. If the sea level rises, the shoreline (including the beach, wetlands near Buchanan Street and the I-80 on-ramp, and the northern shoreline) will be impacted.

## LEGAL/ LAND USE

#### What, if any, regulations constrain development on the waterfront?

There are numerous regulations that impact development at the waterfront. City zoning regulations restrict commercial uses; state and federal environmental regulations protect water and air quality; and delicate wildlife habitat; and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) regulates development within 100 feet of the shoreline and Codornices Creek. Also, Albany’s voter-approved Measure C ensures that any development which proposes change to current zoning requires a vote of the citizenry.

#### What are the permitted zoning uses of the Golden Gate Fields property?

The GGF property is part of the Waterfront District which restricts allowable uses (subject to appropriate use permits) to: park and recreation facilities; utilities (major, minor and underground); bars; commercial recreation, including horse racing; marinas and boat launching ramps; parking (non-residential); restaurants; and waterfront- and sports-related commercial sales and services.

#### Can the currently-permitted uses (zoning) be changed?

Yes. The currently-permitted uses in the Waterfront District could be changed by a majority vote of Albany residents. This is a very unique situation. Ordinarily, the city council (following review by the planning commission) has the authority to change zoning regulations to accommodate development. In 1989, Albany residents approved Measure C (see page 4) which restricted the council’s authority on this land. Measure C “froze” zoning on the waterfront and required that any land use changes be approved directly by a vote of Albany residents.

#### What rights does MEC have to develop its waterfront property?

MEC has the right to develop the Golden Gate Fields property in a manner consistent with current zoning, Measure C, and planning and environmental regulations. MEC would have to comply with the same review process as all proposed developments in Albany.

#### Could the city block development at Golden Gate Fields if the proposed development met current zoning?

Failure to grant permits for a fully-compliant development proposal, or a change in regulations that drastically curtails an owner’s economic use of the site could result in a law suit against the city based on a “takings” claim. According to *California Land Use Planning Law* (Daniel J. Curtin), “a ‘taking’ is a legal finding that regulation of, or actions on, a particular property have the effect of depriving the property owner of fair usage of their land.” If a court made such a ruling, the issuing agency would then be required to change the regulations and/or pay just compensation to the property owner.

#### Are areas of the privately-owned portion of the waterfront physically suitable for development?

The Albany Waterfront Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) of 1989 divides the waterfront into five areas – each with different degrees of geologic stability and suitability for large-scale development. [See map, page 7.]

#### What public agencies have jurisdiction over the Albany waterfront?

At least 15 state and regional agencies, plus the city of Albany, have some level of jurisdiction and responsibility for the waterfront, including: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD); Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC); California Air Resources Board; California Department of Transportation (Caltrans); California Department of Fish and Game; California Department of Parks and Recreation; California Horse Racing Board; East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD); East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC); San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board; State Lands Commission; and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. [See page 19 for additional information.]

## FINANCIAL

#### How big is Albany’s budget?

In 2007-8, the overall city budget was \$23.8 million, including the \$13.9 million General Fund budget. Other major fund areas include Special Reserve, Debt Service, and Capital Projects.

#### What revenue sources fund the city’s budget?

Revenues which fund the city’s General Fund budget come from a number of sources including: property taxes; sales taxes; franchise and other taxes (including wagering taxes); licenses and permits; fines; investment earnings; service charges; and revenues from other agencies.

#### Is Albany financially healthy?

Albany has long had a modest and stable budget, without the fiscal swings faced by many other communities. From time to time, taxpayers have elected to fund capital and operations expenses to meet the needs and desires of the community. Like most cities, Albany faces budget cutbacks due to declining property, transfer, and sales taxes, and other sources of revenue. Albany remains fiscally sound by keeping expenses within revenues, but city officials are always concerned about the capacity to support existing and expanded services. The strength of the tax base depends on property sales, retail transactions, new development, and/or support for local tax measures.

