02

Special Meeting Item

Office of the City Manager

WORKSESSION
November 6, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Jordan Klein, Director, Planning and Development Department

Subject: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

SUMMARY
The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (Specific Plan) will guide the future of one of Berkeley's most prominent corridors. The Specific Plan identifies goals, policies and programs that would address citywide and regional goals for housing production and affordability, support small businesses, offer safer multimodal streets, and encourage cultural vitality. It is intended to guide the City's planning efforts to meet the needs of South and West Berkeley's growing population and employment base while ensuring San Pablo Avenue remains a place where people can live, work, and connect as a community.

The Specific Plan effort began in June 2023, and this report provides an update on the overall progress of the planning process, shares key milestones for completion, and provides an overview of the Draft Specific Plan. Staff are seeking Council's feedback and direction on the **Draft Specific Plan** policies related to:

1. Land Use & Housing: residential density ranges, development standards, and affordable housing strategies.
2. Economic Development: tools to retain and grow small businesses and reduce commercial vacancies.
3. Streets & Mobility: multimodal safety, parking and curbside management.
4. Public Realm: priorities for sidewalks, plazas, lighting, landscaping, and community gathering spaces.
5. Objective Design Standards: design standards for new buildings.

Staff are also seeking feedback from the City Council on the 1993 **West Berkeley Plan**, particularly given the overlap of the San Pablo Specific Plan area with the West Berkeley Plan area. In the thirty years since the West Berkeley Plan's adoption, nearly all its recommended policies and programs have been implemented or explored. Staff

are seeking City Council feedback on whether the West Berkeley Plan should be amended only to the extent required to enact the Specific Plan, or whether it should be retired altogether.

Chapter for Feedback	Specific Questions and Considerations
Land Use	• Are the proposed developments standards appropriate for their respective locations? • Are there development standards that should not be included in the Specific Plan?
	• Should the Specific Plan include a San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program? • What development standards or objective development standards should *not* be waivable as part of a San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program?
	• Should the Specific Plan include the proposed MU-LI Housing Overlay?
Economic Development	• Are there specific economic development policies that should not be included in the Specific Plan? • Are there any other economic development policies or strategies that the Specific Plan should consider?
Streets, Mobility and Public Realm	• Are the proposed street design and mobility strategies sufficient to address safety and comfort for all travel modes along San Pablo Avenue?
Objective Design Standards	• To what extent should the proposed Specific Plan incorporate Objective Design Standards? • How can the proposed Specific Plan balance the inclusion of Objective Design Standards with flexibility to avoid being overly prescriptive? • Should ODS be applied to all projects, or only to certain types (e.g., larger multi-family projects)? • Should ODS replace Design Review (BMC Section 23.406.070)?
Implementation	• Are there any policies, standards, or approaches you feel are missing from the draft plan that staff should consider?
West Berkeley Plan	• Should the West Berkeley Plan be amended specifically to enact the Specific Plan, or should it be retired altogether?

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Specific Plan advances the following City strategic plan goals:

- Create affordable housing and housing support services for our most vulnerable community members.
- Foster a dynamic, sustainable, and locally-based economy.
- Create a resilient, safe, connected and prepared city.

The project team has completed significant outreach for the Specific Plan project, including interviews, workshops, surveys, and public open houses. More than 330 community members have participated in 13 events, providing over 500 comments that have shaped the Specific Plan's priorities.

Two documents summarize this process:

1. **Community Assessment Report *(Attachment 1*)**: The Community Assessment Report examined existing conditions related to housing, businesses, mobility, and public space.

2. **Policy Options and Development Framework Memo (*Attachment 2*):** The Policy Options and Development Framework Memo provided draft land use, economic development and transportation policies in response to the findings of the Community Assessment Report and public outreach.

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan envisions the corridor as a mixed-use district integral to surrounding neighborhoods and employment areas. The plan's central concepts include:

1. Increase the Diversity and Supply of Housing: Encourage a variety of housing types and designs that meet the needs of a range of households.

2. Increase Business Activity to Support a Thriving Community: Create vibrant storefronts, flexible ground-floor uses, and stronger support for small businesses and community-serving retail.

3. Enhance Interaction Between Public and Private Spaces: Expand sidewalks, plazas, and community spaces, with improvements to landscaping, lighting, and safety.

4. Enhance Local and Citywide Access: Make San Pablo Avenue safer and more welcoming for people walking, biking, and riding transit, while maintaining vehicle access.

The Specific Plan will translate this vision into specific land use policies, economic development strategies, and transportation/public realm improvements. The draft is organized into six chapters:

- Introduction
- Vision & Desired Results
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Streets, Mobility, and Public Realm
- Objective Design Standards

Land Use

The following are proposed land use policies and implementation strategies which aim to increase the diversity and supply of housing, and to support commercial vitality and reduce ground floor vacancies while promoting active, pedestrian-oriented development and public realm improvements:

- Establish the San Pablo Commercial (C-SP) Zoning District (*Figures 1 and 2*)

  The existing West Berkeley Commercial (C-W) zoning district covers San Pablo Avenue, 4th Street, parcels along University Avenue west of San Pablo Avenue, and select parcels on Ashby Avenue West of 9th Street.

  As the Specific Plan includes land use policies specifically for San Pablo Avenue, the plan proposes to rezone properties within the Specific Plan area to a new San Pablo Commercial (C-SP) Zoning District. The C-SP district would include all parcels facing onto San Pablo Avenue, as well as parcels on University Avenue currently zoned C-W and C-U.

- Establish a Tiered Node Structure to Focus Growth and Commercial Uses (*Figure 2*)

  The existing C-W zoning includes five nodes where development standards and permitted uses are specifically tailored to concentrate neighborhood-serving commercial uses in key intersections.

  The Specific Plan preserves this node framework, but proposes the establishment of two different node tiers:

  - Tier 1 nodes: The highest intensity areas in the Plan Area which allow for increased height (85 feet max) and Floor Area Ratio (FAR; 4.75 max) to support housing and commercial services near major

intersections. Tier 1 nodes include the intersections of San Pablo Avenue and University Ave., Ashby Ave. and Gilman Street.

- Tier 2 nodes: Allow for moderate increases in height (58 feet max) and FAR (3.0 max), comparable to standards outside of the nodes. Tier 2 nodes include the intersections of San Pablo Avenue and Cedar Street and Dwight Way.

- Allow Affordable and Family-Friendly Housing in the MU-LI

  While several parcels within the Mixed-Use Light Industrial (MU-LI) zoning district are in close proximity to San Pablo Avenue, the MU-LI zoning district does not currently permit residential uses.

  To encourage housing in proximity to San Pablo Avenue, and to provide opportunities to encourage the development of affordable housing, the Specific Plan proposes the creation of a housing overlay district that would allow 100% affordable housing or multi-family residential projects that include family-sized housing units for ten MU-LI parcels in the Plan Area (see Figure 2). Eligible projects would be either 100% affordable projects, or projects that offer most of their residential floor area for family-size units (two or three bedrooms).

- Encourage Public Open Space

  The Specific Plan would encourage high-quality, publicly accessible space as part of private development projects by incentivizing the expansion of public sidewalks into private property, the provision of Privately-Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS), and the creation of street-size plazas at select intersections. For large-scale developments (8 stories or more or 70,000 square feet or more), POPOS would be required.

- Revise Development Standards

  To encourage new housing, the Specific Plan would propose new development standards (see *Table 1*) that would increase residential and mixed-use development intensity across the C-SP zoning district:

  - In the Tier 1 nodes, maximum heights for mixed-use residential projects would be 85 feet and 8 stories, with a maximum 4.75 FAR.

  - In the Tier 2 nodes, maximum heights for mixed-use residential projects would be 58 feet and 5 stories, with a maximum 3.0 FAR.

  - Outside of the nodes, maximum heights for mixed-use residential projects would be 58 feet and 5 stories, with a maximum 3.0 FAR, while maximum heights for residential-only or commercial-only projects would be 40 feet, with a maximum 3.0 FAR.

Figure 1. Existing Zoning Map with designated Nodes

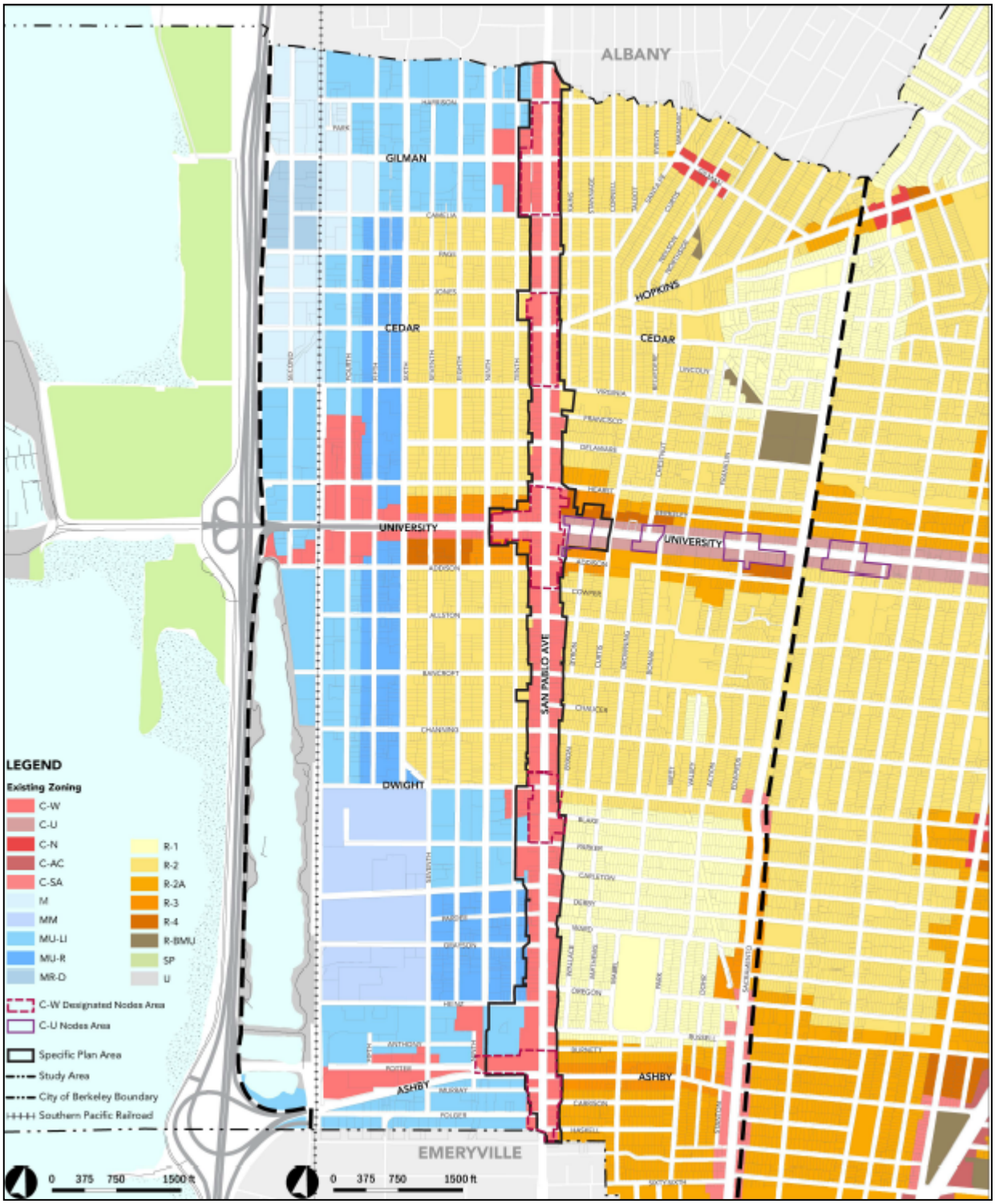


Figure 2. Proposed Zoning Map, Tiered Nodes and MU-LI Housing Overlay

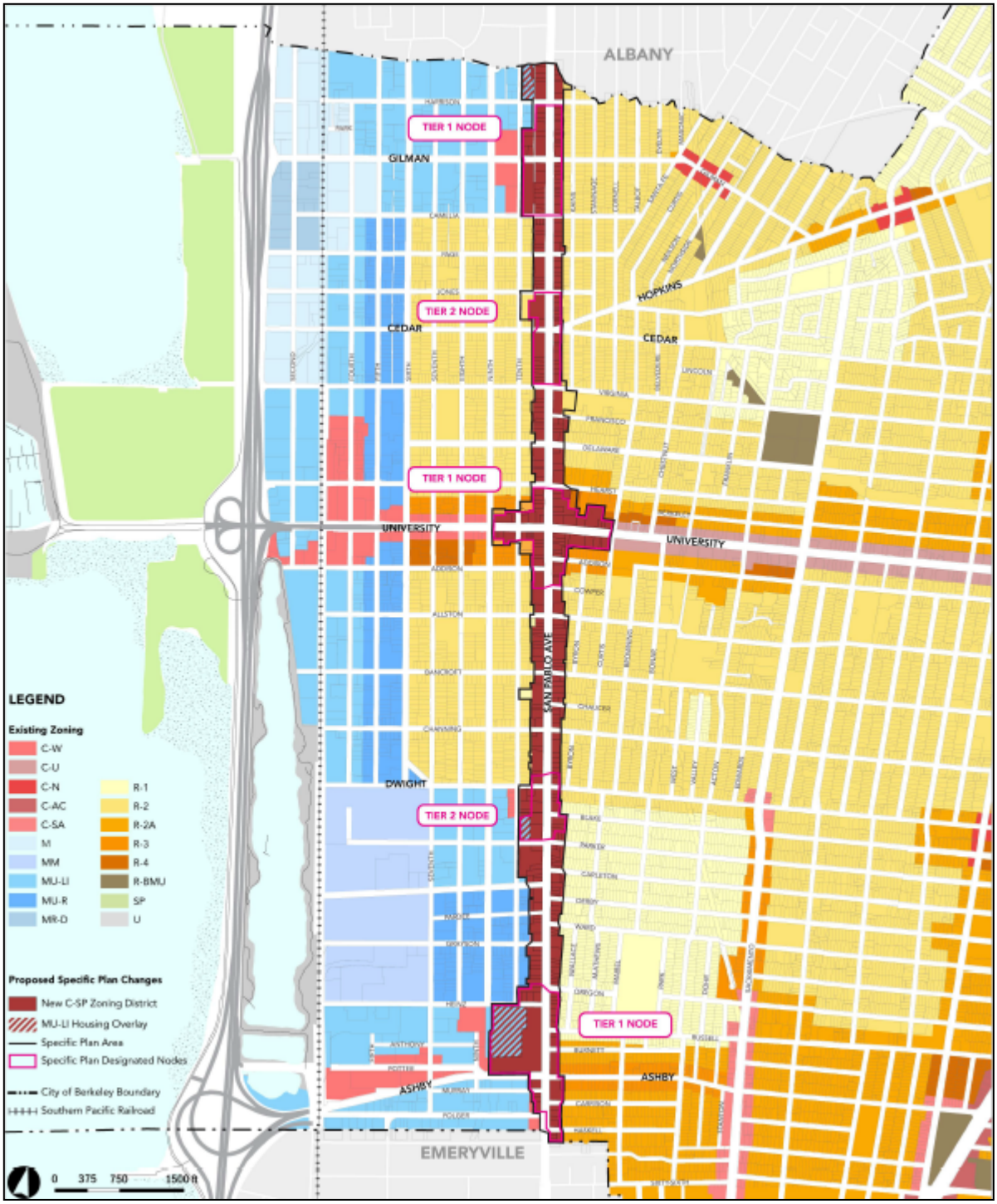


Table 1 – Development Standards

Zone/ Category	Max. FAR	Max. Height	Max Stories	Usable Open Space per Unit	Setbacks	Max Lot Coverage
Existing C-W						
Single-Use (100% residential or 100% commercial)	3.0	40’	3	40 sq. ft.	**<u>When next to a Commercial or Manufacturing District</u>**: None required. **<u>When next to a Residential District</u>:** **Front:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District **Rear:** 10 feet or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less **Interior side:** 5 ft. **Street side:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District	100%
Mixed-Use	3.0	50’	4	40 sq. ft.		

Proposed C-SP						
Outside Nodes						
Single-Use (100% residential or 100% commercial)	3.0	40’	3	40 sq. ft.	**<u>When next to a Commercial or Manufacturing District</u>:** Gound floor residential units shall be set back a minimum of 6 feet and maximum of 10 feet. **<u>When next to a Residential District:</u>** Ground floor residential units shall be set back a minimum of 6 feet and maximum of 10 feet **Rear:** 10 feet or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less **Interior side:** 5 ft. **Street side:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District	100%
Mixed-Use	3.0	55’	5	40 sq. ft.		
Within Nodes						
Residential Mixed Use					**<u>When next to a Commercial or Manufacturing District</u>**: None required. **<u>When next to a Residential District</u>:**	100%
Tier 1 Nodes (Ashby,	4.75	85’	8	40 sq. ft.		

University, Gilman)					**Rear:** 10 feet or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less **Interior side:** 5 ft. **Street side:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District	
Tier 2 Nodes (Dwight, Cedar)	3.75	65’	6	40 sq. ft.		
Commercial / Light-industrial	3.0	40’	3	None		

- Establish an In-Lieu Fee for Required Ground Floor Commercial Uses

  The Specific Plan would establish a program to allow a developer to pay a fee in lieu of providing commercial space. Fees would be deposited in a city-administered Small Business Support or Commercial Activation Fund, which could be used for tenant improvements, façade enhancements, or incubator programs for businesses within the Plan Area.

- Establish a San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program

  The Specific Plan would include a local density bonus program that would provide an alternative to the State Density Bonus. The San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program would aim to give the City greater control over the form, character, and community benefits of participating development in the Plan Area.

  Projects opting into the local program would pay an in-lieu fee to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund and would be granted development incentives like those included in the State Density Bonus. In exchange, projects would waive the right to certain State Density Bonus provisions, such as waivers or concessions of certain objective design standards, allowing the City to define which incentives and concessions apply while ensuring consistency with community goals for design, open space, and public realm improvements.

Economic Development

Community members shared a vision of San Pablo Avenue as a culturally vibrant, economically inclusive corridor where people can live, work, and shop locally. At the same time, they voiced concerns that allowing more intensive development could result in commercial displacement, the loss of cultural identity, and a lack of support for existing businesses.

Reflecting this input, the Specific Plan proposes policies to retain and grow local businesses, activate vacant and underutilized spaces, and strengthen the relationship between public and private spaces so that the corridor supports both economic opportunity and cultural vitality.

- Strengthen the City's Revolving Loan Fund

  Revenue generated from the Commercial In-Lieu Fee (see Establish an In-Lieu Fee for Required Ground Floor Commercial Uses, above) would be placed in the City's Revolving Loan Fund. Funds would provide targeted financial assistance to small businesses for tenant improvements, operating stability, or expansion.

- Support Existing Business Cluster Organizations and Encourage the Formation of New Organizations

  This policy would codify the City's practice of supporting existing business "cluster" organizations and encourage the formation of new groups.

- Study the Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID)

  The Specific Plan proposes to initiate a city-funded study to evaluate the feasibility and scope of forming one or more Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the Plan Area. The study would assess a range of coverage, from full-corridor to targeted districts focused on high-priority nodes and explore extensions into portions of West Berkeley outside of the Plan Area.

- Prioritize Initial Public Investment in Improvements in the Nodes

  The Specific Plan proposes prioritizing the nodes for any public investment committed to the Plan Area, when possible. The Tier 1 University Avenue Node would be the highest priority location for public improvements.

Streets and Mobility

Community feedback emphasized the importance of making San Pablo Avenue easier to cross, more comfortable to walk and bike along, and better connected to the surrounding neighborhoods and regional destinations. To support this transition, the Specific Plan includes policies and standards that focus on improving multimodal mobility, access and safety.

The following policies focus on ongoing and planned improvements to transportation infrastructure along San Pablo Avenue and establish a foundation for improving mobility and access for all users:

- Study Separate Bike and Lanes on San Pablo Avenue

  The Alameda County Transportation Commission's (Alameda CTC) Bus and Bike Lanes Project currently ends at Heinz Street and San Pablo Avenue. The Specific Plan recommends that the City, in partnership with Alameda CTC, undertake a follow-up planning and design process to evaluate conceptual design options for San Pablo Avenue.

- Create a Parking and Loading Management Program

  The availability of parking was a consistent concern throughout the outreach process. The Specific Plan recommends a systematic approach to parking and loading, including strategies such as adjusting parking meter rates and time limits, expanding metered parking locations to side streets with commercial frontage, and increased enforcement.

- Establish Mobility Hubs

  A mobility hub is a welcoming environment that enables travelers to access multiple transportation options (carshare, bikeshare, transit) and supportive amenities in a single location. Mobility hubs would offer a safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible space to seamlessly transfer across different travel modes.

  The University Avenue Node would serve as the first mobility hub.

- Multi-modal Safety and Speed Management

  The Specific Plan includes strategies to reduce vehicle speeds, enhance visibility, and improve safety for all travel modes on San Pablo Avenue. These strategies include lowering the speed limit on San Pablo Avenue, improving crossing and intersection design, and exploring safety improvements at driveways.

- Transit Improvements

  The Specific Plan proposes to study improvements along University Avenue and the Southside area to enhance transit service on AC Transit Line 51B, strengthening connections between San Pablo Avenue, the Berkeley Capitol Corridor Station, Downtown Berkeley, and UC Berkeley.

- Bicycle Improvements

  In alignment with the Berkeley Bicycle Plan (2017), the City would continue to expand and improve a connected, low-stress bikeway network, with emphasis on comfort and safety.

- Pedestrian Improvements

  In alignment with the Pedestrian Plan (2020), the City would continue to expand and improve a connected, low-stress bikeway network, with emphasis on comfort and safety.

- Prioritize connections

  Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements on streets that provide access to schools and parks, as well as other routes that typically serve students in the Specific Plan and Study Area.

Public Realm Policies

This section outlines policies and standards designed to ensure San Pablo Avenue functions as both a transportation corridor and a community place. The public realm should make it easy to reach businesses, transit, homes, and parking while also offering spaces to gather, exercise, and socialize.

- Sidewalk Zones

  To serve the range of uses and infrastructure located within sidewalks, the Specific Plan proposes to establish design standards that define three zones across the sidewalk width: the Pedestrian Zone, the Amenity Zone, and the Frontage Zone. Each zone would have distinct design standards.

- Sidewalk Easements

  The Specific Plan encourages the expansion of sidewalk width to improve pedestrian comfort, add landscape buffers, and create more space for social activity. Mixed-use projects are encouraged to dedicate a public access easement at the frontage (see Sidewalk Expansion Incentive, below). Property owners and businesses would be responsible for maintaining improvements within easements.

- Reestablish Sidewalk Widths

  Some segments of San Pablo Avenue have sidewalks narrower than 13 ft due to older buildings encroaching on the right-of-way. Where feasible, the City would work to restore the full sidewalk width as redevelopment or building permits are pursued. Over time, public improvements should reclaim the intended minimum sidewalk width to support pedestrian safety and comfort.

- Improve Street Lighting

  Community members consistently identified inadequate sidewalk lighting as a priority concern. Existing streetlights mainly illuminate roadways, leaving sidewalks dim and unsafe after dark.

  The Specific Plan calls for installation of pedestrian-scale lighting throughout San Pablo Avenue and its side streets (particularly University Avenue) to enhance safety, visibility, and comfort.

  Lighting standards should provide consistent coverage along sidewalks and reinforce corridor identity while balancing pedestrian comfort with minimizing light pollution.

Public Realm Expansion and Improvements

Community outreach revealed a strong desire for new public spaces that bring people together, strengthen neighborhood identity, and support local businesses. In addition to policies that encourage wider sidewalks, the Specific Plan promotes a range of strategies to expand and activate the public realm, including side street plazas, parklets, curb extensions, privately owned public open spaces (POPOS), and mid-block passages. The proposed policies are intended to increase opportunities for social life, outdoor commerce, and cultural expression along San Pablo Avenue.

- Side Street Plazas

  The Specific Plan would explore converting minor streets into side street plazas by limiting or removing vehicle access at intersections within San Pablo Avenue.

  Potential locations include streets that extend only a few blocks east/west of San Pablo Avenue or that lack a median break. (*Figure 3.*)

  Plaza designs would allow emergency vehicle and trash vehicle access, provide maneuvering space for private vehicles on the side street to turn around, and maintain pedestrian and bicycle access to ensure neighborhood connectivity.



Figure 3. Potential Side Street Plazas

- Support Use and Creation of Parklets

  The Specific Plan would support the use of publicly accessible parklets on San Pablo Avenue.

  On side streets (including University Avenue), parklets could support outdoor dining and business activity, particularly at nodes and corner locations.

- Bulb-Outs on Side Streets

  Bulb-outs extend sidewalks into parking lanes, shortening crossing distances, slowing turning vehicles, and creating spaces for community use.

  Bulb-outs would be limited to side street corners along San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue and may not extend into San Pablo Avenue's travel or parking lanes.

  Street trees, landscaping and green infrastructure, pedestrian lighting, outdoor seating, or public art could be included in bulb-out areas.

  Developers may propose bulb-outs adjacent to new projects and maintain them under agreement with the City. To create an incentive for the private construction of bulb-outs, the Sidewalk Seating Permit fees for the first commercial use of a curb extension space are proposed to be waived for up to 10 years.

- Commercial and Other Private use of Sidewalks and the Public Realm

  Sidewalk frontage along San Pablo Avenue and other streets in the Plan Area could include outdoor seating, planters, or other private uses. Where new

development would widen sidewalks through public easements, the expanded space could also be activated for commercial use. To create an incentive for the private construction of widened sidewalks, permit fees for commercial sidewalk use would be proposed to be waived for up to 10 years from the date of first use.

- Privately Owned Public Open Space (POPOS)

  The Specific Plan would incentivize POPOS in new commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use projects. POPOS types include plazas, courtyards, play areas, dog runs, or landscaped greens, and would be required to be open to the public during daylight hours (or extended hours to support adjacent businesses), with clear signage and a public access easement.

- Mid-Block Passages

  The Specific Plan proposes a mid-block passage requirement for new developments with large frontages. Mid-block passage would directly connect San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue sidewalks to parallel streets to improve block permeability. The policy would require mid-block passages to be at least 16 feet wide and 16 feet high, with unobstructed visibility between public spaces. Passages may function as pedestrian walkways, multi-use paths, or private streets with public access and would be required to include pedestrian lighting.

Objective Design Standards

The Specific Plan includes Objective Design Standards (ODS) to ensure that new development aligns with the overall goals of the Specific Plan. The ODS would apply to all new private development within the Specific Plan Area, as well as to major exterior renovations and additions, unless otherwise specified.

The ODS are intended to supplement the City's Zoning Ordinance. The goal of the ODS is to provide clarity and predictability for applicants, decision-makers and the community while allowing for high-quality architectural expression.

The standards are organized by building type and design topic. Building types include:

- Small/Middle Housing: Townhomes, triplexes/quadplexes, multiplexes, and low-rise/courtyard apartments up to three stories tall.

- Medium/Mid-Rise Multi-Family Housing: Mid-rise buildings (typically 4–8 stories), including ground-level residential entries/stoops, podium buildings and wrapped multi-family structures.

- Large/High-Rise Multi-Family Housing: Large scale, taller structures (typically 9–12+ stories), often designed with podium and tower forms.

Design topics addressed in the ODS include:



- Building Modulation and Articulation:

  These standards would require medium and larger buildings to be visually broken into smaller components through changes in height, massing, or setbacks. Façades would be required to incorporate variations in depth, materials, and architectural details to avoid blank walls and to create interest at both pedestrian and street scales. Large/high-rise developments would be required to include a variety in building heights and reduced upper floor massing through step backs or a reduction of the podium-level area.

  Standards would also include requirements for small and medium-sized housing types with specific standards for townhomes.

- Transitions to Lower Density Building Types:

  Buildings adjacent to parcels zoned for residential would be required to incorporate a minimum ten-foot step back on all floors above five stories.



Framed windows and windows within a recess

- Roof Treatments, Fenestration, and Materials:

  ODS would require variation in rooflines, with clear distinctions between podiums, towers, and parapets to create identifiable building tops. Window design standards would be intended to ensure adequate transparency and rhythm while avoiding monotonous patterns. Materials must be durable, high-quality, and varied, with a focus on creating depth and shadow and lower floors should incorporate materials that reinforce pedestrian activity zones, such as storefront glazing, tile, or stone accents.

- Ground Floor Design

  Ground floors facing San Pablo Avenue and key side streets would be required to promote active uses, safety, and pedestrian comfort. ODS would

establish four ground floor types: Storefront, Residential, Live/Work, and Other Non-Residential.

Standards would require minimum transparency levels for commercial frontages, frequent entrances, and proscribed weather protection elements such as awnings or recesses. Residential entries would be clearly identifiable, would provide a sense of transition from public to private space, and contribute to the overall character of the street. ODS would also encourage outdoor seating, landscaping, and other features that reinforce the corridor as an active and inviting public realm.

- Common and Private Open Space

  ODS would promote high-quality outdoor areas within new developments to balance private and share spaces. POPOS would be encouraged at key nodes to activate the corridor and provide community gathering opportunities. Personal private spaces, such as balconies or patios, would be required for individual dwelling units. ODS would be intended to ensure usability, privacy, accessibility, and integration into overall site and building design.

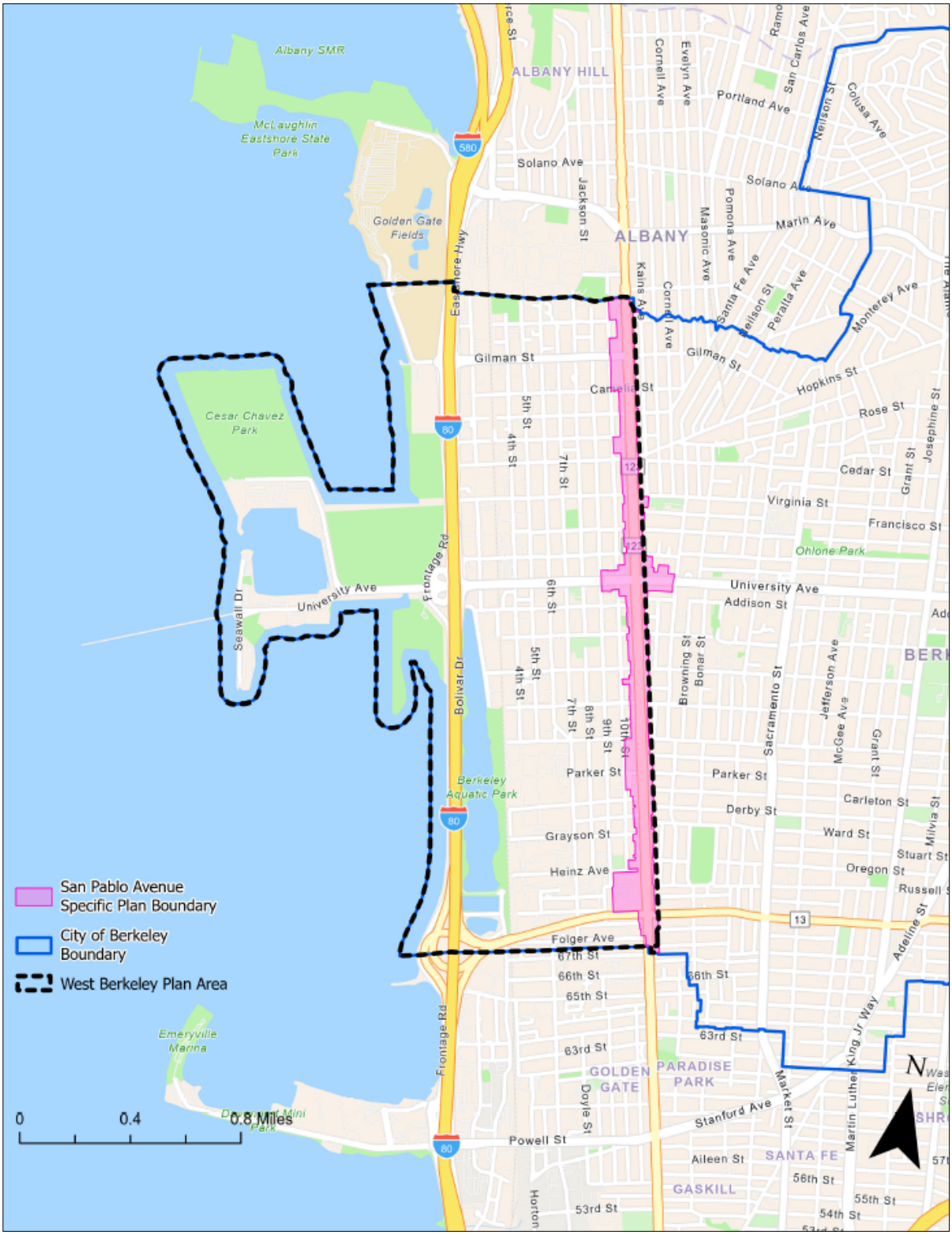
- Site Design

  New developments would be required to create connected, walkable sites that prioritize pedestrians while managing vehicle access and parking in a way that minimizes impacts on the public realm. Mid-block passages, internal pedestrian pathways, and well-lit connections would be required in larger projects to improve access and safety. Parking areas and entries would be required to be screened or wrapped by active uses, with standards for frontage design and garage treatments. Utilities, service areas, and refuse collection would be required to be fully integrated into buildings and landscapes to reduce visual and pedestrian impacts.

- Public Art

  Public art would be required in larger private development projects. Art would be required to be in visible, accessible areas, especially at key nodes, plazas, or POPOS to activate spaces and enhance community character. Developers are encouraged to collaborate with local artists to ensure that art reflects neighborhood culture and values, whether integrated into building design or provided as stand-alone features.

Figure 4. Intersection of West Berkeley Plan Area and San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area



West Berkeley Plan

A portion of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (SPASP) area overlaps with the boundaries of the West Berkeley Plan (WBP)[1]. The WBP, originally adopted in 1993 and amended in 2011, serves as the guiding document for land use, economic development, and urban design within the West Berkeley area.

As part of the Specific Plan process, and because the Specific Plan would supersede portions of the WBP where the two plans overlap, the project team conducted a review of the WBP's implementation status (*Figure 4*). Staff's assessment found that the majority of the WBP's implementation measures have been completed (***Attachment 3***). The evaluation also reaffirmed that the WBP is primarily implemented through the City's zoning ordinance.

Retirement of the WBP could simplify future policy development in West Berkeley. Each time a new policy potentially conflicts with the WBP, it requires an amendment to the WBP. As the WBP is part of the General Plan, any such amendment is subject to the requirements of a General Plan amendment. Retiring the WBP would remove these additional requirements, streamlining and expanding the City Council's discretion in the policy development process in West Berkeley.

Another option is for the City Council to direct staff to propose only those amendments to the WBP that are necessary to enact the policies included in the Specific Plan. These amendments would focus on the proposed changes to the development standards along San Pablo Avenue, and new policies and programs proposed for San Pablo Avenue. Other aspects of the WBP—including policies regarding manufacturing zoning districts and protected uses—would be unchanged.

BACKGROUND

Plan Bay Area 2050 (2021) is the long-range regional planning effort undertaken by Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to outline strategies for growth and investment in the nine-county Bay Area through the year 2050. Plan Bay Area 2050 envisions new development concentrated in Priority Development Areas (PDAs), which are places with convenient public transit services prioritized by local governments for housing, jobs and services. Jurisdictions with PDAs have access to dedicated funding for plans and infrastructure improvements focused in those areas.

In December 2020, MTC and ABAG released a Call for Letters of Interest for $7.8 million in PDA Planning and Technical Assistance funds for jurisdictions in the Bay Area Region. The City of Berkeley submitted a Letter of Interest in February 2021, and was awarded $750,000 in PDA Planning Grant Funds for the San Pablo Avenue Specific

[1] The West Berkeley Plan can be found here: https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/adopted-plans/west-berkeley-plan

Plan. The terms of the grant require the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan be completed by the end of 2025.

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan process formally began in June 2023. Since then, staff have provided a series of updates and community engagement opportunities to guide the development of the plan.

- **September 3, 2023:** Staff provided an off-agenda memo to City Council introducing the SPA SP process, overall project timeline, and key milestones.
- **November 1, 2023:** At a Planning Commission meeting, staff presented an overview of the planning process, including the existing conditions analysis, the public outreach strategy, and an introduction to the project team.
- **January 24, 2024:** The first public workshop was held, gathering community input on existing corridor conditions and priorities for future improvements.
- **April 3, 2024:** Staff presented key findings from the January 2024 workshop to the Planning Commission and outlined next steps in the planning process.
- **September 9, 2024:** A second public workshop was held at the Frances Albrier Community Center. Attendees participated in breakout sessions to evaluate potential improvements, identify opportunities for open space and community gathering, and discuss development concepts along the corridor.
- **December 4, 2024**: Staff presented the *Community Assessment Report* to the Planning Commission. The report summarized the planning process to date and highlighted the key themes, issues, and goals identified through public engagement.
- **October 29, 2025:** The final public workshop was held at the Kala Institute. Attendees participated in a workshop to provide comments and receive information on the potential policies and strategies in the draft Specific Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with this informational report. The proposed Specific Plan and associated zoning changes and General Plan amendments will be reviewed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA).

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Staff will compile and review all comments, along with City Council feedback and direction, to guide revisions to the Draft Specific Plan. A revised Draft Specific Plan, incorporating these edits, is anticipated to return to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration by spring 2026.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION
Implementation of Council direction will be carried out within existing resources. Consultant support for drafting zoning standards is already funded through the current project budget. Any additional fiscal impacts related to the Specific Plan will be identified in future staff reports.

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Attachments:
1: Community Assessment Report
2: Policy Options and Development Framework
3: West Berkeley Implementation Measure Assessment
4: Public Review Draft of San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and Appendices



San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Community Assessment Report

August 20, 2024

City of Berkeley

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This Community Assessment Report (the Report) provides an overview of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan's planning process to date and the findings associated with the existing conditions analysis and community input.

The Report includes:

1. **Existing Conditions Summary Findings:** An overview of key demographics, land use, housing, transportation and economic findings. This summary is intended to help provide an understanding of the context in which the community operates.
2. **Community Engagement Summary:** A description of the engagement approach which includes a summary of the input received from community members, stakeholders, and other interested parties. This input is provided alongside the relevant existing condition findings and lists community concerns, priorities and aspirations.
3. **Key issues and Themes:** This section details key takeaways from findings from the community assessment and engagement efforts. The key issues and themes will inform the Specific Plan's policies and implementation strategies to ensure future development and public investment are aligned with the community's vision, needs, and priorities.

Specific Plan Overview

San Pablo Avenue is one of the primary multi-jurisdictional transportation corridors in the East Bay, extending as a major boulevard from the Carquinez Bridge to Downtown Oakland, through the cities of Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo, Richmond, El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville and Oakland. The character and intensity of San Pablo Avenue varies between towns; however, its connectivity and diversity of uses establishes it as a potential multi-model mixed-use corridor in the East Bay. For that reason, San Pablo Avenue has been the subject of multiple regional planning efforts – such as the Association of Bay Area's (ABAG) East Bay Corridor Initiative and the Alameda County Transit Commission's (ACTC) San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project. Berkeley has taken part in these efforts and has also followed the development and adoption of Specific Plans in neighboring jurisdictions with great interest.

San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley has undergone much change – ranging from pedestrian safety improvements to new mixed-use housing developments to new commercial ventures. Strong market demand for housing has led to new development throughout the city, including along San Pablo Avenue, and contributed to State and Regional policies and programs that require and support the city's facilitation of housing production. Berkeley recognizes that without a vision and plan, housing projects will not contribute to a cohesive community, public investments may not effectively support changing needs along San Pablo Avenue, nor will there be coordination to meet community and regional goals. In 2015 the City Council recognized these missed opportunities and requested development of a San Pablo Avenue Plan, a comprehensive planning process that will guide future development on this important corridor.

The City initiated the planning process in 2023 to prepare a Specific Plan to articulate the community's vision for the future of San Pablo Avenue. The vision will identify improvements and create a framework for creating a multi-modal corridor that provides diverse opportunities for living, working, shopping, and taking part in community life along San Pablo Avenue. The Specific Plan will establish community-based and context-sensitive policies, programs, standards, and implementation actions to realize the community's vision.

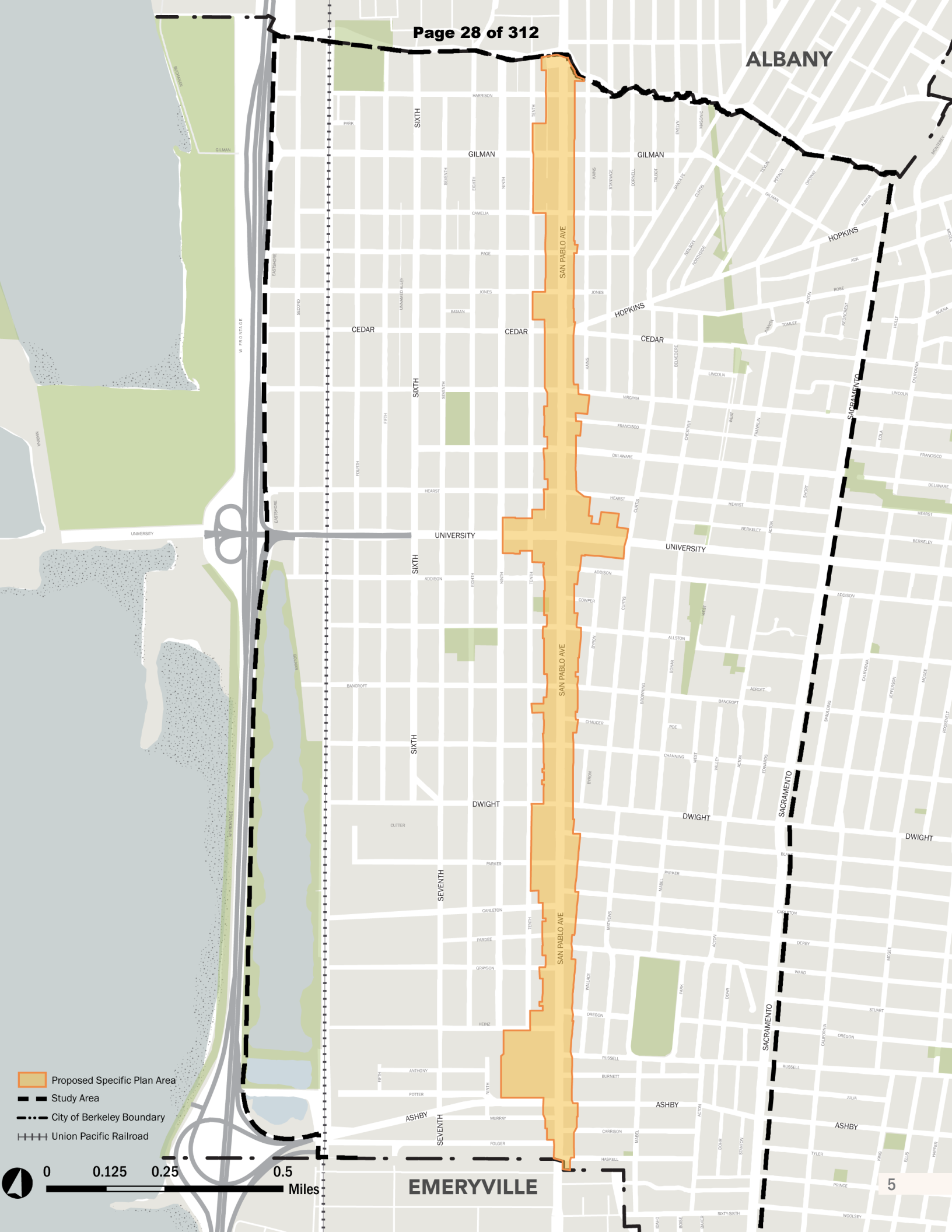
The Plan and Study Area boundaries are described below along with an overview of the Specific Plan planning process.

Graphic to the right:
Figure 1. Specific Plan Boundary Map

Specific Plan Boundaries

The Specific Plan Boundary (Specific Plan Area) encompasses the 2.35-mile corridor along San Pablo Avenue, from the Berkeley/Oakland border in the south, to the Berkeley/Albany border in the north. The Specific Plan Area includes parcels fronting on and adjacent to San Pablo Avenue. Additionally, it covers parcels along University Avenue between Ninth Street and Curtis Street and about 100 ft along some side streets as shown in Figure 1.

The Study Area includes the neighborhoods and employment areas that are proximate to and have a strong relationship with the uses along San Pablo Avenue. The Study Area extends from the I-80 freeway in the west to Sacramento Street in the east and from Albany in the north to Emeryville and Oakland in the south as shown in Figure 1. The Study Area is included in select analyses throughout the Specific Plan process to gain an understanding of the social and economic relationships between San Pablo Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods and districts.


ALBANY
EMERYVILLE
SAN PABLO AVE
SACRAMENTO
GILMAN
HOPKINS
CEDAR
UNIVERSITY
DWIGHT
ASHBY
SIXTH
SEVENTH
Proposed Specific Plan Area
Study Area
City of Berkeley Boundary
Union Pacific Railroad
0
0.125
0.25
0.5
Miles

Plan Process

The Specific Plan planning process includes three primary phases:

- Existing Conditions & Community Assessment
- Policy Development Recommendations
- Specific Plan Preparation

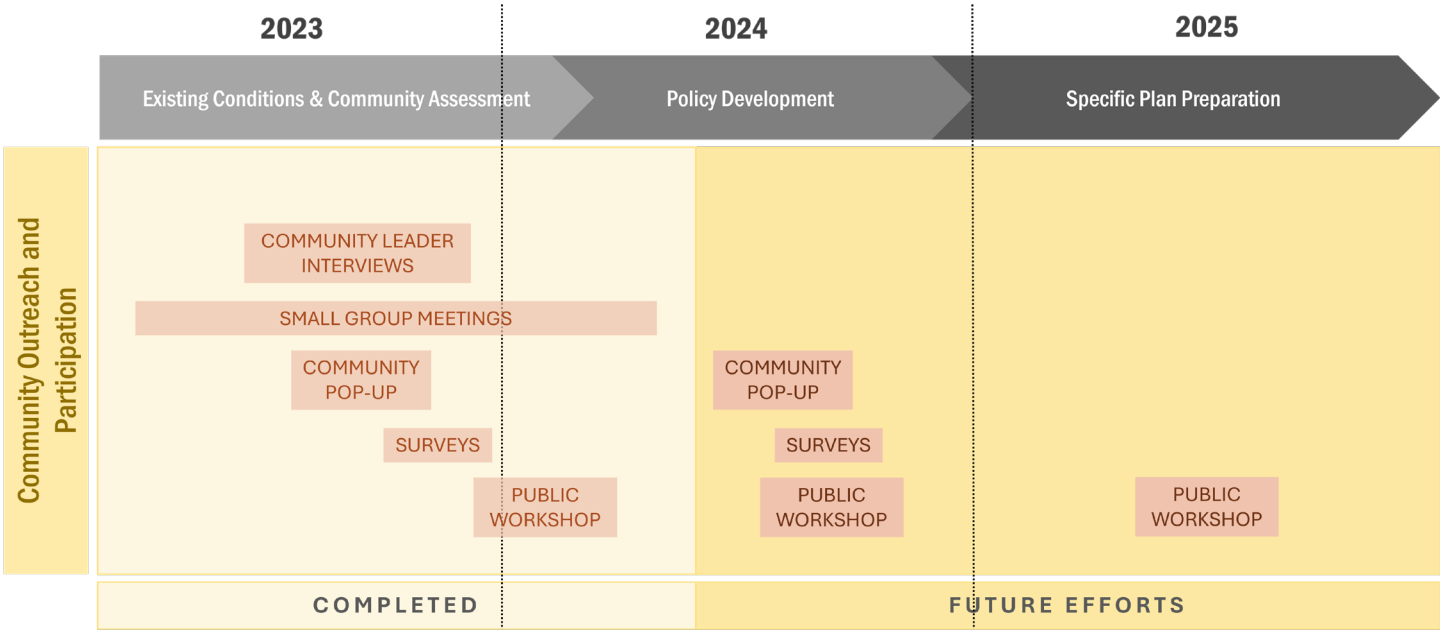
Community outreach and participation efforts occur throughout the entire planning process to ensure community input is received early, and informs key decision points in the process.

This Report is the culmination of the Existing Conditions and Community Assessment work including:

- **Summary of Existing Conditions, Plans and Programs** included an assessment of existing conditions and planning policies and programs relevant to the Specific Plan Area. This work was completed Fall 2023 and is included in Appendix A.
- **Key Community Assets and Issues** included a comprehensive analysis of the community outreach and engagement events (13 events) held between August 2023 and May 2024.

The timeline below highlights complete and future community engagement opportunities. The preparation of the draft and final Specific Plan document is anticipated for 2025, with adoption in late 2025.

San Pablo Specific Plan Timeline



Methodology

This section outlines the data collection and analyses used for the Existing conditions report and describes the community engagement between August 2023 to June 2024.

Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions analyses used quantitative and qualitative data to capture details unique to the Specific Plan and Study Area. Data collection and analysis included review of:

- Berkeley planning documents such as General Plan elements, including the 2021-2031 Housing Element Update, Specific Plans, Area Plans, and the Climate Action Plan.
- The City's Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance.
- State Legislation and Regional Policies.
- Past and current planning efforts such as the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project, the City's Vision Zero Action Plan and Program 29 – Middle Housing, and Objective Design Standards.
- Historical zoning documents, related to equity and displacement, including Equity Priority Communities data and reports from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).
- Commercial data and reports including the City of Berkeley's Office of Economic Development 2016 Economic Development Work Session, and active business license records.
- Past and current demographic and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau

Field study and direct observation of the corridor included two field surveys along the corridor from the Berkeley/Albany border to the Berkeley/Oakland border in both directions. During the field study, the team observed and assessed existing parcels, public realm conditions including building frontages, sidewalk areas, and landscaping. Team members attended community events, such as the SF Bay Brazilian Day and Lavagem Festival for additional observation opportunities. Team members also attended a San Pablo Avenue Bike Tour, led by Berkeley Design Advocates, on September 16, 2023, to view recently constructed, entitled and submitted projects along the corridor.

Community Engagement

During this initial planning work, over 330 community members were engaged in 13 outreach events and forums, and over 500 comments have been received. **Table 1** below outlines the events conducted between August 2023 and May 2024. During these events, participants and members of the community explored issues related to housing and commercial development, economic markets, including local business and retail activities, placemaking, mobility, and personal safety in the public realm. Through comments, interactive activities, surveys, and stakeholder interviews and small group meetings, community members provided insight into their varied experiences living, working, and spending time along and surrounding San Pablo Avenue, as well as traveling to and from the corridor. The input collected includes a range of ideas, experiences, and priorities, however, many similar comments and themes appeared consistently throughout all outreach events.

The Specific Plan process has resulted in valuable feedback throughout the community outreach and engagement events. However, this report acknowledges the limitations of the data and participation process. Engagement can often be disproportionate as some members are more able to participate resulting in an unequal representation of the Specific Plan and Study Area community. This report reflects the full range of feedback received throughout all events, and the planning process will continue to identify strategies to reach a representative range of future and existing residents within the whole Specific Plan and Study Area community.

Table 1: Community Outreach Events

Event	Summary
Key Community Leader Interviews (5)	August 28-31, 2023. – Virtual on Zoom Format: 5 qualitative interviews held for 60 minutes each Attendees: Community Based Organization Leaders & Small Business Owners
Pop-up at Harvest Festival	October 21, 2023. 11am - 4pm. – Harvest Festival at Cedar Rose Park Format: Pop-up stand with interactive elements to receive community feedback. The stand was staffed with city representatives to answer any questions. Attendees: Visitors of the Harvest Festival, primarily Berkeley residents Received 26 comments and approx. 142 dots on interactive elements
Targeted Intercept Survey	November 2-12, 2023. – In-person along San Pablo Avenue Format: Quantitative survey, designed to be completed in under 10 min Audience: San Pablo Avenue users 222 in-person interviews

Event	Summary
Community Open House (Appendix F)	January 24, 2023. 5:30am - 7:30pm. – Berkeley Adult School multipurpose space Format: Introduction presentation, followed by drop-in style open house with 7 stations and interactive elements to receive community feedback. The event was staffed by the project team to answer any questions. Attendees: Approximately 80 community members and Berkeley residents with interest on San Pablo Avenue. Received about 270 comments
Public Meeting	December 9, 2023. 10:00am - 12:00pm. – Berkeley Neighborhood Council, Virtual Format: Staff gave a brief presentation and answered questions from the Berkeley Neighborhood Council. April 3, 2024. 6:00pm. – Planning Commission, North Berkeley Senior Center Format: Public Hearing – Staff gave a brief presentation updating the Commission on the status of the Specific Plan and provided an overview of the Community Open House. Commission asked staff questions and provided comments. May 2, 2024. 7pm - 11pm. – Berkeley Housing Advisory Commission, South Berkeley Senior Center Format: Public Hearing – Staff gave a brief presentation updating the Commission on the status of the Specific Plan and provided an overview of the Community Open House. Commission asked staff questions and provided comments.
Small Group Meetings (5)	Residents: October 17, 2023. 5:30pm. – West Berkeley Library Small Businesses: November 8, 2023. – City Hall at 5:30pm. Community Based Organizations (CBOs): November 14, 2023. 12:00pm. – City of Berkeley Offices Architects and Developers: March19, 2024. 12:00pm. – City of Berkeley Offices Large Employers, Developers, and Land Owners: May 28, 2024. 9:30am. – Virtual on Zoom Format: In-person group discussion with intro presentation, with exception of the Major Employers Group Meeting, which was held virtual on zoom Attendees: 7 Residents of adjacent neighborhoods; 3 small business owners; 2 CBO representatives of Rebuilding Together and David Bower Center; 10 architects and developers; 5 representatives of major employers and consultants


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Chapter 2

Existing Conditions + Community Feedback

Chapter 2 of this report provides a summary of the Plan Area's existing conditions and input received from the community. The existing conditions summary provides a high-level overview of the more detailed Existing Conditions Assessment Report included in Appendix A. The Existing Conditions Assessment was prepared in Fall 2023. The following section highlights analyses related to the Existing Conditions Assessment and integrates pertinent feedback received from community members, stakeholders and other relevant parties.

Community Demographics

A demographic analysis was conducted for the Study Area to highlight characteristics of the community in the area over time.

Population

The Study Area's population in 2020 was 26,360. The population grew 16% between 2010 to 2020, representing 22% of the city's total population and outpacing the city's overall population growth of 9% to122,580 people in the same period.

"It is essential to ensure that the plan addresses the needs of the historically undeserved communities around San Pablo Avenue."

– Community advocate from Beautiful San Pablo Avenue

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Growth in racial and ethnic populations has been disproportionate, resulting in an uneven demographic change within the Study Area. From 2000 to 2020, the White population increased by over 3,900 (+45%), while the Black population decreased by over 2,600 (-39%), see Figure 3. The population increase of Hispanic/ Latinx, Asians/ API, and other races during that period was moderate. The Study Area is still diverse with the percentage of the Black population in the Study Area being higher than the percentage citywide, see Figure 4.

The Study Area displays greater diversity overall compared to the city and county, and the percentage of Black population is higher in the Study Area.

The Study Area has a history of land use and economic policy that excluded Black, Asian, and other racial and ethnic groups from other areas of Berkeley. The majority of the Specific Plan and Study Area is a historically redlined area. Although effectively eliminated by 1966 by the Supreme Court, impacts are still seen today as areas that were redlined are often found to be more prone to racial and economic segregation, economic inequality, risk of displacement, and associated conditions. Those restrictions resulted in Study Area neighborhoods being historically more diverse than the rest of the city.

As a result of being historically under served, the Study area is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)'s Equity Priority Communities (EPCs)[1]. The EPC designation helps provide funding and assistance to census tracts that have a significant concentration of under served populations, such as households with low incomes, limited English proficiency, zero-vehicle households, seniors 75 years and over, people with disability, single-parent families, severely rent-burdened households, and people of color.

Community Feedback: Equity and Diversity

- Several community comments expressed appreciation for the racial and ethnic diversity of San Pablo Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods. Fear that new developments and influx of new residents will increase gentrification and displace marginalized community members was also expressed.
- Overall, many community members support increased housing, specifically affordable housing (rentals), condominiums (owned), and senior housing.



What was Redlining?

In 1933, as part of the federal program and policies, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was created to refinance home mortgages and expand home buying opportunities. HOLC was the originator of the color-coded mortgage security risk practice known as redlining and redlined the majority of the Specific Plan Area and Study Area. See Figure 2. This discriminatory practice withheld significant investment to areas deemed "D (Hazardous)," because of adjacent industrial areas, older buildings, and the presence of "undesirable populations" (e.g., Jewish, Asian, Mexican, and Black families).based and context-sensitive policies, programs, standards, and implementation actions to realize the community's vision.

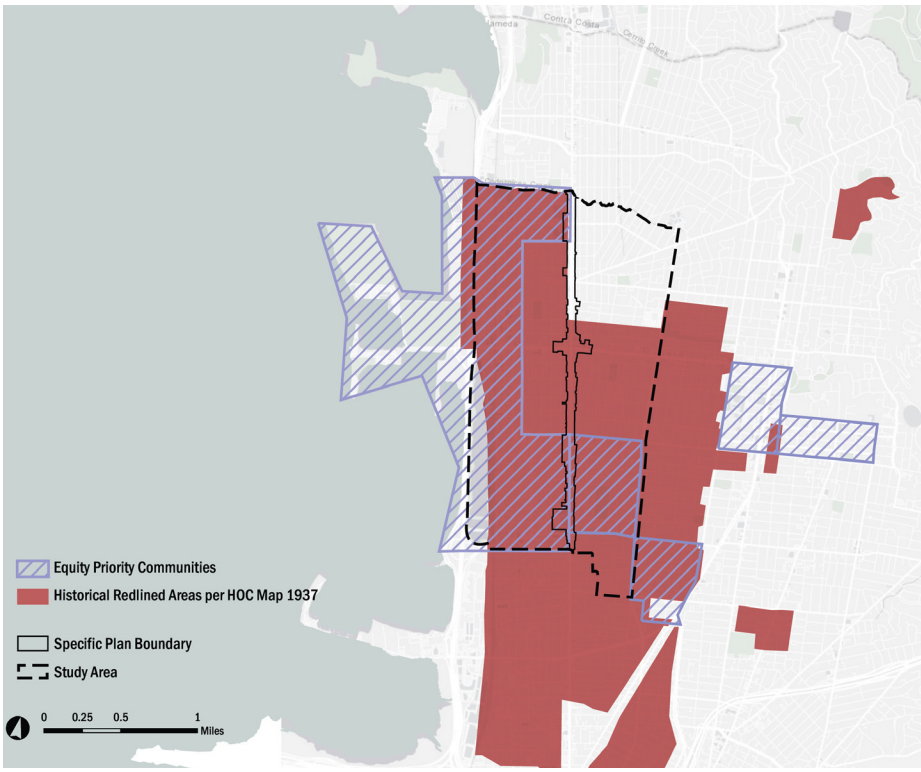


Figure 2. Equity Priority Communities and Historical Redlined Areas. Source: Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, Mapping Redlining, 2023. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Equity Priority Communities, 2021.