#### What are the biggest sources of tax revenue to the city?

The biggest source of tax revenue, overall, comes from property taxes, which are generated from both residential and commercial properties. Property taxes contributed 35% of General Fund revenue in 2008. Other major sources of tax revenue funding include franchise and other taxes (29%) and sales taxes (16%). Franchise and other taxes, the second largest source of operating revenue, include business licenses; property transfer taxes; utility user taxes; racetrack taxes; garbage collection franchise fees; and cable television transmission fees. Transfer taxes comprise 29% of this revenue category.

#### How much tax revenue does Golden Gate Fields provide for the city?

In 2007-8, GGF (MEC) paid \$1,064,702 in taxes to the city of Albany. This represented approximately 7.7% of the city’s General Fund budget.

#### How does Golden Gate Fields generate revenue for the city?

Golden Gate Fields (MEC) generates taxes for the city through property taxes, sales tax, business license fees, and wager taxes. There are two types of property taxes: ad valorum and parcel taxes. Sales taxes are levied on all meals served and on merchandise sold at the racetrack. Unlike other businesses, GGF also generates tax revenues through a wager tax.

#### What is the breakdown of tax revenue from Golden Gate Fields to the city?

Golden Gate Fields (MEC) 2007-8 tax revenues to the city of Albany: Total Property Taxes: \$637,745 [ad valorum (\$163,978); parcel taxes (\$473,767)]; Sales Taxes: \$69,000 (approximate); Wagering Taxes: \$357,457

#### How much tax revenue does Golden Gate Fields provide for the schools?

Tax revenue paid to the school district is based on property tax collections, and is separate from taxes paid to the city. In 2007-8, property tax revenue from GGF (MEC) paid to the school district was approximately \$640,000 (or two percent of the school district’s budget).

#### How much tax revenue from Golden Gate Fields goes to the library?

In 2007-8, Golden Gate Fields (MEC) paid parcel taxes of \$87,474 (included in total parcel taxes noted above) to fund the library.

#### Have Golden Gate Fields’ tax revenues to the city changed over time?

Tax revenues fluctuate based on changes in assessed property value and changes in wagering and sale of merchandise at the racetrack. In recent years, attendance at racetracks around the country, including Golden Gate Fields, has decreased, leading to lower tax revenues. [GGF believes that attendance will increase in 2009 due to the recent closure of the Bay Meadows racetrack.]

#### Is Golden Gate Fields the largest tax payer in Albany?

According to the city’s 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Review (CAFR), real property within the city comprises more than \$1.7 billion in taxable assessed value. The GGF property is first in the list of “top ten” taxpayers, contributing 2.63% of total taxable assessed value (approx. \$45 million). In addition, GGF is the only commercial taxpayer in the city subject to wager taxes, which are levied on bets placed in person at the track.

#### Who are the other big property tax payers in Albany?

Several other property owners pay substantial property taxes. In 2008, Target Corporation was another large property taxpayer (1.71% of assessed value.) Other top taxpayers paid from .1% to .41% of total assessed value.

#### If attendance, and thus, on-site wagering has been declining at Golden Gate Fields, won’t that impact wagering tax revenues?

Yes. Declining attendance does have an impact on wagering tax revenues, though these taxes have fluctuated over the years. In 1995, wagering tax revenues to the city of Albany were more than \$460,000; in 2000, wagering tax revenue was more than \$533,000. Wagering tax revenues for 2009 have been estimated at approximately \$400,000.

#### What is the value of the Golden Gate Fields property?

A property such as the 102-acre site owned by MEC (GGF) is difficult to value. It includes a racetrack and open land, and is located directly on the San Francisco Bay, with views of the Golden Gate Bridge, Headlands, and surrounding cities. But the property has development and environmental constraints which could impact its value. Most property values are based on recent sales or valuations of “comparable” properties. There are no properties in the Bay Area which match the description of GGF, and which need voter support to be developed in ways other than current zoning dictates.

**Sources:** Albany: *The Home City*, 1931; *Albany Waterfront Lands: Draft Environmental Impact Report*, 1989; A Planner’s Dictionary, Davidson, Michael and Fay Dolnick, ed. 2004. Chicago: American Planning Association. Eastshore Park Project: Resource Summary, 2001; Eastshore State Park General Plan, 2002; *Creating the Eastshore State Park: An Activist History*, 2002. Norman La Force; *A Selective History of the Codornices-University Village, The City of Albany & Environs*, 2000. Warren F. Lee and Catherine T. Lee. Video: “Off-leash,” 2007. Thomas McCabe; *The Green Loop: A Sustainable Vision for the Albany Waterfront*, Susan Moffat, 2006; *Rancho San Antonio 2002-2004*, Multiple reports and attachments; *Images of America: Albany*, Karen Sorensen and the Albany Historical Society, 2007; *Visioning Process: 2005-2006*, Multiple reports and attachments; city of Albany; *Stories of Albany*, Catherine J. Webb, 1983. Albany Municipal Code: Zoning Ordinance, 2004; *Measure C: Citizens Waterfront Approval Initiative*, 1990; *Rancho San Antonio: Specific Plan Application*, 2002; Magna Entertainment Corporation, *Fact Sheet: Golden Gate Fields and the City of Albany*, 2005; City of Albany reports to City Council; Magna Entertainment Website; *About MEC*, <http://www.magnaent.com>; 2008 Interviews conducted by Fern Tiger Associates with Albany residents, public officials, interest group representatives, public agencies; “Albany Shuts Down Holeless Camp: Squatters leave site of future park,” Debra Levi Holtz, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Aug. 31, 1999; *City of Albany Creek Map*; “U.S. ‘08 handle drops,” Matt Hegarty, *Daily Racing Form*, Jan. 6, 2009, ABAG website: About the Bay Trail, <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>; WETA website: Proposed Routes, <http://www.watertransit.org>; *Conceptual Plan, 2004. Reclamation of the West and East Lagoons - Albany Landfill*, Streamborn Consulting; letter from director of S.F. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.





1999 Magna Entertainment Corp. (MEC) buys GGF from Ladbroke 2002 ESP formally established; Rancho San Antonio (RSA) project proposed 2003 City workshops on RSA; EBRPD buys 16 acres in Berkeley from MEC to develop ball fields 2005 MEC/Caruso Affiliated propose development at GGF 2006 MEC plans withdrawn

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Acre/Acreage** 43,560 square feet. Gross acreage: total area within a parcel of land; net acreage: total area within lot lines of a parcel after deduction of public street easements and areas reserved for public use

**Ad Valorum Tax** Tax imposed annually on real property based on the assessed value of the property

**Adverse Impact** Negative consequence for the physical, social, or economic environment resulting from a human action or physical project

**Aesthetic** Of or concerning the appreciation of beauty

**Appraisal/Valuation** Systematic, professionally-licensed method to determine a property's market value

**Art, Public** Visual work of art displayed in publicly-owned area or facility, or on private property if installed or financed with public funds

**Brownfield** Abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and/or commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination

**Buildable Area** Space remaining on a lot after minimum open space, offset, and setback requirements have been met

**Buildable Land** Land in urban areas suitable and available for residential, commercial, and/or industrial uses, including both vacant land and developed land that is likely to be redeveloped

**Build-out** Development of land to full potential as permitted under current planning or zoning regulations

**CEQA (pronounced SEE-kwah)** California Environmental Quality Act, adopted in 1970; requires public agencies to study and minimize environmental impacts before approving new project or program

**City-maintained Land (Albany waterfront)** The Bulb; Buchanan Street; Albany Waterfront Trail (along Buchanan Street); and center portion of Neck, also called Buchanan Street Extension [See map page 7.]

**Community Character** Image of a community, defined by built environment, natural features and open space; type of housing; infrastructure; and type and quality of public facilities and services

**Conforming** In compliance with zoning regulations

**Conservation Area** Defined by Eastshore State Park as "an area whose natural habitat values will be protected while allowing lower intensity recreation" (e.g. Albany Neck and Bulb)

**Contextual Zoning** Zoning that regulates height and bulk of new buildings, setbacks from street line, and width along street frontage - to conform with the character of the neighborhood

**Cost-Benefit Analysis** Analytic method to measure actual and hidden costs of a proposed project against benefits to be created

**Cultural Resources** Site or structure which is part of an area's cultural heritage and typifies a particular historical era of human activity in the area