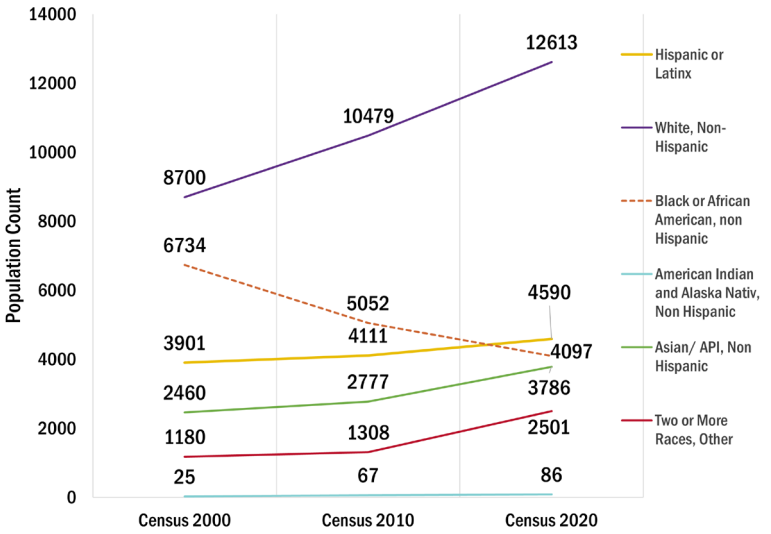


Figure 3. Population Shift by Race and Ethnicity in Study Boundary. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1

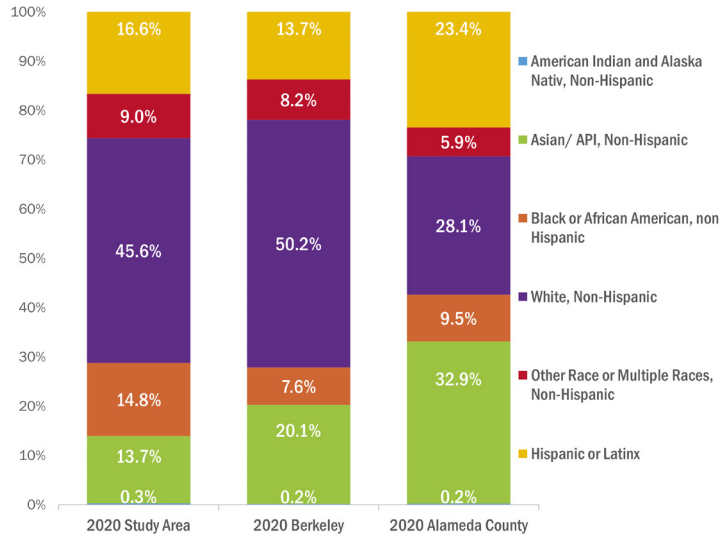


Figure 4. Comparison of Racial Composition. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1.

[1] *To learn more about EPCs, visit: https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/equity-priority-communities. MTC is updating the EPC geography in the region based on the most recent American Community Survey data, and this will change the EPC designations in the Study Area reflecting recent increasing household incomes and shifts in demographics, for more information and to see draft update mapping, visit: https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/equity-priority-communities/mtcs-2024-equity-priority-communities-update.*

Community and Housing

Housing Characteristics

Between 2010-2020, the number of housing units in Berkeley increased by 6% (2,877 units). New housing was primarily developed along major corridors, like San Pablo, University, Shattuck, Telegraph and Dwight Way. The increased number of units in West Berkeley correlates with the population growth. The number of units in West Berkeley nearly doubled in the last decade, accounting for about one-fifth of the total housing growth in Berkeley.

"To put in low-income housing and not fully take care of businesses will create resentment among residents and business owners. It will be an uphill battle."

– Interviewed non-profit leader

Household Tenure

As of 2020, the Study Area makes up 17% of the city's households and 22% of the city's population. Consistent with the city's household tenure trends, the Study Area has more renter-occupied households than owner-occupied households. The Study Area has a higher proportion of overcrowded housing units compared to the city, with 30% of the city's overcrowded units. In the Study Area, significantly more renter-occupied households (237) were overcrowded than owner-occupied (82 households).

Housing Cost

In 2021, the Study Area's median household income ($93,871) was approximately $7,000 below the Berkeley median household income ($101,048).

In the Study Area, over 50 percent of tenants are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their gross household income on rent and utilities. Of those tenants, 26 percent are severely cost-burdened, meaning they are spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent and utilities.

Homeowners in the area are spending a lower share of their income on housing costs (mortgages payments, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, etc.) than renters are, on average.

Household Eligibility for Affordable Housing

There are 1,513 severely cost-burdened households in the Study Area, and 73 percent (1,118) of these households earn less than $35,000 and spend more than 50 percent of their income for rent.

Approximately half of Study Area households earn less than 80 percent of Area Median Income and a third earn less than 50 percent of Area Median Income. These households would likely be eligible for affordable housing.

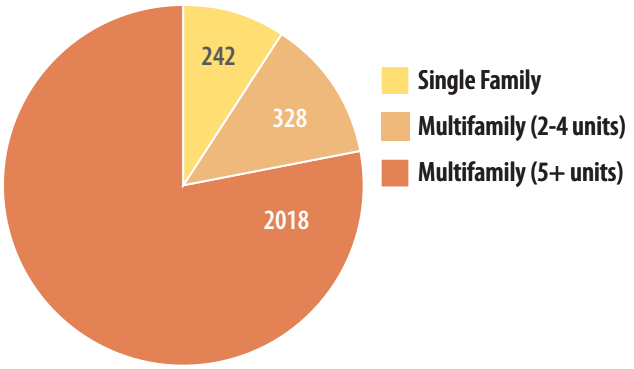


Figure 5. Distribution of Existing Housing Units in the Plan Area by Type. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023.

Community Feedback: Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing

- The community supports more housing options, particularly affordable housing, as it received overall support from all outreach efforts.
- Some community members expressed strong support for condominium and other ownership opportunities along the corridor.
- Input from some events demonstrated specific support for senior housing.

Community Service

- Several community comments noted that an increase in affordable housing units should be met with an increase in supporting services. Suggestions spanned from “daily necessities” like affordable grocery stores to flexible and low-cost space for non-profit organizations.



Land Use

Existing Uses

The Specific Plan Area contains a mix of residential and commercial uses (see Figure 8). Residential uses include multifamily, mixed-use, live-work, and a few single-family homes. Live-work spaces are designed to be used both as a workplace and as a residence by one or more persons, and a mixed-use space is a use of a lot or building with two or more different land uses. There are a variety of existing commercial uses, however the main uses include services, auto-related uses, restaurant, and retail uses. Popular commercial uses include auto and home-improvement businesses, including retail, manufacturing, and wholesale uses. Many commercial uses along the corridor are locally owned businesses with brick-and-mortar storefronts. Approximately 90 percent of brick-and-mortar businesses on San Pablo Avenue are locally owned businesses; 21 percent of which are likely owned by women; and 41 percent are likely owned by people of color.

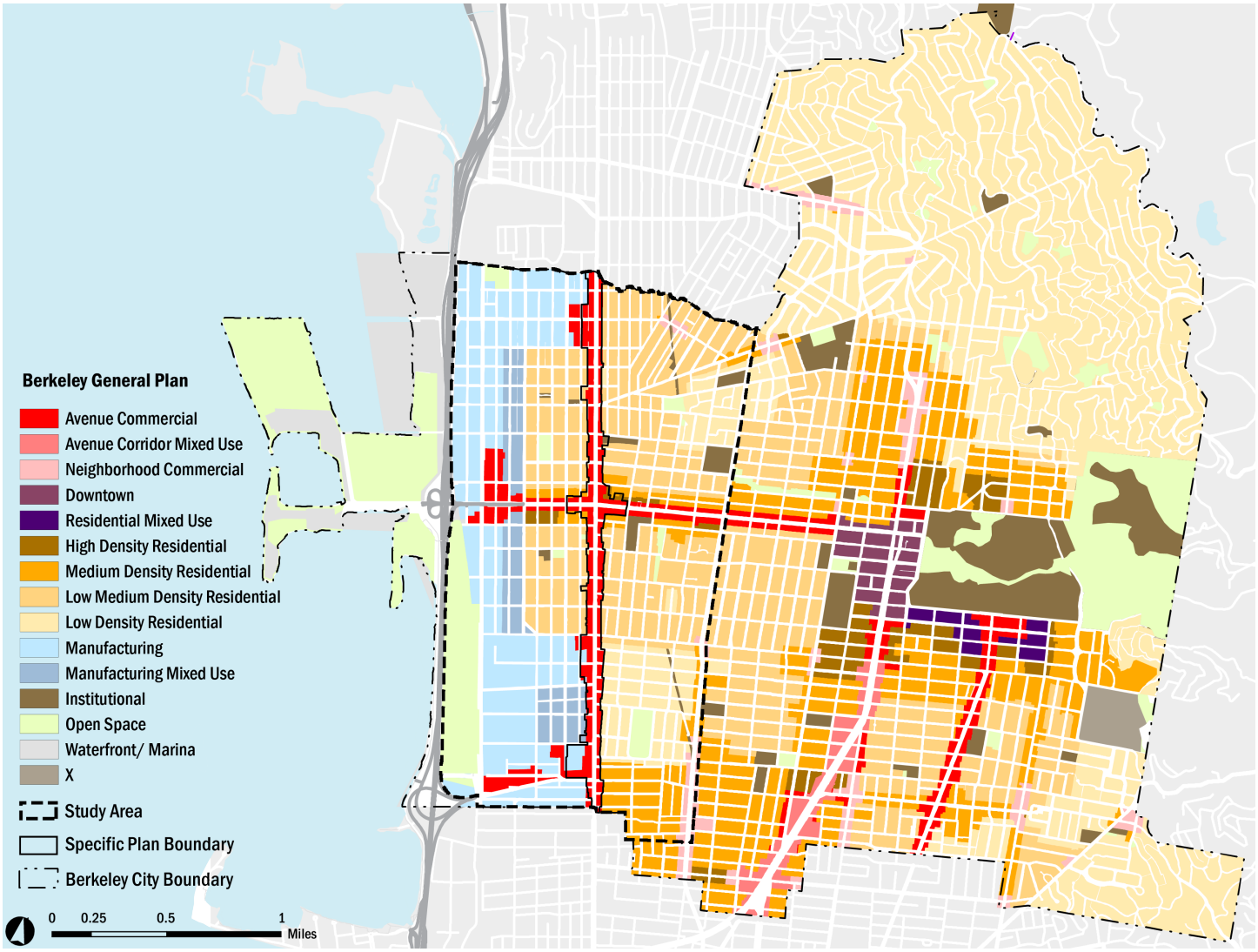


Figure 6. Berkeley General Plan. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023.

Vacancy Rates

According to the Berkeley Office of Economic Development data, San Pablo Avenue's ground floor commercial vacancy rate (by square footage) doubled from 5.5% in 2017 to 10.8% in 2022. This rate increased most significantly, by three percentage points, from 2020 to 2021 and then again from 2021 to 2022, likely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The latter vacancy rate is notably higher than other commercial corridors such as Solano (3.7%), Elmwood (7.7%), and North Shattuck (4.4%), but similar to University (12.8%), Downtown (11.9%) and South Berkeley (11.8%) neighborhoods.

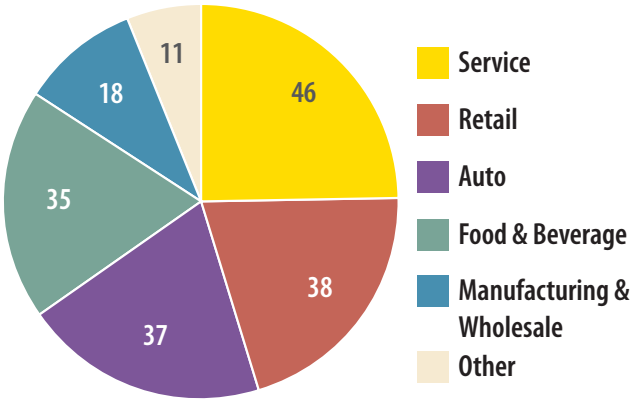


Figure 7. Locally Owned Businesses on San Pablo Ave. Source: Finance Department Active Business License Data & in-person observation (August 2023).

Community Feedback

Vacant storefront

Across all outreach events and forums, the community expressed concern about the high number of vacant storefronts along San Pablo Avenue. Reduced activity and vitality along the street and perceived safety were often cited as primary concerns.

Ground floor use types

Community members expressed support for expanding permitted ground floor uses and advocated for programs and incentives to fill vacant ground floor spaces. Specific ideas included:

- Allowing temporary ground floor uses and other unconventional uses such as art galleries or other pop-ups.
- Allowing a wider variety of uses such as co-working spaces and meeting spaces, galleries and art installations, business incubators, offices, and artist housing.
- Establishing more flexible development standards, reducing discretionary use permits, and other regulatory barriers for small businesses.
- Establishing financial support programs for small businesses for tenant improvements and other startup costs.

Community members mentioned a variety of desired business types and services including:

- Local-serving businesses to meet every day retail and service needs
- Business with affordable products
- Restaurants, cafes and bars

Ground floor commercial challenges

Several members of the developer and professional services community that live and work on and around San Pablo Avenue identified the following challenges for ground floor commercial uses:

- High Tenant Improvement (TI) costs are prohibitive. Specifically, bathrooms and specialized infrastructure such as grease-traps and exhaust hood ducts are expensive costs for small businesses.
- Retail spaces in new developments are not suitable for small businesses as they are currently designed as wide retail storefronts. Small businesses are looking for small storefronts with deeper floorspace, and back of house access.



Map Segment 1: Albany to University Avenue Node

Map Segment 2: University Avenue Node to Emeryville

Figure 8. Ground Floor Use based on Land Use Codes. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023. Alameda County Assessor, 2023.



Map Segment 1: Albany to University Avenue Node

Map Segment 2: University Avenue Node to Emeryville

Figure 9. Mix of ground floor locally owned, brick and mortar businesses. Source: Street Level Advisors and Gordon Consulting, 2023.

Existing Land Use Designations and Designated Nodes

Land uses are regulated by the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance (see Figures 6 and 10). The General Plan land use designation along the entire San Pablo Avenue frontage is **Avenue Commercial**. The Zoning district for properties fronting on San Pablo Avenue is predominantly **West Berkeley Commercial (C-W)**. Some parcels front on San Pablo Avenue have split zoning C-W and another zoning districts including Mixed Use-Light Industrial (MULI), Multi-Family Residential (R-4), and Single-Family Residential (R-1).

The C-W district aims to implement the West Berkeley Plan by providing for diverse commercial services to residents and businesses, including restaurants and both small and large retail formats. It delineates certain areas as nodes to encourage the intensification of commercial activity and prevent overspill into industrial areas while creating a pedestrian oriented environment. The district also aims to promote residential development within commercial zones to support local retail and the use of public transportation. Overall, the district supports development in underutilized commercial areas, while ensuring the developments are compatible with adjacent commercial, residential, and industrial zones.

The Specific Plan Area includes five of the six Commercial Designated nodes in the **West Berkeley Plan.** The five nodes are located in areas around major intersections along San Pablo Avenue at Gilman Street, Cedar Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue. Another commercial node is located along Fourth Street. The intent of these nodes is to intensify retail, commercial, and mixed-use activity to support a strong commercial and pedestrian-oriented environment by requiring that ground floors be activated with select commercial uses. A University Commercial District Node Area is located on the east side of the University and San Pablo intersection. This designation requires that new residential uses be integrated with non-residential uses. While ground floor commercial is required in the nodes, existing commercial uses are scattered along San Pablo Avenue (see Figure 9).

Community Feedback

The community expressed a wide range of perspectives regarding the quantity and location of ground floor commercial and retail along San Pablo Avenue:

- Several comments supported continuing to require ground floor retail in the nodes, while others suggested removing the requirement altogether.
- Some community comments questioned the existing node locations and suggested expanded or reduced node sizes.

The community also expressed competing priorities for the nodes:

- Several members of the developer community believe nodes should concentrate high density residential housing.
- San Pablo Avenue visitors and users suggested that nodes should have retail and other commercial uses.
- Some local residents believe nodes should have open space, plazas, and outdoor dining, as opposed to commercial and retail uses.

Other suggestions for the nodes included:

- Prioritizing infrastructure and public realm improvements at the nodes.
- Increasing density and height within the nodes.



Figure 10. Zoning Map with designated nodes in the Specific Plan and Study Areas. Source: City of Berkeley

Existing Development Standards and Recent Development Trends

The C-W zoning district permits 3-story (40 feet) residential- and commercial-only developments, and 4-story (50 feet) mixed-use developments with either ground floor commercial or live-work units. State Density Bonus Law (See "State Legislation" section) has resulted in developments ranging from six to eight stories and up to 85 feet in height. A detailed overview of the existing development standards is located in the Existing Conditions Report in Appendix A.

Table 2: Existing Development Standards

Designation	FAR (Non-Res/ MU)	Height (Non-Res/Res/MU)	Stories (Non-Res/MU)	Density applied in Housing Element (DU/acre)	Recent Proposed and Approved Development along SPA (C-W)
C-W	3.0	40 - 50' 50' for mixed-use Mixed-Use req. in node	3 - 4 4 stories for mixed-use 4story must be res or live-work	150	6-8 story mixed-use developments 3.75-4.70 FAR 150-380 DU/ac
C-U	2.2 - 3.0 or None	36 - 48'/36' Res only: 36' MU/non-res: 36' MU req. in Node: 48' Non-Res in Node: 40'	3 - 4 MU in Node: 4 stories 3rd floor and above residential only.	150	
General Plan: Avenue Commercial	1.0 to 5.0	Up to 65 ft	Up to 6	150	

State legislation

Several state laws and regional policies have been approved since the adoption of the City's General Plan in 2002. The Berkeley Municipal Code continues to be updated to remain consistent with State laws and policies. The following provides an overview of legislation and policy relevant to the Specific Plan. Many recent State laws have made changes to the development review process, timeline, and requirements, as well as defined limitations on the city's discretion regarding project approval, conformance with certain development standards, and the applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Housing Accountability Act (HAA): This legislation limits cities' ability to deny, reduce the density of, or make infeasible housing development projects or emergency shelters that are consistent with the city's objective local development standards.

Senate Bill 35 (2017): SB 35 streamlines the housing approval process for qualifying multifamily residential projects with certain minimum affordable housing. This allows such projects to move more quickly through the city's review process and restricts the city's ability to reject these proposals to encourage the development of affordable housing. See more at the Housing and Community Development SB 35 Guidelines.

Senate Bill 330 (2019): This legislation limits cities' ability to impose restrictions on housing developments. SB 330 seeks to expedite the housing approval process, enhance housing supply, and ensure predictability for developers by reducing regulatory uncertainty and potential obstacles to new housing construction.

Density Bonus (Gov Code 65915): State density bonus provisions have changed frequently and significantly in recent years to further incentivize certain types of housing, including but not limited to various levels of affordability, senior, transitional, veterans, and student. In exchange for a commitment to build the specified housing type or meet a specified level of affordability, the city must allow a density bonus — an increase over the maximum allowable residential density. In addition to increasing density under density bonus law, developers can use "waivers" and "concessions" to reduce, modify, or waive development standards. The use of concessions can limit the applicability of development standards and other requirements for projects that quality for a density bonus.

Assembly Bill 2011 (2022): AB 2011 allows for by-right approval of one-hundred percent affordable and mixed-income housing projects in zones where office, retail, or parking are the principally permitted use.

Potential Housing Production

An estimate of potential housing production within the Specific Plan Area has been prepared using data sources including:

1. Approved projects that have been entitled but not yet issued Certificates of Occupancy
2. Permit Applications for projects that are currently under review by the city
3. 2023-2031 Housing Element Opportunity Sites which identifies an additional 51 sites that could accommodate 2,023 housing units by-right. Density Bonus law could result in approximately additional 700 units.

As of 2022, the approved and anticipated sites along San Pablo Avenue could accommodate over 5,300 units including over 800 deed-restricted affordable units, **see Table 3**. In addition to on-site affordable units, this level of development could generate roughly $20 million in-lieu fees, which is sufficient to fund about one-third of the local subsidy needed to support the projected number of 100% affordable buildings in the Specific Plan Area.

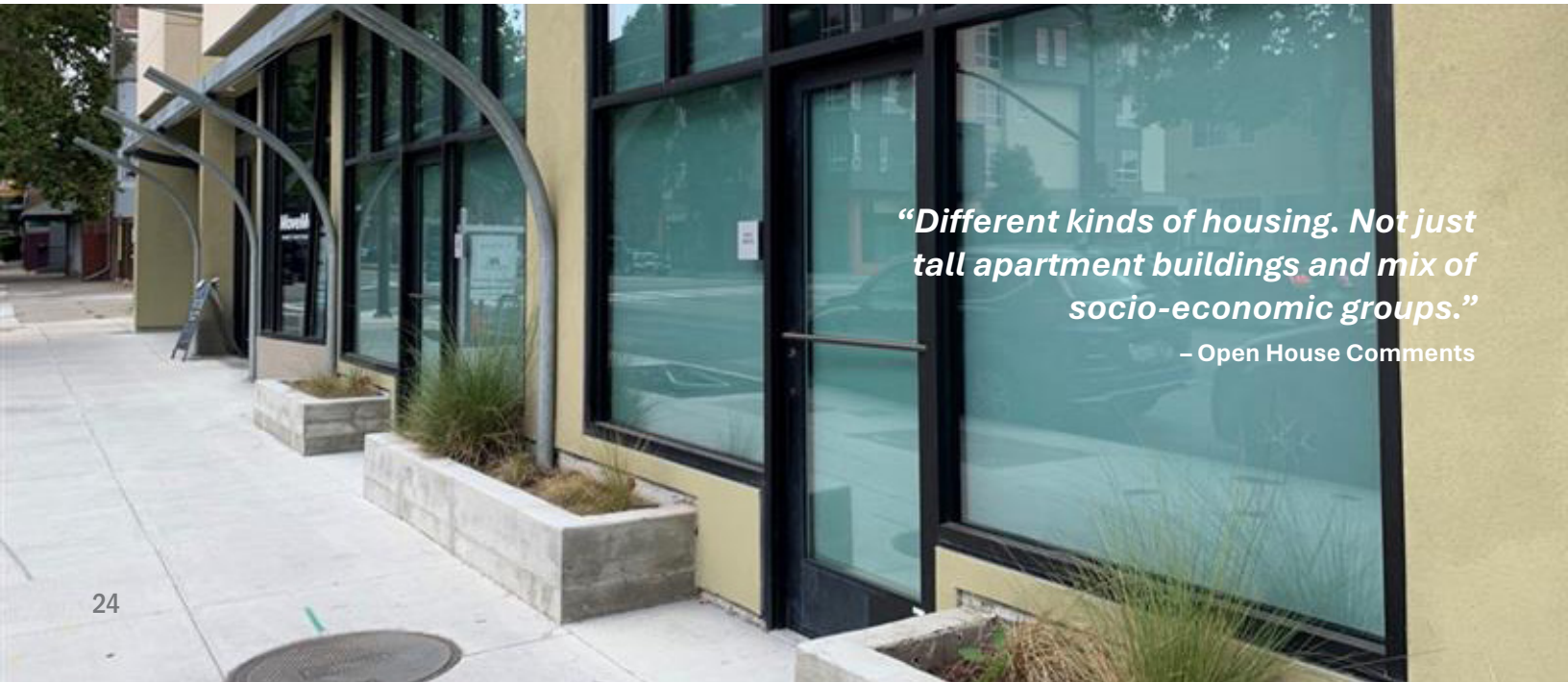
Berkeley Affordable Housing Preference Policy

In July 2023, Berkeley adopted a policy to provide a preference for current residents and descendants of residents of the city's historically redlined areas. Households with ties to redlined areas receive priority in leasing new city funded or regulated affordable units.

Table 3: Estimate of Potential Housing Production

	Total Units	100% Affordable	On site Affordable	% Affordable
Approved (as of 2022)	589	63	52	19.7%
Permit Applications (as of 2022)	2,029	110	192	14.9%
Housing Element Opportunity Sites (Including potential density bonus units)	2,023	110	191	14.9%
Density Bonus[1]	+1,090-2,700	+58-145	+100-255	14.9%
Total All Sites	+5,690-7,400	+340-430	+535-700	15.4%

[1] Estimated based on the typical density bonus achieved from recent projects in Berkeley.
Source: City of Berkeley, 2023. 2023-2031 Housing Element Update. Tables C-3, C-6, and C-10.



Community Feedback

Housing Density

In all outreach events, participants expressed support for more density and for more housing. The community recognizes that San Pablo Avenue provides opportunities to address regional and local housing issues.

Housing Height

- The community expressed varied opinions regarding building height for new developments on San Pablo Avenue. Some comments raised concern about shadows on adjacent low-rise neighborhoods, while others supported increasing permitted building height to allow 8 to 12 stories along the corridor to increase housing capacity and economic support for commercial activity.

"Taller, denser housing urgently needed to house more people."

– Open House Comments

- There was support for increased height for residential-only projects along San Pablo Avenue.

Housing Types and Ownership

- There is support for a greater diversity of housing types. Most community feedback supports a variety of housing typologies (multi-family, townhouse, live-work, etc.).
- The community expressed competing priorities between affordable rental housing options and condominium ownership housing options.

Building Design

- Some community comments expressed concern over "bulky" and unarticulated buildings.

"[Make building facades] Architecturally unique. Implement standards that aren't so strict to allow for variety (i.e. ornamental, setbacks, etc.)"

– Open House Comments

- Community feedback supports the development of buildings with engaging and active building frontages. The community shared the perspective that ground floor setbacks and other strategies to increase the pedestrian realm along San Pablo Ave will increase pedestrian activity. The additional ground floor setbacks at recent developments along the corridor received positive feedback.

"New developments [are] nice to live in, but not to live around."

– Small Group Meeting comment

Multi-family Building Amenities and Access

- Some local residents expressed concern about private amenities within new developments resulting in the creation of "urban gated communities".
- Several community members suggested that new developments provide local public access to some amenities such as gyms, rooftop lounges, etc., to encourage community cohesion.

Public Realm and Open Spaces

The public realm and open space analysis evaluate the streetscape conditions and its elements, such as sidewalks, landscaping, street furnishings, lighting, and building and site frontages. While the Specific Plan Area does not have any existing public open space or parks, several physical conditions of San Pablo Avenue contribute to a sense of "community life," including semi-public spaces, community events, and social engagement.



Figure 11. Mature London Plain trees define the character of San Pablo Avenue.

Streetscape Conditions

Landscape

A mature tree-canopy covers the majority of San Pablo Avenue, adding greenery and shade throughout the corridor. However, there are gaps in the tree canopy and maintenance issues with trees and tree wells along the sidewalks. Other public landscaping on San Pablo Avenue is minimal. Some other major streets in the city have business improvement districts that install and maintain landscaping, but there are no existing improvement districts in the Specific Plan Area.

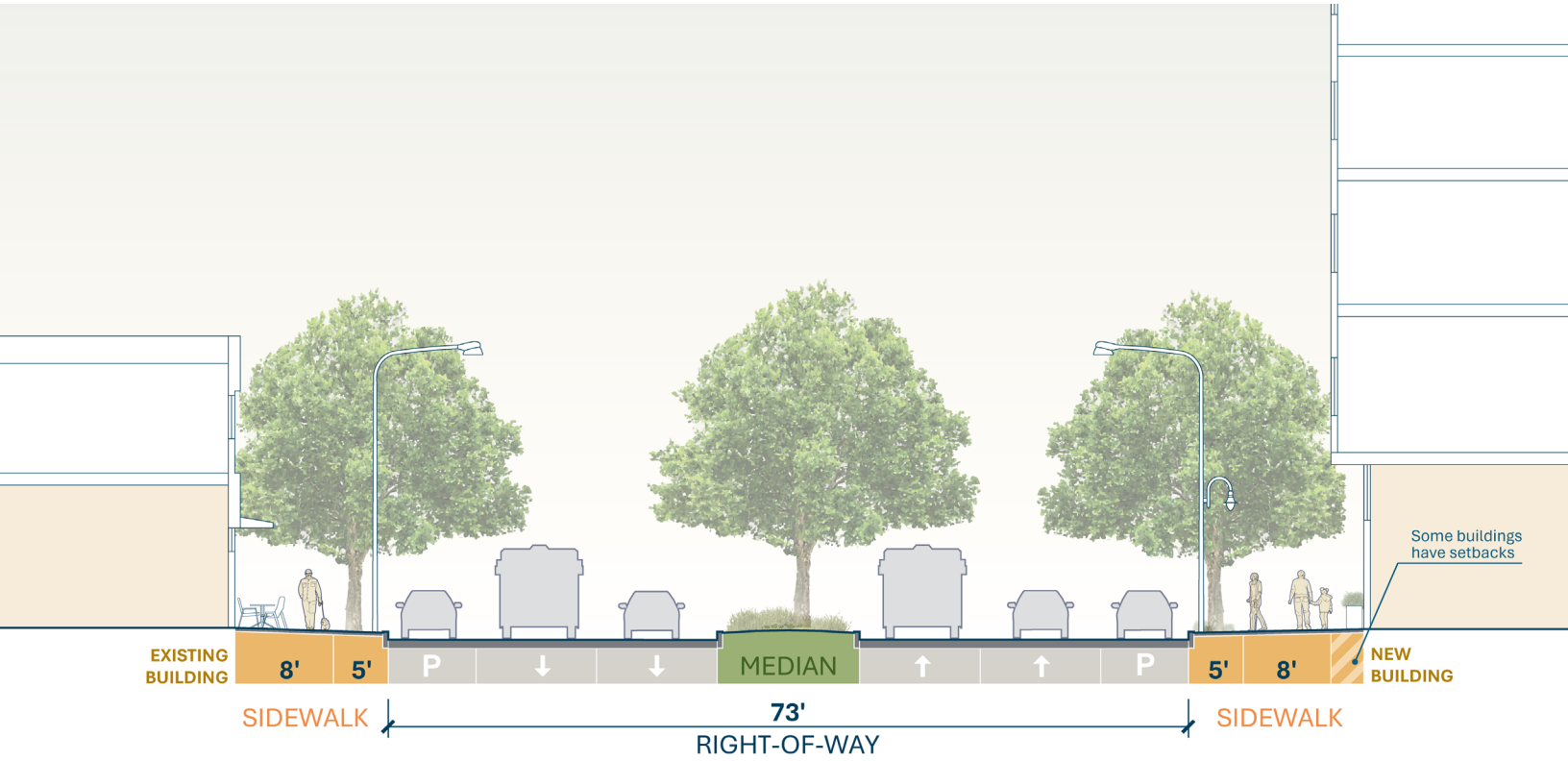


Figure 12. Existing Streetscape Section

Sidewalk

The sidewalk along San Pablo Avenue is 13-feet wide and in variable conditions along the corridor. In some cases, front yard landscaping and other elements extend into the sidewalk right-of-way. The public-right-way is a State highway and managed by Caltrans, not the city. Figure 13

Building and Site Frontages

A wide range of built form fronts along San Pablo Avenue including occupied and vacant brick-and-mortar storefronts and new mixed-use developments, residential- and office-only buildings, parking lots and semi-public spaces. Painted murals and storefronts add visual character to buildings without windows. Some new developments have contributed to the landscape character of the street by setting back the ground level of the building to provide additional sidewalk and space of landscape, such as landscape planters at The Jones north of Cedar Street. Others like the Aquatic at Ashby Ave have a small seating area and a bench and rain shelter built into the additional sidewalk level space. See Figure 14.



Figure 13. Existing 13 ft. wide sidewalk.

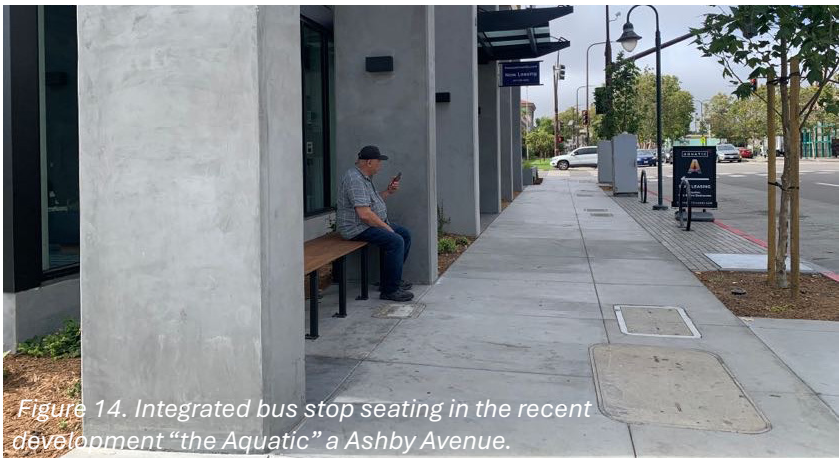


Figure 14. Integrated bus stop seating in the recent development "the Aquatic" a Ashby Avenue.

Community Feedback: Streetscape

- The community views the street trees and landscaped medians as valued assets that makes San Pablo Ave in Berkeley unique.
- The narrow sidewalk width in combination with poor physical conditions was a frequent issue mentioned by participants in regards to personal safety and comfort as vehicles pass by at higher speeds.
- Narrow sidewalks also limit pedestrian space and opportunities for public interaction and gathering. Overall, community feedback expressed support for wider sidewalks.
- The community expressed the need for better maintenance of the public right-of-way. Participants were frustrated by poorly maintained segments and would like to see repairs and upkeep.
- A common and prevalent comment across all community outreach events was the desire for more pedestrian lighting along San Pablo Avenue. Many community members expressed concerns about personal safety and visibility along the corridor at night. Both pedestrian-scale lighting and lighting from storefront displays were mentioned as possible solutions to improving the sense of safety at night.



Figure 16. Existing roadway and pedestrian lighting.



Figure 17. Existing private outdoor "café" seating.

Lighting

Existing lighting along San Pablo Avenue primarily includes streetlights. Nighttime sidewalk lighting levels tend to be low between intersections, unless storefront uses, buildings, or pedestrian lights at bus stops illuminate the sidewalk. See Figure 15. The 2004 Improvement Plan identified this issue and set new lighting standards. While there has been some implementation of the standards in front of new development, there have not been recent publicly funded pedestrian lighting improvements along San Pablo Avenue. The Alameda CTC Safety Enhancement Project will upgrade lighting at some improved bus stops and pedestrian crossings.

Street Furnishing

Street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles are almost exclusively at bus stops. There are some businesses that provide outdoor "café" seating for their patrons. See Figure 16.

Community Feedback: Community Life

Art and Cultural Installations

- Community members are interested in improvements in the public realm that include art and cultural installations. They see the potential in practical improvements, such as lighting not only for safety but also for aesthetics and comfort – light strings, artistic lighting, and lighting the trees.
- People were supportive of the potential for physical public art through murals and street furnishings. Also, public art as special events with local artists and performers was mentioned.
- Participants would like to see the ground floor and underused spaces to become community gathering spaces or places of common ground activities, including indoor or outdoor space for community events, food trucks, pop-up retail to support local businesses or art events.

Personal Safety

Conditions along the street can create an environment that feels unsafe. Assessment of crime data from the Berkeley Police Department from August 2022 to August 2023 shows a total of 578 incidents in the Specific Plan Area, which makes up 5 percent of the overall crime incidents in Berkeley during that time.



Figure 18. 1901 San Pablo Avenue houses Brasarte and other Brazilian culturally oriented groups. This shows the 2023 Brazilian Day & Lavagem event on the block of Hearst St just east of San Pablo Avenue.

Open Space and "Community Life"

There are no public parks along San Pablo Avenue or within the Specific Plan Area. A number of parks surround San Pablo Avenue including George Florence Park, James Kenney Park, Strawberry Creek Park and San Pablo Park.

Several semi-public and private spaces along San Pablo Avenue such as parking lots, restaurant and café and residential development outdoor spaces provide informal community gathering spaces.

There are also existing organizations that provide community gathering venues including Brasarte and Ashkenaz.

San Pablo Avenue, as a State Highway, does not close for street festivals, however the SF Bay Brazilian Day & Lavagem festival took place in the Gilman District, and neighborhood street parties close some streets that cross San Pablo Avenue, see Figure 17.

Open Space

People have diverse feelings about open space along San Pablo Avenue. For some, concerns about personal safety and lack of maintenance appear to override the potential for community open space on San Pablo Avenue. Others strongly expressed a desire for civic open spaces and community gathering places to bring new and existing residents together. Some suggest that such an environment may support commercial activity.

Several ideas were frequently raised across multiple engagement events including:

- Establishing a parklet program to expand public space.
- Expanding sidewalks and bulb-outs on side streets.
- Temporary or permanent road closures of minor streets intersecting San Pablo.

Transportation Safety

Concerns about personal safety were prominent, with a majority feeling more unsafe at night and expressing unease while walking along the corridor. Especially on segments with empty property frontages and vacant storefronts, participants experience discomfort as pedestrians.

All outreach efforts resulted in a strong desire for better pedestrian lighting. Participants cited more lighting would improve the safety and walkability during evening and nighttime.

Transportation, Parking and Utilities

San Pablo Avenue is a California state highway (State Route 123) and improvements within the street right-of-way require approval by Caltrans. The city is responsible for maintenance of the sidewalks and medians, including street trees and landscaping.

The Specific Plan will not focus on making transportation improvements to San Pablo Avenue, because regional transportation authority, the Alameda Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC), has completed a multimodal planning project for San Pablo Avenue throughout Alameda County. The project has led to three projects that will result in construction of safety improvements for all users, bus stop improvements, and parallel bicycle facility improvements, as well as a short segment of bicycle and bus lanes on the southern end of San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley.

The Specific Plan will focus on the public realm of the sidewalks along San Pablo Avenue, parking management, and other transportation improvements that are not being addressed through the Alameda CTC efforts.

Transit Network

Local Transit

AC Transit provides bus service throughout western Alameda County and Contra Costa County and operates 12 bus routes within the Study Area that provides direct access to the Specific Plan Area. AC Transit is currently evaluating and developing a new network in response to changing travel patterns through the AC Transit Realign Plan. The Realign Plan may alter future AC Transit service in the Specific Plan Area.

In addition to public transit, several privately-operated shuttle services operate in Berkeley. The West Berkeley Shuttle links the Ashby BART station with employment centers in West Berkeley on weekdays. Bear Transit, UC Berkeley's shuttle system, serves Campus Park, Downtown Berkeley, and Berkeley Hills, offering free rides for the university community and $1 fares for the public. The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBL) Shuttle provides free service for LBL employees and guests between LBL and North Berkeley BART, with stops along San Pablo Avenue. Upcoming developments like The Berkeley Commons Project and TheLAB will introduce new shuttles between the North Berkeley BART Station and their sites. Though these services cross San Pablo Avenue, they don't directly serve the Specific Plan Area.

Regional Transit

BART provides regional commuter rail transit in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. BART provides regional commuter rail transit in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

Amtrak's Capitol Corridor route operates between San Jose and Sacramento and stops at the Berkeley Rail Station. The station is located under the University Avenue overpass, about 0.5 miles west of San Pablo Avenue. The station provides basic amenities, including outside seating and automobile and bicycle parking.

Parking

Street parking is available along San Pablo Avenue and on side streets within the Study Area. The majority of parking is paid and timed as part of the GoBerkeley paid parking pricing program. In addition to street parking, many businesses within the Specific Plan Area have small parking lots specific to their business.



Community Feedback: Transit & Parking

Transit Service

There are concerns about the possibility of reduced transit service along San Pablo Avenue, specifically the Transbay services. More accessible transit and improved transit stop infrastructure were perceived as important aspects for the corridor's future.

Transit Routes

Some community members articulated the importance of East-West transit connections and expressed support for additional routes and service for connectivity to and from Central Berkeley and UC Berkeley.

Private vs Public Transit

Community members expressed varied interest and support for private shuttles. Some community comments suggested greater shuttle service throughout San Pablo Avenue, while others raised concerns about a two-tier transit system and suggested transit investment in public networks.

Parking

- The community expressed mixed feedback related to parking. Some local residents express concern about parking overflow from new developments into adjacent residential neighborhoods. Other comments supported not requiring parking with residential or commercial uses.

"My business' storefront isn't visible to people driving by because of cars parking in front of the store 24/7 [blocking the view and lack of timed parking enforcement]."

– Small Group Meeting Comment

- Some community comments express desire for greater parking enforcement for vehicles parked beyond the maximum parking times.
- Several local businesses and large employers expressed support for maximum parking times to prevent long-term parking in front of their businesses for extended periods of time.

Transportation Safety

The entire length of San Pablo Avenue is included in the City of Berkeley's High-Injury Network. Between 2017 and 2021, there were 190 collisions on San Pablo Avenue that resulted in an injury or death, representing 7% of the Berkeley total.

The portion of San Pablo Avenue within Berkeley does not have existing bicycle facilities. Four East-West streets have existing bicycle facilities that cross San Pablo Avenue going East-West (Gilman Street, Virginia Street, Delaware Street, and Channing Way). The Alameda CTC Parallel Bike Improvement Project will construct bike safety and connectivity improvements along streets parallel to and across San Pablo Avenue, there are no plans on providing bicycle lanes on the majority of San Pablo Avenue. Bicycle improvements for the Bus and Bike Lanes Project will extend into the southern city limit to Heinz Avenue.

Utilities

According to the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR), existing utility systems for domestic water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, electricity, and natural gas facilities in Berkeley have sufficient capacity to serve the planned housing developments.

Community Feedback

Transportation Safety

- Throughout the community outreach, participants stated that they desire a more pedestrian friendly corridor, as survey data and feedback found walking as the second most common mode of transportation to and from San Pablo Avenue.
- Community feedback reveals that San Pablo Avenue currently acts as a stress-inducing barrier between east and west Study Area community.
- Several community members expressed concerns about cycling across and along San Pablo Avenue. The most frequent concern was safety due to vehicular traffic and lack of protected bike lanes.
- Community comments included suggestions for a variety of bike infrastructure including bike lanes along San Pablo Avenue and/or cross-streets, and bike boulevard crossing improvements.

Utilities

- Development stakeholders expressed concern about the time and cost of making utility connections, particularly when connections occur on San Pablo Avenue and require approvals by Caltrans.

"SPA is stressful. Just realized it acts as a border and I hate crossing over it. Increase space for people, less space for cars (i.e. parklets, bulb outs, turn median into park.)"

– Open House Comment



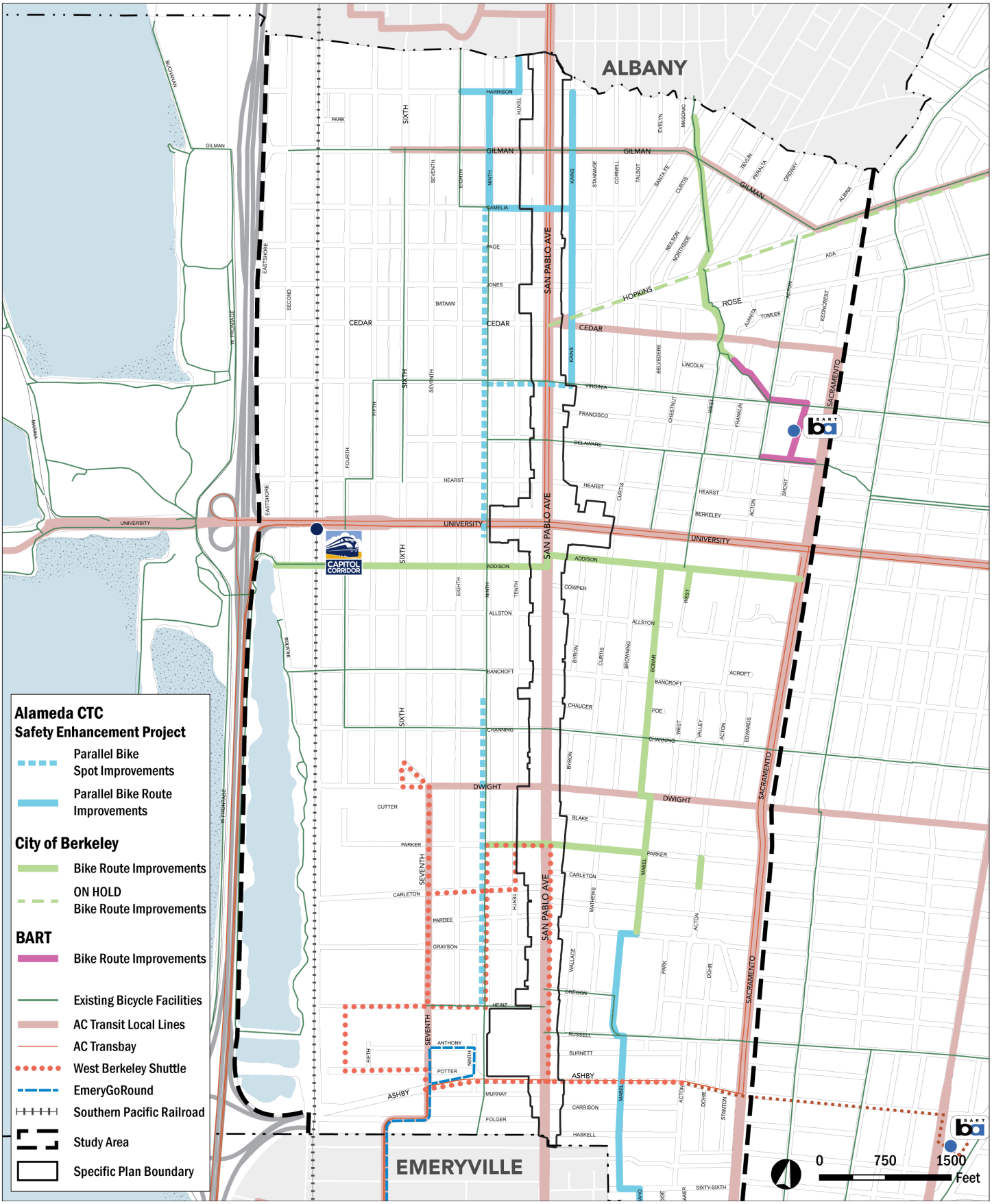


Figure 19. Transit Lines and Bicycle Routes. Source: City of Berkeley, Alameda CTC, and Fehr & Peers, 2023.

Economic Development

Berkeley's Office of Economic Development's (OED's) 2016 Economic Development Work Session highlights two existing economic tensions along San Pablo Avenue:

- Local and regional interests for transportation and land use compete for space. Local interests include better walkability, multi-modal transportation options, a broad range of businesses, and housing infill development. Regional interests support car access, street parking, and clusters of specialized businesses not widely available in other parts of Berkeley.
- Demand for housing development in the area threatens to displace the existing concentration of auto businesses along San Pablo Avenue.

The COVID-19 pandemic and broader economic impacts have also affected the corridor and businesses across the city. Nationally, small businesses closed at unprecedented rates from February to April of 2020. African-American, Latinx, Asian, immigrant, and women business owners were disproportionately affected, with African-American businesses owners most impacted. Since then, many small businesses have re-opened or opened for the first time. During 2023, business owners cite inflation, supply chain effects, and filling open jobs as among their primary concerns.

There are several existing business organizations within the Specific Plan Area and Study Area:

- Gilman district association (Local breweries, organic wineries, food producers, shopping, art).
- West Berkeley Design Loop: Group of local merchants, designers, consultants, and builders that provide unique products and services for design and building projects.
- SoU (South University) Berkeley "eclectic fun shopping district in West Berkeley, South of University near 4th Street".
- West Berkeley Artisans and Industrial Companies (WEBAIC): Collaboration of PDRR (Production, distribution, repair and recycling companies), existing art, music and dance studios, initiated by Office of Economic Development.

Community Feedback

Vacancy

Many community members across all outreach events expressed concern over ground-floor vacancies along the corridor. Several concerns were raised related to the vacancy, including:

- Reduced vitality and vibrancy along the corridor.
- Fewer "eyes on the street", resulting in personal safety concerns.
- Visual and aesthetic concerns regarding dilapidated storefronts.

During the outreach process, participants voiced support for commercial uses and advocated for programs and incentives to fill vacant ground floor space. This is coupled with a belief that there is too much retail space given current demand, and therefore there is a desire to allow and encourage other uses. Throughout the outreach, when asked about opportunities vacant storefront could provide, participants expressed a desire for more community gathering space, entertainment and temporary uses to avoid long term vacancies and accompanying maintenance issues. Generally, community members would like to see more support for businesses to fill those spaces.

Business Incentives

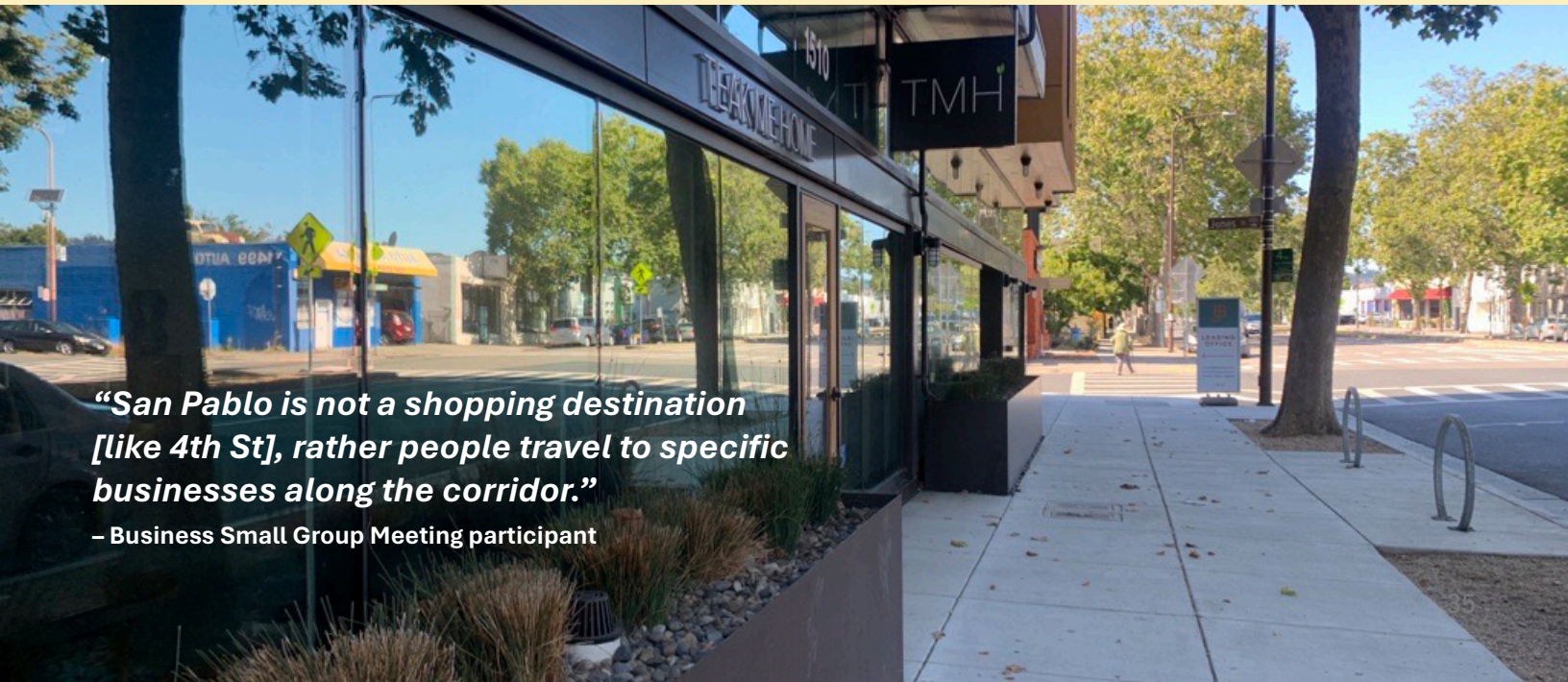
Participants describe San Pablo Avenue as a series of commercial destinations, with household goods, food stores and restaurants/cafes being the most frequently visited destinations They would like to see more financial support for existing small businesses, such as Mi Terra and Casa Latina, and are worried about losing small and local businesses.

Tourism/ Marketing/BID

Participants suggested organizing special events with local artists and performers. They also recommended establishing a Business Improvement District in retail-heavy segments or nodes to fund streetscape improvements.

Relationship to West Berkeley Employment Development

Several comments highlighted the lack of safe walking paths between employment campuses and San Pablo Avenue. Participants also expressed a desire for more "quick and easy" lunch places, as well as after-work restaurants to enhance the area's vibrancy after work hours.



"San Pablo is not a shopping destination [like 4th St], rather people travel to specific businesses along the corridor."

– Business Small Group Meeting participant

There is currently no Business Improvement District associated with San Pablo Avenue. However, there are several city-led programs and initiatives to support small and independently owned businesses in Berkeley, which can help to make San Pablo Avenue a more attractive retail location. These include:

- **Zoning Amendments:** Berkeley's City Council passed the Zoning Amendments for Berkeley Business package on February, 2024 to encourage local economic development and enhance cultural offerings in an equitable manner across Berkeley. The zoning ordinance changes are wide ranging; spanning the permitting of group class instruction, the service of distilled spirits, expanded hours of operation, live entertainment, pet stores, art and craft studios, outdoor food service, and the removal of restrictions related to change of use, removal of food service quotas, and rentals of food service establishments to third parties.
- **Revolving Loan Fund & Resiliency Loan Program:** The City of Berkeley's Revolving Loan Fund offers capital to Berkeley-based businesses and entrepreneurs for various growth and operational needs, targeting those who don't qualify for traditional bank loans.
- **#DiscoveredinBerkeley Campaign:** The Discovered in Berkeley marketing campaign showcased diverse local businesses, achieving over 3.8 million impressions and 146 thousand direct engagements through various online platforms and social media promotions.
- **Expanded Outdoor Commerce:** In 2020 and 2021, the City of Berkeley expanded outdoor activity allowances and streamlined permits, now offering businesses a permanent option for outdoor commerce installations with fees starting May 20, 2024, anticipating over 30 businesses to participate.
- **Art Investments:** The City established a Civic Arts grant program offering up to $5,000 each in Fiscal Year 2025 to support local arts and cultural programming. In addition, the City created a Capital Project Grant for local nonprofit arts and cultural organizations for real estate and capital project support.



"San Pablo is not a shopping destination [like 4th St], rather people travel to specific businesses along the corridor."

– Business Small Group Meeting participant


Demographics & Housing Affordability
San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan



Chapter 3

Key Themes + Issues

This chapter summarizes key themes and issues identified throughout the Existing Conditions and Community Assessment phase. These findings will inform the development of policies, programs, guidelines and incentives for the Specific Plan. The summary is organized by theme, though many issues are interconnected and span multiple themes. Overall, the Community Assessment revealed three overarching objectives for the community's vision for the Specific Plan:

1

Provide guidelines and incentives for more housing that improves the vitality of the corridor.

2

Remove barriers and integrate San Pablo Ave with the surrounding community and shape opportunities for neighborhood life.

3

Broaden opportunities for business and community activities that can adapt to economic and market conditions.

Increase Business and Activity Along the Corridor



Improve Commercial Identity

The Commercial Nodes are not being realized. While C-W nodes are intended to concentrate retail, commercial, and mixed-use hubs along San Pablo Avenue, actual commercial activity and proposed housing developments are dispersed throughout the corridor.

Reduce Commercial and Retail Vacancy

The Community Assessment revealed that commercial and retail vacancy along San Pablo Avenue is a concern for all community groups. Key issues identified through the existing conditions research, and community feedback as contributing factors to vacancy include:

- **Current market conditions:** Vacancy rates increased due to broader economic impacts, leading to vacant and abandoned commercial ground floors throughout the corridor.
- **Land-use and regulatory restrictions:**
  - Limited range of permitted land-uses
  - Lengthy and costly permitting process
- **Over supply of retail spaces:** Mixed-use developments are allowed greater heights than residential-only developments, incentivizing the construction of more mixed-use buildings and commercial space. However, due to current economic market conditions and land-use restrictions, many retail and commercial ground floor space remain vacant.
- **Incompatible design:** The design of commercial and retail spaces are not compatible with small

Support Local Business Vitality and Growth

Both the small business community and the developer community cited the following challenges and barriers for small businesses to start-up and thrive.

- **Permitting process:** The permitting process for new businesses is very long, adding costs and uncertainty to small business owners.
- **High start-up costs:**
  - Tenant improvements are a substantial cost for small businesses and are often prohibitive in new commercial spaces.
  - Compliance with commercial use regulations often requires additional costly tenant improvements, such as adding bathrooms and installing grease-ducts, driving up costs beyond what smaller businesses can afford.
- **Ongoing maintenance and curb-appeal:** Existing property owners/businesses/tenants face challenges in maintaining the street frontage and sidewalk next to their property due to incidents of vandalism and theft. The issue results in both a financial and time-sensitive burden demotivating additional street frontage improvements.

Increase Housing Supply and Diversity

The Community Assessment findings indicate overall support for housing along San Pablo Avenue. The following includes key issues raised by the local and professional community as to the challenges of low housing supply and development.