**Density** Number of dwelling units or principal buildings or uses permitted per acre of land

**Development** Any human-caused change to improved or unimproved real estate that requires a permit or approval

**Easement** Authorization by property owner of a designated part of his or her property for use by another party

**Eminent Domain** Authority of government to take, or to authorize the taking of, private property for public use, upon payment of just compensation

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** A professional study of a "project" that assesses existing conditions and effects that would result from the project; prepared in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

**Environmental Justice** A social movement to eliminate or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on populations of color and low-income people and to ensure meaningful involvement of all people with respect to environmental laws, regulations, and policies

**General Fund** Fund used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund; usually an agency's largest fund

**General Plan** Document required by state law that serves as blueprint for all land use regulations

**Handle** Total amount of money wagered on races - traditionally measured daily as the sum wagered on all races

**Hazardous Material** Substances that pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment

**Impact** Effect of man-made actions, directly or indirectly, on existing physical, social, environmental, or economic conditions

**Infill Development** Development of vacant parcel(s) or redevelopment in built-up areas

**Infrastructure** Basic facilities (e.g. roads, sewers, power plants, transportation, communication systems) that support a community

**Landfill** Area used for disposal of non-toxic waste material

**Construction/Demolition Landfill** Area used for disposal of non-biodegradable waste from construction, remodeling, repair, or demolition

**Lease** Contractual agreement by which an owner of real property (lessor) gives right of possession to another (lessee) for specified period of time (term)

**Market Study** Process of analyzing data relating to a proposed development, including population conditions, competition, and adequacy of site

**Measure C** Voter-approved initiative, passed in 1989 and enacted in 1990; freezes existing zoning on Albany waterfront lands and requires changes in zoning to be approved by voters [See page 4.]

**Mitigation** Measures to eliminate or minimize damage from development

**Native Species** Plant or animal that is believed to originate in the local area

**Natural Condition** Condition that arises from or is found in nature and not modified by human intervention

**Natural Feature** A component or process which is present, or produced by nature, including soil types, geology, vegetation, climate, flood plain, aquatic life, wildlife

**Noise Impact** Extent to which noise levels interfere with land utilization

**Open Space (Passive, Active)** Land and water areas retained for recreational use or for resource protection in an essentially undeveloped state; *active*: open space that may be improved and used for recreational facilities; *passive*: open space that is essentially unimproved and set aside for public or private use

**Parcel** A plot or tract of land defined by physical and contractual boundaries

**Parcel Tax** Type of property tax that is approved by voters and generally assessed by a special district; assessed as a fee and paid annually by property owners to support particular services

**Pari-mutuel Tax** Tax imposed on money wagered on horse racing (Albany receives tax income from bets placed on-site at Golden Gate Fields); also called wager tax

**Park** Any public or private land designated for recreational, educational, cultural, or aesthetic use. (Types of parks in Albany: community, linear, mini, neighborhood, open space, regional, as defined in Albany Parks and Recreation General Plan)

**Community Park** Designed for organized activities and sports requiring support facilities (parking, restrooms, and covered play areas); size ranges from 10-20 acres serving a one to two mile radius (e.g. Memorial Park)

**Linear Park** Developed landscaped areas that follow linear corridors (e.g. Ohlone Greenway, Waterfront Trail, Catherine's Walk, Manor Walk)

**Mini-Park** Small play lots designed primarily for use by young children (e.g. Dartmouth Tot Lot, San Gabriel Mini-Park)

**Neighborhood Park** A combination of playground and park; designed primarily for non-organized recreation activities; approximately five acres serving a half-mile radius (e.g. Ocean View Park, Terrace Park)

**Open Space Area** Undeveloped land primarily in a natural state; recreational uses as secondary objective to preservation from commercial development (e.g. Bulb, Albany Hill, Creekside Park).