Revise Housing Development Regulations

Residential zoning regulations for Mixed-Use and Residential-only development are overly restrictive regarding height, floor area ratio, and ground-floor commercial requirements, therefore restricting development.

Support Increased Diversity of Housing Types

There are limited opportunities for home ownership other than single-family detached options, limiting options for renters and workers to stay within the community.

Support Housing Affordability

There is a need for Affordable Housing for people with a range of incomes on the corridor and throughout the city.



Improve and Increase Interaction between Private and Public Spaces

Encourage Engaging Buildings

Residents from surrounding neighborhoods feel isolated from new residential buildings, describing those as a single “bulky” development. The lack of connection between the public realm and private open space oriented away from San Pablo Avenue reduces interactive experiences.

Support Engaging Site Frontage

Large vacant parking lots, and long, windowless frontages contribute to an alienating public environment that discourages walkability and makes pedestrians feel unsafe by fragmenting the urban fabric.



Improve the Public Realm



Increase Amount and Quality of Sidewalk Space

- The sidewalk width is limited by the amount of right of way currently used for vehicles due to San Pablo Avenue's regional function and designation as a state highway. The sidewalk narrows at several locations where existing development, landscaping, and other furnishing extends into it.
- The narrow sidewalk in combination with higher speeds of bypassing vehicles negatively affects pedestrian comfort and opportunities for public interaction.



Improve Lighting and Maintenance of Sidewalk and Landscape

- Several sidewalk segments lack the upkeep and maintenance of sidewalk, such as trash cleanup, paving and landscaping of tree wells.
- The absence of essential public amenities, particularly pedestrian lighting for nighttime safety, is a concern. Currently, there are insufficient public funds available to address these improvements. This shortage impacts public safety and community well-being.



Increase Public Open Space and Community Gathering Space

- There are no publicly owned parcels available to convert or adapt into open spaces, and limited funds may restrict the possibility of acquiring additional land for this purpose.
- There is a shortage of community gathering spaces, as private open areas within new developments are inaccessible to the public. Third spaces are limited to semi-private locations, such as restaurant and café seating, and some private surface

Enhance local Access

Improve East-West Connectivity

- Pedestrians and bicyclists feel unsafe crossing San Pablo Avenue.
- East-West transit routes are limited in number and frequency.
- San Pablo Avenue suffers from a deficiency in public transit connections between East and West Berkeley, exacerbating its function as a barrier between neighborhoods. Presently, private shuttles operated by major employers and UC Berkeley bridge this gap to a degree. However, their availability to the public is limited with no guarantee of access.



Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Access

- High car volume and fast speeds contribute to pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns.
- There are limited crossing points along San Pablo Avenue and many community members feel unsafe crossing the road.
- There is limited connectivity to adjacent parks and community spaces around San Pablo Avenue including a lack of clear signage, pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly pathways, and safe crossing facilities, further hindering community engagement and access to recreational areas.



Transit Access and Frequency/Availability

- AC Transit's Realign Plan is still in development. So, the future of local transit service along San Pablo Avenue is uncertain.

Parking/ Loading Access/ Management of On-Street Parking

- Potential reduction of on-street parking and loading along San Pablo Ave, as well as lack of time-parking enforcement makes





San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Date: 8.20.2024

To: Robert Riviera and Anne Hersch, City of Berkeley

From: Phil Erickson and Dewi Bleher, Community Design + Architecture
Lynette Dias and Hannah Chan Smyth, Urban Planning Partners

Re: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan – Task 3.4 Policy and Development Options Memorandum

Policy Options

This memorandum outlines policy options and a development framework to address key themes and issues identified in the Existing Conditions and Community Assessment phase of the Specific Plan process (see Chapter 3 of the Community Assessment Report). The policy options and development framework below provide a range of draft policy options and example development scenarios for public review and comment. Community input from the community outreach and engagement process and continued analysis will help the City identify a set of preferred policies that will be developed and refined for the Specific Plan.

The policy options are organized by Key Theme and Issue, which correspond to Chapter 3 of the Community Assessment Report:

A. (CAPITAL LETTER): Key Theme
    1. (Number) Issue
        a. (lowercase letter) Policy or Development Option
            - (Bullet point) Incentives, strategies and alternatives

Each policy option is sorted according to the relevant issue. If there are related policies under different issues, they are referenced in related policies. Incentives, strategies, and alternatives to the policy option are listed below each policy option, providing detailed actions and variables to consider when finalizing the policy and to achieve successful implementation. All policy options, including those not recommended, are discussed to transparently present the full range of community suggestions received during the Community Assessment. This approach ensures that all potential options are acknowledged and considered.

The Development Framework outlines three policy areas to shape development along the corridor and strengthen the designated nodes (see more information on nodes in Community Assessment Report, page 20). The Development Framework describes how key land use policies and standards – Height and Density, Ground Floor Use and Design, and Community Benefits can be used to shape future conditions and hierarchies between the nodes and the other parts of the corridor. **The Development Framework is conceptual and designed to incorporate community input. No specific decisions or approaches have been finalized.** The preferred Development Framework will be determined through the preparation of the Specific Plan and include further public review and input opportunities including public hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council.

The Development Scenarios are examples that illustrate how policy areas can shape different development scenarios, balancing community benefits with variations in height and density across designated nodes and the entire corridor.

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A. Increase Business Activity Along the Corridor

1. *Improve Commercial Identity*

a. **Re-evaluate and adjust node boundaries, policies, and development standards** to focus uses such as commercial, public resources (open space, community meeting/social spaces, etc.), or housing along the corridor. Node alternatives are further considered in the *Development Scenarios* section below.
   - Provide incentives for commercial clusters and mixed-use development within the nodes such as increased heights or intensity by-right[1]. (*Related Policies – A.2.d; B.2.a; C.1.a; C.1.b*)
   - Focus initial public investment on improvements in the nodes (*Related Policies – A.3.a; D.1.a; D.3.c*)
   - Target business support programs on local businesses in nodes, including tenant improvement grants or no-interest loans and rent support for a start-up period. (*Related Policies – A.3.a)*

b. Work with the businesses, cultural institutions and artist groups in the community to **identify Commercial and Cultural Districts along San Pablo Avenue,** such as a maker/light industrial district, international district, or state-designated cultural district. (*Related Policies – C.3.c*)

c. **Support creation of business "cluster" organizations** that publicize the range of businesses in the San Pablo Avenue and West Berkeley areas, such as the West Berkeley Design Loop with goal of creating an identity similar to a Commercial District while being more flexible with business location. (*Related Policies – A.3.b*)

2. *Reduce Commercial and Retail Vacancy*

a. **Allow temporary pop-up uses** such as business incubators, art installations, galleries, etc.

b. **Expand the list of by-right uses**.
   - Expand the list for selective uses to encourage community gathering space (public or semi-public third spaces such as a community center or public plaza) and maker-uses (light-industrial). Allow all office uses, public markets (open air and enclosed), art studios, galleries, theaters, and live work with a Zoning Certificate. Exclude heavy-industrial uses. (Related Policies – A. 2. c.; B.1.b; and B.2.a)
   - Allow 100% affordable housing conversion of existing non-residential building.

c. **Allow non-commercial ground floor use,** in nodes.
   - Allow for transitional ground-floor residential use along side streets within nodes. (Related Policies – A. 2. b.)
   - Allow ground floor-residential use along San Pablo Avenue within nodes. ***Not Recommended*** – this would go against goals of reinforcing clusters of commercial and service uses at nodes/high-service transit locations and improving commercial identity.
   - *Alternative:* allow ground-floor residential towards node edges.

d. **Allow residential ground floor in mixed-use developments outside of nodes**. Developers would be allowed to wave the commercial ground floor requirements by **paying a ground floor retail in-lieu fee into a Small Business Support Fund.** (*Related Policies – A.3.a.*)

e. **Improve new ground floor commercial space viability** with objective design standards for minimum floor-to-ceiling height, minimum depths, flexibility for different sized spaces, shared bathrooms, storefront design of building frontage. (Related Policies – B.2.a).

[1] The use of the term "by-right" is used to mean that a use, height, intensity, etc. can be approved without discretionary review, public hearing, additional conditions or community benefits.

f. **Establish size limits for certain types of uses,** which may discourage larger chain businesses from locating on the corridor. ***Not recommended*** – can be challenging to define "larger chain" businesses (e.g., regional vs. national chains, etc.) and some can be smaller sized. Also, given the current weaknesses in the retail market some chains might be welcomed by the community.

g. **Implement a commercial space vacancy tax** to encourage owners to keep spaces occupied. ***Not Recommended*** – while a vacancy tax may encourage owners to fill vacant space that they are "holding" for one reason or another, success of vacancy taxes is variable. We commend implementing policies and programs to support businesses to locate on San Pablo Avenue first and evaluate if a vacancy tax is necessary to support those efforts after they have been in place for a period of time.

3. Support Local Business Vitality and Growth

a. **Establish a Local Small Business Support Fund** for start-up businesses. This would be funded through the combination of a ground floor retail in-lieu fee, development project community benefits, or other local funding sources. (*Related Policies – A. 2.d; Also see, Policy Levers, Community Benefits, page 11*)

- Offer tenant improvement and relocation funding to small businesses.
- Provide start up rent subsidies to small businesses.
- Waive permit fees or other City fees for small businesses.

b. Work with businesses to **establish business support programs** including marketing campaigns, weekly market programs, and a Community Benefit, Business Improvement District, or Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (*Related Policies – A.1.c*).

- City and local businesses/property owners to **fund and initiate a study of the feasibility and scope of forming a Community Benefit or Business Improvement District** for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area, subareas of the Plan Area, and/or the Plan Area and portions of West Berkeley.
- **Support existing and encourage new business organizations/affiliations** such as the West Berkeley Design Loop, a sub-group of Open Studios that might be interested in more frequent co-marketing, and other location or service based "clusters" of businesses.

c. **Review City's efforts to streamline new business use, building, and other permitting approvals.**

d. **Establish public-private partnerships** for implementing indoor- and outdoor community events. (*Related Policies – A.2.a; A.2.b; and D.3 Increase Public Open Space and Community Gathering Space)*

e. **Initiate a study of the feasibility and scope of forming an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD)** to fund infrastructure maintenance and housing development, economic development, transportation infrastructure, sewage treatments, and climate adaptable projects, among other uses.

B. Improve and Increase Interaction between Private and Public Spaces

1. Engaging Buildings

a. **Incentivize public access to amenities** in new developments, such as courtyards, rooftop open space, or public working stations.
   - Provide semi-private access to amenities through neighborhood key-card programs.
   - *Alternative:* offer public access to private amenities as a community benefit contribution option to developers.

b. **Require new development amenities to be on the ground floor** (and to be sidewalk facing and visible), including gyms, coworking, and meeting spaces. (Related Policies – A.2.b)

c. **Define Objective Design Standards for articulation of upper floors** that animate the façade by addressing design elements including materials, projections and recesses, balconies, and window design.

2. Engaging Site Frontages

a. **Establish Objective Design Standards for the ground floor frontage** that have key elements of pedestrian friendly building frontage design. (Related Policies – A.2.b)
   - **Storefront standards** that provide a low proportion of "blank" walls, high windows percentage, and frequency of entries. These standards are designed to facilitate an easy change of use from retail to restaurant, gym, or similar active commercial or service use.
   - **Active Ground Floor standards** that provide more flexible design choices to allow a broader range of non-residential uses.
   - **Active Residential Ground Floor standards** that require a transition or connection from public sidewalk to unit, including entry patios, stoops, shallow landscaped setbacks, etc.

C. Increase Housing Supply and Diversity

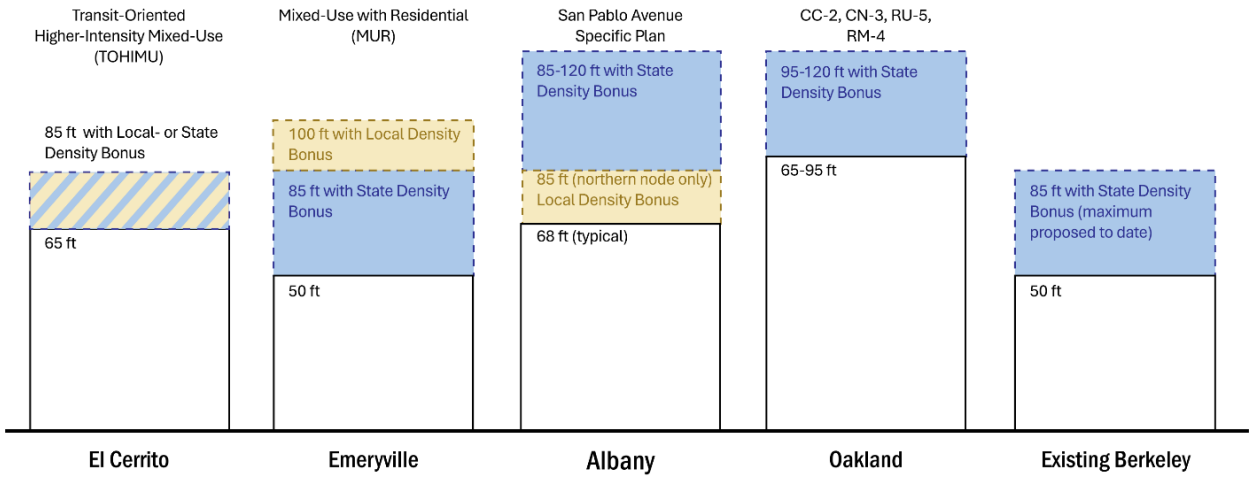
1. *Revise Housing Development Regulations*

a. **Increase by-right maximum allowed height and floor area ratio (FAR) –** see Policy Levers – Height and Intensity section on page 10 for discussion of intensity scenarios that are being assessed.

- *Alternative 1:* Increase throughout the whole corridor
- *Alternative 2:* Increase only within the nodes

b. *Alternative to by-right increase in height and FAR*: **Modify current approach of allowing additional height for mixed-use building**. But allow 100%-residential buildings to achieve mixed-use height and FAR if the developments comply with all Objective Design Standards and provide a minimum threshold of community benefits (including payment of ground-floor retail in-lieu fee, provision of public open space, and other benefits). Also see Policy Levers, Community Benefits, page 11. (*Related Policy – A.2.d, B.2.a; C.2.b; D.3.c)*

c. **Review City's efforts to Streamline Planning Approval and Building Permit** process for new developments and make recommendations for further streamlining improvements.



3. *Support Increased Diversity of Housing Types*

a. **Allow density to be counted as units or bedrooms** to provide developers more flexibility in meeting min. density standards through either metric.

b. **Allow an option to waive mixed-use development requirement for additional height outside of the nodes** by providing a threshold percentage of workforce, senior or family-friendly housing. *(Related Policy – C.1.b.)*

c. **Permit rezoning of select MULI and MUR zoned parcels** within the Specific Plan if the development provides 100% percentage of workforce, senior or 2-3+ bedroom family-friendly housing; see Development Framework section for potential MULI and MUR zoned parcels that this policy could be applied to. *(Related Policy – C.3.a)*

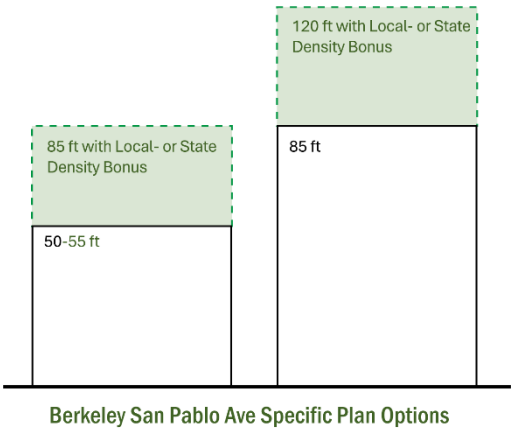


Figure 1 Development Zoning Height Limits along San Pablo Avenue

4. Support Housing Affordability

a. **Permit rezoning of select MULI and MUR zoned parcels** within the Specific Plan if development provides 100% affordable housing; see Development Framework section for potential MULI and MUR zoned parcels that this policy could be applied to. *(Related Policy – C.2.c)*

b. **Provide a density bonus for projects with a percentage of middle-income** affordable units.

c. **Reserve up to 10% of affordable housing units for artists** in any state-designated cultural districts that are established. (*Related Policies – A.1.b*)

d. Establish a **site acquisition financing/funding program** for 100% affordable projects.

e. **Opt into and comply with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy** to increase access to funding for housing and transit improvements including active transportation and pedestrian safety.[2]

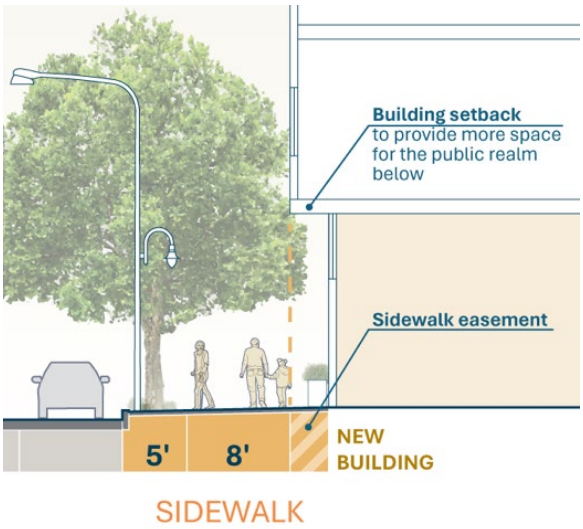


Figure 2 Section to illustrate sidewalk easement

D. Improve the Public Realm

1. Increase Amount and Quality of Sidewalk Space

a. **Provide community benefit for new or existing development to include sidewalk easements.** *(Related Policy – C.1.b.)*

b. **Create side street curb extensions** for public and outdoor dining.

c. **Expand the sidewalk area and create public space through City-owned/ Caltrans-permitted parklets**.

2. Improve and Maintain Lighting, Sidewalk, and Landscape

a. **Update Streetscape Standards** including landscape, pedestrian lighting, bicycle parking, seating, and other public realm standards.

- Update pedestrian lighting standards, include street facing façade design and performance standards and require developments to implement.

b. **Require developments to implement streetscape standards** on their San Pablo Avenue frontage; this is an existing requirement that will be maintained by the Specific Plan.

[2] As described in MTC's April 2024 Working Draft Administrative Guidance for MTC's Transit-Oriented Communities Policy, jurisdictions with transit stops and stations that are not served by fixed-guideway service (e.g., areas that are only served by regular fixed-route bus transit) may choose to "opt in" and voluntarily meet TOC Policy requirements for these areas. For locations with no fixed-guideway transit service, the Tier 4 density and parking management requirements will apply in addition to all other TOC Policy requirements. The Tier 4 Average Minimum Zoning Density Required for Residential Development is 25 units/net acre or higher. The Tier 4 TOC Policy Parking Management Requirements is a parking maximum of 4.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet or lower and a minimum of 1 secure bicycle parking space per 5,000 square feet for commercial office. (MTC, May 14, 2024).

c. **Pursue grant funding** for public realm and infrastructure improvements.

d. **Study viability of funding districts for streetscape and other public improvements** in the Specific Plan area:

- *Alternative 1:* a Landscape and Lighting District for public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- *Alternative 2:* modify development impact fees for public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- *Alternative 3:* a Tax Increment Financing District to fund capital improvements for the public realm.
- *Alternative 4:* a Community Facilities District (CFD) against specific properties to fund streetscape improvements.

3. Increase Public Open Space and Community Gathering Space

a. **Create small plazas** by closing short and minor streets' access to San Pablo Avenue *(see Figure 3)*

b. **Purchase underutilized small properties** for public parks or plazas funded through an in-lieu fee that allows developers a percentage reduction of on-site open space, and other public funds including grants.

c. **Require privately owned and publicly accessible open space for high-rise developments over a certain square foot threshold** (in limited locations within nodes) with the requirement to provide a minimum area of private open public space (percent of total site area to be determined. (*Related Policy – C.1.b)*

- *Alternative 1:* Allow to credit against private open space requirement
- *Alternative 2:* Allow payment of in-lieu fee to public open space community benefit funds.

d. **Require a minimum amount of publicly accessible open space** either for all projects, or for projects above a certain size.

e. **Incentivize developments to create adjacent side-street public open space** through a community benefits program.

- Projects that provide publicly accessible open space with amenities can count that space towards a to be determined percentage of required private amenity space.

4. Integrate Public Art and Cultural Programming into Public Open Space

a. **Integrate public art** into the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area or subareas of the Plan Area to enhance the pedestrian experience along the corridor.

b. **Use public art to enhance and celebrate the unique characteristics of West Berkeley and to highlight distinct neighborhoods.**

c. **Use public art to enhance wayfinding and signage.**

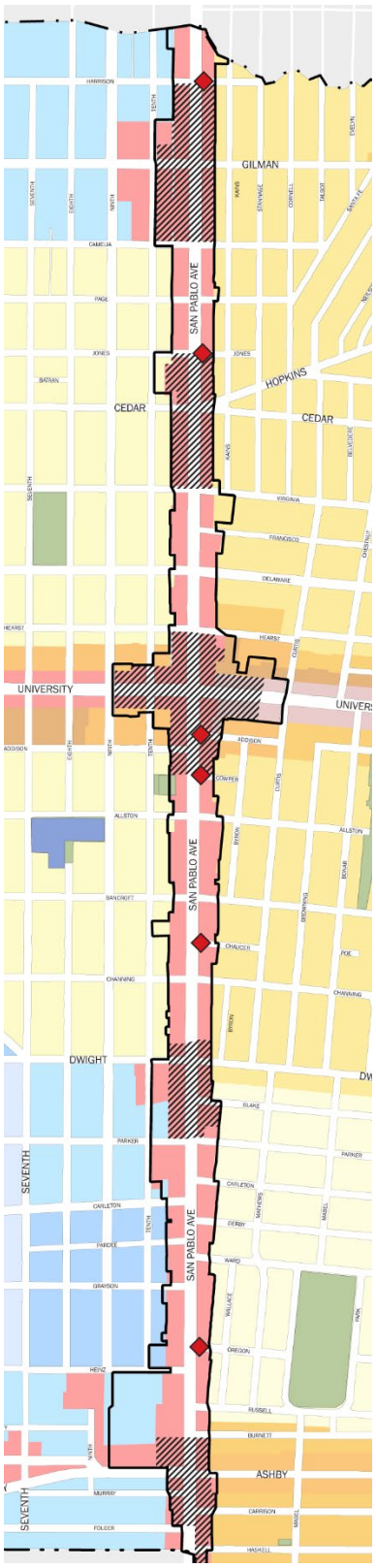


Figure 3 Potential side street closure locations

E. Enhance Local Access

1. *Improve East-West Connectivity*

a. **Study feasibility of a shared shuttle service** or an agreement between City and AC Transit to improve connections between Plan Area and West Berkeley, regional transit and East Berkeley (including Downtown Berkeley and the UC Berkeley Campus).

2. *Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Access*

a. **Develop and implement wayfinding standards** to improve connection between San Pablo Avenue and parallel bicycle facilities, the 4th Street West Berkeley node, adjacent parks and other community services.
b. **Improve sidewalk and streetscape conditions** between San Pablo Avenue and adjacent parks and other community services.
c. **Require public mid-block pathways** for development sites that go through a block.
d. **Study feasibility of lowering speed limit** on full length of segments of San Pablo Avenue.
e. **Study feasibility of separate bike lanes and bus lanes** on San Pabo Ave with Alameda CTC.

3. *Improve Transit Access and Frequency/Availability*

a. **Maintain and improve bus service** in collaboration with Alameda CTC and AC Transit. *(Related Policy – E.1.a)*
b. **Evaluate Alameda CTC bus stop improvements, including bus bulbs** and identify additional opportunities for streetscape and public open space improvements

4. *Management On-Street Parking and Loading*

a. **Create an active parking and loading management program** for San Pablo Avenue, including adjustment of parking meter rates, meter location expansion to side streets, and enforcement.
b. **Create residential and merchant parking permit area(s)** on adjacent neighborhood streets.

Development Framework

Throughout the public engagement process to-date, the community has expressed an overall interest in strengthening the nodes and prioritizing commercial viability with additional policy and beautification efforts. As described in the Community Assessment Report, there are five (5) nodes along the corridor at Gilman Street, Cedar Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue. The nodes are currently intended to provide focused clusters retail, commercial, and mixed-use activity to support a strong commercial and transit- and pedestrian-oriented environment by 1) requiring ground floor retail within the nodes, and 2) permitting only selective "active" commercial uses.

The Community Assessment report also identifies some challenges with existing nodes and opportunities for revising node boundaries within the Specific Plan. Existing node challenges include a lack of incentives for pedestrian-oriented retail, an oversupply of scattered retail space, and a non-distinct streetscape. Future opportunities include intensifying development at key areas, concentrating retail in walkable clusters, and investing in public space.

While many Specific Plan policies will apply to the entire corridor, this section outlines a **development framework based on three policy areas that act as levers and tools to shape development outcomes both inside and outside of nodes**, ensuring that strategies are tailored and effective for targeted areas. **The Development Framework is conceptual and designed to incorporate community input. No specific decisions or approaches have been finalized**. The preferred Development Framework will be determined through the preparation of the Specific Plan and include further public review and input opportunities including public hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council. The Development Scenarios section that follows presents three examples of how the framework, and its levers, can be applied to the corridor.

Policy Levers

Three key policy areas act as levers and tools to create a framework for future conditions and hierarchies between node and corridor development: height and intensity, ground floor use and design requirements, and community open space and activities.

Height and Intensity

Current development characteristics have deviated from existing zoning regulations due to density bonuses and market conditions. Developers often utilize density bonuses to propose 6 to 8 story buildings (3 to 4 stories permitted with existing zoning) with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) between 3.75 and 4.7 (3.0 permitted with existing zoning) throughout the corridor. Developers also chose to propose mixed use developments to establish a more intensive base zoning condition, which results in more commercial space throughout the corridor and in particular outside of nodes. This necessitates a reevaluation of the current height and density standards for the overall corridor and its nodes. Policy opportunities could include increasing the base zoning building heights and FAR for the corridor or varying the intensity between nodes and the areas in between.

Height and intensity options to consider include:

- An increase to 55 feet (5 stories) and 3.5 FAR (55 feet is within the height range allowed for the General Plan Avenue Commercial designation in the city. This height allows a 5-story building with a higher clearance for the ground floor, allowing for adequate space. The FAR increases to account for the additional height). If a project applies State Density Bonus, the likely maximum height would be 85 feet. Similarly, the local density bonus with community benefits would allow up to 85 feet in height and a maximum 5.0 FAR.
- An increase to 85 feet (8 stories) and 5.0 FAR (85 feet is the maximum height for a wood framed construction type allowed by the building code. The 5.0 FAR reflects the increase in building height and is the current maximum FAR for Avenue Commercial, which is the General Plan designation for C-W zoned properties). If a project applies State Density Bonus, the likely maximum height would be 120 feet. Similarly, the local density bonus with community

benefits would allow up to 120 feet in height and a maximum 8.0 FAR.

Most in-process or approved residential or mixed-use development projects are not moving forward at this point, given current market conditions, including higher interest rates, building code requirements, and increasing construction costs. An exception to this could be some 100% affordable housing projects, because of lower interest funding that may be available for affordable projects. Projects with heights above 85 feet will likely not be feasible along San Pablo Avenue until there are significant decreases in construction costs and increases in market rents. Additional height and density allowances could be linked to contributions towards community benefits.

Density Bonus

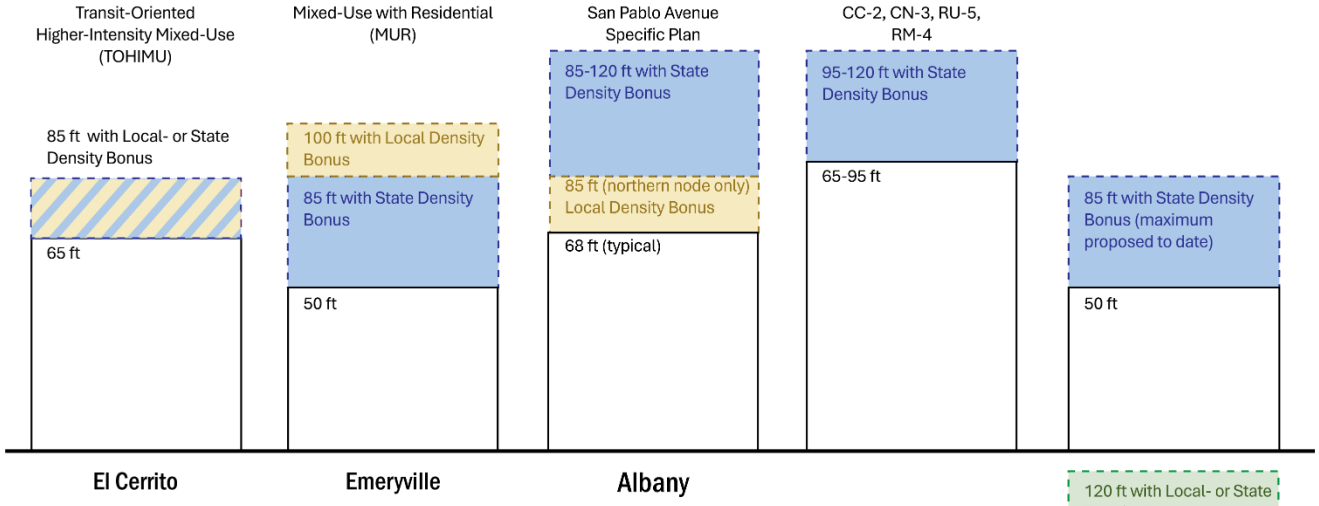
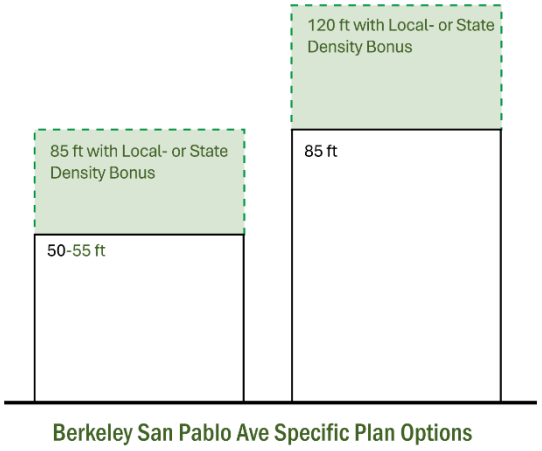


Figure 4 Development Zoning Height Limits along San Pablo Avenue

The state density bonus allows developers to increase the maximum allowable residential density in exchange for providing affordable housing (See the Community Assessment Report, page 23), and allows them to waive, reduce or modify development standards. A local density or development bonus, such as codified in the City of Emeryville aims to encourage the inclusion of public benefits in addition to affordable housing in new development projects. A local bonus provides developers with increased density, height, or other zoning modifications in exchange for providing specific community benefits.



By increasing the base height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) along San Pablo Avenue, there may be an increase in market-rate developments and a reduction in developments utilizing the state density bonus. If developers choose not to utilize the density bonus, they cannot waive any development standards proposed in the Specific Plan, such as Objective Design Standards, ground floor policies, and public open space requirements.

Berkeley's inclusionary housing policies will still apply to all market-rate developments to ensure affordable housing availability for low- and moderate-income residents. Under these policies, housing development projects are required to provide a percentage of affordable units or choose alternatives such as paying an in-lieu fee or dedicating land for the construction of affordable units.

In summary, Berkeley does not need state density bonus projects to create affordable housing because the City's own rules require that market rate projects integrate affordable housing or pay an in-lieu fee. By letting developers reach the same density levels with local standards, the City maintains more control over development designs, as developers would not have access to waivers and concessions that would be available if they used the state density bonus.

Ground Floor Use and Design

Outside of the nodes, mixed-use buildings are permitted an additional height (one residential floor) compared to residential-only buildings. The difference in allowed height has led to mixed-use buildings being proposed by developers along San Pablo Avenue to achieve a 4-story base zoning condition for new buildings instead of 3-story for a residential-only building. This is contributing to an oversupply of retail space scattered throughout the corridor. This presents an opportunity to leverage the demand for additional height by allowing more flexibility in ground floor use and implementing an in-lieu fee structure to waive ground floor commercial or live/work requirements in exchange for increased building height. Through the in-lieu fee, developers could be allowed to create *active residential ground floor* units instead.

Some developers may want to adhere to the mixed-use requirement and choose other ground floor uses. With the proposed *active ground floor* requirement, they would still have to follow pedestrian-friendly design standards.

Currently, within the nodes, there is a general requirement for ground floor commercial space. However, this designation lacks incentives for pedestrian-oriented retail, which undermines the original intention of these nodes. Adjustments such as broadening the allowed uses and emphasizing *storefront ground floor design* would create more flexibility and creating a built environment that can flex to more active retail uses as the population within the Specific Plan Area increases over time, and better align with the intended pedestrian-friendly environment.

Expand Uses

The following describes three major types of expanded ground floor uses. Note that all types are equivalent to Ground Floor Objective Design Standards (see *B.2.a)*

Storefront ground floor use focuses on commercial type uses that allow for more sidewalk visibility, such as restaurants, retail, and certain office types.

Active ground floor use allows for all non-residential (and live work) uses and provides more flexible Objective Design Standards

Active residential ground floor allows for apartments on the ground floor, which are subject to Objective Design Standards.

Community Benefits

The above-mentioned policy levers can serve as tools to incentivize community benefits, which refer to amenities, improvements or contributions that developers can provide to enhance the surrounding community as part of their project. Developers may be offered trade-offs such as more height and density, or reductions for private open space. The following outlines potential community benefits:

1. San Pablo Avenue corridor open space contribution program
2. Streetscape setbacks to enhance the pedestrian experience
3. Additional streetscape improvements such as pedestrian lighting, furnishing, landscaping
4. Public rooftop or courtyard access
5. Privately owned public open spaces
6. Allocated community spaces for public use within developments
7. Provide neighborhood access to project amenities (roof top open space, gym, meeting space, community garden, etc.)
8. Community Benefit Fund to support small local serving businesses throughout the Specific Plan Area

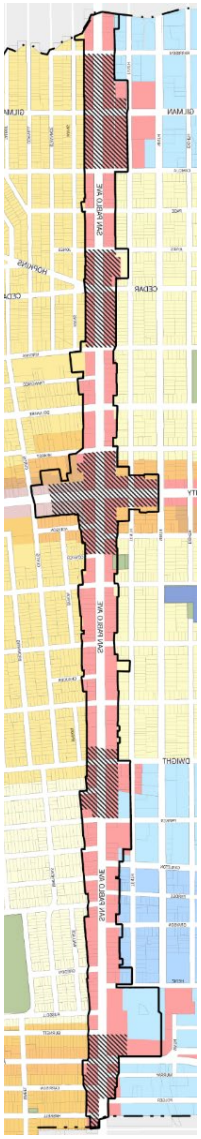
9. Additional workforce, senior or family friendly housing
10. Flexible Community Benefit proposed by the development

Development Scenarios

The development framework can be applied in various ways, creating different possibilities for developing nodes in the future. These possibilities include:

- Encourage more intensity of development
- Effectively concentrate retail in the nodes to create walkable neighborhood clusters
- Focus public open space investments and community use

The following three scenarios are examples to demonstrate how policy levers can be used as tools to develop various policy options. These scenarios illustrate the potential relationships between designated nodes and the entire corridor, showing how community benefits can be leveraged as trade-offs. This approach aims to achieve a variation in height and density while designating public realm and community improvements to priority areas.

	Scenario 1: Retail Focused Nodes with minor height increase	Scenario 2: Flexible Storefronts with more intensity at University Node	Scenario 3: Flexible Storefronts with expanded nodes and more intensity at select parcels in Gilman, University, Dwight, and Ashby Nodes
	**Maximum Development Intensity** Outside of Nodes: ▪ No change for single-use buildings ▪ Mixed-use Buildings maximum 55' height and 3.5 FAR. Developers may pay an in-lieu fee to waive the ground floor commercial requirements *(See policy option A.2.d)* ▪ Mixed-use buildings can increase to 85' height and 5.0 FAR, if they meet the Local Community Benefits Requirement or through the State Density Bonus Nodes: ▪ Base zoning: 55' height and 3.5 FAR ▪ All buildings can increase to 85' height and 5.0 FAR, if they meet the Local Community Benefits Requirement or through the State Density Bonus *Note: This may be more attractive than utilizing the state density bonus for additional development intensity*	**Maximum Development Intensity** Outside of Nodes: *See Scenario 1* University Avenue Node: ▪ Base zoning: 85' height and 5.0 FAR, if meet Storefront Objective Standards (*See policy option B.2.a*) ○ Can increase to 120' height and 8.0 FAR, if they meet Local Community Benefits Requirements, including: ○ Storefront Objective Design Standards ○ Provide privately owned public open space *(See policy option D.3.c).* This may only apply to developments over a certain sq. ft. threshold Other Nodes: *See Scenario 1*	**Maximum Development Intensity** Outside of Nodes: *See Scenario 1* Gilman Street West, University Avenue, Dwight, and Ashby Avenue West Nodes select parcels: ▪ Base zoning: 85' height and 5.0 FAR, if meet Storefront Objective Standards (*See policy option B.2.a*) ○ Can increase to 120' height and 8.0 FAR, if they meet Local Community Benefits Requirements, including: ○ Storefront Objective Design Standards ○ Provide privately owned public open space *(See policy option D.3.c).* This may only apply to developments over a certain sq. ft. threshold Other Nodes: *See Scenario 1*
	Public Realm Improvements Implement community benefits programs throughout the corridor. Locations for improvement areas may differ from nodes	**Public Realm Improvements** University Node: ▪ High priority for public space Other Nodes: ▪ Priority for streetscape improvements ▪ Incentives and focus for privately owned public spaces.	**Public Realm Improvements** Gilman West, University, and Ashby West Nodes: ▪ High priority for public space Other Nodes: ▪ Priority for streetscape improvements ▪ Incentives for privately owned public spaces
	Boundary and Zoning Designation Changes To be determined	**Boundary and Zoning Designation Changes** To be determined	**Boundary and Zoning Designation Changes** To be determined

ATTACHMENT 3

Chapter	Implentation Measures	Status	Notes
Land Use	1.1 Rezoning	COMPLETE	Manufacturing Zoning districts
	1.2 Redevelopment Plan Amendments	N/A	Redevelopment Agency was dissolved
	1.3 Truck Weight Ordinance	COMPLETE	BMC Chapter 14.56 (Movement of Heavy Vehicles and Equipment (Ordinance 6799-NS; 2004)
	2.1 Consolidated Parking	INCOMPLETE	Neither site available for parking now
	3.1 Inventory of Industrial Space	COMPLETE	Ordinance 65,210 -NS - 2011 West Berkeley Plan Update - inventory conducted as part of the update
Economic Development	1. Target Industrial retention and attraction program	COMPLETE	(i.e. Manufacturing Week)
	2. Large Site Reuse Project	COMPLETE	Ordinance 65,210 -NS - 2011 West Berkeley Plan Update
	3. Major Employer Training Project	COMPLETE	OED - Confirmed Complete
	1. Rezoning	COMPLETE	Manufacturing Zoning districts
	2. Arts and Crafts Ordinance Review	COMPLETE	Ordinance 65,210 -NS, 2011 West Berkeley Plan Update, and Berkeley Business zoning updates
	3. Mitgations as ordinance related to housing, child care and others	COMPLETE	Inclusionary Housing ordinance - Family Dare Care use updates
	4. Coordination with County	ONGOING	
	B.1 Building Buyout Program	COMPLETE	Mitigation for Durkee project
	B.2 Buyouts of Retiring Owners	COMPLETE	Project Equity
	B.3 Employment/Training System	COMPLETE	First Source
	B.4 Recognition system	COMPLETE	Berkeley Manufacturing Week; Green Business Certification
	B.5. Business Assistance	COMPLETE	OED Business Assistance
	C.1 Business Directory	COMPLETE	Developed internally OED Economic snapshot.
	D.1. San Pablo Ave Economic Development Study	COMPLETE	San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan
	D.2. Redevelopment Feasibility Study	N/A	Redevelopment Agency was dissolved
	D.3 Economic Development Organization -	COMPLETE	Explored - OED marked complete
Environmental Quality	1.1 Centralize and Coordinate Environmetal Information	COMPLETE	https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/public-records/community-right-know-hazardous-materials California Environmental Recording System
	1.2 Development and Implement work program for the Community Environmental Advisory Commission	COMPLETE	The CEAC is now the Environment and Climate Commission
	1.3 Revise and resubmit to state Citywide Chemical Emergency Response Plan	COMPLETE	Toxics' Area Plan: reviewed by state every 3 years
	1.4 Provide Risk management and communication program assistance to manufacturers and other businsses.	ONGOING	
	1.5 Work with businesses to improve existing odor problems	COMPLETE	Air District regulates
	1.6 Continue to review new and expanded uses for odorous potential	ONGOING	
	1.7 Provide assistance to businesses through the Recycle Market Development Zone (RMDZ)	COMPLETE	Recycling Market Development Zone through CalRecycle
	B.1 Map source sites and groundwater contamination plumes	COMPLETE	CalEnviroScreen
	B.2 Construct acoustic berm along western edge of Aquatic Park via Aquatic Park Master Plan	INCOMPLETE	Studied; found infeasible; barriers upgraded at Aquatic Park; acoustic berm was found to be too costly because of the need for concrete piers and a retaining wall. $13M - likely higher now.
	C.1 Implement 1991 Hazardous Material Importation Regulation Act	COMPLETE	regulation required by state law
	C.2. Create a hazard ranking system for use in charging fees and evaluating Use Permits	COMPLETE	Fees scale for larger haz mat quantities on-site
	C.3 Develop and Implement standard Use Permit conditions for hazardous waste hauling	COMPLETE	Regulated by Department of Toxic Substances Control
	C.4 Adopt requirement for pollution prevention planning	COMPLETE	Toxics
	C.5 Implement Non-Point Discarge Program (runoff program)	COMPLETE	Storm Water Management Plan
	C.6. Work with BAAQMD to ensure clean air measures are implemented	ONGOING	
	C.7. Implement Ozone Depletion Ordinance	COMPLETE	https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/11.62
	C.8 Revision of Noise Ordinance	COMPLETE	https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/13.40.050
	C.9 Improve consideration of noise in Use Permit decisions	COMPLETE	https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/13.40.050
	D.1. Study requirements for increase public notification for environmetal review when related to hazardous materials.	COMPLETE	no study was conducted however increased notification and state requirements have been implemented through CERS and permit requirements through the Toxics Division; exceptions to exemptions
	D.2. Study possibilty of extending tax credits or other incentives for pollution preventions, source and toxic use reduction.	INCOMPLETE	Study not conducted. State offers various incentives (cap and trade, Carl Moyer, California Pollution Control Financing Authority, etc)
	D.3 Research more comprehensive Hazardous Materials Transprotation Ordinance	COMPLETE	https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/11.50 Yes: Railway Study
	D.4. Research a Mandatory Commercial Hazardous waste recycling Ordinance	COMPLETE	Nicole Kim: supereded by desginated hauling out of Berkeley
	D.5 Identify sources of night noise and develop appropriate mitgations when possible	INCOMPLETE	

Chapter	Implentation Measures	Status	Notes
Physical Form	1.1 Redevelopment Area Public Improvement	N/A	Redevelopment Agency was dissolved
	1.2 Soundwall Design and Construction Monitoring	INCOMPLETE	https://aquaticpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/AqPk-Sound-Barrier-Options-2000.pdf Caltrans found the "living sound wall" would cost $13 million because of concrete piers and retaining wall, rending project infeasible.
	1.3 News rack Ordinance-Explore the feasibility-given both aesthetic and First Amendment concerns--of an Ordinance regulating the placement and design of news racks.	COMPLETE	https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/16.44
	1.4 Train Station Design Concept	COMPLETE	
	1.5 Facade Improvement Program - seek funding to develop a facade and signage improvement.	INCOMPLETE	Likely attempted to seek funds however no signage or facade improvement program is in place
	1.6 4th St. Area Strategic Plan	INCOMPLETE	
	1. 7 Development of Design Guidelines for various areas	IN PROGRESS	SPA SP
	1.8 Gateway Improvement Studies	IN PROGRESS	SPA SP
	1.9 1-80 Corridor Visual Improvement Study	COMPLETE	https://www.alamedactc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/I-80_Gilman_Visual_Impact_Assessment_Aug2018.pdf
	1.10 Billboard Amortization removing billboards from San Pablo Avenue	IN PROGRESS	SPA SP
	1.11 Zoning Ordinances Changes for and between Nodes	COMPLETE	
	1.12 Sign Ordinance Amendment	COMPLETE	Sign Ordinance has been amendmended since WBP adoption
	1.13 Review of Major Public Improyements	ONGOING	
	2.1 Designation as Certified Local Government-Apply to State Historic Preservation Office for certification as a Certified Local Government.	COMPLETE	Certified: March 1, 2000
	2.2 Completion of West Berkeley Historic Survey (with BAHA)	INCOMPLETE	Shifted to citywide historic statement and survey via HE EIR mitgation; HE EIR says we shoud do this citywude, which would include West Berkeley. So, still in GP
	2.3 Research for Landmark Designation on State Historic Resources Inventory building	COMPLETE	4 local landmarks and 1 landmark district established post 1993 in WBP area
	2.4 Historic signs program-Install signs at historic buildings and sites,	COMPLETE	https://berkeleyplaques.org/
	2.5 Elementary educational program	INCOMPLETE	
	2.6 Heritage Area Designation	INCOMPLETE	"when residents suport such efforts"
	3.1 Codomices Creek Regulation and Improvement	ONGOING	Updates to the creek ordinance in 2006
	3.2 Tree Planting Program	COMPLETE	https://berkeleyca.gov/city-services/streets-sidewalks-sewers-and-utilities/city-trees-and-coast-live-oak-ordinance
	3.3 Aquatic Park Access Improvements: Improve access to Aquatic Park	COMPLETE	Email Nelson Lam
	3.4 Other Aquatic Park Master Plan Improvements	COMPLETE	Email Nelson Lam
	3.5 Neighborhood park Improvements/addition	COMPLETE	Seek funding to improve facilities and services at neighborhood parks - Measure F
Transportation	1.1 Trip Reduction Ordinance	COMPLETE	TDM ordinance
	1.2 Bikeway Redesignations	COMPLETE	Bicycle Plan
	2.1 Employee Shuttles	ONGOING	Approached them and they were not interested (TDM)- continue to approach
	2.2 Transit improvements	ONGOING	"Work with AC Transit..."
	2.3 Freeway reconfiguration	COMPLETE	https://www.cahighways.org/ROUTE080.html
	2.4 Bikeway Improvements	ONGOING	
	2.5 Bicycle Facilities	ONGOING	
	2.6 Improvements for pedestrians	ONGOING	
	2.7 5th St. Extension	COMPLETE	likely assessed and found to not be viable solution to congestion
	2..8 Street System Improvements	COMPLETE	
	3.1 Train Station Design Concept	COMPLETE	
	3.2 Centralized Parking Demand and Cost Analysis	COMPLETE	Sites conveyed/developed
	3.3 Aquatic Park Access Study	COMPLETE	https://aquaticpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/APIP_Study_2008_W_TechnicalReportAndAppendices.pdf Aquatic Park Improvement Program (2008)
	3.4 9th Street Connection Study	COMPLETE	Berkeley Bowl West did not include this.
Housing and Social Services	Miles Development Agreement Housing Programs	COMPLETE	
	West Berkeley's housing programs will generally be those adopted in the 1990	COMPLETE	updated in each iteration of the Housing Element

DRAFT

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Public Review Draft – October 28, 2025

City of Berkeley

Land Acknowledgement

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

Plan Acknowledgment

This section will be made to include specific names, organizations, and contributors prior to final publication.

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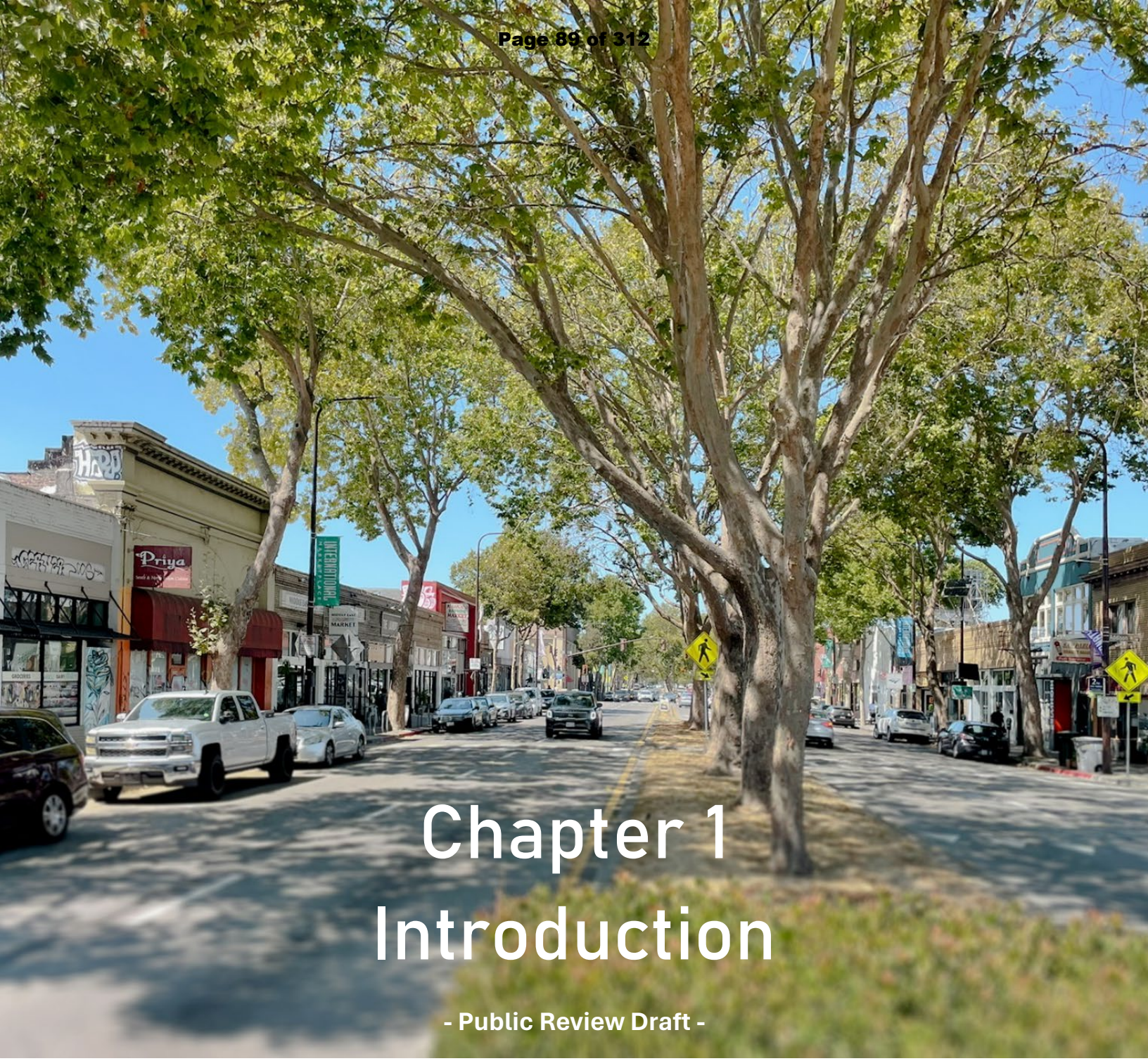
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Chapter 1 Introduction

- Public Review Draft -

San Pablo Avenue is a corridor in transition, shaped by growing demand for housing and fluctuating levels of commercial activity as new businesses open and others close. Existing zoning and State housing laws support additional housing development, but there is no cohesive vision to shape future growth toward a mixed-use district with stronger economic and social vitality.

In 2023, the City of Berkeley launched the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan process to create a framework for equitable and sustainable development, safer streets, better access to the surrounding community, and a more vibrant economy and public realm. Building on City Council direction from 2015, the Specific Plan planning process prioritized inclusive engagement, with targeted outreach to those who live and work in and around the Specific Plan Area (the Plan Area) and multiple opportunities for the public to participate and shape the plan.

Plan Purpose

The Specific Plan responds to the question: *"What will the future of San Pablo Avenue look like?"* Its purpose is to establish community-based, context-sensitive regulations and policies that articulate a shared vision for a mixed-use district along San Pablo Avenue. Through the planning process, the City, in collaboration with the consultant team and the community, identified improvements and innovative programs that expand opportunities for living, working, shopping, and community life along San Pablo Avenue.

In February 2021, the City of Berkeley received a Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to create the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan establishes a comprehensive framework of land use, public space, transportation, and economic development policies and strategies, including revised standards for allowed uses in existing and new buildings, updated development intensities, and design standards for new development. It also outlines programs and policies to support diverse housing options, strengthen new and existing businesses, enhance public amenities, and improve connections between the Specific Plan Area and surrounding neighborhoods and destinations.

Mutual knowledge exchange

The Specific Plan planning process facilitated meaningful knowledge exchange between the community and the Specific Plan team:

- Stakeholders gained an understanding of how recent changes in Citywide policies and State housing legislation have affected the housing development approvals process. The Specific Plan public engagement focused on where the community's input can be meaningful in the context of streamlined project approvals.
- Stakeholders identified current community assets and expressed their vision for enhancing them, as well as their aspirations for other positive changes along San Pablo Avenue.
- Stakeholder input provided insight into the unique aspects of the community and their ideas for the future. This informed Specific Plan policies and standards, the land use map, implementation, strategies, and many other aspects of the Plan.

Desired outcomes of the planning process

The San Pablo Specific Plan:

- Identifies a community vision and provides a plan for achieving the vision.
- Includes a framework for transforming San Pablo Avenue into a multimodal street that functions well for all users, not just as a thoroughfare, but as a mixed-use place that provides a multitude of opportunities for living, working and taking part in community life.
- Explains, updates and creates new local planning policies, development standards and practices, and highlights their interrelationship, relevancy, and adherence with State, regional, and Citywide planning policies and processes.
- Includes implementation strategies with clear actions and responsibilities.
- Prioritizes equity, promotes inclusivity, and strives to eliminate disparities through the Plan's policies, programs, and implementation strategies.

Specific Plan Area

Location

San Pablo Avenue is one of the primary multi-jurisdictional transportation corridors in northern Alameda County and west Contra Costa County, extending as a major street from the Carquinez Bridge to Downtown Oakland, through the cities of Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo, Richmond, El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville and Oakland. The Specific Plan Boundary (Specific Plan Area) encompasses the 2.35-mile corridor along San Pablo Avenue, from the Berkeley/Albany border in the north to the Berkeley/Oakland border in the south.



Figure 1.1 San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley and adjacent cities. Source: Google Earth

Definition of the Specific Plan Area

Study Area

The Study Area includes the neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment areas that are proximate to and have a strong relationship with the uses along San Pablo Avenue. The Study Area extends from the I-80 freeway in the west to Sacramento Street in the east and from the Albany border in the north to Emeryville and Oakland borders in the south (see Figure 1.2). The Study Area has been studied in select analyses throughout the Specific Plan process to gain an understanding of the social and economic relationships between San Pablo Avenue and West Berkeley, to identify historic and culturally significant locations in proximity to San Pablo Avenue, and to identify parks, open spaces, and other community assets that can be used by people living and working in the Specific Plan Area.

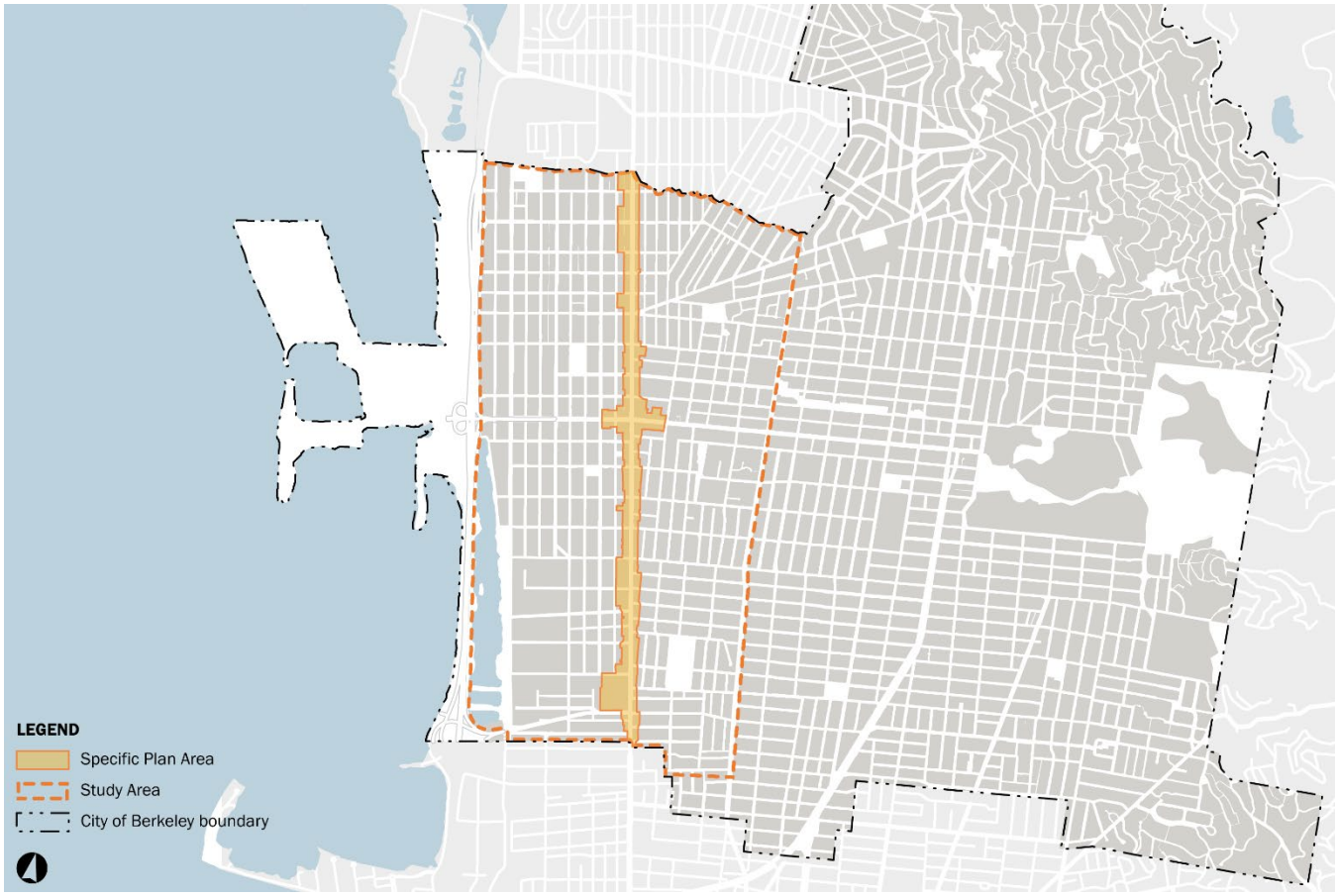


Figure 1.2 Map of Study Area in relation to the City of Berkeley. Source: City of Berkeley

Specific Plan Area

Definition of the Specific Plan Area was informed by the Plan Bay Area 2050 (2021) Priority Development Area (PDA) (see *Regulatory Context* below for more information). The Plan Area is comprised of individual parcels for which the Plan's policies, standards, and implementation actions will apply. These parcels primarily front onto San Pablo Avenue, as well as some adjacent parcels on side-streets and other adjacent areas that have the potential to support new housing and mixed-use development at a similar scale (see **Chapter 3 Land Use** for more detail). Along University Avenue, the area covers parcels between Ninth Street and Curtis Street (see Figure 1.3).