**Regional Park** Recreational area serving multiple communities, often including specific uses or unique features (e.g. Eastshore State Park)

**Pier** General term including docks and similar structures consisting of fixed or floating platform extending from a shore over water

**Preservation Area** Defined by Eastshore State Park as an area with a unique or fragile habitat and resource values that need to be protected and preserved (e.g. Albany Mudflats)

**Property Tax** Tax paid by owners of real property in a given jurisdiction (e.g. ad valorum and parcel taxes)

**Racetrack** Measured course where animals or vehicles are entered in competition against one another

**Recreation Area** Defined by Eastshore State Park as a place that can accommodate recreation and the necessary parking, utilities, and infrastructure needed to support it

**Remediation** Measures taken by a property owner or a municipality to lessen, clean-up, remove, or mitigate the existence of hazardous materials on a property to meet applicable regulations

**Riprap** Layer, facing, or protective mound of rubble or stones placed to prevent erosion of a structure or embankment; stone used for this purpose

**Sales Tax** Tax on retail products and some services based on a percentage of the purchase price

**Setback** Minimum distance by which a building or structure must be separated from lot line

**Smart Growth** Urban planning model that concentrates development in city centers and around public transportation, emphasizing pedestrian-friendly, higher density, mixed-use development

**Specific Plan** Detailed policy plan or set of regulations that supports the General Plan in a specific geographic area or site

**Sustainable Development** Development that meets the needs of the present population without exhausting resources and compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Taking / Inverse Condemnation** Any government action that denies economically viable use of property, or causes a "substantial" reduction in property values

**Tax** (See ad valorum tax, parcel tax, pari-mutuel tax, property tax, sales tax, transfer tax, wager tax)

**Tax Increment Financing** Tool, only used by redevelopment agencies, to fund development by "capturing" increased future property taxes ("the increment") in a designated zone, which will be generated by the new development; only used for redevelopment of blighted areas

**Traffic Impact** Increase in congestion, worsening of level of service, or reductions in road safety and efficiency as a result of development

**Transfer Tax** Tax imposed when title to real property is transferred from one person (or entity) to another

**Transit-Oriented Development** Community comprised of multiple uses, within walking distance (average of 2,000 feet) of transit stop and core commercial area

**Variance** Adjustment of specific zoning regulations on particular piece of property

**Wager Tax** See "pari-mutuel tax"

**Water-related Use** Activities not directly dependent upon access to a body of water, but which provide goods and services directly associated with water-dependent or waterway uses

**Wetland** An area inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions; includes swamps, marshes, bogs; tidal wetland: area inundated and saturated regularly by tidal action of the ocean

**Wetland Restoration** Re-establishing wetland characteristics and habitats, which have been lost due to man-made alterations or catastrophic events

**Wildlife Habitat** Lands that contain sufficient food, water, or cover for native terrestrial and aquatic species of animals

**Zoning** Division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, which specify allowable uses for real property, and size restrictions for buildings within these areas

**Primary Sources:** *A Planner's Dictionary*. Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnick. 2004. Chicago; American Planning Association; *Planning Commissioner's Handbook*. California League of Cities.

## PUBLIC AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION AT THE WATERFRONT

### Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Regional planning agency and local government service provider for the nine Bay Area counties; members are city and county governments; [www.abag.gov](http://www.abag.gov)

### Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)

Regional agency that regulates sources of air pollution within the Bay Area; board comprised of mayors, supervisors, and councilmembers; [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)

### Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)

Performs and supervises specialized research and policy development; has jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to San Francisco Bay, including fill and other development within 100 feet inland from high tide line; [www.bcdc.ca.gov](http://www.bcdc.ca.gov)

### California Air Resources Board

Established by State Legislature in 1967 to attain and maintain healthy air quality; to conduct research into the causes and solutions to pollution; and to address pollution caused by motor vehicles; governor-appointed board; [www.arb.ca.gov](http://www.arb.ca.gov)

### California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Manages California's highways; provides inter-city rail services; and permits public-use airports and hospital heliports through its primary programs in aeronautics, highway transportation, mass transportation, transportation planning, and administration/equipment service; [www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)

### California Department of Fish and Game

Provides habitat preservation and protection for native fish, plant species, and wildlife throughout the state, including the Albany State Marine Reserve and other aquatic communities in the Bay Delta region; [www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov)

### California Department of Parks and Recreation

Responsible for wetlands restoration, preservation, acquisition and educational exposure for the state; majority owner of Eastshore State Park, coordinates management with the East Bay Regional Park District; [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

### California Horse Racing Board

Seven-member commission, appointed by the governor and charged with protecting the betting public through pari-mutuel wagering regulation, maximizing state tax revenues and promoting horse racing and breeding industries; formed in 1933, by a constitutional amendment; [www.chrb.ca.gov](http://www.chrb.ca.gov)

### City of Albany

Charter city with five-member elected council; located north of Berkeley and south of Richmond, CA; approximately 17,000 residents; [www.albanyca.org](http://www.albanyca.org)

### East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)

Governed by elected board of directors, each representing geographic areas in Contra Costa and Alameda counties; manages more than 98,000 acres of parks; has minority share of Eastshore State Park, which it manages in coordination with California Department of Parks and Recreation; [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org)

### East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)

Publicly-owned utility, seven-member, elected board of directors from Alameda and Contra Costa counties; provides wastewater treatment; supplies water; controls water connections for development at waterfront; [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com)

### FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

Formed by President Carter's fusion of fragmented disaster relief departments; responsible for preventing, ameliorating, and coordinating recovery from all man-made and natural domestic disasters, including floods [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

### Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

Transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the nine-county Bay Area; responsible for amending and advancing regional transportation plan; governed by 19-member policy board, composed primarily of commissioners appointed by locally-elected officials; [www.mtc.ca.gov](http://www.mtc.ca.gov)

### San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

Reviews development plans to ensure they do not impair water quality; [www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay)

### State Lands Commission

Coordinates energy resources, hazard management, oil spill prevention; administers Public Trust easement rights on California shoreline; and ensures that development plans are consistent with Public Trust guidelines; members include lieutenant governor, state controller, state director of finance; [www.slc.ca.gov](http://www.slc.ca.gov)

### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Provides engineering services (e.g. ecosystem restoration and clean-up of contamination from military activity); implements Clean Water Act; has jurisdiction over navigable waters including SF Bay; [www.usace.army.mil](http://www.usace.army.mil)



## See the Albany Waterfront — at the Community Center

A scale model of the Albany waterfront 1" = 100' is in the atrium of the Community Center/Library, 1249 Marin Avenue. Please stop by to view the model. It is one of the best ways to understand the relative sizes of each part of the waterfront, and to get a sense of the terrain and configuration of the site, before coming to your neighborhood visioning session.

## Set your Bookmark — [www.voicestovision.com](http://www.voicestovision.com)

Visit [www.voicestovision.com](http://www.voicestovision.com) for updated information about the waterfront and the *Voices to Vision* process. The website includes expanded information on the topics covered in this publication and links to many reference documents and other resources and data relevant to the Albany waterfront. You can link to an RSVP to confirm your participation in one of the many facilitated, small group sessions that will take place in May and June. You can also submit information such as your ideas about great waterfronts you've visited or read about.

### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR VOICES TO VISION

**For questions about the process:**

[info@voicestovision.com](mailto:info@voicestovision.com)

**To RSVP for a session:**

[rsvp@voicestovision.com](mailto:rsvp@voicestovision.com)

**To speak with someone:**

444-4567

**For more information:**

[www.voicestovision.com](http://www.voicestovision.com)



ALBANY  
**VOICES TO VISION**  
WATERFRONT



This publication has been sent to all Albany addresses. We hope you will read it and participate in *Voices to Vision*, a unique opportunity to express your opinions and ideas about the future of Albany's waterfront.

Esta publicación ha sido enviada a todas las direcciones en Albany. Esperemos que la lea y participe en *Voices to Vision*, una oportunidad única para expresar sus opiniones e ideas sobre el futuro del área a la orilla del mar de Albany. Para información en Español, por favor llame al (510) 444-4567.

這份資料已寄至Albany 所有的住址。希望您能閱讀資料及參與這個會議 (Voices to Vision)。這是個獨特的機會來表達您對於 Albany Waterfront (水岸邊) 未來遠景的意見及看法。  
中文：請至電 (510) 444-4567。

PR5RT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BERKELEY, CA  
PERMIT #467



**Mixed Sources**

Product group from well-managed  
forests, controlled sources and  
recycled wood or fiber  
www.fsc.org Cert no. SW-COC-002180  
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council