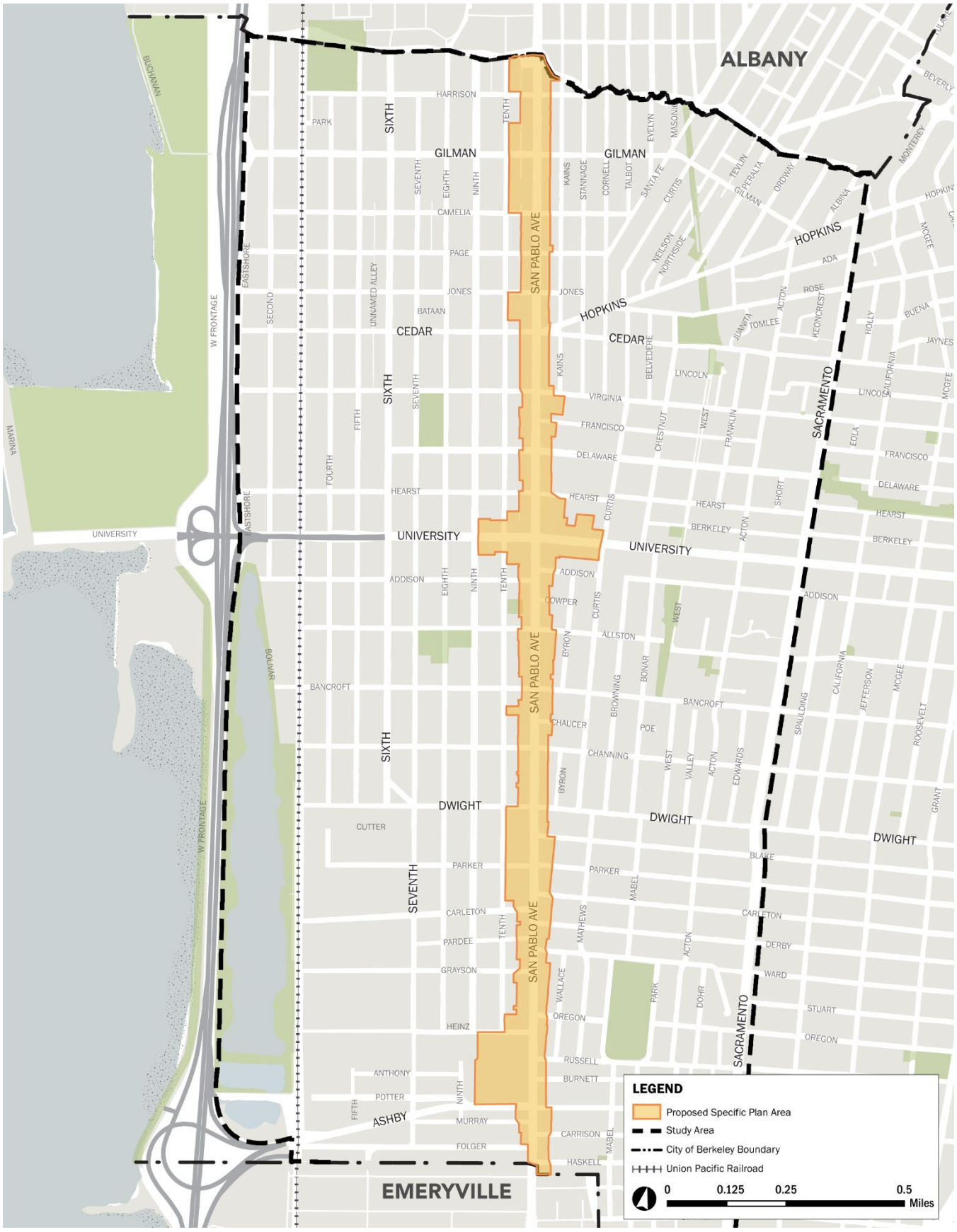


Figure 1.3 Study Area and Specific Plan Area. Source: City of Berkeley

Significance of the San Pablo Avenue Corridor

Running parallel to I-80, San Pablo Avenue connects tens of thousands of people each day to residential neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, public gathering spaces, and other key destinations in the East Bay. The character and intensity of the streetscape, development, and uses along San Pablo Avenue varies along its length; its connectivity and diversity of uses establishes it as a mixed-use corridor in the East Bay. As State Route 123, it also functions as a designated reliever route during incidents on the I-80 freeway. Due to this role, the right-of-way in Berkeley is under the jurisdiction of the State of California through Caltrans, requiring the City of Berkeley to obtain Caltrans approval before making physical changes to the street. For these reasons, San Pablo Avenue has been the subject of multiple regional planning efforts – such as the Association of Bay Area's (ABAG) East Bay Corridor Initiative and Alameda County Transit Commission's (Alameda CTC) San Pablo Avenue Corridor Projects. Berkeley has taken part in these efforts and has also followed the development and adoption of Specific Plans in neighboring jurisdictions with great interest.

Historical Context

Originally known as part of the Lincoln Highway in the early 1900s, San Pablo Avenue served as the primary north-south connection prior to the construction of I-80. Its original role as a key regional and national route contributed to its designation as a state highway and shaped the corridor's pattern of region-serving, auto-oriented land uses.



Figure 1.4 The Key System and Berkeley sign at San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue, ca. 1925. Source: Berkeley Public Library. Online Archive of California

San Pablo Avenue and the Study Area are also part of West Berkeley's history of ethnic and racial segregation. On the 1937 federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) redlining maps, much of West Berkeley — particularly the neighborhoods near San Pablo Avenue — were marked in red and deemed "hazardous" for investment, largely because of the presence of African American, Asian American, and immigrant communities (see Figure 1.5).[1] These classifications led to systematic disinvestment, exclusion from mortgage lending, and lasting economic and environmental inequalities. As a result, West Berkeley became both a hub of diverse working-class communities and a target of discriminatory practices limiting their access to housing elsewhere in the City.

At the same time, the area west of San Pablo Avenue developed as one of Berkeley's primary industrial and manufacturing centers. Industries such as ironworks, chemical production, food processing, and printing thrived, drawing on the surrounding diverse workforce. Although large-scale manufacturing declined after World War II, West Berkeley's industrial legacy remains visible in its historic building stock. Today, a new generation of small-scale manufacturers, makers, and biotechnology firms are located within the Study Area west of San Pablo Avenue, continuing the role of West Berkeley as a center of production and innovation. The Specific Plan Area's proximity to West Berkeley has led to some complementary businesses locating on San Pablo Avenue and supports general business vitality along San Pablo Avenue.

[1] *A detailed review on the History of Redlining in the East Bay can be found here: https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/CA/Oakland/context#loc=12/37.8839/-122.2562. Last accessed 10/02/2025*



Figure 1.5 Historical Redlined Areas and Equity Priority Communities Map. Source: R.K.Nelson and E.L.Ayers, Mapping Redlining, 2023. MTC, Equity Priority Communities, 2021.

Community Demographics

The Study Area has a greater racial and ethnic diversity compared to the city as a whole and Alameda County, with a notably higher percentage of Black population. This pattern reflects the legacy of historic redlining that shaped neighborhood demographics and limited mobility for communities of color over time. Although racially restrictive covenants were ruled unenforceable by the Supreme Court in Shelley v. Kraemer (1948), the practice of redlining persisted until it was prohibited under the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Its impacts persist today, as formerly redlined areas continue to experience greater economic inequality and higher risk of displacement.

The Study Area's population in 2020 was 26,360. The population grew 16% between 2010 to 2020, representing 22% of the city's total population and outpacing the city's overall population growth of 9% in the same period.[2]

As neighborhoods within the Study Area continue to grow, demographic shifts have varied across racial and ethnic groups. From 2000 to 2020, the White population increased by over 3,900 (+45%), while the Black population decreased by over 2,600 (-39%) (see Figure 1.6). The population increase of Hispanic/Latinx, Asians/API, and other races during that period was moderate.

[2] *United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1.*

As a result of being historically underserved, some census blocks within the Study Area are part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)'s Equity Priority Communities (EPCs). The EPC designation helps provide funding and assistance to census tracts that have a significant concentration of underserved populations.[3]

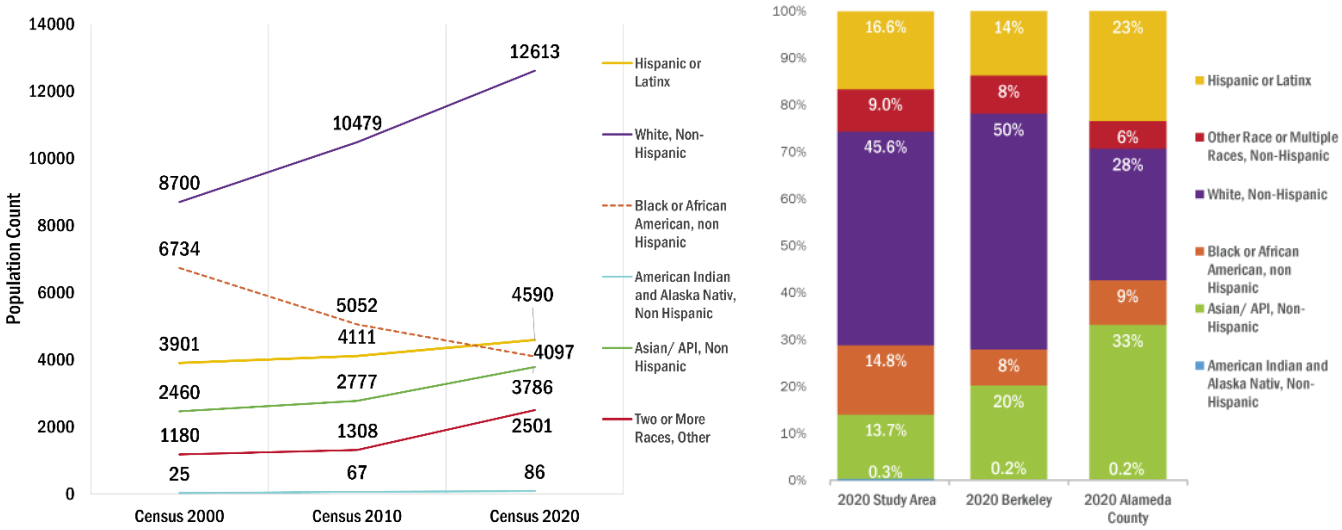


Figure 1.6 Left: Population Shift by Race and Ethnicity in Study Boundary. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1. Right: Comparison of Racial Composition in Study Area, Berkeley, and Alameda County. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1.

Economic Vitality Conditions

San Pablo Avenue is a unique commercial corridor in Berkeley, historically defined by regional and specialty businesses, along with uses connected to industry and manufacturing. Previous City plans and economic assessments have characterized the corridor in ways that remain relevant today:

- **Historic industrial identity**: Once a center for manufacturing and production, the West Berkeley neighborhoods adjacent to San Pablo Avenue still include industrially zoned areas. Automotive and repair related businesses continue to operate along the corridor, contributing significantly to the local and regional economy.[4]
- **Commerce and production**: Many businesses on the corridor produce goods on-site and sell directly to customers, occupying a niche at the intersection of commerce and light industry.[4]
- **Regional destination**: San Pablo Avenue functions primarily as a destination for specialized goods and services, such as auto repair, construction materials, home improvement, and restaurants, rather than serving as a walkable, neighborhood-serving retail district.[5]

This strong regional identity can at times be at odds with local aspirations for a more walkable, mixed-use environment that supports multi-modal transportation options, a broad range of businesses, and new infill housing.

Vacancy and Broader Economic Impacts

San Pablo Avenue experienced a significant rise in ground-floor commercial vacancies in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. Office of Economic Development data indicates that San Pablo Avenue's ground floor commercial vacancy rate (by square footage) doubled from 5.5% in 2017 to 10.8% in 2022. The rate peaked in 2023 at 15.5%, reflecting ongoing challenges for local businesses.

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[3] *To learn more about the MTC/ABAG's EPC designation and methodology, visit mtc.ca.gov.*
[4] *City of Berkeley. Office of Economic Development's 2016 Economic Development Work Session, 2016. p.9, 13.*
[5] *City of Berkeley. 2022 Economic Dashboard. Office of Economic Development, 2022.*

By 2024, the vacancy rate had declined to 7.1% along San Pablo Avenue[6], signaling a recovery in ground floor activity. By comparison, the average citywide vacancy rate in 2024 was 7.5%.

The past few years were defined by several high-profile closures along San Pablo Avenue, many of which were establishments with broad name recognition and historic and cultural significance in Berkeley. KC's BBQ, for instance, was a Black-owned, family-run business that first opened in 1968; Kirsten Davis, a third-generation co-owner told NBC Bay Area in April 2023 that "The brick and mortar are a monster for a lot of small businesses. People are trying to find funding and to hold onto and retain employees."

Despite these closures, the decline in vacancy rate and the arrival of new neighborhood-serving businesses suggest that San Pablo Avenue is entering a period of renewal. The Specific Plan aims to build on this recovery by supporting small business retention, improving storefront vitality, and reinforcing the Plan Area's role as a diverse, mixed-use district.

Planning Context

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan is a key component of Berkeley's broader long-range planning efforts. The Plan's policies and implementation strategy reflect recent changes in State housing and land use law that require a new approach to local planning. The Specific Plan is consistent with State guidance for the preparation of a specific plan, as identified in the California Government Code §65450-65457.

Regulatory Context

Citywide Policies

The **City's General Plan**, adopted in 2002, outlines Berkeley's long-range vision and priorities for growth, development, and conservation. It includes elements on Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Disaster Preparedness and Safety, Open Space and Recreation, Environmental Management, Economic Development and Employment, Urban Design and Preservation, Citizen Participation, and Implementation.

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan will serve as an extension of the General Plan, providing policy and regulatory guidance tailored to the Specific Plan area. All land-use decisions are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan

The Housing Element of the City's General Plan serves as the City's framework for housing goals, policies, and programs for meeting existing and future housing needs and increasing affordable housing opportunities to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) established by the State. In the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update, approximately 31%, or 2,023, of the housing units needed to accommodate the RHNA fall within the Specific Plan Area, indicating the Plan Area's potential to accommodate a significant share of future housing. The Housing Element also identified land use and zoning actions to help meet the RHNA, including the implementation *Program 27- Priority Development Areas (PDAs), Commercial and Transit Corridors* to develop San Pablo Avenue as a PDA.

The **West Berkeley Plan (adopted in 1993 and amended in 2011)** defines the City's key land use, environmental, economic development, transportation, housing and social services, and physical form policies for West Berkeley, which includes the Specific Plan Area, as well as parts of the broader Study Area to the west of San Pablo Avenue. The West Berkeley Plan defines West Berkeley's land use to support desired economic development, as well as identifies retail "nodes", including those that are now "designated nodes" in the C-W West Berkeley Commercial District zoning standards.

This Specific Plan supersedes the West Berkeley Plan for all properties within the Specific Plan Area while carrying forward its key goals related to land use and community character. All future development must comply with both this Specific Plan and the Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC). Additional details can be found in **Chapter 3 Land Use**.

[6] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Economic Dashboards Update, 25 Feb. 2025, p. 3. Accessed 6 May 2025.

Regional Policies

The PDA designation stems from **Plan Bay Area 2050**, which is a long-range regional plan developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). [7] The Plan Bay Area 2050 includes strategies to improve housing, the economy, transportation, and the environment with a focus on the region. As part of this effort, PDAs in Berkeley were identified by the City and Bay Area Metro to promote sustainable development patterns for jobs and housing in walkable and transit-oriented infill locations. The PDA designation increases the City's eligibility for funding to support improvements in and provide benefit to a PDA.

State Legislation

Many State laws and regional policies related to housing and land use have been approved since the adoption of the City's General Plan in 2002. The Berkeley Municipal Code continues to be updated to remain consistent with the laws and policies. Many recent State laws have made changes to the development review and approval process, timeline, and requirements, as well as defined limitations on the City's discretion regarding project approval, conformance with certain development standards, and the applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

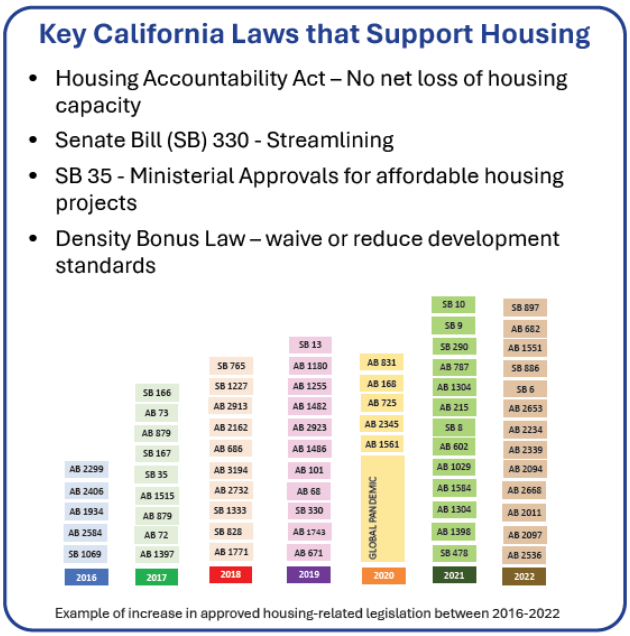


Figure 1.7 Key California Laws that Support Housing. Source: UPP

Relationship to other Planning Documents and Projects

Other related plans and improvements that support the goals of the Specific Plan are discussed in their respective chapters. Key connections to the Specific Plan are summarized below:

- The 2016 **San Pablo Avenue Commercial Corridor Report** highlighted the area's economic growth and diversity, identifying long-term opportunities for land use, transportation, and public realm improvements. While it did not propose immediate actions, its recommendations, such as sidewalk upgrades, public art, and branding, helped inform the goals of **Chapter 4 Economic Development**.
- Previous planning efforts have addressed streetscape issues along San Pablo Avenue. The **San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan**, adopted on December 7, 2004, aimed to enhance the corridor for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and transit users, while also supporting revitalization of the surrounding area. While some improvements have been implemented, others remain unaddressed or are outdated. The Specific Plan includes updated streetscape standards as part of its improvement strategy, outlined in **Chapter 5 Streets - Transportation and Public Realm**.
- The **Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan** (2022) identifies San Pablo Avenue as a Primary Transit Route and a corridor for future study of transit infrastructure needs based on the AC Transit Major Corridors Study (2016). It describes the **Alameda CTC's San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project** as the lead effort for designing transit improvements along the corridor. Concurrent with the Specific Plan development, the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project is providing key improvements in the Specific Plan Area to improve safety and transit reliability along the streets' Corridor.

[7] *More information regarding Priority Development Areas (PDAs) can be found on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Website mtc.ca.gov.*

- In 2023, the City began work on a Zoning Update for North Shattuck, College Avenue, and Solano Avenue commercial corridors that, like San Pablo Avenue, are designated as priority commercial and transit corridors in the 2023–2031 Housing Element. This initiative aims to establish clear and objective development standards in compliance with State law, while reassessing land uses and permitting processes to support future growth along these key corridors. The **San Pablo Avenue Objective Design Standards** (see **Appendix E)** have been developed with this broader zoning context in mind, with the goal of creating cohesive, high-level design guidance that aligns with the citywide approach.

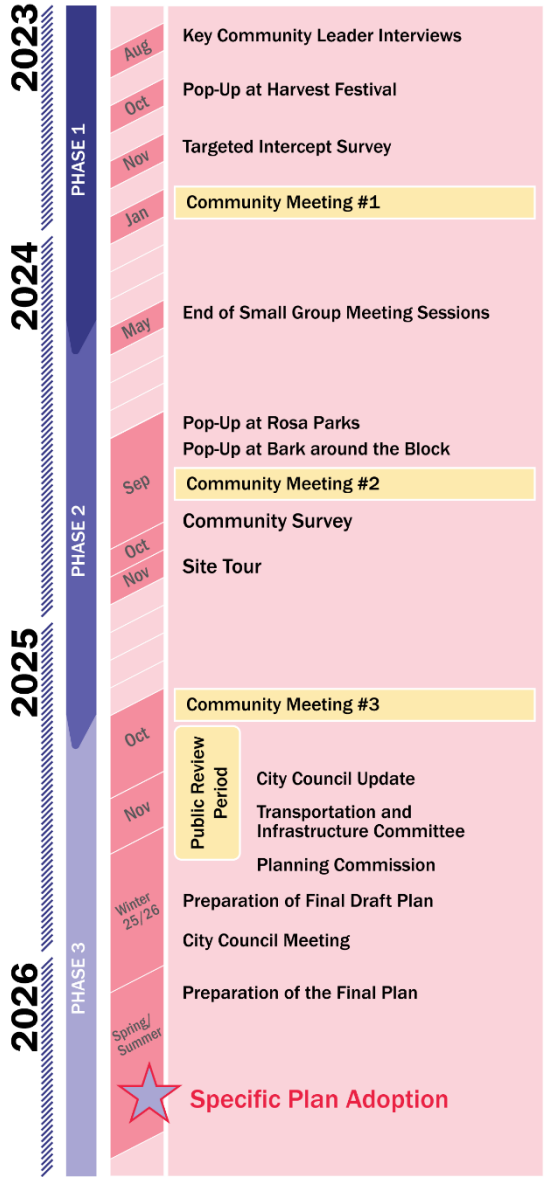


Figure 1.8 Community Engagement Timeline

Community Engagement and Plan Development Process

The Specific Plan's community engagement process provided multiple opportunities for participants to share perspectives, ideas and feedback, representing a broad range of existing and future residents, workers, business owners, property owners, and corridor users. The process also included close collaboration with City staff and included regular discussions with the Planning Commission and City Councilmembers, as well as collaboration with staff from regional planning and transportation agencies.

Engagement Events and Methods

Phase 1

The outreach process included a series of five focus group meetings, five interviews, one community open-house, one survey and one pop-up held between 2023 and Spring 2024 (see Figure 1.7). Phase 1 of the outreach concluded in May 2024, gathering feedback on key issues. The findings from this phase were summarized in the Community Assessment Report.

Phase 2

The outreach in Phase 2 focused on Policy Development and feedback to policy options created by the Specific Plan team. Phase 2 included one community workshop, a survey, two pop-ups and a site tour in 2024. Community feedback echoed the issues outlined in Phase 1 and solidified the Specific Plan's Vision and Desired Results (see **Chapter 2**).

Phase 3

Note: The following description will be updated and expanded upon following the Specific Plan Public Review period and adoption process to reflect the input received.

The Specific Plan team held four stakeholder interviews for preliminary feedback and will hold the final Community Open House to present the Public Review Draft Specific Plan in October 2025 and to gather initial feedback from the public. Input from the Open House and additional comments received during the public comment period will be documented, summarized, and communicated to the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council, along with a description of recommended changes and refinements to the Public

Review Draft. Additional public comments received during the Commission and City Council meetings will be taken into consideration in the Council's adoption of the Plan.

What We've Heard

The community expressed strong support for developing more affordable, mixed-income housing, with a majority in favor of higher-intensity development along San Pablo Avenue. However, some participants voiced concerns that excessive building height or bulk could create a "tunnel effect" limiting sunlight and worsening the pedestrian experience.

There was broad agreement that the current sidewalks and mobility conditions are inadequate. Participants emphasized the need for safety and public realm improvements, including wider sidewalks, better pedestrian lighting, additional greenery, and public art to enhance comfort, livability and corridor identity.

Community members also supported activating ground floors with flexible commercial and creative uses. This approach is intended to reduce vacancies, prevent inactive storefronts, and strengthen the overall pedestrian experience in the Plan Area.

Marcel Pardo Ariza: Municipal Artist-in-Residence

As part of the 2023-2024 Print Public Municipal Artist-in-Residence at Kala Art Institute, artist Marcel Pardo Ariza worked with Robert Rivera and the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan process. In response to the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Study and in dialogue with local community members, Marcel Pardo Ariza highlighted and celebrated seven local businesses along San Pablo Avenue: CASA LATINA, Belmo Cafe, Middle East Market, Heyma Yemeni Coffee, Rainbow Donuts, Everett & Jones, and Mi Ranchito Bayside Market. Through this exploration, Ariza emphasized the critical role these businesses play in the fabric and legacy of the community, underscoring the urgent need for City support in a landscape where vacant retail spaces proliferate across the Bay Area.

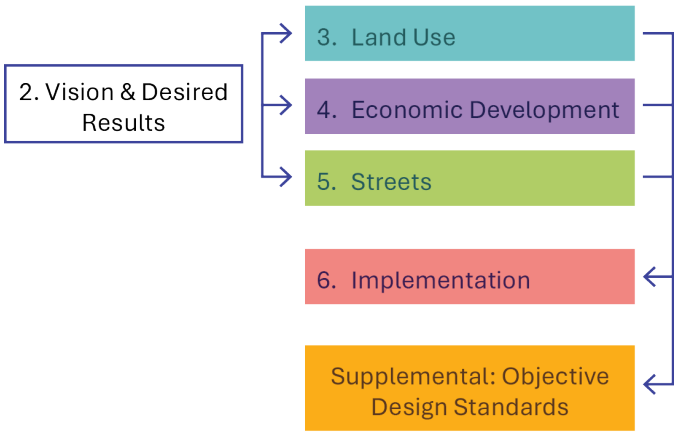
As part of the Municipal Artist-in-Residence, Marcel Pardo Ariza and Cheryl Derricotte presented their exhibition *Roadwork* at Kala Gallery from October 24, 2024, to February 14, 2025.



Figure 1.9 Images of Marcel's work for the Roadwork Exhibition. Source: Marcel Pardo Ariza

Specific Plan Organization

The Plan is organized into five (5) chapters following this introduction.



Chapters 3 through 5 form the core of the Specific Plan, outlining the proposed policies, programs, and standards that advance the vision and goals established in **Chapter 2**. While each chapter focuses on a primary topic, they are not mutually exclusive, and therefore, many policies are interrelated and advance the overall vision and goals across multiple topic areas. For example, policies in the Land Use and Street chapters also support economic development by shaping where commercial and retail activity is prioritized as well as the pedestrian experience throughout the Plan Area.

The Plan concludes with an Implementation **Chapter 6**, which summarizes key priorities and actions needed to carry out the Plan across each topic area. In addition, the Plan is also accompanied by **Objective Design Standards (ODS)** in **Appendix E**.

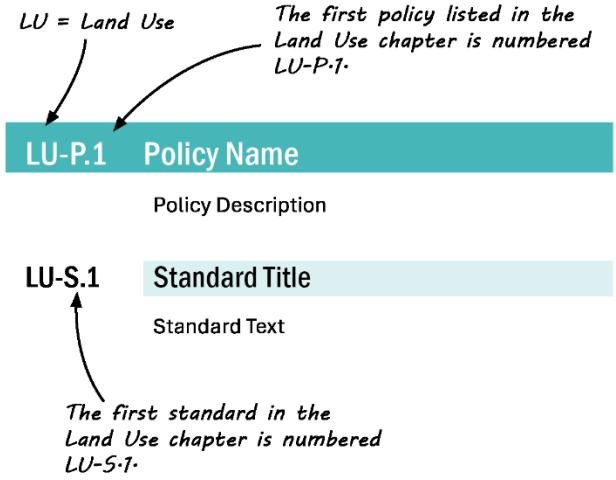
Appendices:

- Appendix A: Key Existing Conditions
- Appendix B: Opportunity Sites
- Appendix C: Buildout Summary Memorandum
- Appendix D: Street Improvements
- Appendix E: Objective Design Standards

How to use this Document

This Plan includes land use, economic development, public space, and transportation policies and standards to support the Vision and Goals outlined in **Chapter 2**. To ensure clarity and ease of use:

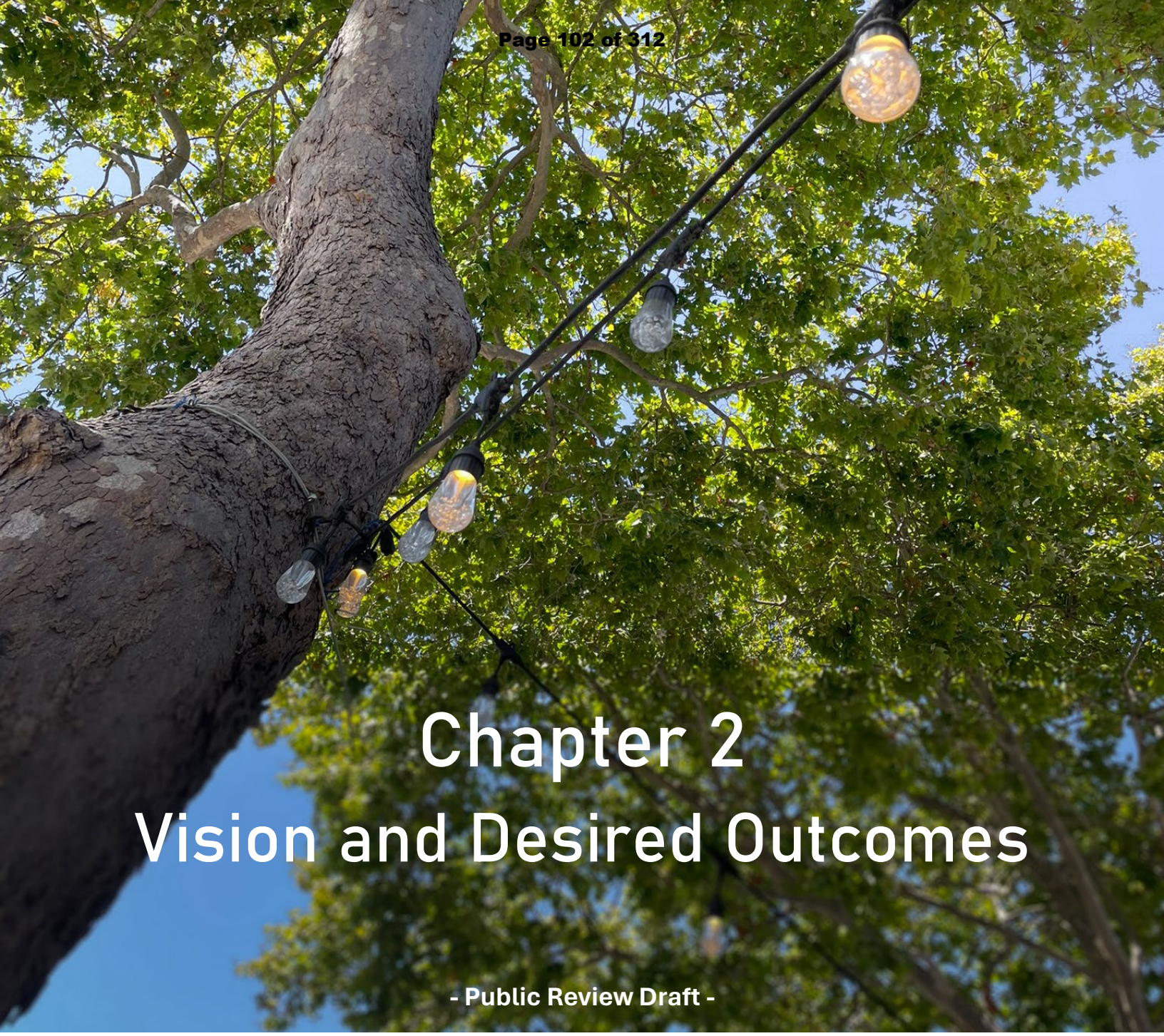
Policies are the core statements of intent that guide decision-making. They articulate the City's goals for future development, community benefits, public investment, and implementation initiatives. Policies are organized in the *Land-Use, Economic Development, and Streets – Mobility and Public Realm* chapters. Each policy is numbered using the first letters of their respective chapter, followed by a "P" and a sequential number. For example, the first policy listed in the **Chapter 3: Land Use** is numbered LU-P.1. All policies appear in the chapter's designated color.



Standards are measurable requirements that implement the Specific Plan's Policies. They include zoning regulations and development requirements. Standards follow the same numbering system as the policies, using "S" instead of "P". For example, the first standard in the **Chapter 3: Land Use** is numbered LU-S.1. All Standards appear in the chapter's designated color.

In many chapters, specific standards are provided directly under the policy they intend to implement. These standards indicate their direct relationship to the corresponding policy.

The final chapter includes the Implementation Table, which outlines implementation actions, responsibilities, timelines, and funding mechanisms to carry out the Specific Plan's goals.



Chapter 2
Vision and Desired Outcomes

- Public Review Draft -

Vision

The community envisions the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area as a mixed-use district that is integrated with the neighborhoods and employment areas that surround it. The Specific Plan Area will serve Berkeley's broad range of community members and continue to support citywide and regional needs as it has historically.

> *"[We need a] Lively corridor where people from all walks of life can enjoy, mingle, and support local businesses. Good mix of housing, restaurants, stores (and grocery stores)." – Open House Comment*

With a history of demographic diversity and cultural exchange, community members are deeply protective of the area's heritage. They continue to advocate for measures to strengthen its distinctive character while accommodating Berkeley's housing needs. Central to this vision is redefining San Pablo Avenue not simply as a car-centric corridor, but as a place that connects east to west Berkeley and serves as an extension of surrounding neighborhoods.

Desired Outcomes

Increased Diversity and Supply of Housing

"It is essential to ensure that the plan addresses the needs of the historically underserved communities around San Pablo Avenue." – Community advocate from Beautiful San Pablo

The Plan will encourage more housing along San Pablo Avenue, offering more variety of unit types and building designs that reflect community diversity and meet the needs of residents ranging from young singles to families, seniors, and others. New and refined design standards, land use, and other policies for new development, paired with incentives for community-oriented spaces, will foster social interaction, support local businesses, and strengthen connections between new residents and the broader community.

Increased Business Activity to Support a Thriving Community

"It is our urban center or spine. Be more for the people that live here. [We are] Missing boutiques, groceries, and practical things." – Open House Comment

The Plan envisions San Pablo Avenue as a vibrant and economically resilient corridor with welcoming storefronts, active ground floors, and businesses that contribute to an engaging public realm. Support for small and locally owned businesses will help activate ground-floor spaces and foster a diverse mix of creative, community-oriented uses. Partnerships between businesses, the City, and neighborhood groups will facilitate community and cultural events that strengthen the corridor identity and establish San Pablo Avenue as a distinct, mixed-use district. Community and social events, organized by partnerships between businesses, the City, and neighborhood groups, will help establish a community identity for the mixed-use district.

Enhanced Interaction Between Public and Private Spaces

The Plan envisions streets where public and private spaces combine to support daily life and community vitality. Wider sidewalks, small plazas, and other gathering spaces will provide welcoming places or "third spaces" for recreation, social interaction, and community events. Investments in street furniture, lighting, and landscaping will enhance safety, comfort, and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities, while preserving and expanding the tree canopy to create a greener, more inviting streetscape.

Enhanced Local and Citywide Access

"SPA is stressful. Just realized it acts as a border, and I hate crossing over it. Increase space for people, less space for cars (i.e. parklets, bulb outs, turn median into park.)" – Open House Comment

The Plan aims to build upon ongoing City and regional efforts to transform San Pablo Avenue into a safe, inclusive, and welcoming street that prioritizes access and mobility for people of all ages and abilities. By improving crossings, lighting, and streetscape design, and by supporting reliable transit and active transportation options, the Plan's street network will better connect residents to neighborhoods, parks, jobs, and the waterfront. This integrated approach reduces reliance on cars while preserving essential vehicle access and circulation.

How does the vision translate into desired outcomes? The table below outlines the key outcomes that the Specific Plan aims to achieve for each theme of the community's vision. It also provides guidance on where to find more detailed information within the document. The chapters are abbreviated as follows: LU = Land Use, ED = Economic Development, PR = Streets and Public Realm, T = Streets and Transportation, and ODS = Objective Design Standards.



Increased Diversity and Supply of Housing	
Revised Housing Development Regulations	LU, ODS
Increased Housing Affordability	LU
Support a Range of Housing for Diverse Resident Needs	LU
Encourage Engaging Buildings and Site Frontages	LU, ODS



Increased Business Activity to Support a Thriving Community	
Increased Local Business Vitality and Growth	LU, ED
Reduced Vacancy of Ground Floor Space	LU, ED, PR, ODS
Identifiable Commercial Areas with Stronger Business Presence	LU, ED, ODS



Enhanced Interaction Between Public and Private Spaces	
Increased Amount and Quality of Sidewalk Space	LU, T, PR
Improved Streetscape	PR
More Public Open Space and Community Gathering Spaces	LU, PR, ODS
More Public Art in Public Space and on Buildings	PR, ODS
Increased Cultural Programming and other Community Activity in Public Space	LU, ED, PR



Enhanced Local and Citywide Access	
Enhanced Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Access	T, PR, ODS
Improved Transit Access and Frequency/Availability	T, PR
Reduced Number and Severity of Collisions	T
Improved Management of On-Street Parking and Loading	T



Chapter 3 Land Use

- Public Review Draft -

The land uses along San Pablo Avenue have been shifting away from the historically regional-serving, auto-oriented land use pattern of primarily commercial and light industrial businesses. The Plan Area is now seeing the addition of higher density residential and more local-serving commercial uses, a transition that is beginning to transform the Plan Area into a more vibrant, mixed-use district.

This chapter establishes a land use and development framework to help achieve the community's vision, focusing on policies and development standards that will achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase the diversity of housing types and supply of housing, including affordable options;
- Support commercial vitality and reduce ground-floor vacancies;
- Promote active, pedestrian-oriented development and public realm improvements; and
- Coordinate land use with transportation and infrastructure investments.

Summary of Community Vision

As detailed in **Chapter 2 Vision and Desired Outcomes**, the community envisions the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area as a mixed-use district that is integrated with the neighborhoods and employment areas that surround it. The Specific Plan Area will serve Berkeley's broad range of community members and continue to support citywide and regional needs as it has historically.

Together with the Specific Plan's **Chapter 4 Economic Development** strategies, **Chapter 5 Streets - Transportation and Public Realm** policies and standards, the **Appendix E Objective Design Standards**, and **Chapter 6 Implementation** actions, the Land Use policies and standards provide a unified framework to guide the continued transformation of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area into a mixed-use district that supports Berkeley's housing, equity, and economic goals while strengthening its role as a central place for community life.

This Specific Plan supersedes the 1993 West Berkeley Plan for all properties within the Specific Plan Area while carrying forward its key goals related to land use and community character. All future development must comply with both this Specific Plan and the Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC). Title 23 of the BMC contains the zoning provisions that implement the Specific Plan, and any topics not addressed here are governed by the BMC and applicable building codes.

Existing Local and State Land Use Policies and Standards

The Specific Plan land use framework is guided by both recent State housing laws and the City's 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (HEU). State laws – including the Housing Accountability Act (HAA), Density Bonus Law, Senate Bills (SB) 35 and 330, and more recently Assembly Bill (AB) 130 and SB 131 – have made changes to the development review process, timelines, and requirements, and have defined limitations on the City's discretion regarding project approval, conformance with certain development standards, and the applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). These State laws have modified the City's review process and have resulted in more streamlined review.

At a local level, the City's Housing Element Update (HEU) establishes goals, policies, and programs to address housing affordability, preservation, production, and equity. Of particular relevance, **Program 27 – Priority Development Areas, Commercial and Transit Corridors**, directed the initiation of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan to increase densities, evaluate design standards and public improvements, and incentivize affordable housing. The Specific Plan therefore functions as the primary tool to implement Program 27 while aligning with State housing requirements and advancing the City's adopted housing strategies. A full description of applicable State and local policies is provided in **Appendix A: Key Existing Conditions**.

Land Use Plan

Existing Land Use and Zoning

The Plan Area contains a mix of residential, commercial, and light manufacturing uses. Residential uses include multi-family, mixed-use, live-work, along with a limited number of single-family homes. There are a variety of existing commercial uses, however the main uses include service-oriented[1], vehicle service and sales, restaurant, manufacturing, and retail establishments. Common business types include automobile repair and home-improvement supply businesses. Many of these businesses are locally-owned and operate with brick-and-mortar storefronts, contributing to the corridor's unique and varied economic profile. As of 2020, there were approximately 2,588 existing housing units in the Specific Plan Area. The majority of those, about 2,018, are in multi-family buildings with 5 or more units (see Figure 3.1). The Plan Area also includes approximately 1.49 million square feet of commercial space.

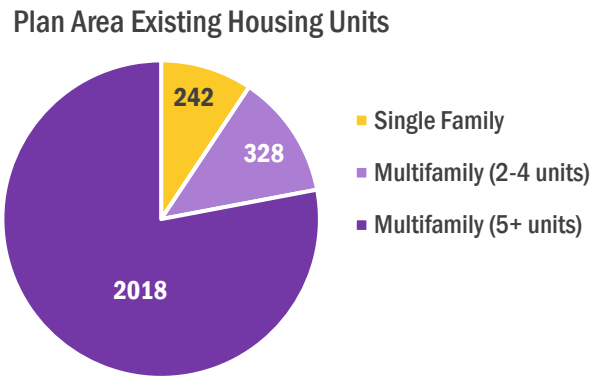


Figure 3.1. Distribution of Existing Housing Units in the Plan Area by Type. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023.

Land uses are regulated by the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. As shown in Figure 3.2, the General Plan land use designation along the entire San Pablo Avenue frontage is Avenue Commercial. As shown in Figure 3.3, the zoning district for properties fronting on San Pablo Avenue is predominantly West Berkeley Commercial (C-W). The portion of University Avenue within the Plan Area includes parcels zoned C-W and C-U (University Avenue Commercial). Other zoning districts within the Plan Area include Mixed Use-Light Industrial (MU-LI), Mixed Use-Residential (MU-R), Restricted Two-Family Residential (R-2), Restricted Multiple-Family Residential (R-2A), and Multi-Family Residential (R-4).

The 1993 West Berkeley Plan and the City's Zoning Ordinance also include Commercial Designated Nodes at the following major intersections along San Pablo Avenue: Gilman Street, Cedar Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue (see Figure 3.3). The purpose of the nodes is to intensify retail, commercial, and mixed-use activity to support a commercial and pedestrian-oriented environment by requiring new development to include certain ground-floor commercial uses.

A full description of existing land use is provided in **Appendix A: Key Existing Conditions**.

[1] Services include personal services such as laundromats and cleaners, as well as professional services such as retail finance services. For additional information, see the Key Existing Conditions in **Appendix A**.

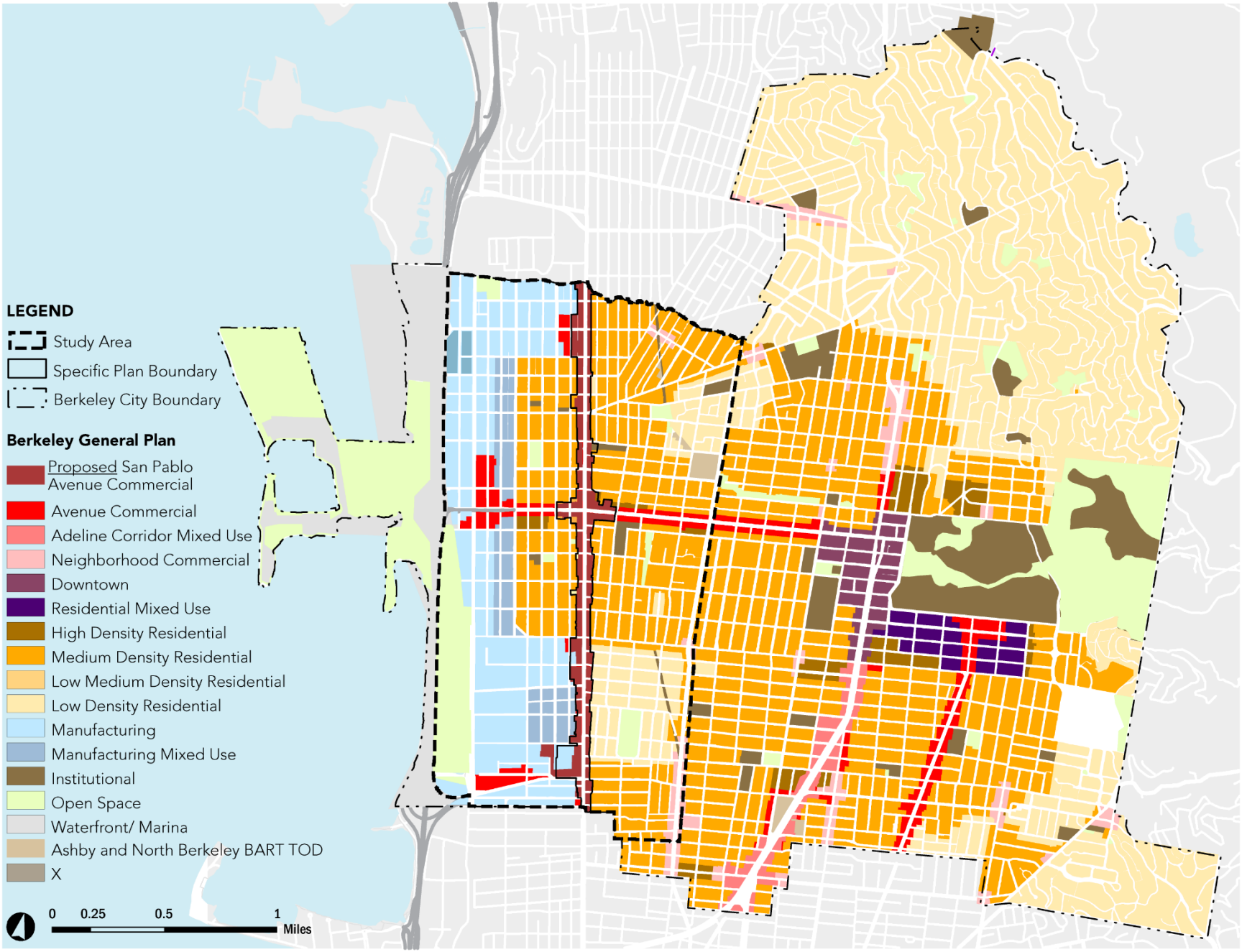


Figure 3.2 Existing Berkeley General Plan. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023 and CD+A, 2025.

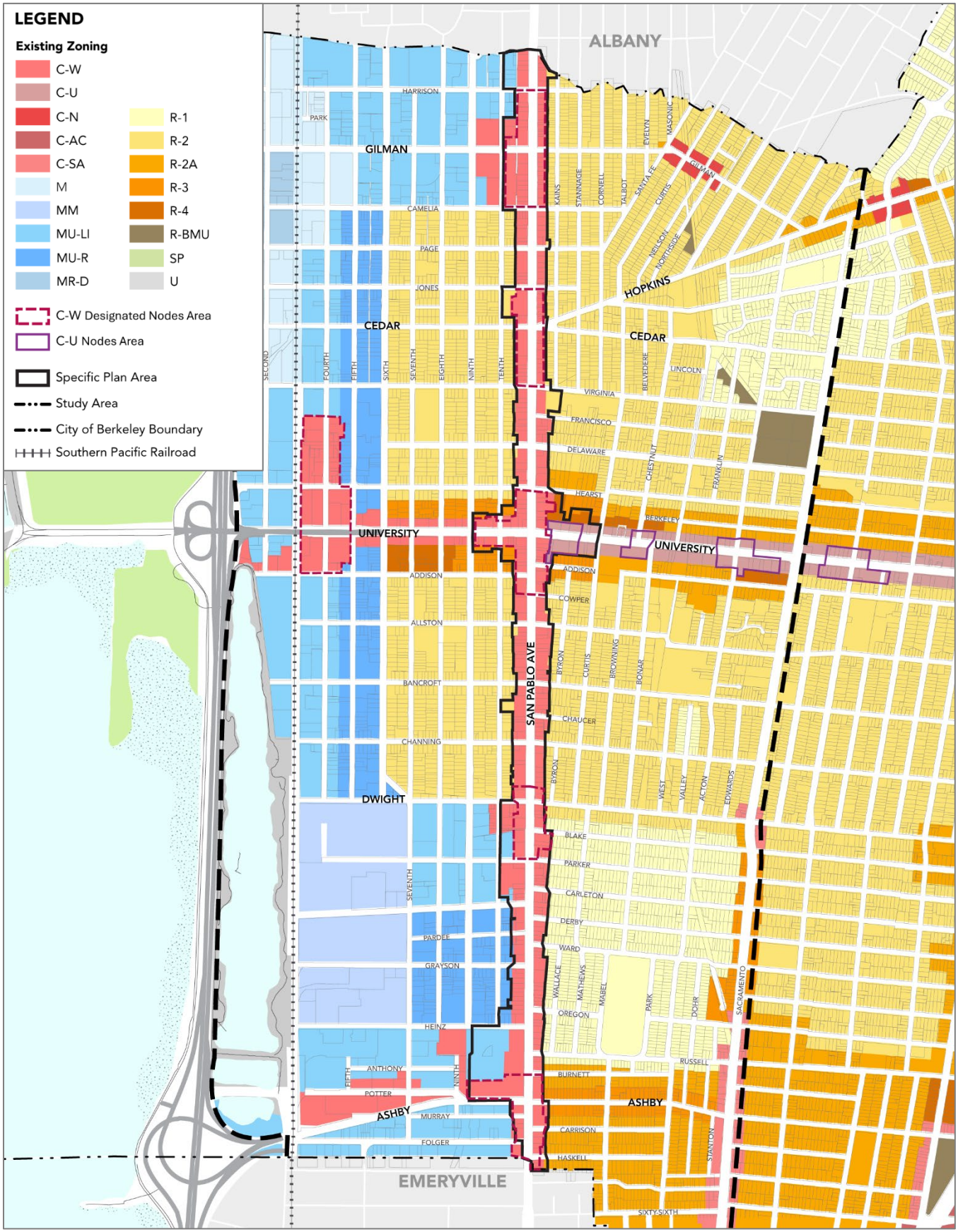


Figure 3.3. Existing Zoning Map with designated nodes in the Specific Plan and Study Areas. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023 and Community Design + Architecture, 2025.

C-W Zoning Evaluation

The current C-W Zoning District applies uniform height limits across the entire Plan Area and does not vary them within Nodes or other specific locations. It establishes different height limits for single-use and mixed-use residential buildings. Single-use projects, whether residential or commercial are limited to three stories (40 feet), while mixed-use projects may reach four stories (50 feet). The additional height allowance for a mixed-use project was originally intended to encourage the development of ground-floor commercial spaces.

However, feedback from real estate developers during the Specific Plan's community engagement process revealed that in many cases there is insufficient demand for ground floor commercial space. Nevertheless, many projects continue to include ground-floor commercial space because the additional residential floor area granted to mixed-use projects typically outweighs the cost of constructing the commercial space, even if it remains vacant. This has contributed to an oversupply of ground-floor commercial space, diluting retail concentration and undermining the intended role of designated Nodes as focal points for commercial activity.

In response, the Specific Plan process re-evaluated how height incentives and ground floor requirements could be structured along San Pablo Avenue to better align with market conditions and achieve the Plan's goals of vibrant, active Nodes.

During the Specific Plan's community engagement process, many community members expressed support for increased density along San Pablo to allow for greater housing capacity and economic activity. Overall, participants favored allowing building height of 8 to 12 stories, with the taller buildings being primarily concentrated at the Ashby, University, and Gilman Nodes.

Proposed Land Use and Zoning Policies and Standards

This section details the land use and zoning policies and standards for the Plan Area. The policies and standards implement refinements based on current community needs, development patterns, and updated State and local legislation.

The land use and zoning policies and standards work in tandem with existing City of Berkeley policies, programs and standards, as well as with the Specific Plan's transportation, public realm, and economic development components. Together, these elements work to achieve the Specific Plan's desired outcomes, which include:

- Revised housing development regulations
- Increased local business vitality and growth
- Expansion and improvement of the public realm
- Reduced vacancy of ground floor spaces
- Establishment of identifiable commercial areas with a stronger business presence

To achieve these outcomes, the land use policies and standards emphasize:

- Concentrating retail uses and ground floor activation within designated Nodes.
- Establishing a hierarchy of development intensity across the Plan Area, with greater height and density focused at the Ashby, University, and Gilman Nodes.
- Providing incentives for development to enhance and expand the public realm

Zoning, Nodes, and Development Policies (P) and Standards (S)

LU-P.1 Establish the Commercial San Pablo (C-SP) Zoning District

The Specific Plan establishes the Commercial San Pablo (C-SP) Zoning District to replace the existing Commercial West Berkeley (C-W) and Commercial University (C-U) Zoning District within the Specific Plan area (see Figure 3.3).

The General Plan text and map will be amended to reflect the zoning change and other Specific Plan policies. The C-SP Zoning District will increase residential and mixed-use development intensity within the Specific Plan Area by allowing greater height, density and Floor Area Ratios (FAR).

LU-P.2 Establish a Tiered Node Structure to Focus Growth and Commercial Uses

The Specific Plan defines the following two-tiered Node structure to strategically concentrate higher-intensity mixed-use development and commercial uses at key intersections. The Specific Plan includes tier-specific development standards to incentivize commercial clusters:

- **Tier 1 Nodes:** These are the highest intensity areas in the Plan Area, allowing for increased height and FAR to support housing and commercial services near major intersections. Tier 1 Nodes include: University, Ashby, and Gilman.
- **Tier 2 Nodes**: These are the moderate intensity areas in the Plan Area, allowing for moderate increases in height and FAR compared to standards outside of the Nodes. The Tier 2 Nodes include: Cedar and Dwight.

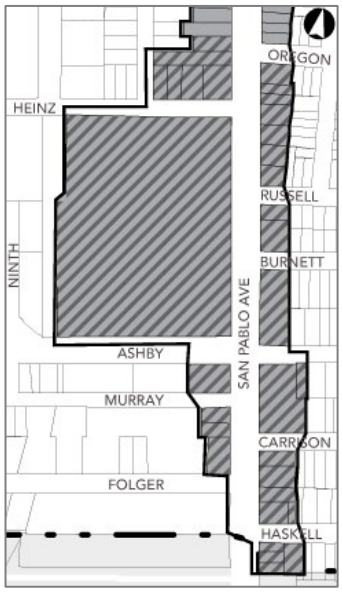
In order to preserve and encourage active street frontages with commercial, retail, and community-service uses within all Nodes, residential ground-floor uses are generally not permitted with limited exceptions to the residential ground-floor restriction (see LU-P.10). Recognizing current market challenges – including elevated vacancy and less demand for retail spaces – the Specific Plan includes adaptive land use policies that expand permitted uses and promote short-term activation, while ensuring flexibility for changing uses and future adaptation (see LU-P.8 and LU-P.10). Together, these policies are all intended to balance near-term flexibility with long-term commercial viability, anticipating that stronger market conditions will emerge over the Plan's horizon as development and population increase within the Plan Area.



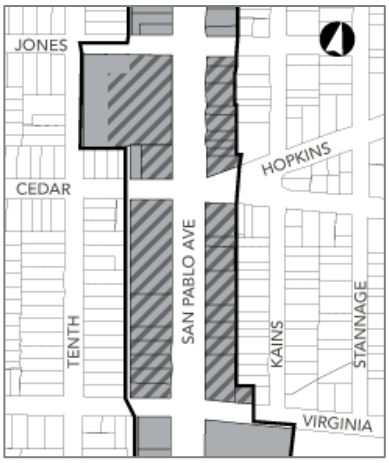
Tier 1: Gilman Node



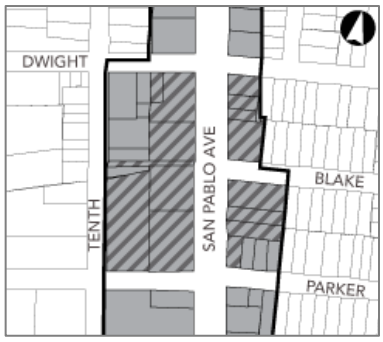
Tier 1: University Node



Tier 1: Ashby Node



Tier 2: Cedar Node



Tier 2: Dwight Node

Figure 3.4 Proposed Nodes

LU-P.3 MU-LI Housing Overlay District to Allow Affordable and Family Friendly Housing

The Specific Plan creates a Housing Overlay District that permits 100% affordable housing and multi-family developments that include family-sized housing units in parts of the Plan Area where residential uses are not currently permitted. Projects that meet the affordability or family-sized unit size requirements may apply the development standards of the C-SP Zoning District.

The following provisions are to be included in the housing overlay zoning standards:

Applicability:

- Applies only to 6 existing MU-LI parcels within the Plan Area.
- Available for projects that either:
  - Provide 100% affordable housing, or
  - Dedicate 50% of the project's gross floor area to family-sized units.

Development standards: Qualifying projects may use the C-SP development standards.

Affordable Housing Requirements:

- Projects must ensure that 100% of units (excluding any manager unit) are restricted to households earning less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) for rental and 80% of AMI for ownership.
- Projects can be for-sale or rental.
- Units must be deed restricted as affordable housing under a Regulatory Agreement similar to those used for projects approved under the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Family-Sized Housing Requirements:

- Family-sized units are defined as units with two or three bedrooms.
- Projects using the family housing option must provide 50% of gross residential floor area as family-sized units.
- Projects can be for-sale or rental.

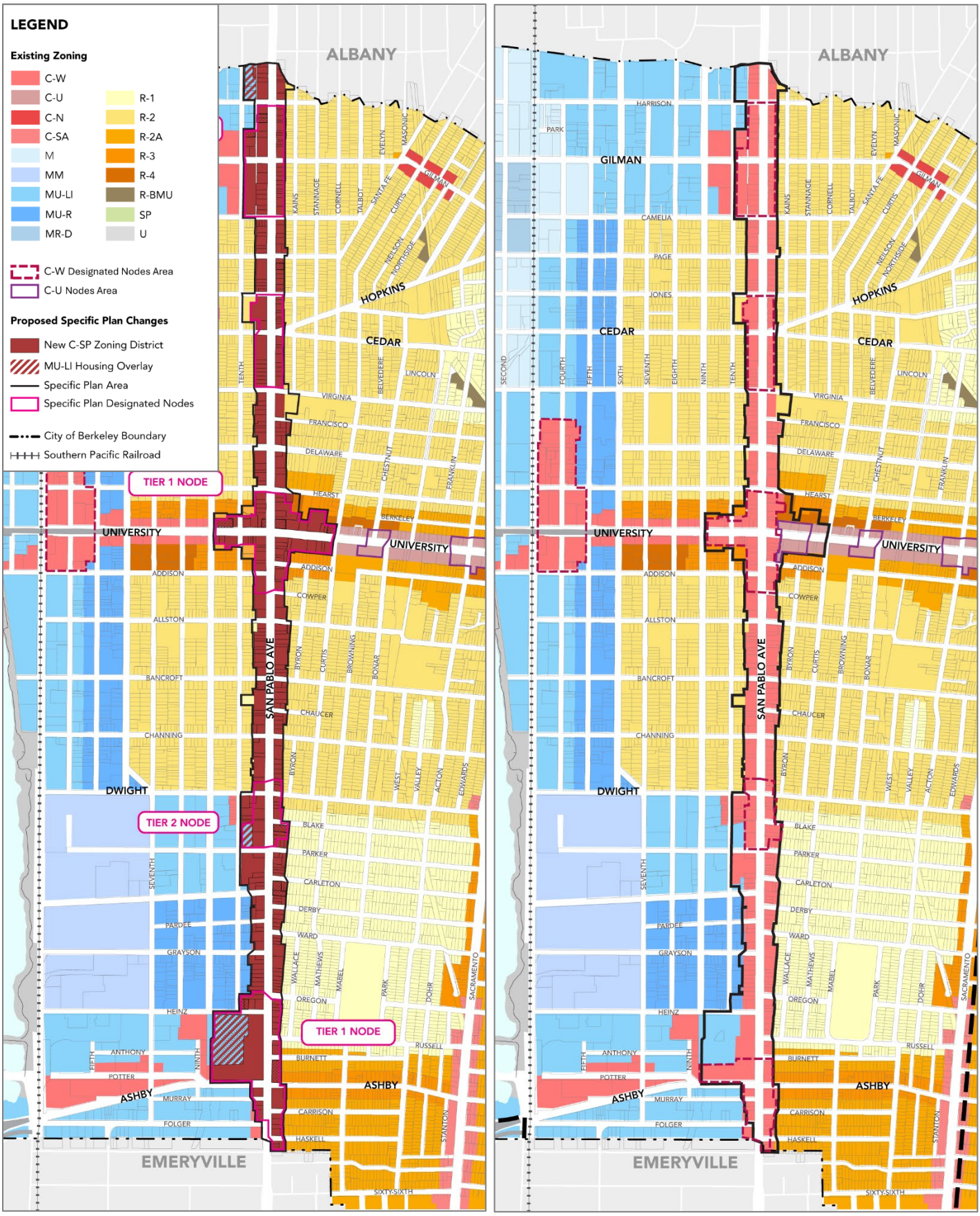
The housing overlay will make MU-LI sites viable for housing while advancing two of the community's priorities: increasing affordable housing production and expanding the supply of family-sized units.

In 2025, land values in the MU-LI zone were approximately half the value of comparable residentially-zoned sites. This is primarily due to the current prohibition on residential uses within the MU-LI district, as well as the lower rents commanded by industrial uses. By restricting the overlay to projects that are either 100% affordable or that provide 50% of their gross floor area as family-sized units, this policy intends to improve the ability of affordable housing developers to compete for these sites and ensure that new housing better serves families in Berkeley.

While these parcels are located in "moderate resource" census tracts and may be less competitive for some state affordable housing funding, the overlay creates a clear zoning pathway that will enable housing development as additional funding becomes available. It also addresses a gap in State housing laws, which generally do not permit residential development in industrial zones, by creating a local mechanism for housing on select MU-LI parcels consistent with the City's Housing Element commitments.

LU-P.4 Amend the General Plan and Zoning Map

Amend the General Plan and Zoning Map to incorporate the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, the C-SP zoning district, Nodes, and the MU-LI Housing Overlay District to support higher-density development in the Plan Area. General Plan amendments include changes in land use designation and text for overlapping Area Plans such as the West Berkeley Plan and University Avenue Specific Plan.


LEGEND
Existing Zoning
C-W
C-U
C-N
C-SA
M
MM
MU-LI
MU-R
MR-D
R-1
R-2
R-2A
R-3
R-4
R-BMU
SP
U
C-W Designated Nodes Area
C-U Nodes Area
Proposed Specific Plan Changes
New C-SP Zoning District
MU-LI Housing Overlay
Specific Plan Area
Specific Plan Designated Nodes
City of Berkeley Boundary
Southern Pacific Railroad
TIER 1 NODE
TIER 2 NODE
TIER 1 NODE
ALBANY
EMERYVILLE
GILMAN
HOPKINS
CEDAR
UNIVERSITY
DWIGHT
ASHBY
SAN PABLO AVE
HARRISON
PARK
CAMELIA
PAGE
JONES
SECOND
FOURTH
FIFTH
SIXTH
SEVENTH
EIGHTH
NINTH
TENTH
KAINS
STANNAGE
CORNELL
TALBOT
SANTA FE
CURTIS
EVELYN
MASONIC
NEILSON
NORTHSIDE
BELVEDERE
LINCOLN
VIRGINIA
FRANCISCO
DELAWARE
CHESTNUT
FRANKLIN
HEARST
BERKELEY
ADDISON
COWPER
ALLSTON
BANCROFT
BYRON
CURTIS
BROWNING
BONAR
CHAUCER
CHANNING
WEST
VALLEY
ACTON
EDWARDS
BLAKE
PARKER
CARLETON
DERBY
WARD
PARDEE
GRAYSON
WALLACE
MATHEWS
MABEL
OREGON
PARK
DOHR
SACRAMENTO
HEINZ
ANTHONY
POTTER
MURRAY
FOLGER
RUSSELL
BURNETT
CARRISON
HASKELL
STANTON
SIXTY-SIXTH

LU-P.5 Planning and Commercial Use Permit Streamlining

Conduct a one-time, citywide review of the City's efforts to streamline planning approval and building permit processes, including commercial permitting, new development, land use changes/use permits, commercial tenant improvements, event permits, short-term use permits, and other permitting processes.

LU-P.6 Public Space Development Incentives

Encourage the creation of high-quality, publicly accessible space within private development projects to enhance the pedestrian environment, support placemaking, and deliver community benefits along San Pablo Avenue, including the following Standards:

LU-S.1 Sidewalk Expansion Incentive

Encourage sidewalk widening of the **Frontage Zone** (*PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*) to improve the pedestrian environment and support street activation.

Standard: Projects must meet the following standards to qualify for the Incentive.

- Applies only to developments fronting on San Pablo Avenue, Gilman Street, Cedar and Hopkins Streets, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue with non-residential ground floor uses.
- Provide a sidewalk expansion (Policy PR-S.1) via a first-floor setback and public access easement. Note that floors above may extend to the property line with no setback.
- Also see **Chapter 5 Streets**, *Sidewalk Space* Section which includes policies and standards for sidewalk design and use.

Incentive: Qualifying projects would receive the following incentive.

- 1 square foot of expanded sidewalk counts as 1.5 square feet of required open space. Eligible credits and incentives, including this provision, may reduce the project's required Private Open Space by no more than 70%.

LU-S.2 Privately-Owned Public Open Space within Nodes

Encourage the creation of high-quality privately-owned and publicly-accessible open space (POPOS) within Nodes to enhance placemaking and provide community open space. Also see Policy *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Spaces*.

Standard: POPOS must meet the following objective design standards:

- Size: A minimum of 5% of site area, or 400 square feet, whichever is greater.
- Location: Must be at ground level or on a podium, visible, located adjacent to or clearly visible from the public right-of-way and directly connected to a sidewalk on San Pablo Avenue.
    - Portions of the building at or above the second story may project over a POPOS by up to 6 feet.
    - Where a POPOS has a clear vertical volume of 3 stories or more, the building may fully bridge or cover the POPOS with upper stories (i.e., the POPOS may be entirely roofed/overhung by the building mass).
- Dimension: Must have a minimum dimension of 20 feet in any direction to ensure usability.
- Access: Public access must be provided daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., or at least during daylight hours. It may open earlier or later to support adjacent and nearby businesses or on-site commercial activity, such as a coffee cart.
- **An Information panel** must be provided that states the public's right to use the space, access hours, and identifies the party responsible for maintenance. Incorporate visible wayfinding signage where appropriate.
- Maintenance: The City shall prepare an ordinance defining clear regulations for POPOS, along with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the property owner/manager and the City of Berkeley to establish maintenance responsibilities.

- Design:
    - A maximum of 40% of open space may be covered. Shade structures such as awnings, trellises and umbrellas that provide protection are encouraged
    - Railing, fencing, or landscaping material, when used to define the edge of POPOS, shall be a maximum of 36 inches in height and decorative, transparent, and/or perforated with a minimum of 75% transparency.
    - POPOS should be programmed to support social activity and at least three amenities shall be provided from the following list:
        - A minimum of 20% of open space shall be landscaped. Landscaping may include in-ground planting areas, raised planters, pots, or integrated Green Infrastructure elements.
        - Provide one tree per 400 square feet of open space.
        - Pedestrian amenities, such as seating options (e.g., seat walls, planter ledges, benches, picnic tables, and seating steps) or drinking fountains;
        - Pedestrian-scale lighting.
        - Public art.
        - Recreational features.

Incentive: Qualifying POPOS will receive the following incentives.

- Count each square foot of POPOS towards 2 square feet of required private open space. Eligible credits and incentives, including this provision, may reduce the project's required Private Open Space by no more than 70%.
- Receive fee waivers for any associated park or public works review of facilities.
- Qualify to receive public open space community benefit funds[2] to subsidize amenities and programming of the spaces.

LU-S.3 Side-Street Plaza Implementation Incentive

The City shall explore establishing a development incentive for Side-Street Plazas at select intersections along San Pablo Avenue, as described in the *PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas* policy. Residential or mixed-use projects at select intersections may receive an incentive if they contribute to designing, building, and/or maintaining a Side-Street Plaza.

Incentive: Projects that contribute to the design, construction or maintenance of a qualifying Side-Street Plaza would receive the following incentives.

- Count it against any setback, lot coverage, or frontage requirements,
- Count each 1 square foot of Side-Street Plaza towards two 2 square feet of required private open space. Eligible credits and incentives, including this provision, may reduce the project's required Private Open Space by no more than 70%.
- Receive fee waivers for any associated park or public works review of facilities,
- Qualify to receive public open space community benefit funds to subsidize amenities and programming of the spaces, and/or
- Receive waivers of other discretionary City requirements.

LU-S.4 Development Standards

The development standards in Table 3.1 define what types of development would be permitted while ensuring new buildings contribute to an active, walkable, and inclusive Specific Plan Area. The standards support a variety of building types and intensities, consistent with the Specific Plan's Land Use and Zoning Policies and Standards, while focusing the greatest development capacity such as height, floor area ratio (FAR), and number of stories in the Tier 1

[2] See potential in lieu fee in LU- S.5 Medium Development and Mid-Rise Public Open Space Requirement.

and Tier 2 Nodes. These location-specific development standards reflect community priorities to concentrate growth near transit and key commercial intersections, while supporting context-sensitive infill in other areas of the Plan Area. These baseline regulations are complemented by the Specific Plan's Ground Floor Use Standards and Objective Design Standards (see **Appendix E**). The development standards may also be modified by future State legislation and regulations. Together these tools are intended to foster predictable, equitable, and high-quality development outcomes throughout the Specific Plan Area.

Table 3.1 Development Standards

Zone/ Category	Max. FAR	Max. Height	Max Stories	Min. Density	Private (Usable) Open Space [1]	Lot Line Setbacks [5]		Max Lot Coverage
Existing C-W								
Single-Use	3.0	40’	3	-	40 sq. ft.	**Abutting/ Confronting a Non-residential District:**	No min	100%
Mixed-Use	3.0	50’	4 [2]	-	40 sq. ft.	**Abutting/ Confronting a Lot in a Residential District:**	**Front:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District **Rear:** 10 feet or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less **Interior side:** 5 ft. **Street side:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District	
Proposed C-SP								
Outside Nodes								
Single-Use	3.0	40’	3	135 du/ac (residential only)	40 sq. ft.	**Abutting/ Confronting a Non-residential District:**	**Non-Residential Build-To Line (BTL) [4]:** The required BTL shall be either: • The front property line, or • the edge of a recorded sidewalk easement or POPOS that functions as the public space. **Residential Front/Street Side Setback**: Where ground floor residential units front a public street or publicly accessible street/pathway the first two floors or first floor with a minimum 12 feet clear height from sidewalk grade shall be set back a minimum of 4 feet and maximum of 6 feet (for ADA unit minimum is 6 feet and maximum is 8 feet).	100%

Zone/ Category	Max. FAR	Max. Height	Max Stories	Min. Density	Private (Usable) Open Space [1]	Lot Line Setbacks [5]		Max Lot Coverage
Residential Mixed-Use As defined by SPASP	3.0	55’	5 [3]	135 du/ac	40 sq. ft.	**Abutting/ Confronting a Lot in a Residential District:**	**Non-Residential Build-To Line (BTL) [4]:** The required BTL shall be either: • The front property line, or • the edge of a recorded sidewalk easement or POPOS that functions as the public space. **Residential Front/Street Side Setback:** Where ground floor residential units front a public street or publicly-accessible street/pathway the first two floors or first floor with a minimum 12 feet clear height from sidewalk grade shall be set back a minimum of 4 feet and maximum of 6 feet (for ADA unit minimum is 6 feet and maximum is 8 feet). **Rear:** 10 feet or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less **Interior side:** 5 ft. **Street side:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District	
Nodes								
Residential Mixed-Use						**Abutting/ Confronting a Non-residential District:**	**Non-Residential Build-To Line (BTL) [4]:** The required BTL shall be either: • The front property line, or the edge of a recorded sidewalk easement or POPOS that functions as the public space.	100%
Tier 1 Nodes (Ashby, University, Gilman)	4.75	85’	8 [3]	150 du/ac	40 sq. ft.	**Abutting/ Confronting a Lot in a Residential District:**	**Non-Residential Build-To Line (BTL) [4]:** The required BTL shall be either: • The front property line, or	

Zone/ Category	Max. FAR	Max. Height	Max Stories	Min. Density	Private (Usable) Open Space [1]	Lot Line Setbacks [5]		Max Lot Coverage
Tier 2 Nodes (Dwight, Cedar)	3.75	65’	6 [3]	135 du/ac	40 sq. ft.		the edge of a recorded sidewalk easement or POPOS that functions as the public space. **Rear:** 10 feet or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less **Interior side:** 5 ft. **Street side:** Same as required in adjacent Residential District	
Commercial / Light-industrial	3.0	40’	3	-	None			

Notes:

1. per dwelling unit or live/work unit; no minimum per group living accommodation resident.
2. The fourth floor must be used for residential or live/work purposes.
3. The fourth and floors above must be used for residential or live/work purposes.
4. A minimum of 75% of the building frontage shall be built to the Built-To Line (BTL). Up to 25% of the building façade may be located behind the maximum setback to allow for massing breaks, forecourts, plazas, etc. Publicly accessible plazas/open spaces may be subtracted from the overall facade length to calculate the minimum percentage of building facade to be located within the setback range. Building façade setbacks are calculated separately for building frontage onto publicly accessible plazas/open spaces.
5. See also Sidewalk and Public Realm Improvement Standards in Chapter 5 – Streets – Transportation and Public Realm.
6. For the Specific Plan Area, Private Open Space is the equivalent term of “Usable Open Space” as defined in the Zoning Code. This term is used, because the Plan allows for publicly accessible open space on private properties that is “usable” in broader meaning. There are two categories of Private Open Space (**see Appendix E: Objective Design Standards** for a full definition.)

- **Common Private Open Space**. Usable Open Space provided for the shared use of residents and authorized guests of the residential project (see ODS.57-58).
- **Personal Private Open Space**. Usable Open Space provided for the exclusive use of an individual dwelling unit’s occupants (see ODS.59)

LU-S.5 Medium / Mid-Rise Development Public Open Space Requirement

Require that Medium/Mid-Rise developments within the Nodes provide privately owned and publicly accessible open space (POPOS) on-site.

Standard

- Applicability: Developments within Nodes with a site larger than 14,000 square feet, or exceed 65,000 square feet of gross floor area, or are at least 7 stories in height.
- Minimum Open Space Area: A minimum 5% of site area, or 800 square feet, whichever is greater.
- Dimension: Must have a minimum dimension of 20 feet in any direction to ensure usability
- Access: Public access must be provided daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., or at least during daylight hours. It may open earlier or later to support adjacent and nearby businesses or on-site commercial activity, such as a coffee cart.
- **An Information panel** must be provided that states the public's right to use the space, access hours, and identifies the party responsible for maintenance. Incorporate visible wayfinding signage where appropriate.
- Location: Must be at ground level or on a podium visible and accessible from San Pablo Avenue or an intersecting street.
    - Portions of the building at or above the second story may project over a POPOS by up to 6 feet.
- Where a POPOS has a clear vertical volume of 3 stories or more, the building may fully bridge or cover the POPOS with upper stories (i.e., the POPOS may be entirely roofed/overhung by the building.
- Maintenance: A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the property owner/manager and the City of Berkeley shall establish ongoing maintenance responsibilities.
- Alternatives to On-Site Provision:
    - In-lieu fee payment to a San Pablo Avenue Open Space Fund; or
    - Combination of on-site POPOS, minimum of 400 square feet, and proportional in-lieu fee payment to achieve equivalent public benefit.
- Credits: On-site POPOS may count toward private open space requirements for residential projects if they meet specified design standards with 1 square foot of POPOS off-setting 2 square feet for private open space.

LU-S.6 New Development Amenities

Require 50% of new development residential amenities to be on the ground floor (and to be sidewalk facing and visible, including but not limited to gyms, coworking, and meeting spaces). Private Open Space is excluded from this requirement.

LU-S.7 Streetscape Standards

Require that new developments implement streetscape standards (see *Streetscape* in **Chapter 5**) on their San Pablo Avenue frontage; this is an existing requirement that will be maintained by the Specific Plan.

LU-S.8 Mid-Block Passages

Require public mid-block connections for development sites that span the full depth of a block and include more than 170 linear feet of site frontage along San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue. Mid-block connections may be

differentiated between **private publicly-accessible streets** designed to accommodate low-volume vehicular connection and **Mid-Block Passages**, designed for pedestrian and bicycle use only.

Mid-Block Passage Standard: As described in *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces*, are considered a type of POPOS and may qualify for incentives outlined below.

- **Size, dimension and design** shall comply the ODS.61 in **Appendix E**.
- **Location:** Must be at ground level and accessible from San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue.
- **Information panel** that states the public's right to use the space, access hours, and identifies the party responsible for maintenance. Incorporate visible wayfinding signage where appropriate.
- **Maintenance and Operation:** property owner is responsible of maintenance and operations in the Mid-Block Passage, including and not exclusively, lighting, stormdrainage, landscaping, and paving.

Incentive: Qualifying Mid-Block Passages will receive the following incentives.

- Count each square foot of Mid-Block Passage toward 1.5 square feet of required private open space. Eligible credits and incentives, including this provision, may satisfy no more than 70% of the project's required Open Space.

Private publicly accessible streets shall be designed to accommodate bicycles and vehicles in accordance with the Berkeley Municipal Code and applicable Emergency and Fire Access requirements, including minimum and maximum width, turning radii, and clearance dimensions necessary to accommodate service and emergency vehicles.

When two adjacent sites are developed concurrently, developers are encouraged to coordinate site planning efforts to identify and implement opportunities for mid-block connections or shared access improvements that enhance pedestrian and multimodal circulation.

Allowed Uses

LU-P.7 Encourage a Mix of Community-Serving Uses

The Specific Plan aims to provide for a broad mix of land uses that will contribute to a vibrant, economically resilient, and pedestrian-oriented Plan Area that both serves the community and supports small business developments, while preserving existing legacy businesses and cultural institutions. The following uses are encouraged within the Plan Area:

Residential Uses - Housing is allowed anywhere in the Plan Area, either as standalone residential or as part of a mixed-use project depending on location. Ground-floor residential is allowed outside of the Nodes and permitted in select Nodes along side-streets (see *Ground Floor Typologies and Figure ODS.1 in* **Appendix E: Objective Design Standards**).

Retail & Commercial – General retail and commercial, including restaurants and café uses, are allowed throughout the Plan Area, with emphasis on clustering at Nodes. Pop-ups and temporary retail are also permitted with streamlined approvals to reduce vacancies, enhance commercial vibrancy, and support small business.

Public & Quasi-Public – Community and civic uses such as community centers, libraries, educational uses and cultural institutions are allowed throughout the Plan Area, including within the Nodes.

Office Uses & Workspaces – Professional and medical offices, and co-working spaces, are permitted in the Plan Area, including on the ground floor within Tier 2 Nodes subject to design standards (see Figure 3.4). Artist workspaces, maker workshops, and compatible light-industrial uses are also permitted.

Arts & Entertainment - Arts, entertainment, gallery, and studio spaces are allowed and strongly encouraged in the Plan Area.

LU-P.8 Expand the list of Allowed Uses and Allowed Temporary Uses

Allowed Uses: Expand the list to include maker-spaces, galleries, office uses, and temporary pop-ups. By-right Uses (or permitted with Zoning Certificate):

- Support an expanded list of allowed uses by right, compared to C-W zone, to encourage community gathering space, and allow a broader range of community-oriented commercial and light-industrial activities.
- Allow office uses, public markets, co-working spaces, galleries, maker spaces, live-work, and other third spaces with a Zoning Certificate, while excluding heavy-industrial uses incompatible with mixed-use development.
- Maintain the current zoning approach for Research and Development (R&D) uses. Under 20,000 square feet they may proceed with a Zoning Certificate, while uses over 20,000 square feet or larger require an Administrative Use Permit.

Temporary Uses: Expand temporary uses to allow for a variety of businesses to reduce vacancies and support small business creation.

Affordable Housing:

- Allow 100% affordable housing conversion of existing non-residential buildings, consistent with State Law.
- Allow 100% affordable housing or multi-family residential projects that include family-sized housing on MU-LI zoned parcels(See LU-P.3)

LU-P.9 Define Residential Mixed-Use with On-Site and In-Lieu Options

To provide for flexibility in ground floor use and support the concentration of active commercial space in Nodes, the Specific Plan would allow residential ground floors in-lieu of commercial space in mixed-use developments outside of the Nodes. Under the Specific Plan, Residential Mixed-Use refers to projects with both residential and non-residential uses. Residential Mixed-Use is permitted throughout the Specific Plan Area. To be designated as Residential Mixed-Use project under this Specific Plan a development project must comply with one of the following conditions:

- **On-Site Mixed-Use:** The project must include at least 5% of the total gross floor area as non-residential use, located on the ground floor along the primary street frontage.
- **In-Lieu Mixed-Use:** For sites outside of Nodes, projects may substitute residential use in place of the required non-residential component if:
    - The developer pays a Commercial In-Lieu fee, calculated based on the square footage of omitted required non-residential space (5% of total gross floor area);
- The fee is deposited into the San Pablo Avenue Small Business Support Fund (See ED-P.1).
- A portion of the fees may also be used to fund the start up of the Economic Development Liaison for the San Pablo Specific Plan Area (see ED-P.5). Should funds be used to fund the Liaison position, following 2 years of such funding, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Liaison efforts should be prepared and a decision should be made if funding should be adjusted or discontinued.

Projects that meet either requirement shall be classified as Residential Mixed-Use for the purpose of applying development standards. Projects will be required to apply applicable Objective Design Standards (ODS) based on their ground-floor use: on-site mixed-use projects would apply commercial or non-residential ground floor ODS, and in-lieu mixed-use projects would apply residential ground floor ODS.

Ground Floor Uses

Ground floor use requirements play a critical role in shaping the pedestrian experience, supporting local businesses, and ensuring a vibrant street life. To support the Specific Plan's goals of a more active, pedestrian-oriented, and economically resilient area, the Specific Plan introduces a revised typology of ground floor types. These categories are designed to respond to different context conditions – such as Node tier – while providing flexibility to adapt to changing demand over time.

LU-P.10 Establish Ground Floor Typologies to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors

Establish four ground floor typologies—Storefront, Other Non-Residential, Active Residential, and Live-work—with tailored design standards to support an adaptable and walkable public realm. Prioritize transparency, architectural articulation, and seamless adaptability between commercial uses (*Ground Floor Typologies* in **Appendix E: Objective Design Standards** for applicable standards). Additional ground floor typologies may be added to the objective development standards to achieve the Plan's vision.

Ground Floor Typologies

- **Storefront Ground Floor:** Designed to allow for more visibility from the sidewalk to support pedestrian-oriented commercial activity, such as restaurants, retail, and certain office types. These standards are designed to ensure compatibility with a wide range of uses to facilitate an easy change of use from retail to restaurant, gym, or similar active commercial or service use. Storefront Ground Floor Design is required within the Nodes (exceptions apply see **Appendix E: Objective Design Standards** Figure ODS.1).
- **Other Non-residential Ground Floor:** Designed to allow for all non-residential uses and provides more flexible Objective Design Standards.
- **Active Residential Ground Floor**: Designed to allow residential units at the ground floor, subject to Objective Design Standards that require a transition or connection from the public sidewalk to a residential unit, including entry patios, stoops, shallow landscaped setbacks, etc.
- **Live-work**: Design to allow spaces for both living and working at the ground floor level, subject to Objective Design Standards.

San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program

State Density Bonus law allows developers to increase the allowable residential density of a project in exchange for providing affordable housing within their developments. The law also allows developers to waive, reduce or modify development standards, such as setbacks, design standards, and open space requirements, to accommodate the additional units.

Throughout the Specific Plan's community engagement process, local residents emphasized housing goals that extend beyond simply increasing unit production. Key priorities included improving housing affordability, ensuring high-quality housing design that fosters social connection, and increased public open space and community gathering areas.

Establishing a San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program would provide an alternative to the State Density Bonus within the Plan Area and allow the City to achieve affordable housing production while maintaining greater control over the form and character of development in the Specific Plan Area. Under this program, a project could choose either the State Density Bonus or the San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus, but not both. Selecting the San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus would mean that the project chooses to opt-out of the State Density Bonus, including the rights to some waivers and concessions. This would ensure that the City can offer a clear, locally administered path to additional density while retaining the ability to define which waivers and concessions apply.

The San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus would generate dedicated funding for the City's existing Affordable Housing Trust Fund, a proven program with a backlog of projects in need of additional funding. By offering a local alternative to the State Density Bonus, the City would still receive an affordable housing benefit, but would maintain control over which waivers and concessions would apply to eligible projects, ensuring that important urban design standards and public realm priorities from this Specific Plan—such as active ground-floor frontages and open space requirements—are protected.

It is worth noting that Berkeley's Inclusionary Housing policies would continue to apply to all market-rate development, ensuring that every project contributes to affordable housing—either through on-site units or in-lieu fees. Because of these requirements, Berkeley does not rely solely on the State Density Bonus program to create affordable housing. Instead, the San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus would provide an additional pathway for developers to achieve equivalent density while giving the City stronger tools to align new development with community objectives, particularly in housing affordability, urban design, and public realm improvements.

LU-P.11 Establish a San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program

Establish a San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program by developing an affordable-housing benefit for new residential projects that is exclusively met through paying an in-lieu fee to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The following components shall be included in the program:

Program Exclusivity

- A project may utilize only the San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program and would be required to waive the ability to use the State Density Bonus for the project.
- Developers must declare their selected program at the time of application, and the selected program's provisions would govern density, incentives, waivers, and concessions.

Affordable Housing Contribution

- In-lieu fee shall be placed in the City of Berkeley's Housing Trust Fund equivalent to the City's inclusionary housing in-lieu fee (currently $62.83 per square foot of residential floor area).
- Funds shall be prioritized for projects within the Plan Area to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing.
- Fund management and allocation will be determined in accordance with the City of Berkeley Housing Trust Fund and Small Sites Program Guidelines, as amended.

Incentives

- Bonus density, waivers, and concessions under this program shall mirror the structure of the State Density Bonus, with the exception that the City may identify certain standards (e.g., ground-floor design, step-backs, or public realm improvements) that are not eligible for waiver under the San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program, such as:
    - Ground floor frontage use requirements, including their corresponding ODS.
    - Medium Development and Mid-Rise Public Open Space Requirement
    - Streetscape Standards
    - Maximum Building Length (ODS)
    - Reduced Massing for Large/High-Rise Buildings (ODS)
    - Vertical Rhythm/Façade Articulation (ODS)
    - Minor Modulation/Massing Breaks (ODS)
    - Ornamental Façade (ODS)
    - Facade Articulation (ODS)

- Blank Walls (ODS)
- Treatment of All Facades (ODS)
- Through-Block and Access and Connectivity (ODS)
- Parking ODS Standards

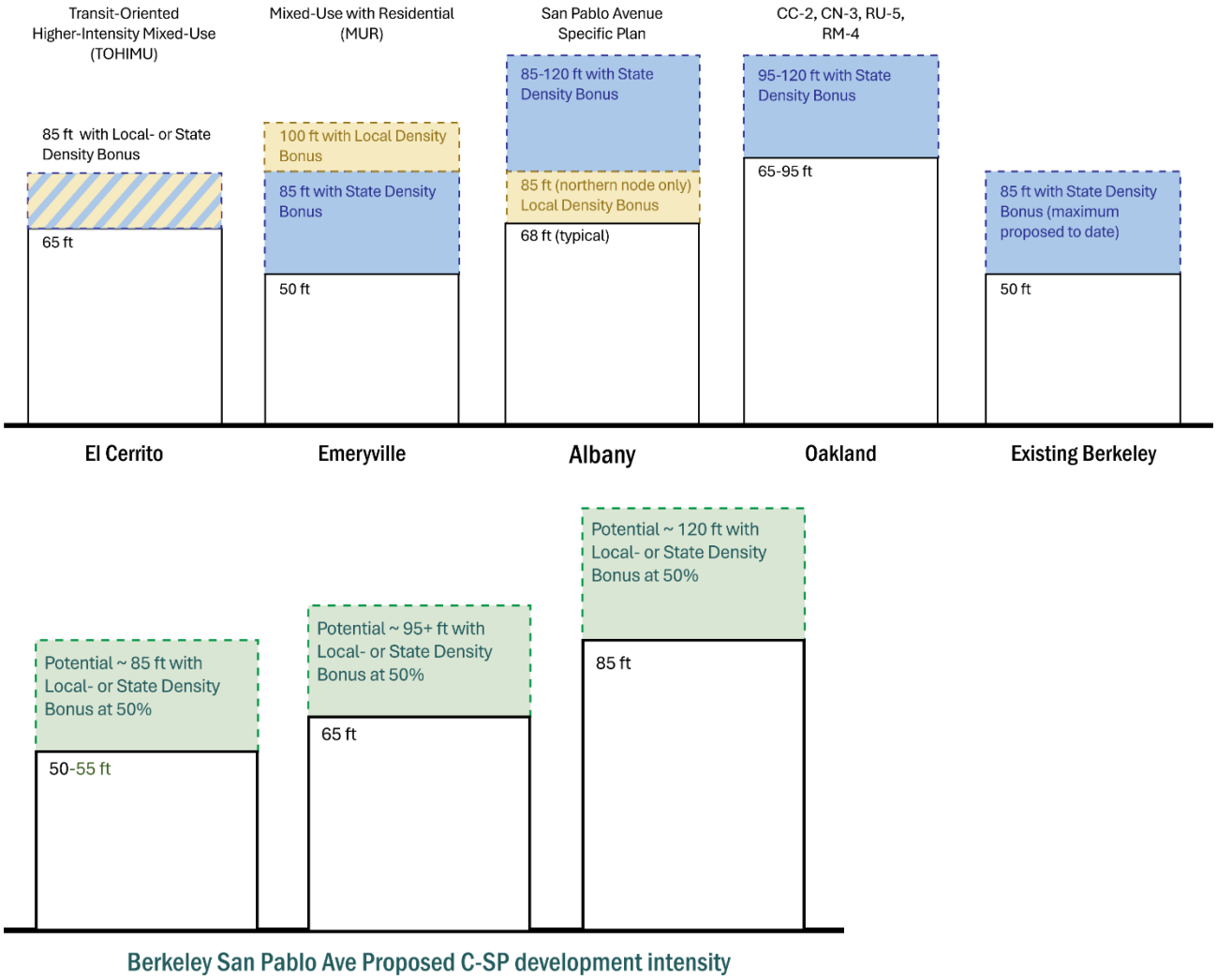


Figure 3.5: Specific Plan proposed density bonus and comparison with Berkeley and other cities. Source: CD+A, 2025

Other Policies and Programs

These are some policies and programs that are related to other citywide policies and programs, where implementation would need coordination with citywide efforts.

LU-P.12 Artists Housing and Cultural Districts

State law allows for locally-required affordable housing to be set aside for artists. This would apply to new affordable housing developments within one-half mile of State-designated cultural district or a similar local designated district. The Plan Area is not currently within one-half mile of such a district. However, if the City of Berkeley designates a cultural district that is within that proximity, consideration should be given to create an affordable artist housing overlay to a portion of the Plan Area. This should be coordinated with the City Civic Arts Commission/Housing Advisory Commission. This approach would support a variety of housing supply while strengthening cultural representation and identity within the Plan Area.

Boundary Adjustments and Rezonings

The Specific Plan includes the establishment of the C-SP zone and the C-SP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Nodes. To ensure consistency with the City's Zoning Ordinance, the following rezoning actions will be proposed as part of the Specific Plan approval/adoption process:

- Rezone existing C-W zoned parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP.
- Rezone existing C-U parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP
- Rezone 12 parcels to eliminate existing split-zoned properties. These changes are limited to parcels fronting on either San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue, and would result in the subject parcel being zoned C-SP. In cases where the split zoned portion of a parcel fronts on a side-street, the split zone is maintained.
- Establish C-SP Nodes and remove the C-W Designated Nodes and the C-U Node that is located within the Specific Plan Area

Opportunity Sites and Potential Buildout

The most substantial redevelopment opportunities in the Plan Area consist of the 51 Housing Opportunity Sites identified in the City's Housing Element Update (HEU), along with an additional 15 sites identified through the Specific Plan process.

In the HEU, Opportunity Sites are one of three categories in the State-required Housing Sites Inventory, which demonstrates that the City has adequate land to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The three site types are:

- Likely Sites – parcels with approved housing projects (at the time of the HEU).
- Pipeline Sites – parcels with housing applications in process (at the time of the HEU).
- Opportunity Sites – parcels without active redevelopment applications that are either vacant or underutilized and have near-term potential for residential or mixed-use development.

The classification of Opportunity Sites is important for State housing law because it establishes a jurisdiction's ability to meet RHNA targets without relying on market speculation. Opportunity Sites are typically those where zoning, parcel size, infrastructure capacity, and market conditions make residential development feasible within the HEU's planning period.

The full Housing Element Site's Inventory is available in the adopted HEU on the City's website.

During the Specific Plan process, an additional 15 parcels were identified that meet the HEU Opportunity Site criteria but were not included in the original inventory. These include parcels that:

- Have become eligible as Opportunity Sites since adoption of the HEU,
- Share ownership with a HEU-listed Opportunity Site, and/or
- Have site-specific characteristics warranting inclusion despite being omitted from the original list.

Several of these additional sites are located at key intersections within the Plan Area Nodes, where increased residential density can also reinforce vitality and improve access to services.

The HEU sites and additional 15 sites identified the Plan are provided in **Appendix B: Opportunity Sites**.

Development Potential and Buildout

The Specific Plan estimates the amount of new development that could occur in the Plan Area during the Specific Plan's planning period. The estimates for this are based on three categories of development potential:

1. HEU Likely and Pipeline Sites – already developed or assumed to develop under existing C-W zoning and development standards.
2. HEU Opportunity Sites – assumed to develop under proposed Specific Plan zoning and development standards.
3. New SPASP Opportunity Sites – also assumed to develop under proposed Specific Plan zoning and development standards.

In addition to housing, the buildout analysis estimates changes in commercial square footage as parcels redevelop. The results are summarized in Table 3.2.

As shown, under maximum buildout assumptions, the Plan Area could accommodate approximately 6,700 new multi-family housing units. This level of housing growth would support an estimated 16,875 new residents, based on the HEU's average household size for multi-family residential.

This potential residential growth represents a significant share of Berkeley's overall housing strategy. In the context of the Housing Element, the Plan Area would account for a substantial portion of new housing capacity in transit-rich locations. The Plan Area's growth also leverages existing infrastructure and facilitates the creation of a more walkable, mixed-use district.

It's important to note that approximately 3,500 of these housing units are already anticipated in the HEU, meaning the Specific Plan would increase the maximum potential buildout by roughly 3,200 units. The estimate represents maximum development capacity; actual development will depend on market conditions, property owner decisions, and other factors, and not all sites are expected to redevelop within the Specific Plan's time horizon.

Table 3.2 Estimated Maximum Buildout

Type	Unit / Sq. Ft.
Residential (Multi-Family)	Units
HEU Likely and Pipeline Sites	1,500
HEU Opportunity Sites	2,900
New SPASP Opportunity Sites	2,300
Total New Dwelling Units (rounded)	**6,700**
Commercial	Sq. Ft.
New Commercial	92,000
Lost due to New Housing	413,000
Net Change	**-321,000**
Existing	1,491,000
Total After Buildout (rounded)	**1,170,000**

The zoning changes associated with increasing the opportunity for residential development may affect the amount of commercial square footage within the Plan Area. Although a net decrease in commercial square footage is estimated, it is difficult to quantify the extent of this change under existing zoning given the shifting demand for commercial uses and the high rate of ground floor vacancy. It is expected that the increase in residential development would incrementally reduce opportunities for new commercial uses and eliminate some existing commercial uses. This net reduction may appear counter to economic development goals, but the intent of the policies is to facilitate redevelopment of underutilized properties over time (i.e., properties consisting of low-intensity uses with limited pedestrian engagement) replacing such uses with higher-quality, more flexible commercial spaces integrated into

mixed-use buildings, particularly within the established Nodes. This will improve commercial and other business viability, support more a diverse mix of uses and reduce long-term vacancy without compromising an engaging public realm.

A full description of the SPASP Buildout is provided in **Appendix C: Buildout Summary Memorandum.**



Chapter 4
Economic Development

- Public Review Draft -

San Pablo Avenue has long served as a vital commercial corridor in West Berkeley – home to many small, locally owned businesses, light industrial uses, service providers, and community institutions that reflect the neighborhood's cultural and economic diversity. Today, the corridor faces both opportunities and challenges: shifting retail dynamics, market conditions, and storefront vacancies are transforming the business landscape.

> ***"It is our urban center or spine. Be more for the people that live here. [We are] missing boutiques, groceries, and practical things."***
>
> – Community Member

Throughout the Specific Plan process, the community voiced that San Pablo Avenue should be a lively and inclusive corridor that represents and serves the people who live nearby and supports new residents as homes are built in the Plan Area. Community members, local business owners, and stakeholders voiced concerns about the risk of commercial displacement, the loss of their historically diverse cultural identities, and the lack of support for existing businesses. Participants at community engagement events emphasized the need to retain and grow small businesses, fill empty storefronts with active and relevant uses, and improve San Pablo Avenue's overall appeal and visibility. Many shared a vision of San Pablo Avenue as a culturally vibrant, economically inclusive mixed-use district where it is possible to live, work, and shop locally.

An assessment conducted as part of this Specific Plan indicates that approximately 90% of the brick-and-mortar businesses are locally owned. Those establishments continue to provide a diverse mix of commercial activities (see Figure 4.1).

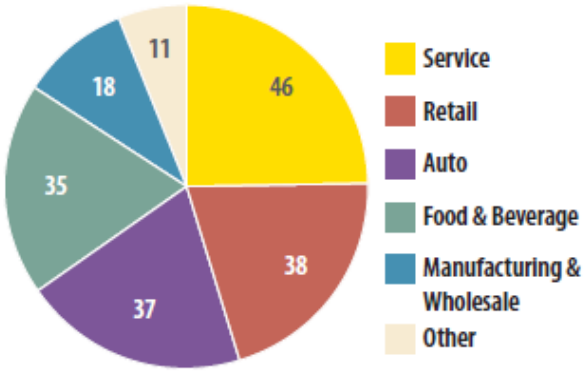


Figure 4.1 Locally owned Businesses on San Pablo Avenue. Source: Financial Department Active Business License Data, In-person observation. August 2023.

This chapter establishes policies that respond to these concerns and aspirations. It presents strategies to retain and grow local businesses, activate vacant or underutilized spaces, and foster a thriving commercial environment that reflects the diversity of the Plan Area. The policies advance the community's vision for a more vibrant business environment and supportive public realm, including the following objectives:

- Increase business activity by supporting existing businesses and making it easier for new local businesses to locate and thrive within the Plan Area
- Support commercial vitality and reduce ground-floor vacancies by providing financial assistance for local businesses improvements and by encouraging the concentration of new commercial development within focused Nodes.
- Strengthen connection between public and private spaces by establishing partnerships for indoor and outdoor events and identifying collaborative opportunities to fund and maintain streetscape and public realm improvements

While this chapter is focused on strategies for business support and commercial vitality, many of the Specific Plan's economic goals are also advanced through policies in other chapters – particularly **Chapter 3 Land Use** and **Chapter 5 Streets**. These chapters address how and where ground-floor retail is encouraged, how storefronts are designed to engage pedestrians, and how San Pablo Avenue's physical environment supports a vibrant mixed-use district. Land Use policies shape the distribution of commercial activity by establishing new strategies to focus retail and services at key Nodes and allow for flexible uses to meet local needs. **Chapter 5 Streets'** public realm policies aim to improve the pedestrian experience through wider sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, street trees, and other amenities to make the corridor more inviting for customers, businesses, and workers.

Together, these policies and programs create a framework to implement the vision of San Pablo Avenue as a mixed-use district that welcomes everyone—residents, workers, artists, entrepreneurs, and visitors—with local businesses that are diverse, stable, and essential to community life.

Relevant Policies

LU-P.2 *Establish a Tiered Node Structure to Focus Growth and Commercial Uses* (see Chapter 3 Land Use)

LU-P.5 *Planning and Commercial Permit Streamlining* (see Chapter 3 Land Use)

LU-P.7 *Encourage a Mix of Community-Serving Uses* (see Chapter 3 Land Use)

LU-P.8 *Expand the list of Allowed Uses and Allowed Temporary Uses* (see Chapter 3 Land Use)

LU-P.9 *Define Residential Mixed-Use with On-Site and In-Lieu Options* (see Chapter 3 Land Use)

LU-P.10 *Establish Ground Floor Typologies to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors* (see Chapter 3 Land Use)

PR-P.2 *Sidewalk Easements* (see Chapter 5 Streets)

PR-P.3 *Improve Street Lighting for the Safety and Comfort of all Users* (see Chapter 5 Streets)

PR-P.12 *Facilitate Wayfinding and Placemaking Programs* (see Chapter 5 Streets)

PR-P.14 *Side-Street Plazas* (see Chapter 5 Streets)

PR-P.15 *Support Use and Creation of Parklets* (see Chapter 5 Streets)

PR-P.18 *Privately Owned Public Open Spaces* (see Chapter 5 Streets)

Interview with Business Owners

As part of Marcel's Municipal Artist-in-Residence program, he conducted interviews with business owners along San Pablo Avenue. Here are two of those conversations:

Shirley Everett-Dicko, Everett & Jones

Hi, Shirley! I'm so excited to be here at Everett and Jones Barbecue. It's such an iconic place, especially with all the changes happening in the neighborhood. Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your role here?

Shirley Everett-Dicko: Absolutely! My name is Shirley Everett-Dicko, and I'm one of the original owners of this location, which opened in 1974. My mom, Dorothy Turner, along with my seven sisters and brother, helped start it. This was our second location—the first was in Oakland.

Can you share a little about your mom's journey into the barbecue business?
My mom's story began on Seventh Street in West Oakland, once known as the "Harlem of the West." In the 1960s, she worked at Jenkins Barbecue, run by Reverend Jenkins, our church pastor. Later, she became the first manager at Flint's Barbecue. With help from Harry Mott, she opened Everett and Jones in 1973.

And how did you all choose the name "Everett and Jones"?
Everett is my dad's name, and Jones was my sister's married name. It's always been a family affair!

Tell us about your famous barbecue sauce.
That's Mom's recipe! We started bottling it in 1983 after a customer suggested it, and it's been a hit ever since.

I've heard this place also has ties to the Black Panther movement.
Yes! The East Bay Dragons Motorcycle Club—one of the oldest Black motorcycle clubs in the U.S.—used to provide security for the Black Panther Party. Our first location was next to their clubhouse, so we've always shared that community connection.

How have you seen the San Pablo corridor change over the years?
It's changed a lot. There used to be several barbecue restaurants and plenty of foot traffic from university students. Now there are fewer spots, but we're still holding our ground!

For someone visiting for the first time, what should they order?
Definitely the ribs and links combo—with potato salad and our homemade sauce. It's the best way to experience our barbecue.

Anything else you'd like people to know?
Just that Everett and Jones has always been a gathering place. We're proud to keep our family legacy and community spirit alive.



Figure 4.2 Shirley Everett-Dicko and her family at Everett & Jones (1955 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley, CA 94702) Photo by

Jaime Alejo, Mi Ranchito Market

Hi, Jaime! We're here at Mi Ranchito Market. Could you tell us a bit about yourself and your role here?

Jaime Alejo: Of course! I'm Jaime Alejo, the store manager. I've been here for many years and love being part of this family dream that started over twenty-four years ago. My dad wanted to build something for our family, and now my four siblings and I work together to keep it going.

How did it all begin?
It all started with my dad's dream to create a place where the community could feel at home. In the beginning, we were a small store, but over time we've grown. Despite challenges and changes in the neighborhood, we're still here—always dreaming big and providing good service.

How has the community around the market changed?
It's changed a lot. Most of our customers used to be Latino, and now there's a mix of cultures from everywhere. Sadly, many Latinos have had to leave because of the high cost of living. Most of our current customers are students or new residents. Gentrification has really impacted our community.

How have you adapted to these changes?
The key has been to stay flexible and welcoming. We try to keep a family-friendly environment where everyone feels at home. Many customers tell us they find comfort here, and we love helping them discover products that remind them of their homeland.

What kind of products do you offer?
We carry a wide range of Mexican products—fresh foods, household items, meats, and even some Brazilian and Peruvian goods. Our fresh meat section is one of our biggest draws.

What would you say to someone who's never visited Mi Ranchito?
Come anytime! We're open from eight to eight, and there's always something new to discover. Whether you're looking for a specific ingredient or just want to chat, you'll feel welcome here.

What changes would you like to see in Berkeley to support small businesses?
I hope the city provides more support and subsidies for small businesses. Gentrification has raised costs, making it hard to compete.

Anything else you'd like to add?
Even though times are tough, we're still here thanks to our community's support. Every customer matters, and we hope to keep being a place where everyone feels at home.



Figure 4.3 Jaime Alejo and his brother at Mi Ranchito Bay Side Market. Photo by Marcel Pardo Ariza, 2025

Economic Development Policies and Programs

Small Business Support

Throughout the Specific Plan engagement process, community members expressed the importance of retaining existing businesses and called for greater City support to improve conditions for new small businesses.

A key concern raised by business owners, developers, commercial real estate agents, and Office of Economic Development staff is the high cost of tenant improvements (TI) required to make existing ground floor retail spaces move-in ready. For both new and existing spaces, the need for infrastructure such as grease ducts, commercial kitchen ventilation systems, and ADA-compliant restrooms poses significant barriers for small business owners, even when lease terms are favorable. In many cases, new commercial spaces enter the market as "cold shell," meaning they lack not only the necessary infrastructure but also basic finishes such as concrete slab floors, wall finishes or ceilings. While this provides flexibility for tenants to customize their spaces, it also results in higher TI costs and ultimately, higher rents, which often negate the value of any owner-contribution toward buildout.

To address this issue in future mixed-use development, ODS.23 to 26 introduce new standards for ground floor interior buildout. In combination with other proposed policies and standards, such as establishing a Plan Area-focused business and commercial space loan and grant program, these measures are intended to reduce the TI cost, shorten start-up periods, and help decrease commercial vacancies.

ED-P.1 Specific Plan Focused - Small Business Support Fund

Establish a Specific Plan focused Small Business Support Fund to augment the City's existing Revolving Loan Fund program. The Fund would provide targeted financial and technical assistance to small businesses, particularly those that are locally owned[1], culturally significant, at risk of displacement, or owned by people of color, women, and other underserved applicants. The purpose of the Small Business Support Fund is to strengthen commercial activity along San Pablo Avenue by supporting both new and existing businesses. Eligible uses may include financing for tenant improvements, relocation costs, façade improvements, and outdoor improvements such as sidewalk café seating and landscaping.

The Small Business Support Fund will make it more feasible for locally owned businesses to occupy and activate ground-floor spaces along San Pablo Avenue. By offering low-interest, flexible repayment loans, this policy is intended to help small businesses finance tenant improvements, reinvest in their existing locations, or relocate within the Plan Area. The fund will prioritize tenant-ready businesses with demonstrated financial need and clear community value, ensuring that new commercial activity advances the broader vision for San Pablo Avenue as a vibrant, inclusive mixed-use district.

Over time, the Fund will also replenish itself through loan repayments, creating a sustained source of support for commercial activation and small business resilience within the Plan Area. The City shall integrate this new Fund into the management of its existing Revolving Loan Fund program or economic development funding mechanisms to ensure long-term administration stability, accountability, and alignment with broader City goals.

The Fund will be primarily financed through a commercial In-lieu fee that allows developers to substitute the required non-residential ground-floor space with residential use (see LU-P.9). The City may allocate a portion of the funds to support additional Small Business Support Programs in the Plan Area. Additional funding sources may include grants, partnerships, or targeted reinvestment of repayments to expand support for small business programs in the Plan Area.

[1] Locally owned shall be defined as having business owners that are local to Alameda County, and the business should not already have more than one location.

The following components should be included in the program:

Eligible uses of funds (in order of priority)

- **Node Priority:** Eligible uses of funds located within one of the five designated Nodes may receive the highest priority to support commercial activity at these locations, in alignment with *LU-P.2 Establish a Tiered Node Structure to Focus Growth and Commercial Uses*.
    - **Developer/Building Owner Incentives:** Developers and building owners may be eligible for funding to support façade improvements and upgrades to retail spaces within designated Nodes, provided the improvements target small businesses occupying those spaces.
- **Tenant Improvements:** Loans may cover costs associated with code-required or functional interior and exterior façade or sidewalk frontage upgrades necessary for commercial occupancy. For example, an existing sidewalk may need reconstruction to meet ADA cross slope requirements for café seating. This may include kitchen grease ducts and ventilation systems, HVAC installation and upgrades, ADA-compliant restrooms and accessibility features, plumbing and electrical work, and fire/life safety improvements.
- **Business Relocation:** Assistance in relocation within the Plan Area due to redevelopment, displacements, or lease non-renewal. Eligible expenses may include move-in and tenant improvement costs in the new business location.
- **Succession Planning:** Support small and legacy businesses that have operated in the Plan Area for at least 10 years. Eligible businesses should be independently or locally owned, serve as cultural anchors, or be publicly facing and community-oriented.
- **Marketing and Branding** (Limited Use): A portion of loan proceeds may be allowed for branding, signage, website development, or participation in corridor-wide promotions.

Loan structure

- Interest-free, low-interest fixed-term loans issued through the City's revolving loan program.
- Repayment terms tailored to small business cash flow, with potential deferral options during buildout and startup phases.
- Loans will be provided on a first-come first-served basis.

Borrower Eligibility and Disbursement Structure

- When the loan is distributed to a building owner or developer, they must agree to lease the space to qualifying local businesses for at least 10-years. During this period, the local business tenant may be replaced by another local business, if needed.
    - Developers or building owners who received funding may be required to repay the loan in full if the space is leased to a non-qualifying business.
- Business owners must be local to Alameda County, and should not already have more than one location.
- Businesses must demonstrate financial viability through a business plan and cash flow projections
- Businesses must have site control (e.g., executed lease or letter or intent)
- Loans will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis within funding cycles, with priority for businesses that are culturally significant, at risk of displacement, as well as people of color, women, and other underserved applicants.
- All recipients will be connected to technical assistance programs through the City's Office of Economic Development.

Administration and Oversight

- Administered by the Office of Economic Development and the non-profit administrator of the existing Revolving Loan Fund.
- Funding should be for at least $25,000 and provided in cash rather than as reimbursement.
- Establish partnerships with Community Business Organizations (CBOs) and business networks to ensure that small businesses are aware of the fund and how to apply. Potential partners include:
    - Bay Area Manufacturing Initiative

    - West Berkeley Design Loop
    - The Bay Area Organization of Black-Owned Businesses
    - West Berkeley Artisans and Industrial Companies
- Regular performance tracking and annual reporting to City Council on fund deployment, repayment, and Plan Area impacts.
- The program, include eligible use of funds, loan structure, and borrower eligibility shall be reviewed every five years and included in the annual report to City Council.

ED-P.2 Establish Public-Private Partnerships

The City will pursue partnerships with community organizations, local institutions, merchant groups, property owners, and other stakeholders to plan, fund, and implement a range of indoor and outdoor community spaces and events that activate San Pablo Avenue, and its adjacent neighborhoods.

These partnerships should focus on creating vibrant, welcoming spaces and cultural, artistic, and family-friendly activities. Strategies may include:

- Promotion of new businesses and events in the Plan Area
- Pop-up activations in vacant storefronts
- Transformation of underused parking lots into spaces for food trucks, outdoor markets, or community gatherings
- Side-street closures for block parties, neighborhood festivals or seasonal celebrations

Existing organizations such as the West Berkeley Design Loop and the University Avenue Association already coordinate events and business promotion in the Plan Area. The City should strengthen and expand these efforts by supporting their capacity to organize corridor-wide initiatives, co-advertise, and partner with new and existing businesses.

To support event planning, the City will clearly communicate how permit processes work, provide technical assistance to organizers, and help facilitate applications with the appropriate departments for activities such as encroachment permits, temporary street closures, or outdoor vendor activations. The City will also leverage networks such as the Berkeley Business District Network (BBDN) to connect associations and event organizers with City staff and resources. These meetings are critical opportunities to share information on local trends and conditions affecting small businesses, district events, policy issues, and other relevant topics.

By investing in sustained partnerships with existing and new associations and neighborhood groups, and by providing assistance to navigate permitting and coordination, the City can help build a robust calendar of events that draws visitors, supports small businesses, and strengthens the identity of San Pablo Avenue as a lively and inclusive commercial corridor.

Initially, this effort could be coordinated by a potential OED Liaison. Over time, business organizations or a potential business improvement district could assume the lead role in coordination with the City. (See *ED-P.4 Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID*) and *ED-P.5 Establish an Economic Development Liaison for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area*).

Business Organizations

ED-P.3 Support and Expand Existing Business Clusters

Support the formation and capacity-building of business "cluster" organizations that promote and organize the range of businesses in the Plan Area and adjacent areas, with the goal of enhancing local identity, improving business coordination, and laying groundwork for future collective action. These organizations – such as merchant associations, property-owner groups, or promotional collaboratives should be flexible in their geographic scope and

business membership, modeled after existing efforts like the West Berkeley Design Loop and the Berkeley International Marketplace.

Berkeley International Marketplace

In 2006, local business owners, in partnership with the City's Office of Economic Development, established the "Berkeley International Marketplace" to celebrate the cultural diversity of businesses near the University Avenue intersection. While the initiative faded over time, remnants of its identity remain visible through banners on nearby light poles, and many existing businesses continue to reflect the area's international character. In 2025, local businesses began working together to revitalize the neighborhood designation[2], expanding outreach and featuring more businesses along both San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue on their website.



Figure 4.4 Participating business pictures on their website. Source: Berkeley International Marketplace, Homepage, Accessed October 20, 2025.

The intent is to facilitate coordination among businesses based on geographic location (Plan Area-wide, designated Nodes), business type, or ownership structure, in order to enhance visibility, branding, and mutual support. Implementation of this policy would further support inclusive and flexible organizational models that reflect the Plan Area's diverse mix of retail, service, light industrial, and cultural uses, extending beyond traditional Business Improvement Districts (BID). This policy framework includes:

City Support and Technical Assistance

- The Office of Economic Development (OED) should offer technical assistance to emerging clusters in the form of:
    - Organizational development guidance
    - Access to City branding and marketing tools (e.g., #DiscoveredinBerkeley local marketing campaign, and connections to the the City's Convention and Visitors Bureau known as visitberkeley). This could include assistance in design and installation of signs, banners, or similar elements to define business cluster locations or the location of member businesses that are more dispersed in the Plan Area and in adjacent areas, see Policy *PR-P.12 Facilitate Wayfinding and Placemaking Programs*.
    - Facilitation of peer learning with other local clusters or organizations
    - Grant opportunities for operational support or shared marketing campaigns
- The City should continue to provide strategic support to assist with expansion of cluster organization expansion and implementation of new projects, as well as marketing, branding and events.
- The City should continue to use the Berkeley Business District Network (BBDN) meetings as a platform to connect representatives from commercial groups with the City Manager, other City staff and resources.

Pathway to Long-Term Structures

- Recognize cluster organizations as potential precursors to formalized business associations such as BIDs, if warranted and supported by members.
- Evaluate alternatives to BIDs where relevant, including merchant associations or targeted City partnerships on streetscape improvements and shared amenities.

[2] Nathan Dalton. "Is This West Berkeley Intersection About to Be Revived?" *Berkeleyside*, May 14, 2025.

Coordination with related policies:

- Ensure coordination with implementation of Policy *ED-P.6. Prioritize Initial Public Investment on Improvements in the Nodes* to ensure improvements are aligned with cluster organization initiatives.
- Ensure coordination with Policy *ED-P.1. Small Business Support Fund* to ensure that the use of funds and business eligibility are aligned with small business needs.

Business Improvement District(s) Study

Throughout the planning process, the community expressed frustration with the lack of comfort and poor maintenance of public spaces along San Pablo Avenue. Property and business owners in the Plan Area and West Berkeley have expressed these concerns and shown interest in working together to enhance the streetscape, especially in retail-focused areas that benefit most from pedestrian activity. Members of the West Berkeley Design Loop and others in the business community have also indicated potential interest in forming a business improvement district to expand on business support efforts such as co-marketing, event programming, and enhanced maintenance and safety similar to those of the Downtown Berkeley Association.

ED-P.4 Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID)

The City should collaborate with local businesses and property owners to fund and initiate a study of the feasibility and scope of establishing one or more BIDs within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area. The study should assess potential boundary options ranging from corridor-wide coverage to targeted districts centered around high-priority Nodes and may also explore extensions into adjacent areas of West Berkeley where commercial synergies and business interest are strongest.

What is a BID? A Business Improvement District is an independent non-profit organization funded primarily through property-owners and/or business owners within a defined geographic area who agree to assess (or tax) themselves to support specific improvements and/or services beyond those typically provided by the City. A BID provides a dedicated management structure, with a governing board, annual work plan, and budget, ensuring accountability and transparency. This structure gives local businesses a unified voice and increases capacity to collaborate with the City and other community organizations. Existing BIDs in Berkeley include Downtown Berkeley, Telegraph, North Shattuck, Solano, and Elmwood.

The study should analyze the feasibility of different boundaries and implementation approaches. Options to consider include:

- Establishing a pilot BID focused on one or two high-potential Nodes (such as Cedar and Dwight), particularly where new public investments or community business interest is already concentrated.
- Exploring hybrid models that begin with merchant associations or business clusters and evolve toward more formal entities.
- Examining the possibility of organizing a cross-jurisdictional or thematic district that includes parts of West Berkeley, such as the West Berkeley Design Loop.

An equity-centered outreach process should be a core component of the feasibility study. This includes engagement with a broad range of Plan Area users, including existing businesses and property owners, Black-owned businesses and cultural institutions, community-based organizations, nonprofits, arts groups, and unhoused residents who use the Plan Area's public spaces. The City should partner with CBOs and business networks to facilitate this outreach (see ED-P.2). The study should also define equity principles and desired outcomes to guide the creation and operation of any future entity, ensuring alignment with community goals.

The City should coordinate this effort with existing or proposed district initiatives in nearby areas such as Gilman District and explore opportunities for shared services or partnerships. Lessons from other Berkeley BIDs and national models—particularly those with cultural district components—should inform the structure, governance, and service priorities of a potential San Pablo Avenue district.

ED-P.5 Establish an Economic Development Liaison for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area

To facilitate the implementation of the policies in this chapter, the City shall establish a San Pablo Avenue Economic Development Liaison role. The Liaison role will act as a central coordinator between businesses, property owners, developers, the City's OED, Planning and Development, and other City departments and community organizations.

The Liaison role may be structured in several ways: through a contract with a local economic development partner, as a part-time City staff role, or as shared responsibility integrated into an existing full-time City staff role, such as one connected to adjacent business organization initiatives. Following an initial evaluation to assess the role's impact, the City may consider allocating funding to expand the position into a dedicated part or full-time role or to integrate it more formally into an existing staff position. The City could consider the Commercial in-lieu fee as a potential funding source for this role (see LU-P.9).

Key responsibilities include:

- Lead implementation of Public-Private Partnerships in alignment with ED-P.2.
- Lead implementation of ED-P.4 to initiate a BID feasibility study, as well as support the implementation of other policies in this chapter.
- Conduct outreach and engagement, as described in ED-P.4, with businesses within the Plan Area to assess interest in forming business cluster organizations or a BID.
- Facilitate discussions among businesses and property owners.
- Provide technical assistance in navigating legal and financial requirements related to BID formation.
- Coordinate early marketing or events to build momentum and community identity.
- Work with the businesses, cultural institutions and artist groups in the community to identify potential Commercial and Cultural Districts along San Pablo Avenue, such as a maker/light industrial district, international district, or State-designated cultural district. Report on the feasibility of integrating Commercial and Cultural Districts into marketing efforts and BID feasibility study.
- Track corridor economic performance indicators (vacancy rates, tenant turnover, etc.) and assist in providing updates to OED management and the City Council.

Investment

ED-P.6: Prioritize Initial Public Investment on Improvements in the Nodes

The City should focus initial public investment – such as pedestrian-scale lighting, transit-supportive infrastructure, and amenities for gathering within the Nodes, beginning with the Tier 1 University Avenue Node. Improvements should be prioritized in areas with high pedestrian demand, commercial vacancies, and community support in order to strengthen safety, catalyze economic development and build momentum for the Plan Area.

When funding is secured (e.g., through grants for streetscape or lighting, Alameda CTC improvement funding, or other public sources), priority should be the Nodes, and when the Nodes are completed, the City should conduct a follow-up study to determine the next priority locations for public investment.

Concentrating resources within the Nodes will deliver visible, coordinated improvements that can attract new businesses, enhance safety, and build community identity by targeting grant and capital funding to these locations, the City can leverage ongoing transportation projects, and align public and private investment.

Supporting Policies and Programs

The policies within this Specific Plan, including those in the Land Use and Streets chapters, are designed to work together to strengthen the Plan Area as a whole, including the local economy along San Pablo Avenue.

Land Use policies that increase housing capacity will bring more residents within walking distance of local businesses, thereby expanding the customer base and supporting neighborhood-serving retail and services. Concentrating activity in designated Nodes and promoting a broader mix of uses will enhance the vitality of these areas, helping them evolve into distinct commercial destinations. Building design standards require storefront ground floor frontage within Nodes, allowing the extent of retail and restaurant uses to adapt over time as the population in the Specific Plan Area grows.

Transportation policies are designed to make San Pablo Avenue more attractive, accessible and comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. Enhancing multimodal connections both within Berkeley and to the broader East Bay region will increase foot traffic, improve accessibility for surrounding neighborhoods, and expand regional connectivity to the Plan Area. These improvements will draw more potential customers and support the diverse mix of local and specialized businesses along San Pablo Avenue.

Public realm policies and standards to create consistent lighting and street furnishings, street trees and public realm expansions, will improve comfort and encourage longer, more frequent visits that support commercial activity.

Together, these measures are designed to enhance the livability of the San Pablo Avenue Plan Area while driving long-term economic growth.

In addition, the City continues to provide programs and services that assist local businesses and foster economic and community development. Several of these ongoing efforts present opportunities for the Specific Plan Area, and include the following:

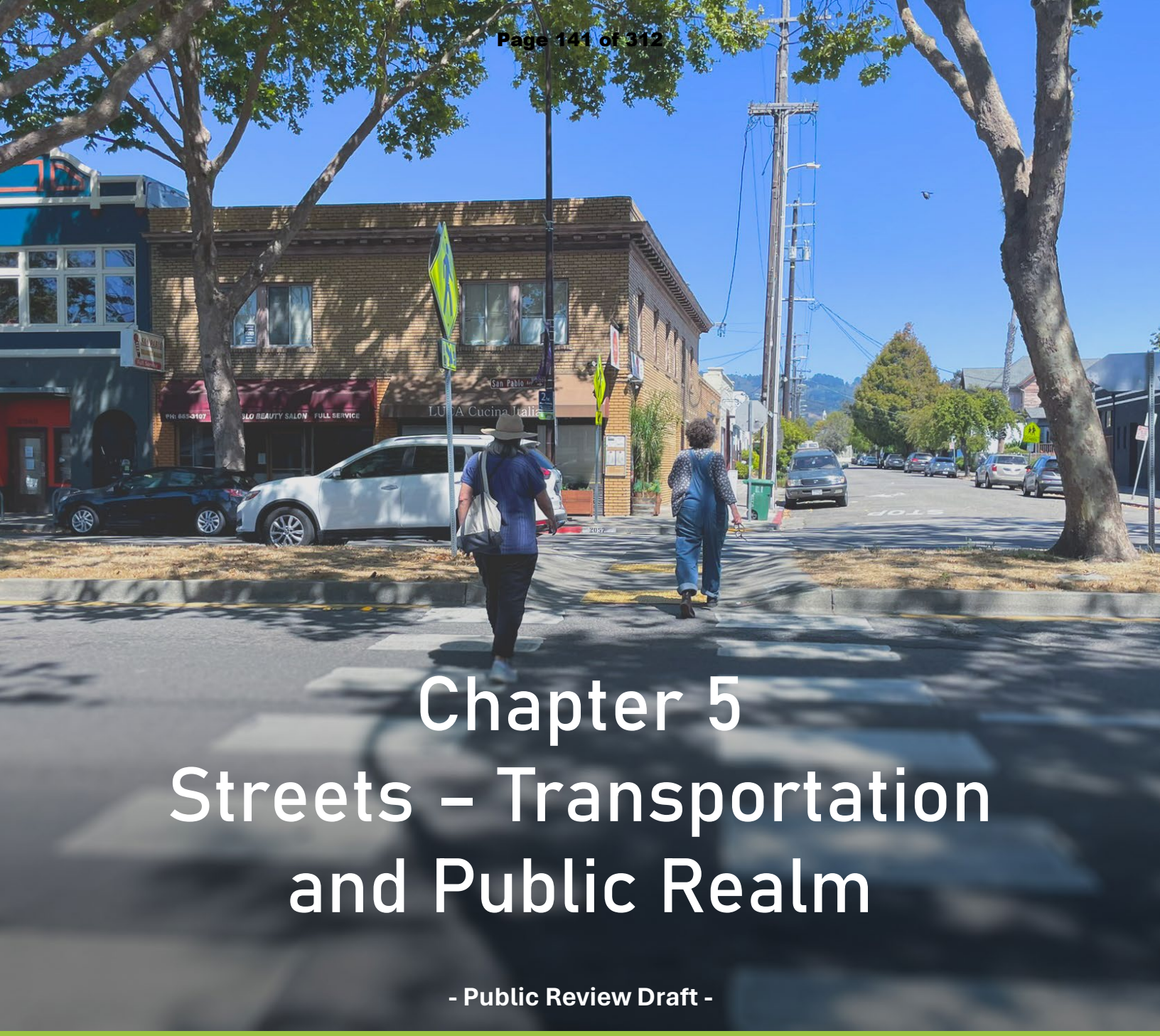
Revolving Loan Fund

The City of Berkeley's Revolving Loan Fund program can provide access to capital for businesses and entrepreneurs who seek to grow and retain jobs, but do not qualify for a traditional bank loan. The loan can be used to fund business expansion, fixed assets, equipment, working capital, and real estate. The fund has opportunities to integrate San Pablo Avenue specific programs, see *ED-P.1 San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Focused Small Business Support Fund*.

Keep Innovation in Berkeley Efforts

In 2024, the Office of Economic Development (OED) published a set of recommendations aimed to Keep Innovation in Berkeley by encouraging growth and retention of the local Research & Development (R&D) industry[3]. As part of this effort, the City revised zoning regulations in the C-W district, which includes areas within the Specific Plan Area, to permit R&D uses under 20,000 square feet with a Zoning Certificate (ZC), and those over 20,000 square feet with an Administrative Use Permit (AUP). These changes do not apply to ground-floor spaces within designated C-W Nodes. The updated zoning intends to strength Berkeley's innovation economy by accommodating R&D businesses, generating local employment opportunities, and reinforcing broader economic development goals.

[3] Staff presentation to City Council, December 3, 2024.



Chapter 5
Streets – Transportation and Public Realm

- Public Review Draft -

Originally part of the Lincoln Highway, San Pablo Avenue has long served as a major regional and national transportation route and remains designated as a state highway. This legacy established a corridor pattern focused on regional mobility and vehicle access, influencing the form of adjacent development. This function has historically prioritized automobiles and resulted in a street environment that favors vehicles but offers limited comfort and safety for multimodal travel, along with fewer high-quality public spaces. **Chapter 1 Introduction** provides more detail about the historical context of San Pablo Avenue.

Some stretches along San Pablo Avenue feature a consistent tree canopy and active storefronts that create a more pedestrian-friendly setting, but these remain exceptions. New mixed-use developments and streetscape improvements are gradually transforming San Pablo Avenue into a more balanced and multimodal corridor. These ongoing efforts aim to enhance comfort, safety, and accessibility for people walking, biking, and using transit, while creating a more attractive and functional public realm that reflects the changing needs of the corridor.

Community feedback gathered through the outreach process reinforces this shift in priorities. Participants expressed strong support for improving the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit environment along and across San Pablo Avenue. Survey responses identified walking as the second most common mode of travel to and from destinations along San Pablo Avenue. At the community open houses, focus group meetings, and other engagement events, community members emphasized the need for safe streets and streetscape improvements. Many also voiced concerns about existing traffic speeds and noise, highlighting the ongoing tension between these conditions and the community's vision for a vibrant mixed-use place where people live, work, shop, and socialize.

This chapter defines policies, programs and standards that aim to balance the transportation, land use, and public realm functions of San Pablo Avenue and the evolving mixed-use district along it. The focus is to transform San Pablo Avenue into a multimodal street that not only facilitates safe and efficient travel for all users but also enhances the availability and quality of public space.

Existing Conditions

This section provides an overview of existing transportation conditions, including transit access, and multimodal mobility, safety and comfort and summarizes existing public realm conditions. A detailed assessment is available in **Appendix A: Key Existing Conditions**.

Public Realm

The public realm experience varies along San Pablo Avenue –some areas support street life, while others feel inactive at the pedestrian scale. There are engaging places with a combination of active street life and vibrant businesses, such as the blocks south of University Avenue and Dwight Way (see Figure 5.1). At these locations, one can find outdoor seating, decorative plantings and other amenities that invite potential customers and create a more comfortable environment for people walking along the street. On stretches where business activity is slow, sidewalks are more likely to be in poor condition, landscaping is less likely to be maintained, and the street edge is framed by vacant or vandalized building frontages, or tall fencing. These segments experience less foot traffic and fewer parked cars, as the public realm offers little reason for people to linger as they pass through.

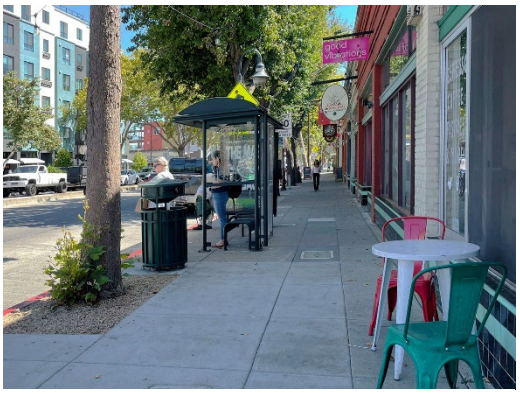


Figure 5.1: Sidewalk with bus stop and café seating on the west side of Dwight Way intersection.

San Pablo Avenue is also physically wide, with a typical right-of-way measuring 73 feet from curb to curb (see Figure 5.2 *Section graphic*). This includes four travel lanes (two in each direction), street parking, and a landscaped median. There are no designated bicycle facilities or markings along San Pablo Avenue, so cyclists ride in the roadway, on the sidewalk, or more commonly, use nearby streets which include parallel bicycle routes. While this configuration supports vehicle traffic movement and access, it creates a sense of separation between the two sides of the street and confines pedestrian space to the standard 13-foot sidewalks on either side. Sidewalks are narrow compared to the preferred width guidance set in the 2020 Pedestrian Plan[1] and offer limited protection from adjacent vehicle traffic. During community engagement activities, participants frequently expressed concern about narrowness, their exposure to vehicle traffic, and associated noise levels.

[1] City of Berkeley. *Pedestrian Plan Appendix B: Toolbox of Pedestrian Improvements.* Adopted 2020, p. 8

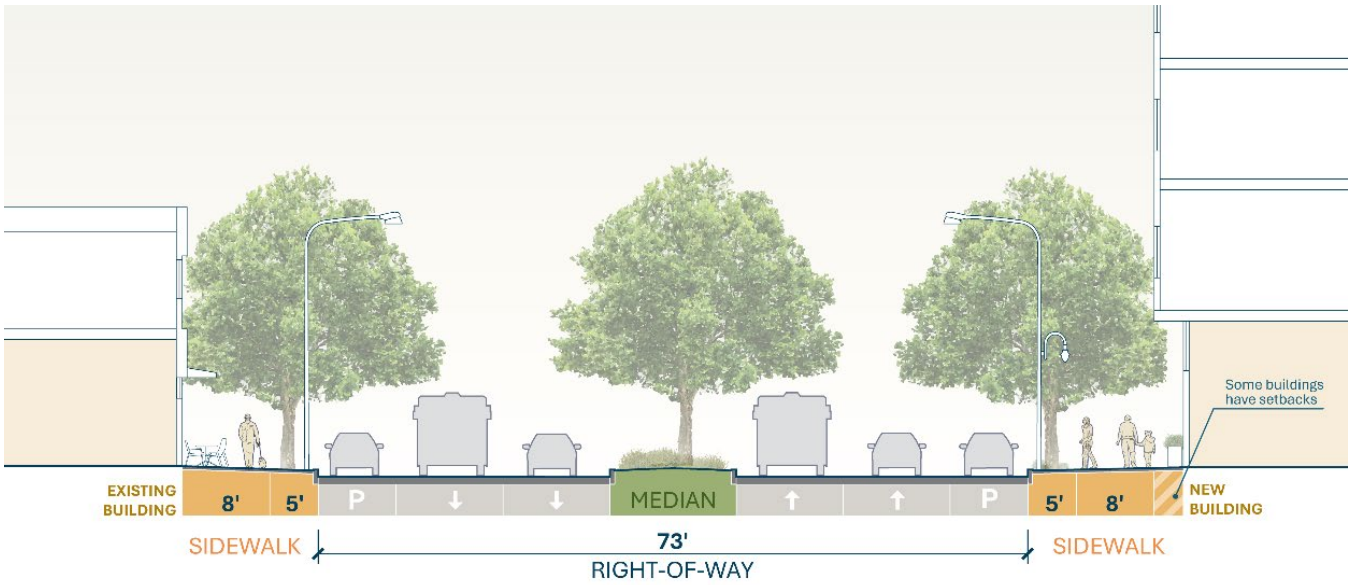


Figure 5.2 Section graphic of the typical right-of-way configuration

Transportation

Multimodal Mobility, Safety and Comfort

According to the Vision Zero Policy and Plan (see page 13) San Pablo Avenue is classified as a High-Injury Street, one of the City's streets with the highest number of severe injury and fatality traffic crashes. Risk and discomfort associated with crossing the street is driven by the absence of dedicated bicycle crossing infrastructure, limited pedestrian visibility, and high vehicle speeds and related traffic noise. These conditions create an environment that is less safe for non-motorized users.

As mentioned previously, many cyclists avoid riding directly on San Pablo Avenue and instead rely on parallel bicycle routes. However, crossing San Pablo Avenue remains difficult. The 2017 Berkeley Bicycle Plan (see page 3-9) identified all intersections at key east-west bicycle routes designated as class III bicycle boulevards—specifically Virginia Street, Channing Way, and the Russell Street and Heinz Avenue connection— as high-stress locations for cyclists and present significant barriers to safe and comfortable bicycle travel.

Several safety improvement projects are underway to address some of these conditions. For project details, see **Appendix D: Street Improvements**. The Specific Plan establishes policies and standards for further improving mobility, safety, and comfort for all users. **Appendix D** also outlines recommended projects that may be implemented with future development.

Transit Network

Transit service within the Plan Area is provided by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit), which operates local bus routes, a limited stop bus line along San Pablo Avenue, and transbay service connecting the area to the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco. AC Transit routes 72, 72L, 72M, 52, 51B, 36, 12, J, G, FS, and San Pablo All Nighters (800 & 802) connect the Plan Area to North Berkeley, Downtown Berkeley, or Ashby BART Stations, and San Francisco.

Objectives

San Pablo Avenue does not need to look the same from end to end; in fact, the distinct character of different places along San Pablo Avenue is one of its valued assets. However, many of these areas can benefit from stronger visual and physical connections. By establishing guidance for shared elements like trees, lighting, and street furnishings, the Plan seeks to create a sense of continuity while allowing for places along San Pablo Avenue to develop their own unique identity.

Transportation

Improve San Pablo Avenue's function as a multimodal street that safely and efficiently serves pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, drivers, deliveries, freight, emergency response and evacuation, and maintenance access. Enhance access to transit and reduce traffic collisions. Improve the balance between regional mobility and local access. Better manage on-street parking and loading to support diverse uses along San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 5.3 Daytime traffic on San Pablo Avenue close to Blake Street Intersection

Public Realm

Transform San Pablo Avenue into a more welcoming and vibrant public realm, public spaces that enhance the distinct character of places along the street and neighborhoods they connect to. Expand and improve sidewalks and streetscape elements and encourage public art, and cultural activities to support a more active street life. Expand and improve sidewalks and streetscape elements and encourage public art, and cultural activities to support a more active street life.



Figure 5.4 San Pablo Avenue Sidewalk south of Dwight Way

Transportation Policies, Standards and Projects

The Specific Plan Area needs improved local and citywide multimodal access to support anticipated growth in population, employment, and business activity in the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods in West and South Berkeley. Meeting the transportation needs of this growth will require reducing dependence on personal vehicles and expanding access to safer and more equitable travel options. This approach aligns with regional and City goals for climate action, economic vitality and equity. The following section outlines strategies to support this transition, including safer street crossings for all users, enhanced transit access and reliability, parking and curb management to support businesses, and measures to reduce collisions while improving overall mobility.

Existing Policies and Standards

City of Berkeley

Vision Zero Policy and Plan

In 2020, the City of Berkeley adopted its **Vision Zero Action Plan** with the goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2028. The plan focuses on engineering and design strategies that improve safety for everyone travelling in Berkeley. Between 2011 and 2020, multiple collisions along San Pablo Avenue resulted in severe injuries to people walking, biking, and driving, including one fatality. According to the City's 2022 Annual Report[2], 42 percent of Berkeley's severe and fatal traffic collisions during that same timeframe occurred within Metropolitan Transportation Commission designated Equity Priority Communities[3], which includes most of the Specific Plan Area.

To help meet Vision Zero goals, several safety improvements are already planned or in progress, and many are part of Alameda CTC's San Pablo Corridor Safety Enhancements Project. This Specific Plan also includes transportation safety related policies, improvements, and an implementation strategy that support Vision Zero goals.

Berkeley Bicycle Plan

The Berkeley Bicycle Plan[4] was adopted by the City Council on May 2, 2017. In 2025, the City began the process of updating the Bicycle Plan. The Plan seeks to encourage more residents and visitors to use bicycles as a day-to-day mode of transportation. San Pablo Avenue, as one of the City's and AC Transit's Primary Transit Routes, was identified for further study to evaluate options for improved bicycle access. San Pablo Avenue is designated as a Tier 1 Priority Project in the Bicycle Plan due to a combination of safety concerns and equity-related needs and includes San Pablo Avenue as a Primary Transit Route to be studied for separated bike lanes. The Bicycle Plan Update further states "separated bikeways that might impact transit operations, emergency response traffic, commercial/business district parking, or roadway capacity will review and address impacts through a Complete Streets Corridor Study, which includes a public engagement process and coordination with the Police and Fire Departments and all affected state, county, and local transit agencies."[5]

Since the adoption of the 2017 plan, the City has partnered with Alameda CTC through its San Pablo Avenue Safety Enhancements Project and Parallel Bike Improvements Project to implement crossing upgrades at several designated bicycle boulevards and to establish new and improve existing parallel bicycle boulevard routes. Additional information about planned safety and mobility improvements along San Pablo Avenue is provided in the following section, which discusses the Alameda CTC San Pablo Corridor Projects.

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[2] City of Berkeley. *Vision Zero Annual Report 2021–2022.* June 2022. Accessed 6 May 2025.
[3] See Chapter 1 Introduction for definition of Equity Priority Communities.
[4] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Bicycle Plan. May 2017. Accessed 16 June 2025.
[5] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Bicycle Plan update, Public Review Draft, July 2025. Accessed 4 September 2025.

Berkeley Pedestrian Plan

The **2020 Pedestrian Plan**[6] outlines strategies to improve pedestrian travel along Berkeley's high-injury streets and enhance overall pedestrian safety consistent with the Vision Zero Action Plan. The plan identifies San Pablo Avenue—from University Avenue to Dwight Way—as a priority corridor, ranking it among the top 10 locations for capital projects focused on pedestrian safety.

The Plan's proposed improvements at key intersections along San Pablo Avenue align closely with the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Safety Enhancements Project and include curb extensions, raised medians, high-visibility crosswalk markings, and pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHBs)/rapid-reflective flashing beacons (RRFBs).

Additional recommendations go beyond the current scope of the Safety Enhancements Project. These include evaluating the feasibility of lowering speed limits to 25 mph and introducing separate pedestrian signal phases that do not conflict with turning vehicles.

Transportation Demand Management Policies

The City of Berkeley Municipal Code establishes a **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program**[7] that supports the goals of the City's Transportation Element and Climate Action Plan by reducing automobile travel, encouraging transit ridership, and promoting bicycle and pedestrian safety. This program requires new residential developments of ten or more units to:

- Provide unbundled parking that is sold or leased separately from units to incentivize reduced automobile ownership
- Offer monthly transit passes at no cost to residents to encourage transit use
- Provide real-time transportation information on displays in common areas to facilitate transit use

Before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued, site inspection is required to confirm that all required physical improvements have been installed. Following occupancy, property owners are responsible for ongoing compliance and reporting to ensure that required TDM measures remain in place and effectively achieve the objectives of the program.

Additionally, the City of Berkeley requires employers with ten or more employees to provide a **Commuter Benefit Program**[8] that encourages the use of transit, vanpools, or bicycles by providing pre-tax payroll deductions, direct payment of expenses, or a company-funded shuttle service.

goBerkeley On-Street Parking Meter Policy

In 2022, the City of Berkeley launched the goBerkeley SmartSpace pilot, funded by MTC and FHWA, to explore ways to reduce the need for residents to move their vehicles every two hours due to on-street parking restrictions in neighborhoods near the Elmwood and Southside/Telegraph commercial districts. As a result of the pilot, the City adopted an **on-street parking meter pricing policy**[9] for single-space meters and pay stations within the goBerkeley meter zones that allows for parking fee adjustments based on published parking occupancy data. The goal is to maintain 65–85% occupancy, or roughly 1–2 open spaces per block, to minimize circling and improve parking availability.

On-Street Accessible Parking and Passenger Loading Requirements

Accessible parking in the public right-of-way is required and must comply with the U.S. Access Board's **Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)**, federally adopted in 2024.[10] Where on-street parking is metered or designated by signage or pavement markings, the required number of accessible spaces and their design must follow

[6] City of Berkeley. Berkeley 2020 Pedestrian Plan. 2020. Accessed 17 June 2025.
[7] City of Berkeley. *Berkeley Municipal Code* § 23.334 - Transportation Demand Management. Accessed 16 June 16 2025.
[8] City of Berkeley. *Berkeley Municipal Code* § 9.88 – Commuter Benefit Program. Accessed 2 July 2025.
[9] City of Berkeley. *Berkeley Municipal Code* § 14.52.120 – Parking Meter and Pay Station Fees. Accessed 23 June 2025.
[10] U.S. Access Board. Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), 36 CFR Part 1190, Final Rule published in the Federal Register, 88 FR 54336. August 2023. Effective 7 September 2024. Accessed 23 June 2025.

PROWAG standards for dimensions, clearances, and connection to the pedestrian access route. If individual spaces are not marked, each 20 feet of designated curb space is counted as one parking space.

The following exceptions apply to implementation of on-street accessible parking:

- Spaces reserved exclusively for residential, commercial, or law enforcement use are exempt and not counted toward required totals.
- If on-street spaces are altered, requirements apply only to the modified spaces until the minimum required number is reached.

Accessible passenger loading zones in the public right-of-way are also required. At least one accessible loading zone must be provided per 100 feet (or fraction thereof) of designated loading area, excluding transit stops.

Off-Street Parking Maximums in Transit-Rich Areas

In 2021, the City of Berkeley adopted parking reforms that established **off-street parking maximums** for new residential developments well-served by transit, limiting vehicle parking to a maximum of 0.5 spaces per dwelling unit.[11] This policy is intended to support TDM measures by discouraging car dependency and encouraging transit-oriented, sustainable growth in areas with good transit service. The cap applies within a quarter mile of rail stations and bus transit corridors with peak period frequency of 15 minutes or better, which includes the entirety of the Plan Area.

Bicycle Parking Policies

Bicycle parking facilities that are secure, accessible, and weather-protected support TDM measures by encouraging bicycle use. Bicycle parking is also included in the *Pre-Occupancy TDM Program and Bicycle Parking Ongoing Monitoring and Reporting Statement*, which new developments are required to complete.

Building on the goals of the 2017 Berkeley Bicycle Plan, the City of Berkeley Municipal Code requires **long- and short-term bicycle parking** for new commercial construction, development that expands floor area, and new residential projects, including residential portions of mixed-use developments.[12] Bicycle parking spaces are required on a per square-foot basis for commercial development and per bedroom basis for residential development.

Detailed siting and design standards for bicycle parking are outlined in the **Bicycle Facility Design Toolbox**, provided as Appendix F of the 2017 Bicycle Plan.[13] This guidance accounts for a range of bicycle types and sizes and recommends long-term parking strategies based on lot coverage. Projects on parcels with high lot coverage (over 85%) are encouraged to provide indoor long-term bike parking, such as a secure room or cage. Sites with lower lot coverage may use outdoor solutions like bike lockers or covered, secure enclosures.

Bike corrals are a form of on-street bicycle parking that provide high-capacity, short-term parking by consolidating racks within the paved right-of-way, typically in areas with high demand and limited sidewalk space. In Berkeley, corrals may replace a vehicle parking space or be installed adjacent to a red curb. Merchants or property owners may request a bike corral in front of their business.[14] Requests are reviewed based on safety, demand, and feasibility, and installations must follow design standards outlined in the City's Bicycle Facility Design Toolbox. The City may also create bike corrals in locations with high bike parking demand and limited sidewalk space, such as in multimodal Mobility Hubs.

Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan

The **Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan (2023**) provides policies and guidelines for implementing the City's Transit-First Policy (Berkeley General Plan Policy T-4) and for future planning for the City's existing transit priority corridors. It is a standalone document but planned to be implemented into a future update of the Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan.

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[11] City of Berkeley. *Berkeley Municipal Code* § 23.322.070 – Off-Street Parking Maximums for Residential Development. Accessed 16 June 2025.
[12] City of Berkeley. *Berkeley Municipal Code* § 23.322.090 – Bicycle Parking. Accessed 2 July 2025.
[13] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Bicycle Facility Design Toolbox. May 2017. Accessed 16 June 2025.
[14] City of Berkeley. Bicycle Parking Program. 2025. Accessed 26 June 2025.

The plan designates San Pablo Avenue as a Primary Transit Route and a priority corridor for further study of transit infrastructure needs, building on the findings of AC Transit's Major Corridors Study (2016). Together with Telegraph and University Avenues, San Pablo Avenue is identified as a potential Bus Rapid Transit corridor in AC Transit's Long-Term Improvements Plan (targeted for implementation by 2040). Further, the plan highlights Alameda CTC's San Pablo Corridor Project as the lead effort for shaping future transit improvements and recommends ongoing coordination with Alameda CTC, Caltrans, and neighboring cities to develop a long-term implementation strategy.

Council Referral for BRT in Berkeley

In September 2023, the Berkeley City Council directed the City Manager to explore a feasibility analysis of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) options along AC Transit's 51B route, including University Avenue. University Avenue bus service provides a key east-west connection between San Pablo Avenue and Downtown Berkeley and is designated a Primary Transit Route in AC Transit's Major Corridors Study.

Future BRT service on University Avenue could enhance transit access between the Plan Area and major destinations such as Downtown Berkeley, UC Berkeley, BART, and the Berkeley Amtrak Capitol Corridor Station. Completed improvements in the Southside area include bus-only lanes on Durant Avenue and Bancroft Way that are used by the 51B and 6 routes. The referral proposes future budget allocations for corridor studies and ADA improvements.

San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan

The San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan, adopted on December 7, 2004, was developed to support pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and transit users, while also revitalizing the area along and surrounding San Pablo Avenue. While many improvements have been completed, the plan itself is now outdated. The Improvement Plan's recommendations served as a foundation for the Specific Plan's public realm framework, informing its policies, programs and design standards.

Caltrans

As described in **Chapter 1 Introduction**, San Pablo Avenue is a California state highway (State Route 123). Any improvements within the street right-of-way must be approved by Caltrans, while the City of Berkeley is responsible for maintaining sidewalks, roadway surface and medians, street trees, landscaping, and electrical work. Any modifications to the roadway itself, such as lane configurations, signal equipment and timing, speed limits, curb changes, or median design, must comply with Caltrans design standards and receive their approval.

Because San Pablo Avenue functions as a freeway reliever route for I-80, it is prioritized for regional vehicle movement. This limits the feasibility of changes that could reduce vehicular capacity.

AC Transit

AC Transit provides bus service across Alameda and Contra Costa counties, operating 12 routes that serve the Study Area and connect directly to San Pablo Avenue.

Realign Plan

In response to evolving travel patterns, AC Transit developed the Realign Plan, a redesigned bus network, which launched in August 2025. Under the new network, bus service frequency along San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley is expected to remain the same consistent with previous levels, while overall schedule reliability is anticipated to improve.

AC Transit first introduced the RAPID bus, Line 72R, service in 2003, a service that continues under 72L today. The agency further upgraded transit efficiency with the San Pablo Avenue Rapid Corridors Project, completed in 2023. This effort improved traffic signals, installed GPS-enabled Transit Signal Priority (TSP) technology, and enhanced overall operations from downtown Oakland to the City of San Pablo.

Major Corridors Study

AC Transit's 2016 Major Corridors Study laid out both short- and long-term strategies for improving service along San Pablo Avenue. The long-term vision calls for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to boost capacity and reliability. In the short- and

mid-terms, the Rapid Corridors project and on-going planning and design led by Alameda CTC are improving transit infrastructure along San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley and adjacent communities. For more details on their current work, see **Appendix D**.

Existing Transportation Projects

At the time of writing the Plan, several transportation and streetscape improvements are anticipated to take place over the next several years. The improvements proposed in the Plan build upon these ongoing and planned efforts, treating them as baseline conditions. For a comprehensive list and description of these projects, refer to **Appendix D**.

City of Berkeley Projects

The City moved forward with the implementation of several projects identified in the 2017 Bike Plan and 2020 Pedestrian Plan, including several projects that cross or parallel San Pablo Avenue. These efforts were coordinated with Alameda CTC's San Pablo Avenue Corridor Projects to support broader multimodal safety goals. For a map of current connections and a full list of projects, see **Appendix D** and see Figure 5.8 *Connections Map*.

Alameda CTC Projects

The Plan does not focus on transportation improvements to San Pablo Avenue, because the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) has completed a multimodal planning study for San Pablo Avenue throughout Alameda County. The study led to three improvement projects (see Figure 5.5 *San Pablo Avenue Multimodal Corridor Overview Map*). These projects will result in construction of safety improvements for all users, bus stop improvements, and parallel bicycle facility improvements, as well as a short segment of bicycle and bus lanes on the southern end of San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley. For detailed project descriptions and timelines, refer to **Appendix D**.

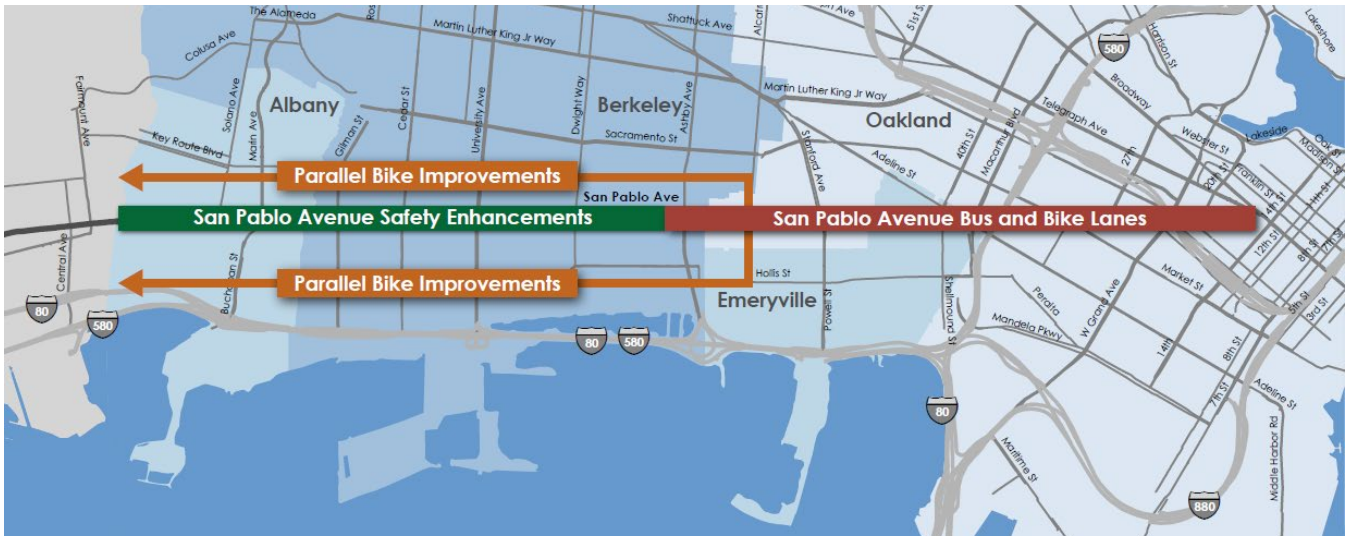


Figure 5.5 Alameda CTC. San Pablo Avenue Multimodal Corridor Overview Map

Alameda Countywide Bikeways Network

San Pablo Avenue is designated as a major bus and bikeway corridor within the Alameda Countywide Bikeways Network[15]; it is subject to regional All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bikeway design expectations. For additional details, see **Appendix D**.

[15] Alameda CTC. Alameda Countywide Bikeways Network Executive Report. December 2022, p.3. Viewed August, 2025.

Transportation Policies and Standards

Multimodal Mobility and Access

Ongoing and planned improvements to transportation infrastructure along San Pablo Avenue establish a foundation for improving mobility and access for all users. Future efforts will build on this momentum to provide infrastructure and operation systems that best serve the community's vision for the Plan Area as a vibrant mixed-use district.

T-P.1 Improve mobility, access, and safety for all people

Improve conditions for people walking, biking, taking transit, driving, deliveries, freight, emergency response and evacuation and maintenance access along San Pablo Avenue and throughout the Plan Area. Consider particular needs of vulnerable users, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Implement the goals for the City's Complete Streets Policy by designing all street and transportation improvements within the Plan Area to enhance mobility, access and safety for people who are walking, biking, taking transit, and driving while providing for deliveries, freight, emergency response, evacuation and maintenance access. Ensure that design and implementation consider the needs of vulnerable users, including children, seniors, and people of all abilities.

T-P.2 Future Transportation Study Needs for San Pablo Avenue

The Alameda CTC Bus and Bike Lanes Project currently ends at Heinz Street and San Pablo Avenue. Through previous planning and engagement efforts, the community expressed concerns regarding feasibility and the significant roadway changes that would be required to extend dedicated bus or bicycle facilities through Berkeley along San Pablo Avenue. These challenges include removal of all or some portions of the medians which hold mature street trees. With a growing population and reduced off-street parking requirements for mixed-use developments, the demand for alternative transportation options is likely to increase. This suggests that the City may need to revisit the design of San Pablo Avenue in the future.

This Specific Plan recommends that the City, in partnership with Alameda CTC and Caltrans, explore a potential follow-up planning and design process to evaluate multimodal conceptual design options for San Pablo Avenue. This study would serve as a follow-on to, and performance evaluation of the investments already planned as part of the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue corridor projects and would make additional recommendations based on that analysis. This potential future process could study a range of potential bike and bus improvements, including bus rapid transit, bus only lanes, and separated bike lanes. Depending on development activity in Berkeley and other San Pablo Avenue communities there may also be some future interest in studying the potential for streetcar service.

T-P.3 Maintain and improve bus service in collaboration with Alameda CTC and AC Transit

Maintain existing transit service levels along San Pablo Avenue and preserve key east-west "secondary route" connections identified in the City of Berkeley's General Plan. In alignment with Berkeley's Transit First Policy (Policy T-2), the City will continue to coordinate with AC Transit to improve service on San Pablo Avenue as needed to enhance east-west service and improve infrastructure. This includes continuing to explore the implementation of AC Transit's recommendations for primary transit routes and the need for improved connections to the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations, which is further discussed in BART's station and access plan.[16] A key element of this approach will be identifying the appropriate lead agency for such studies and project development, as well as adequate funding. Efforts should be guided by the Transit First Policy Implementation Plan to ensure a coordinated and effective approach.

[16] BART, Berkeley-El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan, February 2023, page 66. Viewed 4 September 2025.

T-P.4 Implement signal timing and transit signal priority (TSP)

In collaboration with Caltrans and AC Transit, identify and implement additional TSP improvements at signalized intersections and signal timing that favors transit operations to increase transit reliability and encourage ridership. This effort will build upon improvements made by AC Transit.

Parking and Curb Management

Many businesses along San Pablo Avenue depend on on-street parking for customer access and loading, particularly those without private parking lots or off-street loading.

With new residential developments, community members have raised concerns about parking availability to support the growing population. Business owners have also noted issues such as reduced storefront visibility due to parked cars and lack of parking enforcement leading to vehicles blocking parking spaces throughout the day.

Curb space in the Plan Area, both on San Pablo Avenue and crossing streets, should be managed to support the needs of both businesses and residents, with a shared goal of maintaining available on-street parking access even during periods of peak demand. This Plan recommends a strategy to ensure that on-street parking remains available for customers and other visitors arriving by car.

Provision of parking along San Pablo Avenue needs to be balanced with multimodal needs of all people that use San Pablo Avenue. See T-P.2 regarding the need to study and implement multimodal improvements along San Pablo Avenue.

T-P.5 Create an active parking and loading management program for the Specific Plan Area

The program should include strategies such as adjusting parking meter rates and time limits, similar to the City's goBerkeley Parking Program. It should also consider expanding metered parking locations to side-streets with commercial frontages to maintain the City's target occupancy rate of 65 to 85 percent on metered blocks. Increased enforcement should accompany these measures to ensure compliance and support consistent parking turnover.

Currently, Berkeley's policy does not allow additional Residential Parking Permit (RPP) areas, primarily due to cost considerations. As the effectiveness of pipeline and potential future multimodal improvements are assessed, the City will have an opportunity to reassess parking and loading needs along San Pablo Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods. Based on these assessments, the City Council may consider whether to establish new residential parking permit area(s) in adjacent neighborhoods and whether to allow merchants to purchase permits to park in those areas.

Implement Mobility Hubs

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) defines a Mobility Hub as an access point for *"[...] travelers of all backgrounds to access multiple transportation options and supportive amenities. Built on the backbone of frequent and high-capacity transit, Mobility Hubs offer a safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible space to seamlessly transfer across different travel modes."*[17] Identifying a Mobility Hub can strengthen eligibility for the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) program, improve transit access, and potentially improve eligibility for some funding sources. In 2020, MTC identified the University Avenue Node as a potential Mobility Hub.[18]

T-P.6 Implement Mobility Hub features in the University Avenue Node

In collaboration with MTC and AC Transit, the City should explore implementation of Mobility Hub strategies and features outlined in the Mobility Hub Implementation Playbook. Potential mobility hub features in the University Node may include improvements to bus stops and transit wayfinding, bike share and shared micromobility stations, bike

[17] Metropolitan Transportation Commission. *MTC Mobility Hub Implementation Playbook.* 30 Apr. 2021, p. 5. Accessed June 4, 2025

[18] Metropolitan Transportation Commission. *San Francisco Bay Region Mobility Hubs*. ArcGIS Online Map Viewer. Accessed June 4, 2025

corrals in parking lanes, and designated loading areas for ride-hail services, urban freight and delivery.

T-P.7 Evaluate other locations for some Mobility Hub features

Evaluate the potential for Mobility Hub features at other Nodes or on a corridor-wide basis, especially when transit service levels change. Even in locations that may not fully meet MTC's criteria for a designated Mobility Hub, the City should consider incorporating select hub features.

Multimodal Safety

Collision data identifies San Pablo Avenue as one of Berkeley's most high-injury corridors, indicated the need for targeted safety interventions that reduce vehicle speeds, enhance visibility, and improve safety for all travel modes. Improving sidewalk safety must also include interventions to support personal security and comfort. Measures such as pedestrian-scale lighting, wider sidewalks and Universal Design are further discussed in the Public Realm section of this chapter (see *PR-P.13 Design for People of All Ages and Abilities*).

Manage Vehicle Speeds and Lowering Speed Limit

Reducing vehicle speeds along San Pablo Avenue can help create a safer, quieter, and more welcoming environment that supports the transformation of the Specific Plan Area into a vibrant mixed-use district.

Speeding and safety

Collision data for San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley indicates that from 2018 to 2022 unsafe speed was the primary collision factor in 26% of collisions that resulted in an injury or fatality, more than any other collision factor.[1]



Figure 5.5a Dwight and San Pablo Avenue intersection

T-P.8 Lower Speed Limit on San Pablo Avenue

San Pablo Avenue currently has a posted speed limit of 30 mph. In California, speed limits are primarily established based on rounding the 85th percentile speed[19] observed in an Engineering and Traffic Study (E&TS) to the nearest 5 mph. However, Assembly Bill 43 (2022) allows for greater flexibility in setting speed limits that better reflect safe road conditions for all users through the following mechanisms:

- Agencies may round the 85th percentile speed observed in an E&TS down to the nearest 5 mph, even when the 85th percentile speed would ordinarily be rounded up.
- For roadways where the 85th percentile speed would ordinarily be rounded down, agencies may reduce the speed limit by an additional 5 mph if the reasons for the lower limit are documented in an E&TS.
- Local agencies may reduce the speed limits calculated in an E&TS by an additional 5 mph on designated Safety Corridors or corridors adjacent to land generating high bicycle and pedestrian volumes.
- Regardless of the findings of the E&TS, local agencies may retain the existing speed limit or, if the immediately-prior speed limit was lower than the existing speed limit, reduce the speed limit by 5 mph.
- Local agencies may reduce speed limits from 30 mph to 25 mph (or from 25 mph to 20 mph) in Business Activity Districts without needing an E&TS.

[19] The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions.

Because San Pablo Avenue is operated by Caltrans, only the first two listed provisions would apply.[20] The City should coordinate with Caltrans and AC Transit to conduct an E&TS, with the goal of reducing the posted speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. A lower speed limit would complement other proposed traffic calming measures and pedestrian and bicycle safety enhancements along San Pablo Avenue. Signal timing adjustments at the intersections may also be needed to support this change. Ultimately, Caltrans has the authority to set the speed limit on San Pablo Avenue, because the full length of the street in Berkeley is a State Highway. The E&TS should include a supplementary assessment of how lowering the speed limit would affect transit performance in terms of speed and reliability.

If the E&TS process results in the speed limit remaining at 30 mph, but the E&TS shows that a high proportion of drivers are exceeding the speed limit. This information could be used for the City to continue advocating to expand the AB 645 speed safety pilot program to include Berkeley and potentially San Pablo Avenue as a pilot urban state highway high-injury corridor pilot.[21]

Continue to Improve Intersections

Completed and ongoing intersection improvement projects along San Pablo Avenue (see **Appendix D**) demonstrate a broad commitment to improve safety and multimodal connectivity. While these efforts addressed important locations, they represent only a portion of a comprehensive, long-term commitment to improving intersections throughout the street. Opportunities remain to expand existing improvements – for example, by adding pedestrian lighting – and to apply consistent safety enhancements across all intersections. The following policies will inform the design and upgrades to San Pablo Avenue and other streets throughout the Plan Area.

Note that improvements to San Pablo Avenue and its intersections with other streets are required to be approved by Caltrans.

T-S.1 Pedestrian Crossing Frequency

In an urban mixed-use area, frequent and safe pedestrian marked crossings are desired. According to the Berkeley Pedestrian Plan (2020), the average distance between marked crosswalks along San Pablo Avenue is 380 feet, with the longest gap reaching 625 feet between Gilman Street and Harrison Street. To improve pedestrian convenience and reduce unsafe crossings at unmarked locations, the City should consider adding mid-block marked crosswalks at locations where crossing distances exceed 600 feet.[22]

- With the expansion of multiple multifamily residential developments between Gilman Street and Harrison Street, the long distance between these intersections makes it a strong candidate for installation of a mid-block crossing to support increased pedestrian activity.
- Other locations to consider new mid-block marked crosswalks include the blocks between Gilman Street and Camelia Street (~600 feet), Cedar Street and Virginia Street (~615 feet), Allston Way and Bancroft Way (~615 feet), and Channing Way and Dwight Way (~590 feet).
- Safe crossing features should align with Policy *T-P.10 Intersection Improvements*.

T-P.9 Pedestrian Crossing Design

Pedestrian crossing design in Berkeley is guided by the Berkeley Pedestrian Plan (2020), Appendix B: Engineering & Design Guidance. Improvements to pedestrian crossings along San Pablo Avenue must also comply with the requirements of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual or receive approval for an exception from Caltrans. The following improvements should be prioritized along San Pablo Avenue:

- **Curb extensions –** Generally, curb extensions into San Pablo Avenue are not appropriate given the potential for future multimodal improvements to use the full roadway width between existing curbs (see T-P.2 for discussion of future multimodal study). For side-street curb extensions, see *T-P.11 Minor Side-Street Intersection Improvements*.

[20] California Department of Transportation. *California Manual for Setting Speed Limits.* Revised March 2025, pp. 19, 31-24

[21] This is consistent with the Berkeley City Council's April 29, 2025 adoption a resolution asking the State Legislature to add the city to the existing program or similar program. (See Resolution No. 17,744-N.S.

[22] City of Berkeley. *Pedestrian Plan Appendix B: Toolbox of Pedestrian Improvements.* Adopted 2020, p. 10

- **Crossing islands** as integral part of medians and crosswalks to shorten the crossing distance.
- **Pedestrian-scale lighting**, where needed per standards PR-P.3.

A map with the crossing locations and improvements is provided in Figure 5.6 *Locations with need for Intersection Improvements*.

T-P.10 Intersection Improvements

San Pablo Avenue has undergone several intersection improvements and continues to be the focus of additional planned improvements led by both Caltrans and Alameda CTC. A follow-up safety study should be explored after the completion of these projects to identify additional locations where improvements are needed and to assess whether any additional elements could enhance the effectiveness of previously implemented upgrades. The following are the types of intersection improvements to consider (Intersection specific lists of potential improvements are in **Appendix D**):

A list of proposed potential intersection improvements is provided in **Appendix D**. The Plan's potential improvements are scoped to build upon those of the San Pablo Avenue Safety Enhancement project which have not been constructed at the time of this Specific Plan's adoption. Other intersection improvements were recently completed. The combination of these changes define the baseline for future transportation design and investment. The list of improvements in **Appendix D** is a compilation of improvements defined by the 2020 Pedestrian Plan and additional potential improvements. This list may be further refined as part of a planned update to the Pedestrian Plan.

Signalized Intersections – These locations should be evaluated for potential improvements such as curb extensions on side-streets, median refuge islands where they do not currently exist, and improved roadway lighting and pedestrian-scale lighting to enhance visibility of people entering and crossing the street. Improvements for bicycles should be considered pursuant to the toolbox recommendations of the Bike Plan, where they do not exist. The need and benefit of adding protected left turns at intersections that lack them should be assessed, along with consideration of right-turn-on-red prohibitions.

Un-Signalized Intersections – These intersections should be evaluated for physical and lighting improvements similar to those listed for signalized intersections. The need for additional or upgraded traffic flashers or signals should be evaluated, such as rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHB), or full traffic signals.

In the long term, as population, pedestrian and bicycle activity increase within the Plan Area, particularly in the Nodes, intersections should be evaluated for the potential addition of full pedestrian signal phases. A full pedestrian phase stops all vehicle traffic while pedestrians cross in all directions, including diagonal crossings, also known as pedestrian scrambles. These signal phases improve pedestrian safety at intersections with high pedestrian volumes and complex turning movements. Detailed guidance on all-way pedestrian crossings is provided in the Berkeley Pedestrian Plan (2020), Appendix B: All-Way Pedestrian Crossings, p. B-18.

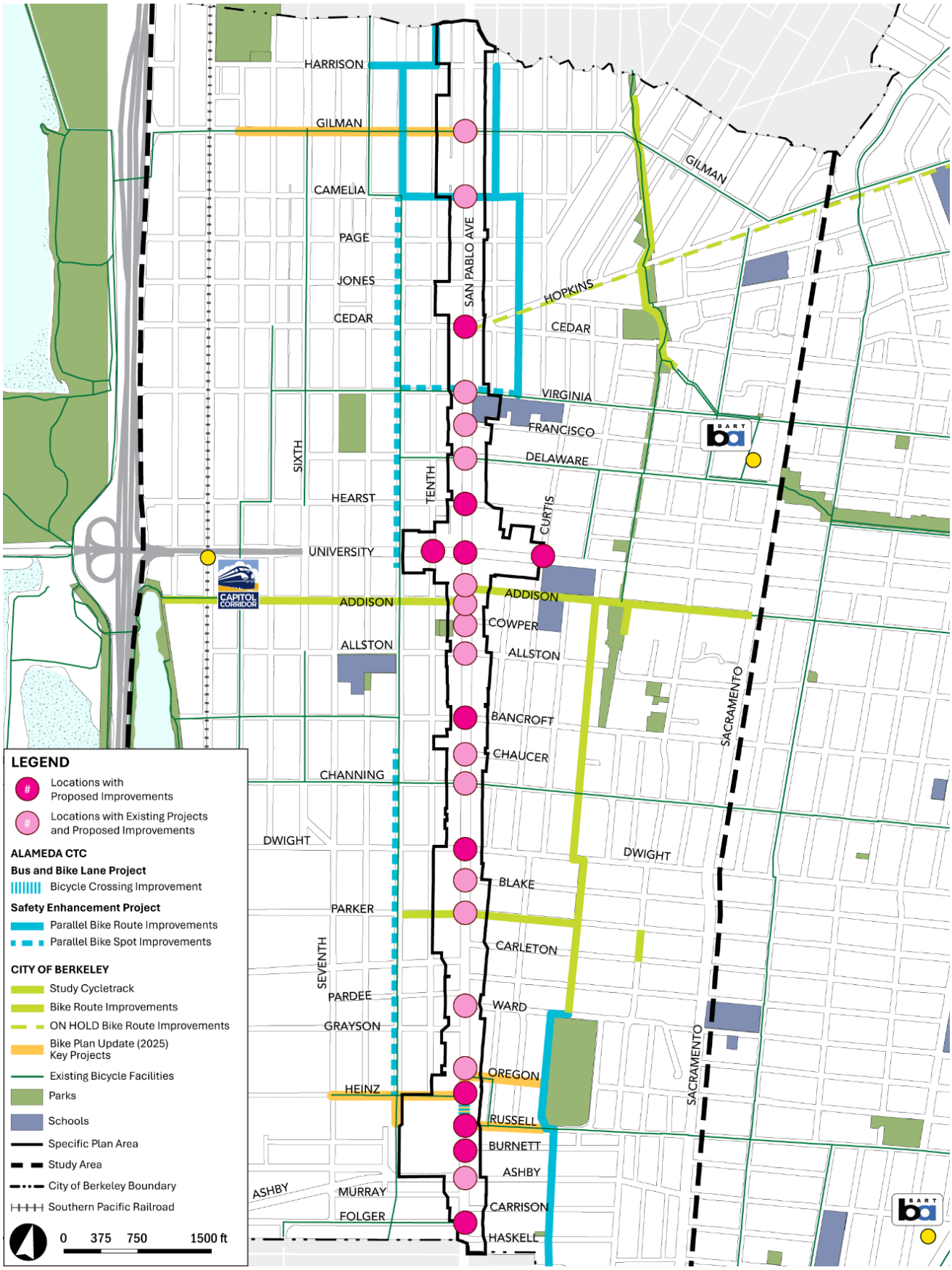


Figure 5.6 Locations with need for Intersection Improvements. For detailed list, see ***Appendix D***

T-P.11 Minor Side-Street Intersection Improvements

The City should review collision data and monitor driver behavior at minor side-street intersections and make improvements as needed. Improvement may include:

- **Raised crosswalks on side-streets** – Elevating the crosswalk between minor side-streets will slow drivers as they enter the minor street. Raising crosswalks should be considered in the context of service and emergency vehicle turn movements. Detailed guidance is provided in the Berkley Pedestrian Plan Appendix B: Toolbox of Pedestrian Improvements, p. B-19.
- **Side-street curb extensions –** When space is available on side-streets provide a curb extension to shorten pedestrian crossing distance. Curb extensions narrow the opening for vehicles and allow for reduced curb radii, which will slow drivers entering the minor street and provide more space for directional curb ramps. Detailed guidance is provided in the Berkley Pedestrian Plan Appendix B: Toolbox of Pedestrian Improvements, p. B-13. (see *PR-S.12 Design and Use of Curb Extensions on Side-Streets* for design and use of curb extensions for public space).
- **Encourage more perpendicular (right-angle) turning movement** at intersections to improve driver visibility of pedestrians in crosswalks. This can be done by extending medians to the crosswalk and providing a median nose to protect the crosswalk where turn movements allow. Intersection legs without medians should have hardened centerlines (see Figure 5.7).

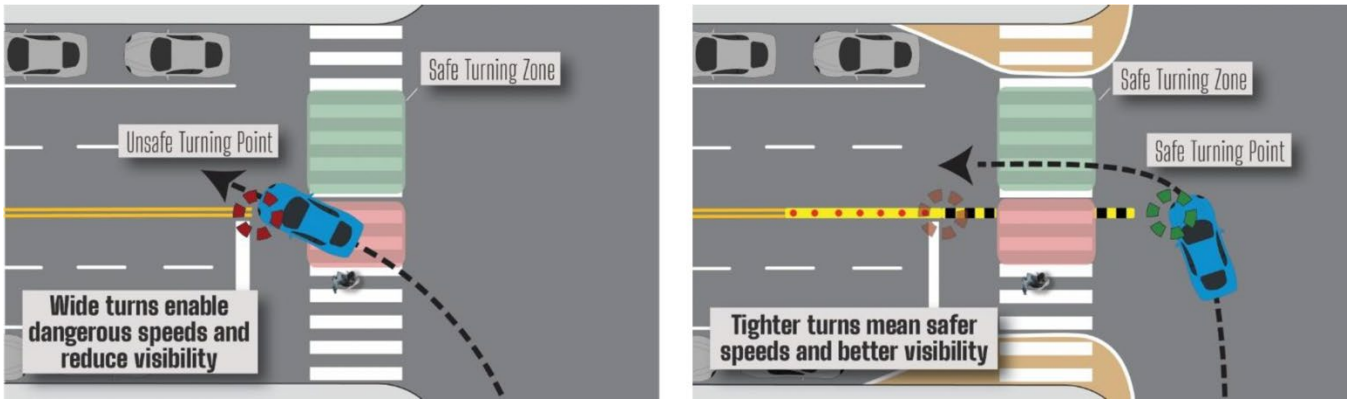


Figure 5.7 Before and after hardened centerline improvement. Source: Chicago.gov

T-P.12 Make Safety Improvements at Driveways

Some driveways in the Specific Plan Area have poor visibility for drivers accessing the street from the parking lot, such as the southern driveway at REI/Chipotle/Walgreens center. Driveways should be assessed for adequate sightlines and red curbs should be provided where sightlines need to be improved. Priority should be given to driveways with more activity and in locations that have a record of collisions.

T-P.13 Prioritizing Multimodal Safety Improvements

The following factors should be used in determining priorities for multimodal safety improvements in the Specific Plan Area.

- San Pablo Avenue intersections with Gilman Street, Cedar Street, University Avenue, Addison Street, and Ashby Avenue which are high-injury streets, as defined in the Vision Zero Plan, 2020, and segments of these streets within the Plan Area (see Figure 5.6). Prioritization of improvements to segments of these streets is discussed in Policy *T-P.17: Prioritize connections*.
- Intersection improvements at Russell Street and Heinz Street are part of Alameda CTC's Bus and Bike Lane Project (**Appendix D**). Improvements for bicycle and pedestrian safety and access are identified in the 2025

Bicycle Plan Update in this area.[23] If the Alameda CTC project is delayed, the City should coordinate with Alameda CTC to pursue more immediate upgrades at these intersection crossings and potential bicycle connection on San Pablo Avenue between the intersections.

- Continuously review transportation collision data and the Annual Vision Zero Report to identify safety "hot spots" for targeted assessment and improvements.
- Prioritize improvements at intersections that serve key connections, in alignment with Policy *T-P.17: Prioritize connections*.

Improve Connections Outside of the Plan Area

Community members consistently described San Pablo Avenue as a barrier separating West Berkeley from the rest of the city. This perception is driven not only by the lack of safe crossings for people walking and biking, but also by the limited number of multimodal, east-west connections to places outside of the Specific Plan Area.

Although several parks are located within a few blocks of San Pablo Avenue, access to these is often hindered by unsafe or indirect pedestrian and bicycle routes. Side-streets that connect current and future residents along San Pablo Avenue to nearby parks and facilities require targeted multimodal improvements. Strengthening these connections will improve equitable access to help overcome the street's physical divide.

Connections Network

Strengthening east-west connections across San Pablo Avenue is essential to linking adjacent neighborhoods with citywide destinations such as schools, parks and transit stations. Figure 5.8 *Connections Map* illustrates the network of planned and completed projects aimed at enhancing these connections. The map identifies potential priority pedestrian and bicycle connections currently missing within the Plan Area and consolidates information from several sources, including the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project, City of Berkeley and BART planned Bicycle Improvements, and the proposed facilities from the Bike Plan Update (2025). A subsequent gap analysis highlights areas where east-west connectivity remains limited and where additional infrastructure investments are needed to support safe and continuous bicycle and transit travel.

Figure 5.9 Street Network Map complements this analysis by providing an overview of existing road designations and emergency access and evacuation routes. Comparing the two maps reveals that many major roadways continue to lack complete multimodal facilities.

[23] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Bicycle Plan update, Public Review Draft, July 2025. Accessed 4 September 2025; page 114 and 115.

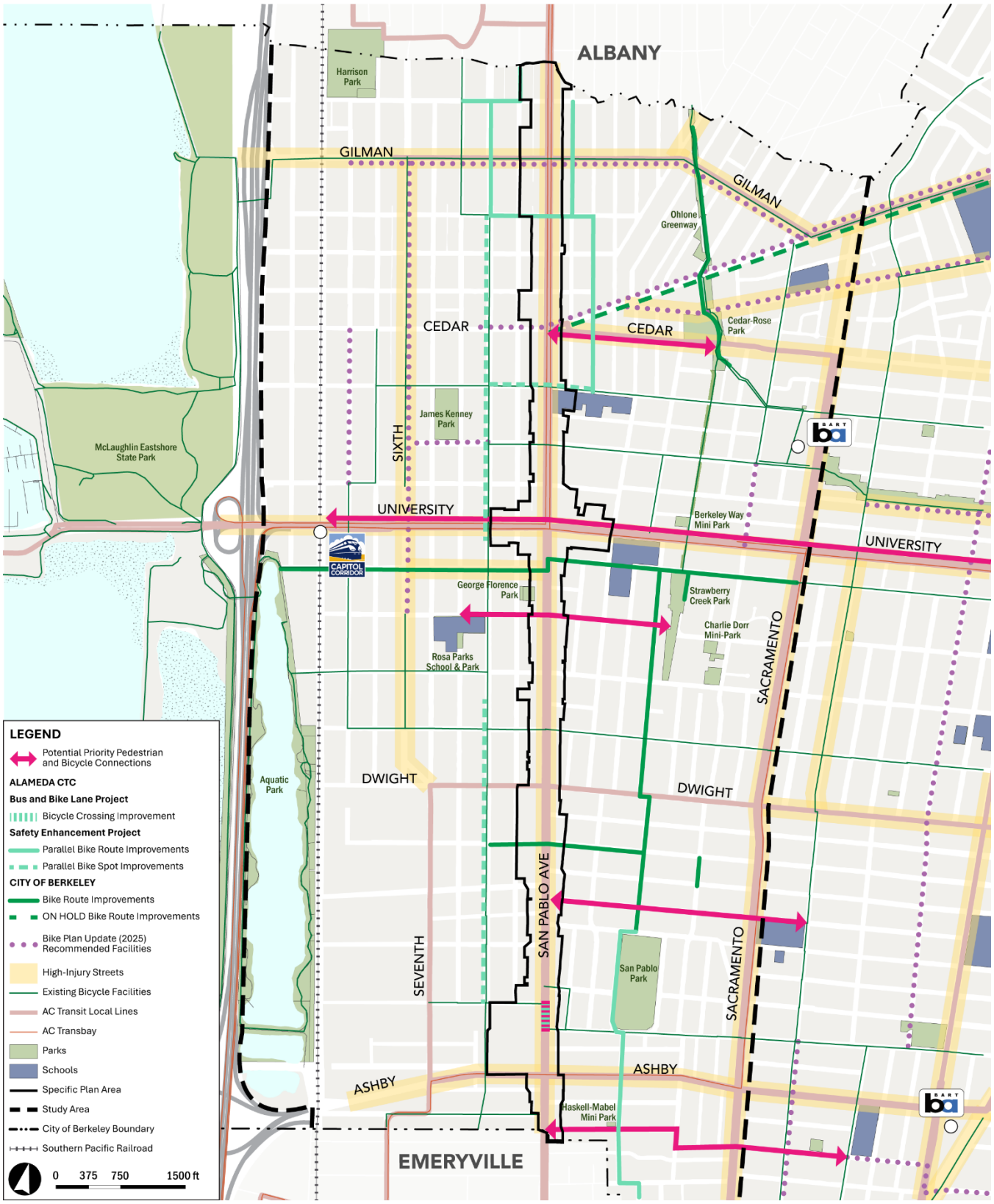


Figure 5.8 Connections Map: Existing and planned Projects. Source: Alameda CTC, AC Transit, City of Berkeley. 2025.

Modal and Functional Policies and Standards



Figure 5.9 Existing Street Network Map. Source: Alameda CTC, City of Berkeley. 2025.

T-P.14 Transit Improvements

The following efforts should be undertaken by the City with partner agencies to improve reliability and efficiency of transit service connecting the Plan Area to BART, UC Berkeley, Downtown Berkeley, and other major destinations:

- In alignment with Transit First Policy 18, explore further study of additional improvements along University Avenue and the Southside area to enhance transit service on Line 51B, strengthening connections between San Pablo Avenue, the Berkeley Amtrak Capitol Corridor Station, Downtown Berkeley, and UC Berkeley.
- Coordinate with AC Transit, BART, and Capitol Corridor to improve connections, reduce transfer wait times, and support future frequency enhancements for east-west bus service that crosses San Pablo Avenue.
- For other transit improvement policies, see section *Multimodal Mobility and Access*.

T-P.15 Bicycle Improvements

In alignment with the Berkeley Bicycle Plan (2017), Bicycle Plan Policy D-1, and consistent with the City's 2025 Bicycle Plan Update, the City should continue to expand and improve a connected, low-stress bikeway network, with emphasis on comfort and safety:

- Improve infrastructure at the intersections at Gilman and Heinz Street, consistent with the City's 2025 Bicycle Plan Update. These intersections are critical for enhancing east-west connectivity and safety. Recommended improvements include studying an extension to the existing cycletrack on Gilman Street from 4th Street to San Pablo Avenue and establishing an offset cycletrack crossing at Heinz Street to connect with Russell or Oregon Street and the larger bicycle boulevard network.
- Improve bicycle access for elementary and middle school students traveling to schools located east and west of San Pablo Avenue. Prioritize infrastructure improvements that create continuous, low-stress routes between neighborhoods and school campuses.
- Enhance bicycle connectivity to regional transit, including a safer and direct link to the Amtrak Capitol Corridor rail station to support multimodal travel options for students, commuters, and residents.
- As bicycle improvements are made, provide bicycle wayfinding and directional signage consistent with standards and guidance in the Berkeley Bike Plan (2020), Appendix F and the 2025 Bicycle Plan Update to help navigate bicycle riders through intersections, and guide them to local and regional destinations. If bike lanes are not established on San Pablo Avenue, bicycle signage on the street should direct cyclists to the nearest bicycle boulevards and parallel routes to provide safe alternatives.

T-P.16 Pedestrian Improvements

In alignment with the Pedestrian Plan (2020), additional improvements in the Specific Plan Area should prioritize comfort, safety, and accessibility for pedestrians:

- Provide crosswalk improvements, traffic calming, and sidewalk upgrades
    - Along key walking corridors for elementary and middle school students, such as Cedar Street, Viginia Street, and Allston Way. Coordinate with any Alameda County Transportation Commission Safe Routes to School Safety Assessment plans.
    - Along key walking routes that are within proximity to transit stops and commercial destinations.
- Provide safe, direct, and accessible pedestrian connections to major employers in West Berkeley, North Berkeley and Ashby BART stations, and the Capitol Corridor rail station.
- For sidewalk standards, see *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards* and other policies and standards in the Sidewalk Space section.

Pedestrian improvements resulting from analysis of an intersection that is already signalized, such as Allston Way, could include extending the San Pablo Avenue median noses towards crosswalks, hardening centerlines on the side-street, and/or installing pedestrian lighting at the corners. These changes would encourage drivers to make safe turning movements to and from San Pablo Avenue and improve visibility of people walking across the streets at night. Other intersections along Allston Way between San Pablo Avenue, Rosa Parks Elementary School and Strawberry Creek Park could also be assessed and improved as needed to enhance connections between these public uses and the Plan Area.

- For pedestrian crossing safety and improvements, see policies and standards in the *Continue to Improve Intersections* section.
- For streetscape improvements to provide lighting, shading, and other amenities for pedestrians, see the Public Realm policies and standards in the *Streetscape* section.

Prioritize Multimodal Connection Improvements and monitor performance

T-P.17 Prioritize Connections with Surrounding Neighborhoods and Districts

As development occurs in the Plan Area, new residents will need safe and comfortable multimodal connection to parks, schools, grocery stores, and other uses in the surrounding community. These connections should be designed to accommodate users of all ages and abilities. The following priorities are based on public comment received during the Specific Plan planning process and expected needs of future residents. Future updates to the citywide Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Plan can verify future residents' needs:

During a public open house, parents with a young child said that they appreciated the proximity of San Pablo Park to their home, a mixed-use apartment on San Pablo Avenue near Ashby Avenue. However, they had decided to move because of the poor quality of the pedestrian connection from their apartment to the park.

- Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements on streets that provide access to schools and parks, as well as other routes that typically serve students in the Plan Area and adjacent neighborhoods to the east and west of San Pablo Avenue.
    - Longfellow Middle School at its temporary location just east of San Pablo Avenue, between Virginia Street and Francisco Street (The School is currently scheduled to return to original location to the east of Sacramento Street between Derby and Ward Streets in Summer 2027)
    - Consider improvements that can serve the Berkeley Adult School and Berkeley Unified School District housing in the longer term.
- Bike boulevards that cross San Pablo Avenue and provide parallel access in adjacent neighborhoods.
- Streets within ¼ or ½ mile of housing for elderly people.
- Prioritize efforts in alignment with San Pablo Avenue improvement priorities discussed in Policy *T-P.13 Prioritizing Multimodal Safety Improvements*.

T-P.18 Monitor Changing Multimodal Needs and Conditions

As multimodal activity and development increase within the Plan Area and surrounding Study Area, the City should coordinate with local, county, regional, and state transportation agency partners to monitor travel patterns and evaluate the need for additional improvements to the connection network, including as needed:

- **Regional traffic –** Coordinate with Caltrans to monitor regional traffic, trips that pass through Berkeley on Plan Area streets and intersections with streets that have interchanges on I-80 to understand its impacts on multimodal safety and mobility.
- **Transit service and use –** Work with AC Transit to monitor travel time and reliability of bus service on streets and routes within the Plan Area that provide connections from the Plan Area to the surrounding communities and region. Periodically survey existing and potential transit riders as the population in the Plan Area grows, to identify their travel needs. Use the results to modify bus service as appropriate to better align with changing demand.
- **Vulnerable user needs –** Monitor changes in land use, demographics, and traffic safety with a focus on vulnerable users, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. For example, if new senior housing or services are developed, evaluate the surrounding streets for needed improvements and consider reprioritizing planned improvements so they are implemented sooner.

This monitoring and assessment should be coordinated with updates to the City's modal plans and will also address multimodal intersections and priority improvement lists that relate to T-P.9, T-P.10, T-P.11 and T-P.13.

Public Realm Policies, Standards, and Projects

The public realm in the Specific Plan Area must satisfy a broad range of transportation, social, and economic needs. The policies, standards, and projects identified in this section, are intended to create an inviting, safe, comfortable, and functional environment along San Pablo Avenue and throughout the Plan Area. The public realm should enable people to move easily and safely along the corridor, whether accessing businesses, transit, homes, parked vehicles or bicycles, and also provide welcoming spaces to meet a friend, exercise, and socialize.

Sidewalk Space



The sidewalk along San Pablo Avenue is typically 13 feet wide with variations in the use and condition of the sidewalk space. In many areas, private landscaping and other encroachments reduce usable space, especially where pavement is damaged around tree wells. These constraints, combined with fast-moving traffic, were frequently raised by community members as safety and comfort concerns. Several mixed-use developments constructed after 2010 include setbacks that expand the sidewalk with additional landscaping or pavement. Encouraging similar setbacks in future development presents one of the few opportunities to increase public space along San Pablo Avenue.

Figure 5.10 Sidewalk Space on San Pablo Avenue in front of 1808 San Pablo Avenue.

A well-designed sidewalk needs to provide enough space for safe, comfortable, and active use by all. The following policies and standards are intended to ensure that new development supports accessibility, safety, and vibrant pedestrian activity. The following policies and standards apply specifically to San Pablo Avenue and immediate side-streets, where noted. For guidance on other streets, refer to the Berkeley Pedestrian Plan (2020), Appendix B Engineering & Design Guidance.

PR-P.1 Sidewalk Zones

To serve the range of uses and infrastructure located within sidewalks, design standards define three zones across the sidewalk width: the Pedestrian Zone, the Amenity Zone, and the Frontage Zone (see Figures 5.11 and 5.12 *Sidewalk Zone examples*). San Pablo Avenue is a state highway, so Caltrans has jurisdiction over the entire right-of-way, including sidewalks. The City, however, is responsible for ongoing sidewalk maintenance and may implement improvements in coordination with Caltrans.

The Berkeley Pedestrian Plan (2020) defines preferred widths for these zones for a Mixed-Use Residential Boulevard like San Pablo Avenue as follows:

- Frontage Zone: 2 feet
- Pedestrian Zone: 8 to 12 feet
- Amenity Zone: 6 to 10 feet
- Total Sidewalk: 16 to 24 feet

The existing sidewalks along San Pablo Avenue, typically 13 feet wide, are 3 feet narrower than the desired minimum width defined in the Pedestrian Plan. **There is no ability to significantly widen the sidewalk area within the existing public right of way.**

To address this constraint, the Plan standards define a flexible approach to best meet the intentions of the Pedestrian Plan guidance. There are some limited segments of sidewalk that are 12 feet wide at the narrowest. In these locations there will be a need to balance the zones of the sidewalk to best meet the standards and land use, depending on the specific location. Policy *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards* provides minimum widths for sidewalk zones along San

Pablo Avenue. Policy *PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements* and standard *LU-S.1 Sidewalk Expansion Incentive* define a way to achieve additional sidewalk width adjacent to new development.

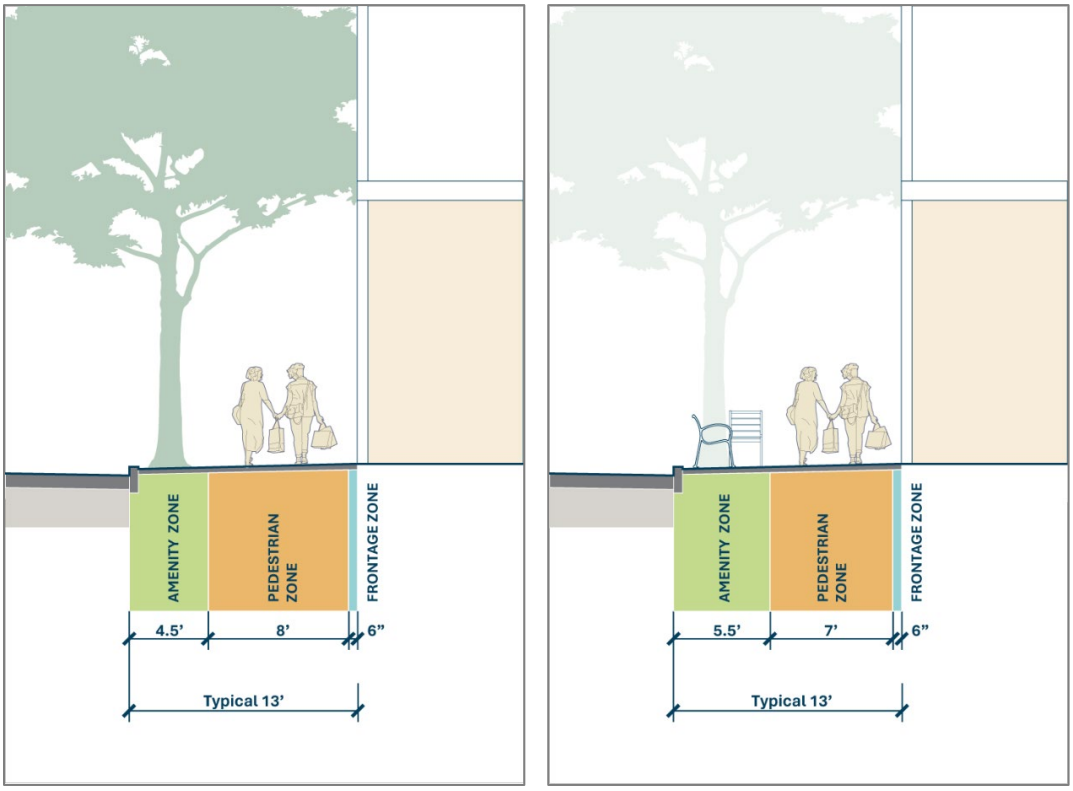


Figure 5.11 Left: Section A - Sidewalk at tree well. Right: Section B – Sidewalk with public seating

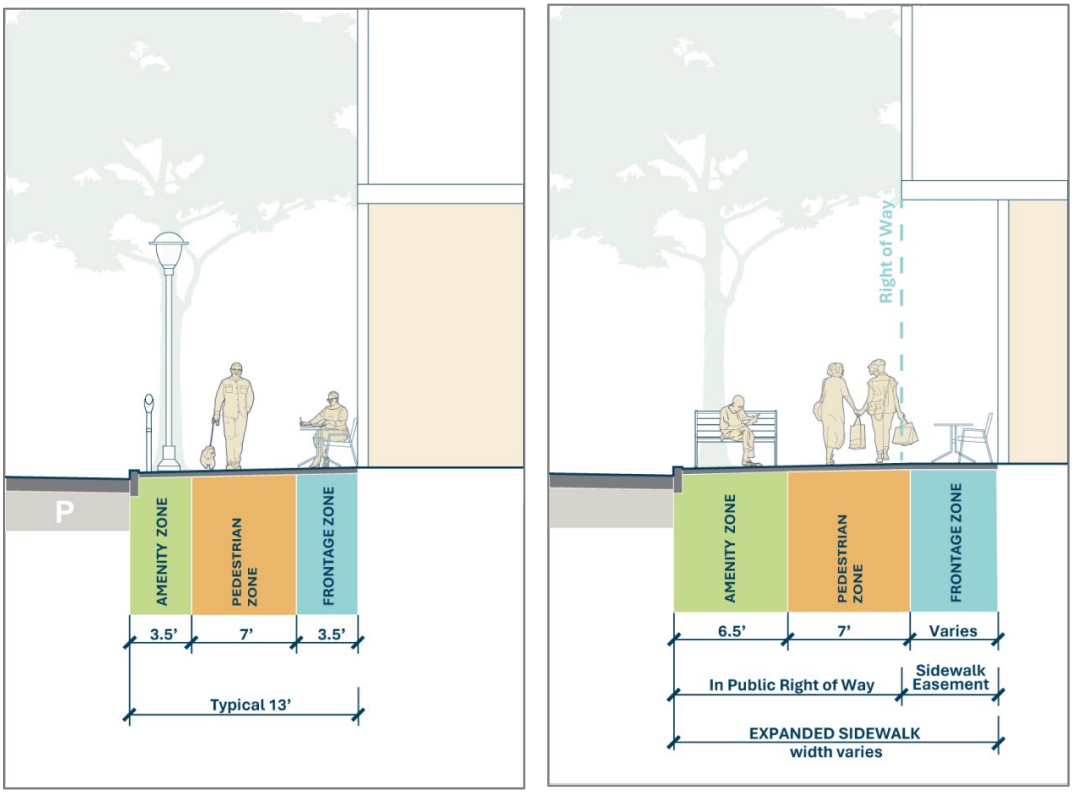


Figure 5.12 Left: Section C – Outdoor seating in the right-of way. Right: Section D – Sidewalk expansion

PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards

Pedestrian Zone: This is the unobstructed portion of the sidewalk designated for pedestrian movement.

- **In Nodes** on San Pablo and University Avenues, the minimum width is 7 feet to allow for higher levels of pedestrian activity.
- **Outside of Nodes**, 7 feet is preferred in active locations, with a minimum of 6 feet. Due to the existing right-of- way constraints, the Pedestrian Zone may be offset along the street to accommodate different sidewalk space needs in the Amenity and Frontage Zones.



Figure 5.13 Example of the sidewalk zones.

Amenity Zone: This is the zone between the street and the Pedestrian Zone that provides space for street tree wells, public seating, bicycle parking, bus shelters, streetlights and signal poles, utility boxes and panels, trash/recycling containers, and other streetscape elements. This zone includes the six-inch curb at the edge of the sidewalk. The width may vary as needed while ensuring the adjacent Pedestrian Zone meets minimum pedestrian clearance requirements.

- The Amenity Zone should be at least 4.5 feet wide to accommodate a minimum 4-foot wide tree well. A width of 5.5 feet allows space for benches or other sidewalk seating for social interaction (see Figure 5.11 Section B).
- The width may be reduced to a minimum of 3.5 feet where the adjacent Frontage Zone in the public right of way is 3 feet wide, see Frontage Zone below.

Frontage Zone: This is the zone between the Pedestrian Zone and adjacent property. Its width may vary depending on site conditions and may be extended where a frontage setback or easement on private property provides additional space. This zone can accommodate features such as outdoor seating, additional landscaping, or expanded general sidewalk space.

- The Frontage Zone shall be a minimum of 6 inches wide to provide a buffer between people walking in the Pedestrian Zone and adjacent buildings on private property.
- If an adjacent business applies for and receives an encroachment permit, the zone may extend up to 3 feet into the sidewalk, provided this does not conflict with the required Pedestrian Zone width (see Figure 5.12. Section C).
- The Frontage Zone may extend beyond the right-of-way when the adjacent property grants a public access easement within the setback area (see Policy *PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements* and Figure 5.12 Section D). It may also be widened into an adjacent Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Open Space (POPOS) (see Policy *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces*).
- A maximum of 20% of the frontage width may be permanent in the ground or raised landscaped areas. Pots and other above-ground planters that can be easily removed and have sidewalk below them are preferred for flexibility of use over time, and may result in a maximum of 30% of the frontage width being landscaped areas.

PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements

Widening sidewalks is a key strategy to improve pedestrian comfort. Increasing the distance between the walkway and roadway allows more space for trees, landscaping and other amenities in the Amenity Zone, while also creating more space for social activity within the public realm. In some locations, recent mixed-use residential developments have incorporated frontage setbacks that effectively widen the sidewalk, enhancing the pedestrian experience and contributing to more attractive streetscape (see Figure 5.14 example images). Widening of the sidewalk with an easement is encouraged and supported by *LU-S.1 Sidewalk Expansion Incentive*.



Figure 5.14 Examples of mixed-use residential developments with easement setbacks.
Left: "Bloom Berkeley" 2747 San Pablo Avenue. Right: "The Jones" 2748 San Pablo Avenue.

Where developments provide an easement widening the sidewalk, the additional space can be allocated to any of the sidewalk zones. For example, the Amenity Zone could be widened to allow for additional landscaping and seating, or the Frontage Zone could be widened to accommodate public seating, outdoor dining, or amenities for an adjacent bus stop (see Figure 5.15 *Frontage zone*). Improvements within the frontage zone must be installed and maintained by the property owner or adjacent business.

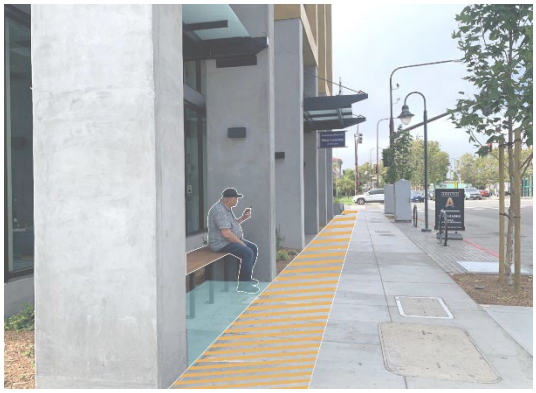


Figure 5.15 Frontage zone includes decorative elements, outdoor seating, and a bus bench. "Aquatic at Ashby", 3000 San Pablo Avenue.

PR-S.2 Reestablish Sidewalk Width

In several locations along San Pablo Avenue, sidewalks are less than 13 feet wide between the face of curb and landscape along adjacent property frontages. There are a limited number of locations where older buildings are less than 13 feet from face of curb, and these conditions will likely remain. If these locations lack an approved encroachment permit, the full sidewalk width should be reestablished over time as public improvements are made, and as adjacent properties are redeveloped or building permit applications are filed.

Streetscape

The Specific Plan updates streetscape standards to improve San Pablo Avenue's quality and identity of the public realm, and to support the economic and social vitality of the Plan Area. These streetscape standards build upon and update the San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan (2003) and include revised standards on pedestrian-scale lighting, street furnishing, bus stop improvements, medians, trees, and landscaping. Elements of the streetscape standards apply to side-streets within the Specific Plan Area, particularly to University Avenue.

Lighting

Improving pedestrian lighting along San Pablo Avenue was the most consistent need expressed by community members during the Plan process. Existing streetlights are mostly designed to light the roadway and intersections, leaving sidewalks dimly lit, unless there is light spilling from storefronts, nearby buildings, or the occasional pedestrian fixture at a bus stop. This issue was raised in the 2004 San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan, which proposed new lighting standards. While some private developments have added pedestrian-scale lighting, no comprehensive public investment has yet been made. There are similar existing lighting conditions on other streets within the Specific Plan Area. The City has been preparing a citywide streetlighting standards document but it has not been fully drafted to date. The following recommendations should be considered as the standards are finalized.



Figure 5.16 Pedestrian Light. Source: San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan, 2004



Figure 5.17 Example of Pedestrian scale lighting. "Aquatic at Ashby", 3000 San Pablo Avenue.

PR-P.3 Improve Street Lighting for the Safety and Comfort of All Users

The following policies and design recommendations build upon those of the 2004 San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan.

Roadway and Pedestrian-Realm Lighting

To cost-effectively improve lighting within the Plan Area, the City should implement the design approach defined in the Public Improvement Plan, which calls for the maintenance and incremental improvement of existing roadway lighting. This approach includes attaching pedestrian pendent lights to the existing roadway poles and painting the roadway poles and fixtures the color defined below (see Figure 5.16). Depending on roadway pole spacing, one or two 12-foot poles with pedestrian pendant lights should be added between roadway poles. The pendant lights should extend over the sidewalk, positioned below the mature tree canopy to maximize the illumination of the public realm.

Pedestrian-scale Light Fixture: Selux, Beta Pendant LED with pole mount fitter or single arm as appropriate (see Figure 5.16).

Color: RAL 5008 dark slate blue

Lighting Analysis: Scoping, funding, and implementation of street improvement projects should include a lighting analysis of existing lighting conditions within the project area so that lighting improvements can be implemented as part of the project where feasible.

Lighting Levels: The following recommended light levels are informed by lighting standards from other Bay Area cities and can be revised through technical analysis and future development of citywide standards.

Location	Minimum		Optimum[1]	
	Illuminance (footcandles)	Uniformity Ratio (avg. to min.)	Illuminance (footcandles)	Uniformity Ratio (avg. to min.)
San Pablo Avenue, Gilman Street, University Avenue, and Ashby Avenue	1.5	3:1	2.5	2:1
Hopkins Street, Cedar Street, and Dwight Way with C-SP frontage	1.1	4:1	1.8	3:1
Other streets in Plan Area	0.8	6:1	1.2	4:1
Transit Areas[2]	2.0	3:1	3.0	2:1

Notes:

1. When installed or until end of maximum lighting with smart lighting systems.
2. On both sides of the street within one block of bus stops on San Pablo Avenue, Gilman Street, University Avenue, and Ashby Avenue, and within one-half block on both sides of the street for bus stops on other Plan Area streets.

Smart Lighting Systems

The City should pursue grants and other funding to implement a smart lighting system on San Pablo Avenue and throughout the Plan Area to maximize the utility and efficiency of the street and public realm lighting. Smart lighting systems allow for centralized control and management of lighting. Lighting levels can be programmed and automatically adjusted based on time of day, season, ambient light level sensors, motion detectors, and other relevant factors. These systems also monitor the condition and performance of lighting equipment, improving lighting management, energy efficiency, and maintenance.

Landscaping

The street tree canopy, mature street tree canopy and landscaped medians of San Pablo and University Avenues are defining features of their visual identity. The community views these as valued assets giving the streets their unique character (see Figure 5.18). However, the tree canopy is inconsistent, with noticeable gaps and maintenance issues affecting both trees and tree wells. Beyond the medians, public landscaping is limited. In some locations, adjacent property owners and tenants maintain landscape along their frontages, which sometimes narrows the available sidewalk width.



Figure 5.18 Left: Mature street trees grew to the same height as this four-story mixed-use building. Right: Tree canopy cover

Many of the existing gaps and maintenance issues were identified previously in the 2004 San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan. Since then, some improvements have been advanced through private initiative or targeted city investments, but funding constraints have limited the extent of implementation. The Plan builds on these earlier recommendations to guide future public realm improvements.

Since 2004, landscape standards and requirements have evolved to reflect new priorities. These include new irrigation standards, and requirements for landscaping that captures and treats stormwater runoff from development

and street projects. Current best practices emphasize water-efficient plant selection and species that can thrive under global climate change impacts, such as changes to local rainfall, higher average temperatures, and other factors. The Plan updates those outlined in the 2004 Improvement Plan to reflect these practices.

Additional policies, standards, and implementation strategies address the issues of capital, maintenance cost and responsibilities for landscaping within the Specific Plan Area.

Street Trees

PR-P.4 Enhance Tree Health and Expand Tree Canopy

Existing street trees should be well maintained, and their positive impact on the public realm should be enhanced by planting additional trees and other landscaping. Establishing a consistent and continuous tree canopy along sidewalks and medians will strengthen the Plan Area's character, improve pedestrian comfort, help to reduce urban heat island effect, and address the community's desire for a greener environment.

The **tree canopy** should be as continuous as possible with mature tree canopies touching those of adjacent trees. Breaks may occur at roadway street light locations. Pedestrian-scale lighting is to be installed below the mature tree canopy to minimize conflicts.

Street tree planting shall follow the City of Berkeley standard details, including tree well modifications described below, which define additions and some exceptions to citywide standards as they apply to specific street sidewalks and median conditions in the Plan Area.

Tree wells should be as large as feasible and meet the minimum standards for specific streets described in the standards below. Maximizing tree well size supports the long-term tree health and offer opportunities for additional plantings.

- In Nodes, along University Avenue within the Specific Plan Area, and within proximity to bus stops and other high pedestrian activity areas, tree well should be "filled" with flexible porous pavement. This material allows water and oxygen to reach the soil and roots to maintain tree health, while the pavement surface provides a level, walkable and ADA compliant surface (see Figure 5.19).
- In areas with less pedestrian activity, gravel mulch and other plantings can enhance visual interest.
- See PR-S.6 *Landscaping in Tree Wells and Planters,* below for further discussion.



Figure 5.19 Flexible porous pavement in downtown Berkeley tree well

PR-S.3 San Pablo Avenue Tree Standards

Some of the most comfortable and engaging blocks along San Pablo Avenue feature large mature trees in the sidewalks and medians that form a full tree canopy across the street. This canopy creates a human scaled streetscape (see Figure 5.20). As taller mixed-use buildings are built along San Pablo Avenue, expanding the street tree canopy will soften the perceived scale of these structures and enhance the character of the public realm and provide meaningful urban greening.



Figure 5.20 Trees in San Pablo Avenue sidewalk south of University Avenue

Tree species. The predominant tree species along San Pablo Avenue are London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*), Western Sycamore (Platanus racemosa), American Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and Red Sunset Red Maple (*Acer rubrum 'Franksred'*). Other trees and smaller tree species are also present. However, several trees, particularly the American Sweet Gums, are in decline or poor condition. While Ginkgo biloba trees have also been planted, they tend to grow slowly and do not achieve the desired large and rounded form.

- London Plane trees should be prioritized for new plantings and when existing trees are replaced, continuing the standards of the San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan (2003) which this Specific Plan replaces.
- To avoid a monoculture of tree species, different cultivars such as 'Exclamation' and 'Columbia', which can grow wide and up to 50' tall can be planted. Western Sycamore is another alternative to support more diversity of tree species.
- In locations where these species are not suitable, as determined by the City forestry staff, a deciduous tree similar to the London Plane in height and canopy width should be selected. Red Maple trees are one example with appropriate cultivars and some Red Sunset Maples are already planted along San Pablo Avenue.
- If tree size is the limiting factor, a tree that will reach the largest possible size given the specific location conditions should be selected, and tree spacing should be adjusted to maintain a more continuous tree canopy.

Trees in Medians. The size and placement of trees in San Pablo Avenue's medians are governed by the Caltrans Highway Design Manual and other Caltrans Standards. The full-width medians along San Pablo Avenue are typically 13 feet wide. Caltrans Standards require a minimum clearance of 5 feet from median curb face to the tree trunk of a mature tree. The trees recommended above satisfy this requirement.

Tree Trimming Maintenance. Branches of existing mature trees in sidewalk locations should not reach lower than 14 feet above the adjacent roadway or sidewalk level. This provides the vertical clearance required by Caltrans for street traffic, provides visibility to storefronts and signs, and reduces shadowing of pedestrian-scaled and storefront lighting.

Tree Wells. The predominant size of existing tree wells along San Pablo Avenue is 3 x 3 feet and undersized for large canopy trees (see Figure 5.21).

- A minimum size of 4 x 6 feet is required for new wells, with the longer dimension oriented parallel to the curb.
- Where possible, a 4 x 8 foot tree well is desirable.
- The 4 foot dimension can also be wider in many cases given other standards defined for sidewalk use (see Policy *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards)*.
- See Policy *PR-P.4 Enhance Tree Health and Expand Tree Canopy* for more details about tree well materials and *PR-S.6 Landscaping in Tree Wells and Planters* for landscaping.



Figure 5.21 Tree on San Pablo Avenue overgrowing a 3 foot by 3 foot tree well

PR-S.4 University Avenue Tree Standards

On University Avenue between 9th and Curtis Streets is within the Specific Plan Area, sidewalks are 10 feet wide, narrower than those along San Pablo Avenue. The median between 10th Street and San Pablo Avenue contains an extended left-turn lane and only one tree.

Tree Species and Spacing. Existing trees along this section of University Avenue are of various species. Chinese Elm trees (*Ulmus parvifolia, Ulmnus 'Frontier' and other varieties*) are most common, accompanied by Tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and Honey Locusts (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). Many trees are in poor health. Elm trees with a large mature vase-shaped form, such as Allee Elm (Ulmus parvifolia 'Emer ll'), should be prioritized for replacement and new plantings. As tree health is evaluated, new trees should be added to create a continuous tree canopy with a spacing that allows mature tree canopies to touch those of adjacent trees.

Trees in Medians. The medians are planted with various California natives. Coast Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) have performed the best, while California Buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and Blue Blossom Ceanothus (*Ceanothus thyrsiflorus*) are in poorer condition. Narrow, medium-sized, drought-tolerant deciduous oaks, such as Chisos Red Oak (*Quercus gravesii*) or Spanish Oak (*Quercus cerrioides)* should be used as replacement species.

Tree Trimming Maintenance. Branches of existing mature trees in sidewalk locations should not reach lower than 14 feet above the adjacent roadway or sidewalk level. This provides the vertical clearance needed, given bus and truck traffic on this street, provides visibility to storefronts and signage, and reduces shadowing of pedestrian-scaled and storefront lighting.

Tree Wells. The predominant size of existing tree wells along this part of University Avenue is 3 x 3 feet and undersized for large canopy trees.

- The minimum size of 4 x 6 feet is required for new wells, with the longer dimension oriented parallel to the curb.
- Where possible, a 4 x 8 foot tree well is desirable.
- Given the narrower typically 10 foot sidewalk width along University Avenue the tree wells should use flexible porous pavement in order to provide the desired 6 foot minimum width for the sidewalk's Pedestrian Zone that meets universal access design considerations.
- See Policy *PR-P.4 Enhance Tree Health and Expand Tree Canopy* for more details about tree well materials and *PR-S.6 Landscaping in tree wells and planters* for landscaping.

PR-S.5 Other Side-Street Trees

A wide variety of tree species are planted on streets intersecting San Pablo Avenue. The following design standards apply to those portions of the intersecting streets, except for University Avenue, which fall within the Plan Area. For University Avenue, see PR S.4 *University Avenue Tree Standards* above.

Tree Species and Spacing

- Outside of Nodes, side-street trees adjacent to properties that front or side onto San Pablo Avenue should match the species planted on the adjoining block face of San Pablo Avenue, unless sidewalk widths, utility lines, or other site conditions make this infeasible.
- In Nodes, street trees should match the adjacent San Pablo Avenue species for the length of the sidewalk that is within the Plan Area.
- If San Pablo Avenue tree species are infeasible, trees should match the predominant species already established along the side-street.

Tree Wells. Sidewalk widths vary along side-streets, resulting in different tree well sizes.

- A minimum tree well size of 4 x 6 foot, as defined for San Pablo Avenue, is preferred.
- Where sidewalks widths are too narrow to provide both a 5-foot-wide Pedestrian Zone with a 4-foot-wide tree well, the size of the tree wells may be reduced in size or filled with flexible porous pavement. This pavement allows the Pedestrian Zone to overlap into the tree well.
- *PR-P.4 Enhance Tree Health and Expand Tree Canopy* for more details about tree well materials and *PR-S.6 Landscaping in tree wells and planters* for landscaping.

PR-P.5 Enhance and Expand Other Landscaping

Beyond street trees, the landscape character of the Plan Area is defined by other plantings in the medians and some street tree wells, and other small areas of plantings along the sidewalk. As the Plan is implemented, additional opportunities for landscaping may arise in new curb extensions, partial and full side-street plazas (see Policy *PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas*), planters in the sidewalk Amenities and Frontage Zones, and in Privately-owned public open spaces (see Policy *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces*).

In the future, should a Community Benefit or Business Improvement District form within a portion of the Specific Plan Area this organization could negotiate an agreement with the City to improve and maintain landscaping within the sidewalk, median, and other landscaped areas within the public right-of-way. See Policy *ED-P.4 Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID*).

PR-S.6 Landscaping in tree wells and planters

Where tree wells do not need to be filled with flexible porous pavement, tree wells can be planted to create a distinct identity for locations along San Pablo Avenue (see Figure 5.22).

- Plantings in tree wells, except for the tree itself, will not be maintained by the City. Tree wells with landscape planting need to be maintained by adjacent property owners, residents, businesses, tenants, or a future Community Benefit or Business Improvement District.
- Planting of a tree well shall comply with Specific Plan standards and the requirements of the Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 12.44 Trees and Shrubs.
- Plantings shall not impede public use of other sidewalk areas, such as adjacent Pedestrian and Amenity Zones.



Figure 5.22 Additional landscape in large tree well on San Pablo Avenue.

Landscaping in medians

Full-width and narrow width landscaped medians are generally planted with grass and not irrigated along San Pablo Avenue. Narrow medians next to left turn lanes vary in conditions with some narrow medians having hedges, which were once a dominant treatment, but these have not been consistently replaced as they die or become damaged. Where narrow medians next to left-turn lanes have been modified, they have typically been paved with concrete.

Although the grass and tree treatment in the medians positively impact the character of San Pablo Avenue, during dryer times of the year the appearance of the grass deteriorates. Maintaining green grass would require regular irrigation which is not environmentally appropriate, and existing irrigation systems are not currently in use. In addition, the grass requires regular mowing and other maintenance. A more sustainable and climate-resilient approach would involve replacing grass over time with a low- water drought-tolerant landscape treatment that can adapt to climate change and not require irrigation after the plants are established.



Figure 5.23 Median landscape on San Pablo Avenue

PR-P.6 Near-term Opportunities for Re-landscaping medians

Significant investment in median relandscaping is not advisable in the near-term given the potential for future multimodal transportation projects along San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley. However, when opportunities arise through smaller transportation improvement projects, the City should replant sections of medians using landscape design treatments that reflect the **long-term landscaped median design** vision. These demonstration segments can help build support and establish precedent.

PR-P.7 Long-term landscaped median design

In the long-term, landscape medians along San Pablo Avenue should be aesthetically pleasing, low-maintenance, and free of irrigation. The design should include a ground cover of crushed rock or wood mulch, with trees and low-water, drought-tolerant, low growing shrubs, grasses, succulents, and other plantings. Suitable species may include mat rush (*Lomandra species*), California yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), aloe (*Aloe species*), finger aloe (*Cotyledon orbiculata var. oblonga 'Flavida'*), and *Majorcan germander* (teucrium cosonii). Berkeley's Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department will take a lead role in determining which plant species are most appropriate for long-term landscaping in medians.

Green Infrastructure

Transportation improvements and other construction within Specific Plan Area that meet specific criteria must include green infrastructure consistent with the Caltrans NPDES Order 2022-0033-DWQ Stormwater Permit when within the Caltrans right of way of San Pablo Avenue and the Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit Order No. R2-2022-0018 (MRP 3.0) when in city right of way or private property. Green infrastructure is a sustainable landscape and civil engineering improvement that captures, slows, and treats stormwater runoff with a primary goal of reducing pollutants entering the San Francisco Bay.[24] Green infrastructure systems support Berkeley's climate change and sustainability goals. The City's Green Infrastructure Plan (2019) includes guidelines for implementation of green infrastructure in Berkeley and should be referred to during the planning and design phases of both streetscape improvement and private development projects in the Specific Plan Area.

[24] San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, Stormwater webpage, accessed June 30, 2025.

PR-P.8 Green Infrastructure in Public Projects

All publicly funded projects must meet the requirements of the current MRP and/or the Caltrans NPDES permit as applicable. In addition to fulfilling the Specific Plan's public realm policies and standards, green infrastructure should contribute positively to pedestrian comfort and safety.

- Design approaches may include permeable or porous pavement materials to maintain required sidewalk widths, and use of tree wells, and can be integrated into side-street curb extensions and side-street plazas if Caltrans and the City reach a maintenance agreement for specific improvements.
- See *T-P.11 Minor Side-Street Intersection Improvements*, and *PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas* for design related policies and standards.

PR-P.9 Green Infrastructure in Private Development

Private development projects are also required to meet the requirements of the current MRP. The Plan supports and provides flexibility for private development to fund and integrate public spaces that serve dual purposes for stormwater management and the community.

- Green infrastructure that serves to treat private property stormwater can be integrated into the public realm and may be included in side-street curb extensions, see *T-P.11 Minor Side-Street Intersection Improvements*, or within *PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements*, *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces*, *PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas* for design related policies and standards
- When a development constructs green infrastructure in the public right of way the property owner must enter into a maintenance agreement with the City. Then the improvement may be used towards the project's stormwater compliance requirements with the concurrence of the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Street Furniture

PR-S.7 Public Seating

Public seating may be installed within the Furniture Zone of the sidewalk or integrated into *curb extensions on side-streets* (see T-P.11) and *PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas*. Seating must not encroach into the Pedestrian Zone, which shall remain clear as required in *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*. Public seating must provide wheelchair-accessible space per the requirements of Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). These standards are in addition to, not a replacement of, Berkeley Municipal Code 14.48.150 Sidewalk seating, benches and planters.

Placement. Benches in the Furniture Zone should face away from the street. Alternatively, there may be pairs of short benches placed perpendicular to the street and face each other to allow for a small group gatherings.

Developments along San Pablo Avenue have introduced public-facing elements such as benches or seating areas within the ground floor setbacks. While located on private property, these spaces are accessible to the public.

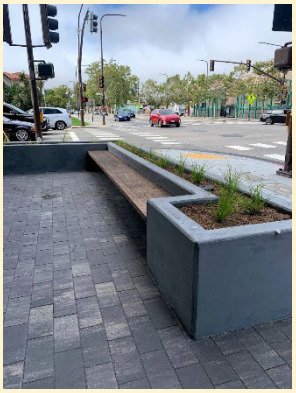




Figure 5.24 Left: Seating Wall at 3000 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. Right: Bench variations of LandscapeForms Scarborough bench in Downtown Berkeley.

Style.

- Benches provided and maintained by the City shall be "Landscape Forms Scarborough" bench in black. This bench model is available in four standard lengths in both back or backless versions. These benches have been used in the Shattuck Avenue reconstruction project in Downtown Berkeley and other improvements in Berkeley. Using the same model on San Pablo Avenue will streamline city maintenance.
- Benches or other public seating installed and maintained by adjacent property owner or businesses may be custom design or an alternative style. All seating and street furniture must be approved by the City through their sidewalk seating application process.[25] The applicant is responsible for installation and ongoing maintenance. Privately installed public seating shall satisfy the requirements and guidance of PROWAG and other ADA requirements.
- Seating in curb extensions and side-street plazas can be integrated into planter walls that are part of green infrastructure systems, or consist of movable tables and chairs or other context-sensitive design.

PR-S.8 Trash and Recycling Receptacles

City-standard trash and recycling receptacles shall be placed in the sidewalk Furniture Zone or integrated into curb extensions on side-streets and side-street Plazas**.**

Style. The color and design of public must follow the citywide standard and be Forms + Surfaces "Modified Urban Renaissance" model with upper integrated recycler module in dark green color or approved equal. [Picture of type.]

- *Privately Owned Public Open Spaces*, shall have adequate receptacles and may be of a different manufacture and model as they will be maintained by the property owner.



Figure 5.24a Trash Receptacle

Placement.

- In designated Nodes, where foot traffic and stores are more frequent, two (2) city-standard receptacles should be installed per intersection, on opposite sides of the street.
- Between designated Nodes, one city-standard receptable should be installed per block face. Consider placement at bus stops or locations where trash may otherwise accumulate.
- Businesses, property owners, and future Community Benefit or Business Improvement Districts may place and maintain refuse cans in the public right of way if they have a maintance agreement with the City.

PR-S.9 Bicycle Racks

Bicycle racks along streets in the Specific Plan Area shall be placed in the Furniture Zone and meet the clearance and space standards outlined in the Berkeley Bicycle Plan, Appendix F.[26]

Style. All racks in the right-of-way must be a city-approved design. The color may be black or galvanized as in other parts of the city.



Figure 5.24b Bicycle Rack

Placement.

- The City of Berkeley offers a bike rack installation program to improve bicycle access to local businesses and destinations. Through this program, the City installs bike racks on sidewalks in commercial areas at no cost to property or business owners. Business owners and community members can request new

[25] City of Berkeley. *Outdoor Commerce, Sidewalk Seating, and Parklets.*

[26] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Bicycle Plan, Appendix F Facility Design Toolbox. Adopted 2017, p. F-106

bike racks in areas where demand exists, or existing bicycle parking is insufficient. The application procedures are available on the City's website.

- Private development projects may install bike racks in the public right of way adjacent to their developments with approval of the Public Works Department

PR-S.10 Raised Planters

Raised planters can enhance the streetscape by adding greenery and visual interest, providing a buffer from the roadway, and expressing community care for public space.

- Raised planters may be used in the Frontage Zone, curb extensions, plazas, side-street plazas, and privately owned public open spaces, with planters edges offering opportunities for informal seating.
- Freestanding planter pots allow for flexible placement as single installations or groupings.
- All planters must be stable and secure to prevent tipping or shifting.
- Planters shall not encroach into the Pedestrian Zone maintain the sidewalk clearance specified in *PR-S.1* Sidewalk Zone Standards.
- Planters shall maintain required clearances from face of curb.
- Planters and low walls should not exceed 30 inches in height from sidewalk grade, and the combined height of planter and landscaping shall not exceed 36 inches above the sidewalk when within 20 feet of an intersection or 10 feet of a driveway to provide line of sight between pedestrians and vehicle drivers.

PR-P.10 Other Street Furnishings

Additional public street furnishings, such as public restrooms or information kiosks, may be installed in the right-of-way where an identified need exists. These furnishings must be designed and located in accordance with the *PR-P.1 Sidewalk Zones* and all other applicable standards and policies in this document.

Bus Stop Improvements

To support use of bus transit along San Pablo Avenue and throughout Berkeley and its agency partners, AC Transit and Alameda CTC, have been planning and building bus stop improvements. Improvements include new shelters, benches, lighting, and other improvements to adjacent intersections and crosswalks. Within the Plan Area, bus stop improvements will be made as part of the San Pablo Avenue Safety Enhancement project. The improvements are focused on stops that are used by limited-stop bus routes. These efforts are achieving the goals of Berkeley's *Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan* (2022) and AC Transit's *Bus Stop Furniture Guidelines* (September 2022). In addition, it is the intent of the Specific Plan that improvements made in the Plan Area treat ADA requirements as the minimum standards for accessibility and strive for achieving universal design for users with a broad range of abilities. Bus stop improvements should be designed in this way (see *PR-P.13 Design for People of All Ages and Abilities*).

PR-P.11 Continue to Improve Bus Stops

Berkeley and its agency partners should continue to identify funding for and implement stop improvements beyond those provided through the San Pablo Avenue Safety Enhancement project. This will include improvements to bus stops from Heinz Street to the south along San Pablo Avenue that are part of the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Bus Lanes and Bike Lanes Project. Other bus stops in the Plan Area along San Pablo Avenue and those serving bus routes on crossing streets should also be assessed and improved as funding is identified.

Prioritization of bus stops to receive improvements should consider existing ridership and potential ridership growth based on nearby destinations and development that brings new residents to the area, as well as the current condition or absence of bus stop improvements.

- Potential improvements may include installation of shelters, benches, pedestrian lighting, maps, signage, emergency call systems, and street tree plantings for additional shade.

- Other features and fixtures identified in Berkeley's *Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan* (2022) and AC Transit's *Bus Stop Furniture Guidelines* (September 2022) should also be considered.

Berkeley and AC Transit should collaborate to identify and determine bus shelter models that provide weather protection and a safe and comfortable environment for waiting transit riders at bus stops while being practical to maintain. They should also include maintenance agreements as needed.

Wayfinding, Placemaking and Public Art

PR-P.12 Facilitate Wayfinding and Placemaking Programs

As development increases and pedestrian and business activity grows within Specific Plan Area, coordinated signage, banners, and public art can support navigating the area, reinforce local identities and highlight distinct places within the Plan Area.

- The Berkeley Office of Economic Development could work with existing business organizations or clusters, such as the Berkeley International Marketplace to facilitate installation of signs, banners, public art, and similar elements to support placemaking efforts, see Policy ED-P.3. *Support and Expand Existing Business Clusters*.
- Identify wayfinding opportunities that reflect distinct character areas for business clusters or Nodes, and explore coordinated or branded approaches across San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley.
    - For instance, banners mounted on streetlight poles to highlight unique areas along the Plan Area. In the near-term, these could be funded by a combination of the City and local business groups.
- Incorporate public art into wayfinding design to reflect local character, history, and destinations. See *PR-S.11 Public Art in Public Spaces*.



Figure 5.25 Wall art on the façade of Ashkenaz, funded by the business.

- Should Community Benefit or Business Improvement District(s) form in the Specific Plan Area, these organizations may take on a larger role in managing and expanding wayfinding efforts. See Policy ED-P.4, *Study the Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID)*.

Facilitate Installation of Public Art that Benefits the Public Realm

San Pablo Avenue currently features a range of informal and formal public art that create or reflect historic, demographic or commercial identities for Plan Area segments. Community input expressed support for more public art to enrich the public realm and strengthen the street's sense of place. For public art on private development, see ODS.79 and 80.

PR-S.11 Public Art in Public Spaces

Public art should be integrated into public spaces throughout the Specific Plan Area to enhance the pedestrian experience and reflect the community's character and culture.

- The process for incorporating art in public spaces is governed by Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter *6.13 Visual Art in Public Places,* and is administered by the Civic Art Commission and Civic Arts Coordinator.
- Opportunities for public installations include public infrastructure projects (as funding allows), existing medians and sidewalks (with specific public art funding), and within the public right of way through partnerships with adjacent property owners, businesses, and community development or business improvement districts (see ED-X.4 I*nitiate a Study of the Feasibility and Scope of Forming a Business Improvement District*).





Figure 5.26 Existing examples of public art installations in Berkeley. Image on the left is a temporary art installation on Heinz Street in the Specific Plan Area by Amrita Singhal through a program with the Berkeley Art Works Project (photo by CD+A). Image on the rights is at Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Addison Street Intersection; *Delivered, Mable's Promissory Note*; 2024 by Milred Howard (photo by Ethan Kaplan).

- Public art proposed within San Pablo Avenue's right-of-way, which includes medians, street murals, or sidewalks, requires review and approval by Caltrans. This includes obtaining an encroachment permit, and a maintenance agreement between the City and Caltrans. This process adds time and cost of from concept to installation of the art.
- Future Community Benefit or Business Improvement District(s) are also encouraged to integrate art into their marketing and identity programs. This could include art installations in the public realm with maintenance agreements with the City.
- Promote cultural programming and community art events along the corridor by supporting flexible gathering and event spaces that can host a wide range of activities. Such events should complement existing programming, expand the diversity of event types, and attract both local residents and visitors. Cultural events can help activate the corridor, strengthen its identity, and foster a more vibrant and inclusive public realm.

Universal Design

PR-P.13 Design for People of All Ages and Abilities

The Specific Plan Area's public realm shall be designed, implemented, maintained, and operated to serve people of all ages, sizes, and abilities. Universal design approaches should be applied to promote inclusive access to streets, sidewalks, open spaces, and transit.

- At a minimum, all improvements must comply with the Federal Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.
- Accessibility improvements should be prioritized proximate to senior housing and other uses frequently visited by individuals with a range of abilities
- When designing public realm improvements, the city, developer, and/or other project sponsors should consult with accessibility advocates and organizations serving people with access and functional needs to guide priorities and ensure inclusive design.
- Advanced Universal design strategies may include:
    - Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)[27], Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPIs)[28] and extended pedestrian signal phases to maximize crossing time.

[27] City of Berkeley. *Pedestrian Plan Appendix B: Toolbox of Pedestrian Improvements.* Adopted 2020, p. 16
[28] City of Berkeley. *Pedestrian Plan Appendix B: Toolbox of Pedestrian Improvements.* Adopted 2020, p. 17

- Use of tactile detectable warning surfaces, in addition to typical truncated dome panels at crosswalks. These additional warning surfaces should be used when blind/low-vision people may experience non-typical circulation conditions in the public right-of-way. Use of these materials can be discussed in consultation with accessibility stakeholders during the design of public realm improvements in the public realm.
- Passenger loading zones and accessible parking near senior and mixed-use housing that meet and, where possible, exceed PROWAG and ADA regulations.

Public Realm Expansion and Improvements

As noted in **Appendix A: Key Existing Conditions**, San Pablo Avenue lacks public parks or plazas, and the streets and sidewalks are the only public space today. As new homes are built in the Plan Area, demand on the public realm will grow, since it functions as the primary social space for the people living, working and shopping in the area. During community outreach, residents and business owners expressed a strong desire for shared spaces that bring people together, support street-level business and community activity. In addition to opportunities for sidewalks widening (see *PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements*), **the Specific Plan encourages a variety of new public spaces**, including:

- Corner plazas at University Avenue to highlight the intersection as a major entry point into Berkeley from the highway.
- Plazas in designated Nodes and near (rapid) transit stops.
- Temporary or permanent conversion of parking lots to community-oriented uses.
- Mini-plazas in the public right-of-way created through full or partial side-street closures.
- Flexible spaces between sidewalks and adjacent buildings that can be used for seating, planting, and gathering.
- Side-street parklets and curb extensions used for public space and/or outdoor dining.

The following policies and standards offer strategies to expand the public realm and support the development of new public spaces. In the near term, improvements can be made through pavement-to-park initiatives like parking lot conversions, parklets and side-street entry closures. Over the long term, opportunities include curb extensions and side-street plazas, public open space and privately owned public open spaces (POPOS) at designated Nodes, mini-parks, and mid-block pedestrian pathways can provide lasting enhancements to the public realm.

San Pablo Avenue's designation as a state highway limits opportunities for its closure for street festivals. For special events or any activity within the State highway right-of-way an Encroachment Permit[29] with an extensive approval process is required. However, events and neighborhood gatherings have taken place on side-streets, see sidebar.

Festival Street Closure: Until the end of 2024, the non-profit cultural organization Brasarte, which is dedicated to preserving Brazilian arts and culture in the Bay Area, was located on San Pablo Avenue at the Casa de la Cultura. Each year, for their celebration of SF Bay Brazilian Day & Lavagem Festival, they organized a street closure adjacent to their building, closing a block of Hearst Street and activating an adjacent parking lot for festivities.



Figure 5.27 Photos of the Festival in September 2023.

[29] California Department of Transportation. *Local Development Review and Encroachment Permit Process.* 2025

PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas

The City should explore opportunities to convert minor streets into small side-street plazas by limiting or removing vehicle access between San Pablo Avenue and these streets. These closures would create room for public gathering spaces, urban greening and green infrastructure systems. Potential locations include side-streets that extend only a few blocks east or west from San Pablo Avenue, or streets that intersect San Pablo Avenue without a vehicular median break. See Figure 5.29 *Map of potential side-street plaza closures* to the right.

The plazas can be designed to close vehicle access entirely or only allow one-way entry or exit. Designs should allow emergency vehicle and refuse vehicle access, provide maneuvering space for private vehicles on the side-street to turn around, and maintain pedestrian and bicycle access to ensure neighborhood connectivity. Site and use specific conditions would also be assessed, such as side-street commercial loading, and ability of adjacent parallel streets to provide for vehicle access. The design also must provide necessary property access along the side-streets.

In the near-term, the City can partner with non-profits, businesses- and neighborhood advocacy groups, and other community organizations to identify pilot locations for quick-build plaza projects. These should be prioritized where local community partners will use, program, or activate the plaza space.

- Quick-build treatments can include barriers (e.g., jersey barriers, stone blocks or planters), markers for space and lanes with striping and paint, and table with seating of different types. Also, boulders, logs, or small structures can be installed to engage children.



Figure 5.28 Sunset Triangle Quick-Build Plaza (source: LADOT)

In the long term, when funding is available and where community support in activating a side-street plaza is strong, permanent plaza improvements may be pursued. Several implementation and maintenance models are possible:

- **City-Community Partnership:** Local group of residents, businesses, and/or property owners may reach out to the City and work with the Office of Economic Development (OED) and the Transportation Division to identify funding. The community could take an active role in ongoing maintainance and programming.
- **Future community benefit or business improvement District:** They may take a leadership role and partner with the City and adjacent community, to

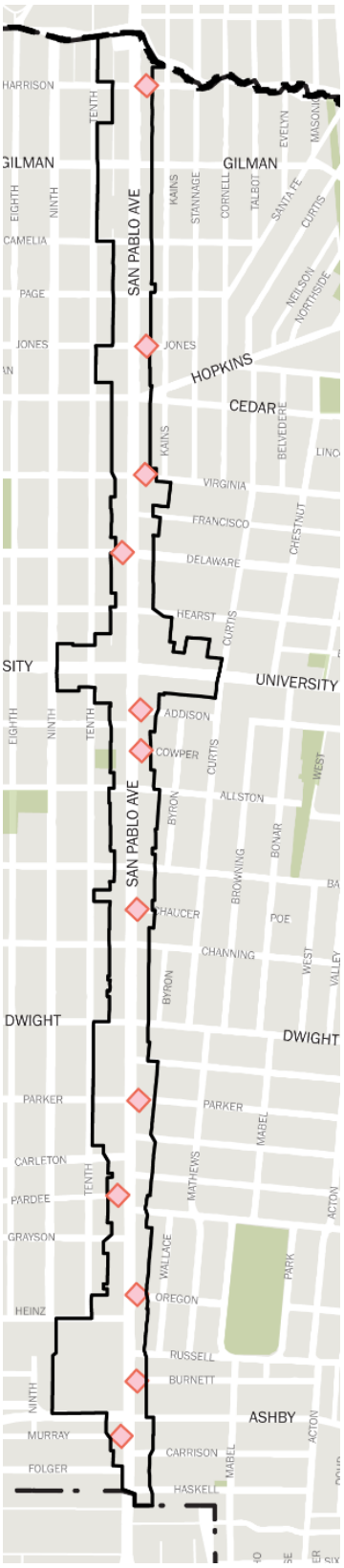


Figure 5.29 Potential Side-Street Plaza Locations

manage and maintain the plaza, under a formal agreement with the City, similar to how the Downtown BART Plaza or the plaza space in Strawberry Creek Park (see ED-4. *Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District*).

- **Adjacent Development:** A developer or property owner of a new residential or mixed-use building adjacent to the plaza may design, build, activate, and maintain the public space under agreement with the City (see *LU-S.3 Side-Street Plaza Implementation Incentive*).



Figure 5.30 Street closed to vehicles and converted into a plaza with landscaped seating with bicycle and emergency vehicle pass-through at Vancouver Street and McClure Street, Victoria, BC. Google maps, November 2022.

Parklets and Curb Extension Common Spaces

Though smaller in scale than side-street plazas, parklets and curb extensions offer opportunities to create community gathering areas, business spaces and streetscape landscaping within the public right-of-way. Opportunities for these types of spaces include smaller parklets along the commercial frontages on the southside of Dwight Way, on either side of San Pablo Avenue, as well as a larger potential gathering space on the east side of San Pablo Avenue at the Hopkins Street and Cedar Street merge, where intersection reconfiguration could a more usable and inviting public area.

PR-P.15 Support Use and Creation of Parklets

Parklets are allowed on San Pablo Avenue but must follow strict design criteria set by the Caltrans Encroachment Permits Manual. They must also be publicly accessible, be applied for and maintained by the City of Berkeley, and cannot serve as semi-private spaces, such as excusive outdoor seating for restaurants or cafés. Permits for parklets are limited to one year, and extensions are not guaranteed, adding to the uncertainty of long-term use.[30]

Side-streets including University Avenue, however, provide opportunities for parklets as another way to support outdoor seating and dining for nearby businesses. This approach can enhance corner locations, making them more appealing for restaurants and cafés, thereby boosting business activity and economic vitality while providing the

[30] California Department of Transportation. *Encroachment Permits Manual.* Section 500.3I, "Parklets," July 2021, pp. 5-12

public with valued common space. Preferred locations include designated Nodes and areas prioritized by pedestrian safety. These could also be part of "piloting" a side-street plaza.

- Parklet location, design, use and other requirements include the BMC 14.48.190 *Parklets* and BMC 14.48.150 *Sidewalk seating, benches, and planters*.
- **Incentive –** To support business activity within the Specific Plan Area, the Outdoor Commerce Use Fee will be waived for businesses using free parking spaces and reduced by 75% for those using paid parking spaces. Evaluate incentive after first 3 years of implementation and revise as appropriate.

PR-S.12 Design and Use of Curb Extensions on Side-Streets

Curb extensions (also called bulb-outs) extend the sidewalk into the parking lane, to narrow the roadway, shorten pedestrian crossing distances and slow turning vehicles.

The Alameda CTC Safety Enhancements project is planning bus curb extensions at select locations on San Pablo Avenue. In these locations and further projects, the City should assess whether added space can accommodate outdoor seating or other placemaking efforts.

New curb extensions should be located on side-street corners along San Pablo or University Avenues and extend only into the side-street parking lane. They must not extend into the San Pablo Avenue parking lane or shoulder. Potential curb extensions must be evaluated for feasibility in terms of private vehicle, truck, and emergency vehicle turn movements.



Figure 5.31 Curb extensions with seating and planters at University Avenue and Kala Bagai Way

On side-streets, curb extensions can be used in the public realm for:

- Street Trees (see tree related policies and standards within the Streetscape section of this chapter)
- Landscaping opportunities such as Green Infrastructure (see other landscape related policies and standards within the Streetscape section of this chapter)
- Pedestrian-Realm Lighting (see PR-P.3)
- Outdoor seating or dining (aee PR-P.16 *Commercial and Other Private Use of Sidewalk*)
- Public Art in Public Spaces (see PR-S.11)

Similar to Side-Street Plazas, see PR-P.14, a developer or property owner of a new mixed-use or residential building adjacent to a side-street may propose to design, construct and activate a curb extension. This space would be maintained through an agreement with the City. Implementation details include:

- The location and design of any curb extension shall be approved by the Public Works Department.
- Requirements of BMC 14.48.150 Sidewalk seating, benches, and planters shall apply to these curb extensions with the exception of the Sidewalk Seating Permit fee waivers described below.
- **Incentive –** To encourage construction of curb extensions and activation of the Common Space, the Sidewalk Seating Permit fees that would otherwise result from commercial use of the curb extension space shall be waived for up to 10 years for the first commercial seating use of the space.

Sidewalk and Other Public Realm Activation

PR-P.16 Commercial and Other Private Use of Sidewalks and the Public Realm

While side-street plazas, parklets, and curb extensions focus on enhancing adjacent side-streets, the sidewalk frontage along San Pablo Avenue or other existing sidewalks offers opportunity for activation through seating, landscaping and small gathering spaces.

- The requirements of BMC 14.48.150 *Sidewalk seating, benches, and planters* shall apply to commercial and other private use of the sidewalk.
- As discussed in *PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements*, new developments may expand useable sidewalk space on San Pablo Avenue and other streets in the Plan Area through public easements.
- **Incentive –** In these cases, permit fees for the commercial use of the sidewalk shall be waived for up to 10 years from the date of first commercial seating use.

Pocket Parks and Plazas Along San Pablo Avenue

There are no publicly owned park, plazas, or other community spaces located along San Pablo Avenue and only a few within the Specific Plan Area. One example is the small Kains Avenue Park at the north end of the Plan Area along Cordonices Creek, which has not yet open to the public. However, several parks, including George Florence Park, James Kenney Park, Strawberry Creek Park, and San Pablo Park are located within a few blocks (see Figure 5.9. *Street Network Map*).

Community feedback throughout the planning process emphasized a strong desire for accessible public open space along San Pablo Avenue. In the absence of dedicated public open space, a variety of semi-public spaces or "third places" have emerged organically. These include outdoor seating at restaurants and cafes, and the use of gas stations or paved areas by food trucks and trailers with temporary seating.



Figure 5.32 Example of a food truck using a parking lot.

PR-P.17 Purchase Underutilized Small Properties for Public Open Space

Several small and underutilized properties along San Pablo Avenue could, over time, have the potential for public acquisition and could be developed as public parks or plazas. Currently, the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department's does not have sufficient funding to purchase property for park development. If future funds become available, the Department should consider purchasing property along San Pablo Avenue to develop into public parks or plazas.

One potential funding mechanism is outlined in *LU-S.5 Medium Development and Mid-rise Public Open Space Requirement*, which requires that high-rise developments and larger developments to either create a privately-owned public open space (POPOS), pay an in-lieu fee, or provide a combination of other public open space.

PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces

An important strategy to create public open space within the Specific Plan Area is to encourage and incentivize the development of privately-owned public open spaces (POPOS). POPOS are publicly accessible open spaces that are built and maintained on private property. They can come in many forms, e.g., plazas, courtyards, recreational facilities, play areas, dog parks and usable green space. Key benefit of POPOS is that the construction and maintenance costs are typically the responsibility of the private developer, rather than the City. These spaces are encouraged in new commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use developments, and they also present an opportunity to transform existing parking lots or underutilized properties into open areas for the public.



Figure 5.33 Left: Quick build POPOS plaza on former parking lot at Broadway and 21st Street in Oakland. Right: POPOS Plaza in front of mixed-use development, 2161 Allston Way, Berkeley

LU-S.2 *Privately Owned Public Open Space within the Nodes*, further encourages POPOS as part of new mixed-use residential development projects in the Nodes in the Plan Area. This land use policy defines minimum size requirements and a range of incentives and benefits when a development provides a POPOS.

LU-S.5 *Medium Development and Mid-Rise Public Open Space Requirement* defines a requirement for including a POPOS or contributing an in-lieu fee for large and/or high-rise developments.

Priority Locations

The intersections of major Nodes, including Gilman, University and Ashby, with San Pablo Avenue should be prioritized for implementation of POPOS. In addition to being designated as areas for increased development intensity, these locations are key gateways into Berkeley and points of entry from I-80. Given their prominence and development potential, a public open space at these locations would significantly improve the character and functionality of the public realm.

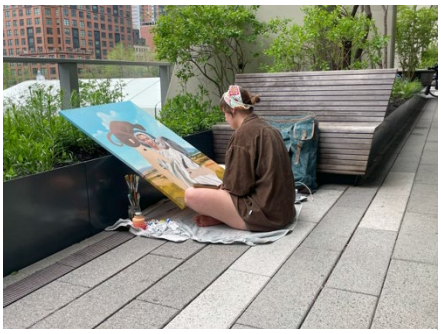


Figure 5.34 Student practices painting in a POPOS provided by the adjacent development. Hudson Yard, New York City.

Mid-Block Passages

Mid-block passages are a type of POPOS but are subject to Design Standards (see ODS.61) and Land Use Standards for eligibility to receive usable open space benefits (LU-S.8). They improve the walkability within the Plan Area by creating "shortcuts" through long block and through-lots, linking San Pablo Avenue, and possibly University Avenue, with parallel streets and improving accessibility between the avenues and surrounding neighborhoods. These connections are required for new developments that exceed a specified minimum site frontage as described in LU-S.8.

Utilities

Utility services required to support the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area include domestic water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, electricity, natural gas, waste and recycling. According to the City of Berkeley 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (HEU) EIR--SCH #2022010331-- (HEU Final EIR), including the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Addendum to the Housing Element Update Final EIR (SCH #2022010331) (HEU EIR SPASP Addendum), existing utility systems for domestic water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, electricity and natural gas facilities in Berkeley have sufficient capacity to serve the planned housing developments. x

Water

Domestic Water

The City of Berkeley and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), the water supplier for the City of Berkeley, typically require individual developments to make any necessary upgrades. EBMUD's water system is primarily sourced by the Mokelumne River Watershed west of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. There is currently sufficient water capacity for the City and the development anticipated by this Specific Plan. However, the long-term adequacy of the water supply has been susceptible to the effects of climate change. The development of water recycling and conservation programs have offset climate change concerns to date. California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen) requirements include plumbing fixture maximum flow rates intended to reduce water consumption for all residential and commercial buildings. These standards would be implemented with the Specific Plan development.

Wastewater

There are two components to ensure the City of Berkeley's wastewater is properly managed: (1) the treatment facility and (2) the collection and conveyance pipes. EBMUD operates the large diameter interceptor sewer and provides municipal wastewater treatment for Berkeley. The City of Berkeley owns and maintains its own sewage collection system. This system includes 254 miles of City-owned sanitary sewer pipe.

EBMUD is anticipated to have adequate dry weather capacity to accept wastewater flows from the planned buildout of this Specific Plan[31]. Wet weather flows may also be accommodated with implementation of ongoing local and regional programs to reduce infiltration and inflow during wet weather events (City of Berkeley, Housing Element Update EIR, 2022).

Future development under the proposed HEU will require new connections for wastewater conveyance. As described in the HEU Final EIR (see page 4.16-4 of the Draft EIR), Chapter 17.05 of the BMC requires that new development pay its fair share of improvements to the sewer system that would be necessary to accommodate increased flows. This policy and BMC requirements would ensure that new developments are not approved until it can be demonstrated that adequate wastewater collection capacity exists, or until a financial commitment to create such capacity has been made.

Stormwater

The Specific Plan Area is highly urbanized and the area is almost entirely covered with impervious surfaces except for landscaped areas. Future development will have to comply with existing programs and permits, including the BMC and the Municipal Regional Stormwater (MRP 3.0) NPDES Permit (No. CAS612008). All new development or redevelopment projects that create or replace 5,000 square feet of impervious surfaces are "regulated projects" and are required to implement Low Impact Design (LID) Measures and hydromodifications management measures required under the C.3 provisions of the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit (MRP). These features may include but not be limited to bioretention, permeable paving, detention basins, underground stormwater storage (see *PR-P.8 Green Infrastructure in Public Projects* and *PR-P.9 Green Infrastructure in Private Development* for Specific Plan

[31] The City's wastewater treatment capacity is 320 mgd. The existing average daily flow is 63 mgd and the HEU would add 0.77 mgd. Based on the HEU wastewater generation assumption of 40 gallons per day (gdp) for a multifamily unit, the SPASP buildout, which is 3,250 units above the HEU maximum buildout, would add 130,000 gdp, which is 0.13 mgd and well within the City's treatment capacity.

policies related to rainwater management). For example, on-site infiltration would improve the water quality of stormwater.

Implementation of rainwater measures can be especially challenging in a dense urban area. Measures such as rain barrels and cisterns, green roofs, and preserving undeveloped open space may also need to be considered. MRP 3.0 specifies methods to calculate the required size of treatment devices.

Improvements with Caltrans right-of-way are subject to requirements of Caltrans NPDES Permit Order No. 2-2022-0033-DWQ.

There is a minor possibility that underground creeks beneath San Pablo Avenue, due to deterioration, daylighting, or other creek crossings, could cause the need to reconstruct major storm drain infrastructure. However, the risk appears low given that the historic creek crossings have already been directed into a main storm drain within San Pablo Avenue through this area. The Specific Plan Area also falls outside of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone.

Electric, Gas, and Communications

Natural gas and electrical services for the City of Berkeley are provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). There is also telecom (cable and internet) service throughout the Plan Area, mainly provided by AT&T and Comcast. Electrical systems within the Plan Area have mainly been undergrounded. Most overhead electrical lines are located within the cross streets.

Electricity, Natural Gas, and Communications upgrades will continue to be available from the providers. Typically, the utility companies will upgrade facilities as needed. It is expected that PG&E will accommodate the electrical and gas demands of the Specific Plan. A service application submitted to PG&E will be required to trigger a review of added electrical and natural gas demand for each new individual development. Likewise existing telecom infrastructure and providers are expected to be able to accommodate development that may be generated by the Plan. In addition, East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) is a local public agency tasked with supplying clean electricity at low rates to customers in Alameda County. EBCE procures electricity and provides local renewable resources, while PG&E continues to administer natural gas service as well as energy transmission, distribution, repair, customer service, and billing for EBCE customers.

Waste and Recycling

The City of Berkeley is one of the few cities in Northern California to operate its own refuse, dual stream recycling and green/food waste curbside collection system, as well as material recovery/drop-off and buyback facilities. The service provides curbside recycling, green/food waste, and refuse collection services. Some of the programs offered by the City's Solid Waste Division include recycling collection programs for businesses as well as residential and commercial refuse and organic waste collection. Solid waste, recyclable, and compostable materials collected by the City and its contracted companies are transported from the Berkeley Transfer Station, located at 1201 Second Street, for sorting or disposal at off-site facilities.

One permitted landfill in Alameda County has the capacity to accommodate solid waste generated in Berkeley: the Altamont Landfill. The maximum permitted daily throughput at the Altamont Landfill is 11,150 cubic yards, and the maximum permitted capacity is 124.4 million cubic yards. The remaining capacity for solid waste at this landfill is approximately 52.3 million cubic yards (CalRecycle, Solid Waste Information System (SWIS), 2025). The City of Berkeley has achieved a solid waste diversion rate of 69 percent of its solid waste.

Development facilitated by the Specific Plan would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure. The Landfills that serve the City of Berkeley have adequate capacity to serve development under the proposed Specific Plan[32]. The solid waste reduction goals would be in alignment with

[32] Based on the HEU solid waste generation rate of 4/lbs/unit/day, and conversion factor of 1,000 pounds per cubic yard, the SPASP buildout would generate 13 cubic yards of solid waste per day. With Berkeley's 69% diversion rate, the SPASP buildout would generate an additional 4.03 cubic yards of solid waste per day, which equates to 1471 cubic yards per year. This represents 0.00282% of the current total remaining landfill capacity of 52.3 million cubic yards.

the development of projects within the Plan Area and would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste (City of Berkeley, Housing Element Update EIR, 2022).

The City of Berkeley General Plan's Environmental Management Element includes the following goals and policies applicable to solid waste:

- Policy EM-7: Reduced Wastes. Continue to reduce solid and hazardous waste.
- Policy EM-8: Building Reuse and Construction Waste. Encourage rehabilitation and reuse of buildings whenever appropriate and feasible in order to reduce waste, conserve resources and energy, and reduce construction costs.
- Policy EM-9: Recycling and Waste Transfer Stations. Ensure convenient access for Berkeley citizens to transfer stations, recycling, composting, and collection of household hazardous waste products.
- Policy EM-10: Materials Recovery and Remanufacturing. Support and encourage serial materials recovery and remanufacturing industries.

Development facilitated by the Plan would follow the City of Berkeley policies for waste reduction and recycling.



Chapter 6 Implementation

- Public Review Draft -

Project Administration

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan will be implemented through the adoption of its Land Use, Transportation, Public Realm, and Objective Development Standards and regulations, which are designed to align private investments with the Plan's vision and goals. These will also be reflected in necessary General Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates. In addition, public improvements and programs will require the City and its partners to leverage existing resources, establish new funding mechanisms, and pursue partnerships to complete the implementation actions in this chapter. These include regular monitoring and updates to ensure responsiveness to changing conditions, evolving laws, funding opportunities, and community priorities.

The City maintains a dedicated webpage for the adopted Plan, implementation updates, and resources for property owners, developers, and community members.

Environmental (CEQA) Review

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan is accompanied by an Addendum to the 2023–2031 Housing Element Update Environmental Impact Report ("2023 EIR"), which evaluates whether the proposed Specific Plan would result in any new or substantially more severe significant environmental impacts not previously identified in the 2023 EIR, or require new or different mitigation measures. The 2023 EIR, certified by the City of Berkeley in January 2023, analyzed citywide housing growth under the Housing Element Update, including 3,682 housing units anticipated within the San Pablo Avenue Plan Area. The proposed Specific Plan would increase this development potential to a total of approximately 6,750 units, representing an additional 3,068 units, rounded to 3,250 for the purposes of the CEQA analysis.

The project analyzed in the Addendum includes amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan, which include new development standards for the C-SP zone such as height and FAR, particularly at designated commercial nodes. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, the Addendum concludes that the proposed changes do not meet the conditions outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 that would require preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR. The Addendum compared the impacts of the proposed Specific Plan to those disclosed in the 2023 EIR and found no new significant impacts or substantial increase in severity of the impacts disclosed in the 2023 EIR. Updated analysis was conducted for vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Plan Area qualifies as a Transit Priority Area and Low-VMT Area under the City's adopted thresholds. Updated modeling for GHG emissions under revised electrification assumptions found that the combined buildout scenario would not exceed the applicable plan-level thresholds.

The City of Berkeley, as lead agency, must determine whether any of the criteria under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, requiring a subsequent or supplemental EIR, have been met. Namely, whether any new significant environmental impacts, substantial increases in the severity of previously identified impacts, or new information of substantial importance have emerged. The City will consider the Addendum, together with the certified 2023 EIR, before taking action on the Specific Plan.

Implementation Actions

The following tables describe a range of implementation measures, actions, responsibilities, and timeframes, as well as potential funding sources for these measures. These actions should be considered in tandem with the corresponding policies and standards outlined in **Chapters 3 through 5**.

Abbreviations

City of Berkeley

CMO – City Manager's Office

CAO – City Attorney Office

HHCS – Health, Housing and Community Services

OED – Office of Economic Development

PLNG – Planning and Development Department

PR&W – Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department

PW-Public Works

- Transportation Division ("PW Trans")
- Engineering Division ("PW Eng")

RSB – Rent Stabilization Board and Staff

BHA – Berkeley Housing Authority

Other:

Alameda CTC-Alameda County Transportation Division

AC Transit – Alameda Contra Costa Transit

Alameda County SBDC – Alameda County Small Business Development Center

BART – San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

BBDN – Berkeley Business District Network

Caltrans – California Department of Transportation

Timeline

Each table includes the timing of each implementation action, assuming Specific Plan adoption in 2026. Many implementing actions depend on the availability of funding, and once initial funding is secured, it can be used to identify and pursue additional resources to carry out the program or improvement. Therefore, the timeline will need periodic refinement and updating.

- **On-going** – actions that are already occurring and may be affected by Specific Plan policies and standards.
- **Immediate** – actions that will start with adoption of the plan.
- **Following other actions** – some actions are dependent on implementation of projects or other actions. In this case, the dependent project or action is listed.
- Specific time periods are listed for some implementation actions; time periods are in response to:
    - Priorities for the action;
    - Estimate of time needed to undertake action; and
    - Some actions can only start once another action has been completed.

Table 6.1 Plan Administration Implementation Actions

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
Provide annual updates on Specific Plan implementation through the General Plan Annual Progress Report (APR) The annual update should include metrics such as: • Number of new housing units entitled, permitted, or completed. • Summary description of transportation, streetscape, and open space improvements under design, construction and completed. • Summary report of collisions that have occurred within the Plan Area. • Number of active businesses, including new business licenses within the Plan Area. • Funding secured and partnerships established with community groups, agencies, and developers.	PLNG	Input from other City Departments and Partner Agencies	On-going	General Fund
Identify and Pursue Funding Opportunities Coordinate and monitor grant and other funding opportunities to implement Specific Plan policies.	PLNG, OED, PW		On-going	General Fund
Monitor opportunities to pursue Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grants. AHSC is an annual state grant program that funds construction of affordable housing and improvements related to reducing GHG emissions. Certain multimodal and other transportation improvements are fundable. As appropriate work with affordable housing developers and partner agencies to prepare and submit AHSC grants for housing within the Specific Plan Area and transportation infrastructure improvements that are prioritized in this Plan.	PLNG, PW	Affordable housing developers, AC Transit, Caltrans, etc.	On-going	General Fund

Table 6.2 Land Use Implementation Actions

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
LU-P.1 Establish the Commercial San Pablo (C-SP) Zoning District • Amend the zoning ordinance to include the C-SP zone and the following standards as described in **Chapter 3 Land Use**: ○ LU-S.4 *Development Standards, Table 3.1* ○ LU-S.5 *Large Development and High-Rise Public Open Space Requirement* ○ LU-S.6 *New Development Amenities* ○ LU-S.7 *Streetscape Standards* ○ LU-S.8 *Mid-Block Passages*	PLNG		Immediate	
LU-P.2 Establish a Tiered Node Structure to Focus Growth and Commercial Uses • Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include Tier 1 and Tier 2 Nodes, as described in **Chapter 3 Land Use**, and adopt node-specific development standards and frontage requirements. • Periodically evaluate Node performance and adjust boundaries	PLNG		Immediate + On-going	General Fund (staff time)
LU-P.3 Housing Overlay District to Allow Affordable and Family Friendly Housing on MU-LI Zoned Parcels • Adopt a zoning overlay on MU-LI parcels within the Specific Plan Area and amend the zoning ordinance permitting affordable housing and family-friendly housing consistent with the Policy description **in Chapter 3**, including definitions and deed-restriction requirements • Allow qualifying projects to use C-SP standards	PLNG		Immediate	General Fund (staff time)

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
LU-P.4 Amend the General Plan and Zoning Map • Amend the General Plan Map as described in the **Chapter 3 Land Use** • Amend the Zoning Map as shown in the Proposed Zoning in **Chapter 3 Land Use**, including: ○ Specific Plan Boundary ○ Tier 1 and Tier 2 nodes ○ Rezone all C-W and C-U parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP ○ Include MU-LI Overlay ○ Remove split-zoning inconsistencies and other minor rezoning corrections ○ Add the 15 additional housing opportunity sites	PLNG		Immediate	General Fund (staff time)
LU-P.5 Planning and Commercial Permit Streamlining Review permitting processes after 5 years. Update intake, completeness, and over-the-counter TI pathways, align with CEQA tiering, and publish processing dashboards. At that point determine if further monitoring is needed.	PLNG	OED, PW	5 years	General Fund (staff time)
LU-P.6 Public Space Development Incentives Amend the Zoning Ordinance to implement the following standards consistent with their descriptions in **Chapter 3 Land Use**: • LU-S.1 *Sidewalk Expansion Incentive* • LU-S.2 *Privately-Owned Public Open Space within Nodes* • LU-S.3 *Side-Street Plaza Implementation*	PLNG		Immediate	General Fund (staff time)
LU-P.7 Encourage a Mix of Community-Serving Uses Amend the Allowed Uses Table in the Zoning Ordinance to allow residential, retail, office, cultural, and maker uses throughout the C-SP zone.	PLNG	OED	Immediate	General Fund (staff time)

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
LU-P.8 Expand the list of Allowed Uses and Allow Temporary Pop-ups Amend the Allowed Uses Table in the Zoning Ordinance to expand by-right uses (e.g. galleries, coworking, light-industrial); streamline pop-up permitting with temporary use permits.	PLNG	OED	Immediate	General Fund (staff time)
Develop outreach program for small businesses (coordinate with ED-P.1,2,3)	OED	PLNG	0-3 years	General Fund (staff time)
LU-P.9 Define Residential Mixed-Use with On-Site and In-Lieu Options • Establish the Residential On-site Mixed-Use and In-Lieu Mixed-Use definitions consistent with the Policy described in **Chapter 3 Land Use** and amend the Zoning Ordinance to include the definitions within the C-SP zoning district. • Amend the City's Fee Schedule to include the Commercial In-Lieu fee and adopt an ordinance dedicating revenues to the San Pablo Avenue Small Business Support Fund.	PLNG	OED	Immediate or within 1 year	General Fund (staff time)
• Develop developer and administrative guidance documents for the program.			Within 1 year	
LU-P.10 Establish Ground Floor Typologies to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors • Amend the Zoning Ordinance and establish ground floor frontage typologies and location standards (and exceptions) as described in the Policy in **Chapter 3 Land Use** and the corresponding Standards: ○ LU-S.9 *Ground Floor Typologies*, including Storefront, Other Non-Residential, Active Residential, and Live-work.	PLNG		Immediate	General Fund (staff time)

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
LU-P.11 SPASP Density Bonus Program Adopt a local density bonus ordinance for the Plan Area consistent with the Policy described in **Chapter 3 Land Use**, including: • Requiring in-lieu contributions to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund • Prohibiting waivers of critical standards and ODS • Requiring applicants opt-out of State Density Bonus	PLNG		Immediate or within 1 year	General Fund (staff time)
• Develop developer and administrative guidance documents for the program.	PLNG		Within 1 year	General Fund (staff time)
LU-P.12 Artists Housing and Cultural Districts Should Berkeley create a cultural district within one-half mile of the Plan Area, coordinate with the City Civic Arts Commission/Housing Advisory Commission to consider creation of an affordable artist housing overlay in portions of the Plan Area.	PLNG	OED/Civic Arts, HHCS	Timing dependent on City establishing a cultural district	General Fund (staff time)
Supportive Action - During the Plan Bay Area update, MTC allows Cities to request PDA adjustments. The City shall request that the PDA boundary be updated to match the Specific Plan boundary.	PLNG	MTC	0-3 years	General Fund (staff time)

Table 6.3 Economic Development Implementation Actions

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
ED-P.1 San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Focused Small Business Support Fund Develop and establish a Local Small Business Support Fund within the City's existing Revolving Loan Fund program or economic development funding mechanisms consistent with the Policy description in **Chapter 4**, including: • Define loan guidelines including loan terms, eligibility criteria, fund disbursement methods, and oversight structures. • Launch the Small Business Loan Program with an Outreach Campaign (see ED-P.2 and ED-P.3) to Plan Area businesses, especially businesses that are culturally significant or at risk of displacement, as well as business owners who are people of color, women, and other underserved potential applicants for Support Fund loans.	OED	Non-profit administrator of existing Revolving Loan Fund	0-3 years	Mixed-Use In-Lieu Fee revenues (LU-P.9), General Fund, federal and state grants, and loan payments.
Small Business Support Fund Annual Tracking and Reporting as part of the Commercial District Dashboards Conduct annual performance tracking on fund deployment, repayment, and Plan Area impacts	OED	Non-profit administrator of existing Revolving Loan Fund	On-going	General Fund
Small Business Support Fund Outreach and Program Refinements Conduct outreach to small businesses to assess evolving needs, and opportunities to expand eligibility criteria for the Fund following first 3-years of fund availability. Also, inform businesses about other funding opportunities such as the existing Revolving Loan Fund. Based on findings, the City should consider adjusting eligibility, loan terms, or allowable uses of funds. The Fund's program guidelines may be reviewed and updated as needed following the initial review, incorporating feedback and	OED	Non-profit administrator of existing Revolving Loan Fund, CBOs	3-years, as determined following first outreach and review	General Fund

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
data on program performance, utilization, and other economic trends. In alignment with ED-P.1 *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Small Business Support Fund*.				
ED-P.2 Establish Public-Private Partnerships Build partnerships with community organizations, local institutions, merchant groups, property owners, and other stakeholders to activate community spaces and organize events consistent with the Policy description in **Chapter 4 Economic Development**. Initial role for OED Liaison with lead shifting to business organizations and potential BID(s) over time. (See ED-P.5 *Establish an Economic Development Liaison for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area*)	OED	PLNG, CBOs and business organizations	On-going	General Fund (staff time); partner contributions
Outreach by OED Liaison to potential community organization, business, and other private and institutional partners. This can include develop of a technical assistance FAQ for navigating permits such as encroachment permits, temporary use, temporary street closures, and vendor permits.	OED	PLNG, PW, Neighborhood Services/Special Events	0-3 years	
Leverage Berkeley Business District Network and CBOs to coordinate events and Plan Area-wide promotions.	OED	BBDN, CBOs	On-going	
ED-P.3 Support and Expand Existing Business Clusters **City Support and Technical Assistance** • OED to offer technical assistance to emerging clusters as defined in the policy. • Initial outreach by OED Liaison	OED	BBDN	On-going + 0-5 years	General Fund (staff time)

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
Coordination with related policies: • Ensure coordination with implementation of Policy ED-P.6. *Prioritize Initial Public Investment on Improvements in the Nodes* to ensure improvements are aligned with cluster organization initiatives. • Ensure coordination with Policy ED-P.1 *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Small Business Support Fund* to ensure that the use of funds and business eligibility are aligned with small business needs.	OED, PLNG		On-going + 0-5 years	General Fund (staff time)
ED-P.4 Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID) Fund and initiate a feasibility study of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the SPASP area, consistent with the Policy description in **Chapter 4**. • Gauge Plan Area stakeholder interest in moving forward with a feasibility study through initial OED Liaison outreach. (See ED-P.5 *Establish an Economic Development Liaison for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area*) • Consider multiple geographies (full corridor vs. nodes), hybrid models, and cultural district components. • Consider the potential for Community Benefit Districts and other organizations similar to BIDs . • Conduct equity-centered outreach with businesses, property owners, CBOs, and nonprofits.	OED, OED Liaison	Local businesses and property owners	3 years (potentially earlier if strong interest is expressed by Plan Area stakeholders and funding is available)	General Fund (staff time) Identify funding for BID feasibility study (potential Geneal Fund and grant funding)

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
ED-P.5 Establish an Economic Development Liaison for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area Establish a liaison position consistent with the Policy description in **Chapter 4 Economic Development**. • Establish approach for initial staffing of liaison role. • Review effectiveness after 24 months and decide future viability to fund a dedicated liaison position, continue as a part-time role for existing staff, or discontinue the liaison role.	OED		24 month start up effort Possible extension following evaluation and identification of funding	General Fund
ED-P.6 Prioritize Public Investment on Improvements in the Nodes Pursue funding for improvements in the Nodes, such as grants for streetscape improvements, Alameda CTC improvement funding, other state and federal grants and funding. As city-wide multimodal transportation plans are updated, take this Plan's prioritization of future improvements into account. See also T-P.13 *Prioritizing Multimodal Safety Improvements* and T-P.17 *Prioritize Connection with Surrounding Neighborhoods and Districts*.	PW, PLNG	OED, MTC, and Alameda CTC	On-going	TBD

Table 6.4 Street Implementation Actions

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
Transportation				
Retire San Pablo Avenue Public Improvement Plan (2004) The San Pablo Specific Plan replaces the street design policies and standards of the Public Improvement Plan and the retirement of that Plan is an action taken with the adoption of the San Pablo Specific Plan. Implemented with adoption of the San Pablo Specific Plan.	OED	PLNG, PW, and PRW	Immediate	Specific Plan General Fund (staff time)

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
T-P.1 Improve mobility, access, and safety for all people Implement the goals for the city's Complete Streets Policy by designing all street and transportation improvements within the Plan Area to enhance mobility, access and, safety for all people of all abilities who are walking, biking, taking transit, and driving while providing for deliveries, freight, emergency response, evacuation and maintenance access.	PW Trans	Alameda CTC Caltrans AC Transit	On-going	No direct budget impact
T-P.2 Future Transportation Study Needs for San Pablo Avenue Coordinate with Alameda CTC, AC Transit, Caltrans, and City of Albany to initiate and complete Multimodal Complete Streets Study of San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley and Albany to determine a preferred design concept for redesign of the street and work together towards construction of the preferred concept. This study will address the feasibility of dedicated bus lanes and separated bikeways on San Pablo Avenue north of the Ashby Avenue and Heinz Street intersections. In addition, assess the benefits of the other two multimodal projects after their construction. This process includes the following steps: • Assess operations and benefits of Alameda CTC's Bus-Bike Lanes Project on San Pablo Avenue (Downtown Oakland to Ashby/Heinz) following construction, completion currently anticipated in 2028 with analysis of project expected to occur x years after constuction. • Prepare to initate multimodal complete streets study of San Pablo Avenue north of Heinz Street by coordinating with partner agencies to define scope and funding; study to be led by Alameda CTC. Scoping of study to be informed by assessment of initial Bus-Bike Project and needs within the study area at that time.	PW Trans	Alameda CTC Caltrans AC Transit City of Albany	Assessment of initial Bus-Bike Lanes Project should occur at least 6 months after construction is complete. Initiate study for improvement in Berkeley following assessment of initial project with timing to be determined.	General Fund (staff time), Alameda CTC funding for post construction analysis County, Regional, State, and Federal Grants Alameda CTC CIP
Supportive Implementation Action: Assess the Benefits of the Safety Enhancement and Parallel Bike Routes Projects Coordinate with Alameda CTC to conduct a follow-up safety study after completion of the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Corridor Safety Enhancements and Parallel Bike Routes Projects to evaluate the	PW Trans and PRW	Alameda CTC, AC Transit, Caltrans, PLNG	2-4 years	

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
effectiveness of improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. Construction expected to be complete in 2026. Also see implementation steps for Policy *T-P.2 Future Transportation Study Needs for San Pablo Avenue*. • **Review and update list of intersection improvements.** As part of the follow-up safety study, review, update and implement improvements identified in Figure 5.8 and **Appendix D**. Use this updated list to guide future implementation, reflecting current conditions, safety need and community input. • **Assess Bulb-Out Extensions for Public Use**. After completion of the ACTC San Pablo Avenue Corridor Safety Enhancements assess opportunities to enhance constructed bus bulb-out extensions on San Pablo Avenue for general public and transit rider benefit, such as seating, additional trees, other landscaping, bicycle racks, pedestrian-scale lighting, or other public amenities.				
T-P.3 Maintain and improve bus service in collaboration with Alameda CTC and AC Transit Coordinate with partners to align service levels to meet demand and plan for and implement infrastructure upgrades in alignment with the Transit First Policy Implementation Plan. Monitor progress, needs, and implementation through the AC Transit/City of Berkeley Interagency Liaison Committee. Also see implementation steps for Policy *T-P.2 Future Transportation Study Needs for San Pablo Avenue*.	PW Trans	AC Transit, ACTC, Caltrans, PLNG	On-going	Staff participation in Liaison Committee is already funded.
T-P.4 Implement signal timing and transit signal priority (TSP) Coordinate with partner agencies to assess bus transit reliability resulting from existing TSP improvements and Safety Enhancement project bus stop improvements. It is assumed that Safety Enhancement improvements will be complete by end of 2026. Following assessment identify funding for design and construction of any recommended additional improvements.	PW Trans	Alameda CTC, Caltrans AC Transit City of Albany	2-5 years	County, Regional, and state grants

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
T-P.5 Create an active parking and loading management program for the Specific Plan Area Reach out to businesses and property owners within the Specific Plan Area to identify a location to pilot an active parking and loading management program. Likely locations include the University Avenue, Cedar Street, and Dwight Way nodes. The pilot should include discussion with businesses and surrounding neighborhoods regarding their interest in opting into the Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) program; however, these areas are not currently eligible to join the program. Council approval would be needed to make these areas eligible for the RPP program.	PW Trans	OED	~3 years	General Fund
T-P.6 Implement Mobility Hub features in the University Avenue Node Gauge level of interest and support from partner agencies and organizations (MTC, AC Transit, and Bay Wheels) to study and then implement Mobility Hub features.	PW Trans	MTC, AC Transit, and Bay Wheels	3-5 years	General Fund
Identify funding for study and design of Mobility Hub and undertake study, including business, transit rider, and general community outreach to identify types of improvements, their locations and cost to implement. Also identify funding sources and timeline.	PW Trans	MTC, AC Transit, and Bay Wheels	3-5 years	General Fund and potential grant funding
Implement Mobility Hub features in the University Avenue Node – this action will require a combination of coordination with partner agencies and organizations, City work crews, and possibly work by construction contractors to install Mobility Hub features and make associated improvements.	PW	MTC, AC Transit, and Bay Wheels	5-6 years	General Fund and potential grant funding
T-P.7 Evaluate other locations for some Mobility Hub features As development occurs in the Specific Plan Area and mobility needs change, evaluate needs for potential improvements in other nodes.	PW Trans	MTC, AC Transit, and Bay Wheels	6-8 years	General Fund

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
T-P.8 Lower Speed Limit on San Pablo Avenue **Evaluate Potential to Lower Speed Limit:** • Conduct an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS) to evaluate the feasibility of reducing speed limits along San Pablo Avenue. Study should identify need and identify potential for traffic calming improvements including signal timing and physical improvements. E&TS should not be done until Alameda CTC Safety Enhancement Project has been constructed and operated for at least one year. • If the E&TS supports lower speed limit, request Caltrans approval and prepare plans to implement improvements, such as signal timing changes and replace speed limit signs. • Implement improvements.	PW Trans	Caltrans, AC Transit, and Alameda CTC	~ 3 years (at least 6 months after construction is complete)	General Fund
T-S.1 San Pablo Avenue Pedestrian Crossing Frequency Improvements Monitor safety at the five long San Pablo Avenue blocks within the Specific Plan Area as part of collision data and other transportation safety studies that are performed. If safety monitoring indicates the need for mid-block crossings of San Pablo Avenue along any of these long blocks, prioritize improvements, design, and implement improvements based on safety and available funding.	PW Trans	Caltrans, PLNG	On-going	General Fund, State Affordable Housing Sustainability Grants, Developer Funding
Improve Multimodal Safety at Intersection and Along San Pablo Avenue **T-P.9 Pedestrian Crossing Design.** Monitor safety at the pedestrian crossings that have been identified for additional improvements. **T-P.10 Intersection Improvements.** Monitor multimodal safety at intersections within the Specific Plan Area and identify improvements as needed. **T-P.11 Minor Side-Street Intersection Improvements.** Same actions as for T-P.10, above.	PW Trans	Caltrans, PLNG	On-Going	General Fund, State Affordable Housing Sustainability Grants, Developer Funding Include in other planned public improvement project

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
Prioritize, design, and implement improvements based on safety and available funding. Monitoring safety and updating prioritization and types of improvements are addressed in T-P.18 *Monitor Changing Multimodal Needs and Conditions*.				
T-P.12 Make Safety Improvements at Driveways Monitor development and other improvement projects with driveways on major streets and require that safety improvements are made as needed as part of proposed projects.	PW Trans and PLNG	Caltrans	On-Going	Funded by owner/developer.
T-P.13 Prioritizing Multimodal Safety Improvements • As multimodal safety, access, and comfort issues are identified through on-going review of collision data and transportation safety studies are performed in the Plan Area, continue to identify and prioritize multimodal safety improvements at these locations. Those with particular modal priorities would be implementing T-P.14, T-P.15, and T-P17 below	PW Trans	Caltrans and Alameda CTC	On-going, address other improvements as identified	State, Regional, or Alameda CTC CIP or grant funding
Improve Connections with Surrounding Community **T-P.14 Transit Improvements –** • Continue to coordinate AC Transit service through on-going staff communication and the AC Transit/City of Berkeley Interagency Liaison Committee to best serve the needs of Specific Plan Area residents, businesses, workers, and visitors. • Coordinate with partner agencies to set a timeline for achieving Transit First Policy 18 to compete University Avenue transit corridor study by 2029; or as possible given funding constraints. This could be done as part of a University Avenue Specific Plan process to update the 1996 University Avenue Area Plan.	PW Trans and PLNG	AC Transit, BART, and Capitol Corridor	Service Coordination: on-going University Avenue Transit Study: 2-6 years	General Funds from City and partner agencies Coordinate with partner agencies for County, Regional, and State grant funding

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
T-P.15 Bicycle Improvements – • **Russell Street and Heinz Street intersection improvements –** these intersections and San Pablo Avenue between them are being planned for bicycle and pedestrian improvements as part of the Alameda CTC Bus Land and Bike Lane Project. Should this become delayed, the City should consider working with Caltrans and Alameda CTC to complete these improvements as an independent project. • Prioritize bicycle improvements to best serve the needs of Specific Plan Area residents, businesses, workers, and visitors. Work to design and construct priority improvements.	PW Trans	Caltrans and Alameda CTC	Russell and Heinz Street improvement to be determined On-going, address other improvements as identified	Prioritization: General Fund Design and Construct: Measure FF State, Regional, or Alameda CTC CIP or grant funding
T-P.16 Pedestrian Improvements Prioritize pedestrian improvements to best serve the needs of Specific Plan Area residents, businesses, workers, and visitors. Work to design and construct priority improvements.	PW Trans	Caltrans and Alameda CTC	On-going, address other improvements as identified	Prioritization: General Fund Design and Construct: Measure FF State, Regional, or Alameda CTC CIP or grant funding
T-P.17 Prioritize Connection with Surrounding Neighborhoods and Districts Review and update priorities for future residents' needs for multimodal connections with the surround community, and take these priorities into consideration in future updates to the Berkeley Pedestrian Plan, the Bicycle Plan, and the Transit First Policy Implementation Plan	PW Trans	Partner agencies	Per timing of updates to modal plans	General fund and grant funding
T-P.18 Monitor Changing Multimodal Needs and Conditions Work with partner agencies to undertake periodic safety assessments and assess multimodal needs within the Plan Area and the safety record of streets in the Plan Area. This could include a review and update of priorities and needed improvements. Use this updated list to guide future implementation, reflecting current conditions, safety need and community input.	PW Trans	Partner agencies	Periodically as needed Coordinate with updates to modal plans	General Fund for City staff time

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
Public Realm				
PR-P.1 Sidewalk Zones Implement the flexible design approach of the Plan's sidewalk zone standards through public improvement projects and private improvements, sidewalk easements, and private improvements in the public right of way associated with development projects. Overtime as public improvements are made to San Pablo Avenue and new development occurs projects and planning approvals should reestablish the public right of way where adjacent landscape or other elements have reduced it. Related standards include: • LU-S.1 *Sidewalk Expansion Incentive* • PR-S.1 *Sidewalk Zone Standards* • PR-S.2 *Reestablish Sidewalk Width*	PW and PLNG	Partner agencies, private development, and businesses	On-going	Funding through other public and private projects
PR-P.2 Sidewalk Easements Facilitate the use of the sidewalk expansion incentive as developments propose easements to widen the sidewalk and improve the public realm. • LU-S.2 *Sidewalk Expansion Incentive*	PW and PLNG	Development projects	On-going	Planning review fees
PR-P.3 Improve Street Lighting for the Safety and Comfort of All Users Integrate this policies design recommendations into City of Berkeley draft Streetlight Comprehensive Plan and in the interim use the design recommendations to guide street lighting improvements that are made within the Plan Area.	PW	Partner agencies	On-going	General Fund for staff time Planning review fees
PR-P.4 Enhance Tree Health and Expand Tree Canopy The City and developers/property owners shall plant new trees and/or improve conditions for existing trees as part of public improvements made to streets and sidewalks through public projects and as required for new development and major remodeling projects. New tree plantings and	PW Developers or property owners	PR&W, review planned improvements	On-going	General Fund for staff time Potential new Parks and Recreation Fees Grants or General Fund for City improvements

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
improvements shall be made in compliance with the following Specific Plan standards: • PR-S.3 *San Pablo Avenue Tree Standards* • PR-S.4 *University Avenue Tree Standards* • PR-S.5 *Other Side-Street Trees*				Developer or property owners for private improvements
PR-P.5 Enhance and Expand Other Landscaping The City and developers/property owners shall plant other landscaping as part of public improvements made to streets and sidewalks through public projects, as required for new development and major remodeling projects, and in tandem with other improvements that property owners, businesses and residents may make along sidewalks adjacent to their properties. New landscape plantings and improvements shall made in compliance with the following Specific Plan policies and standards: • PR-S.6 *Landscaping in tree wells and planters* • PR-P.6 *Near-term Opportunities for Re-landscaping medians* • PR-P.7 *Long-term landscaped median design* • PR-P.8 *Green Infrastructure in Public Projects* • PR-P.9 *Green Infrastructure in Private Development*	PW Developers, property owners, or businesses	PR&W, review planned improvements	On-going	General Fund for staff time Potential new Parks and Recreation Fees Grants or General Fund for City improvements Developers, property owners, businesses, or residents for private improvements
Street Furniture The City and developers/property owners shall install street furniture as part of public improvements made to streets and sidewalks through public projects, as required for new development and major remodeling projects, and in tandem with other improvements that property owners, businesses and residents may make along sidewalks adjacent to their properties. New street furniture installations shall made in compliance with the following Specific Plan policies and standards • PR-S.7 *Public Seating* • PR-S.8 *Trash and Recycling Receptacles* • PR-S.9 *Bicycle Racks* • PR-S.10 *Raised Planters* • PR-P.11 *Other Street Furnishings*	PW and PR&W	Developers, property owners or businesses	On-going	General Fund Grants Developers, property owners, or businesses

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
Bus Stop Improvements The City and AC Transit shall work together to evaluate and improve bus stops in the Specific Plan Area in support of the following Specific Plan policies: • PR-P.11 *Continue to Improve Bus Stops*	PW Trans and AC Transit	Caltrans	Following completion of Alameda CTC Safety Enhancement Project and on a 5 year evaluation cycle after	Grants and Measure FF
PR-P.12 Facilitate Wayfinding and Placemaking Programs Identify opportunities to implement wayfinding and placemaking as part of the implementation of the following Economic Development policies: • ED-P.3. *Support and Expand Existing Business Clusters* • ED-P.4, *Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID)*	OED	PW and Caltrans	On-going + 0-5 years	General Fund for staff time Support from local businesses Grants
PR-S.11 Public Art in Public Spaces OED/Civic Arts, Public Works, and Parks, Recreation and Waterfront staff are to review public improvement projects within the Specific Plan Area as the move from programming to design and identify opportunities of public art to be integrated into the projects.	OED/Civic Arts and Civic Arts Commission	PW and PR&W	On-going	General Fund for staff time General Fund, grants, and donations for design and installation of art
PR-P.13 Design for People of All Ages and Abilities Design, implement, maintain, and operate the public realm in the Plan Area should use a universal design approach that meets and exceeds compliancy with the Federal Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations by following the guidance of this policy and other best practices of universal design.	PW and PR&W	Partner agencies	On-going	Planning, Design, and Construction – General Fund, Measure FF, and other local, regional, and state funding; and private funding as appropriate. Maintenance and operations – General Fund and private funding as appropriate.

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas Implementation of this policy shall utilize a phased process: **In the near-term,** City staff will reach out to non-profits, businesses, -neighborhood groups, and other community organizations to identify opportunities for implementing quick-build plazas. If community partners are identified and commit to supporting implementation, funding can be pursued, improvements can be designed and implemented along with an assessment to verify viability of full or partial street access.	PW, OED, and PR&W	Community partners and Caltrans	0-3 years	General Fund for initial staff time Community partner's funds Grants
In the longer-term, City staff and community partners, including potential future BID(s) can pursue design, fund raising, and implementation of permanent side-street plazas.	Community partners	PW, OED, PR&W, and Caltrans	3-6 years and after	Community partner's funds Potential new Parks and Recreation Fees Grants
New development projects may design, build, and provide activation for side-street plazas adjacent to their projects.	Developer	PLNG, PW, PR&W, and Caltrans	As proposed	Developer
PR-P.15 Support Use and Creation of Parklets For first 3 years of Plan implementation wave Outdoor Commerce Use Fee for parklets using free parking spaces and reduce paid parking fee by 75% for parklets using paid parking spaces. After 3 years of implementation review effectiveness of fee reductions and revise as needed.	PLNG and PW	OED	0-3 years 4 years review and revise fee reductions as needed	Reduced fees
PR-S.12 Design and Use of Curb Extensions on Side-Streets When a developer or property owner receives approval for construction and use of a curb extension wave Sidewalk Seating Permit fees for up to 10 years of the first commercial use of the increased sidewalk space. After 3 years of implementation review effectiveness of fee reductions and revise as needed.	PW	OED	0-3 years 4 years review and revise fee reductions as needed	Reduced fees

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
PR-P.16 Commercial and other private use of sidewalks and the public realm **Short Term Use and Activation –** In the near-term, the OED Liaison (see ED-P.5) shall facilitate community, business, and property owner-supported activation of the public realm by informing potential partners about possibilities and supporting them in getting permit approvals for activation and use of public space.	OED and Community partners	PW, PR&W, Caltrans	0-5 years	OED initial staff time Potential new Parks and Recreation Fees Community partner's funds Grants
Short Term or On-going Use and Activation – potential BIDs or property owners/managers who have implemented side-street plazas, POPOs, or provided sidewalk easements can propose and implement activations that receive permit approval.	BIDs or property owners and managers	PW, PR&W, Caltrans	As proposed	BID or property owner/manager funds
PR-P.17 Purchase underutilized small properties for public open space Assess potential for funding the cost of property acquisition.	PR&W	PLNG	0-3 years	General Fund staff time
Following assessment, if funding can be identified, move forward to purchase, improve, and maintain new public open space.	PR&W	—	3 years and after	Potential new Parks and Recreation Fees Grants
Supportive Action – Nexus Study to Support Citywide Park and Open Space Funding Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department should undertake a citywide nexus study that includes the need for new parks and public open spaces within the Specific Plan Area and to evaluate the legal and financial basis for establishing a development impact fee and/or adjusting the local property tax to support property acquisition, development and maintenance of public park space within the Specific Plan Area and maintenance of parks elsewhere in the city. Related Policy: *PR-P.17 Purchase underutilized small properties*	PW, PLNG, PR&W	—	0-3 years	General Fund

Action Description	Lead Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Potential Funding Source
PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces Implement supportive land use policies and standards. • LU-S.2 *Privately Owned Public Open Space within the Nodes* • LU-S.5 *Large Development and High-Rise Public Open Space Requirement*	PLNG and PR&W	Developers	On-going	Permit fees for review and approval General Fund for ongoing review of operations and maintenance
Utilities				
Implementation of infrastructure services and improvements will be achieved through current and on-going policies, programs, and actions.	PW	PLNG (Development Review) Utility provider partners	On-going	Utility and City Development Fees

Appendix A: Key Existing Conditions

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

- Public Review Draft –

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Introduction

This report describes the location of the Specific Plan Area and surrounding Study Area, and the key existing conditions in the area that will inform the public planning process and development of the Specific Plan's policies, standards, and implementation actions.

The desired outcomes of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan are to:

- Identify the community's vision for the future of the area.
- Provide a framework for that offers opportunities for living, working, and taking part in community life.
- Defines policies, standards, and implementation actions for achieving the community's vision.
- Prioritizes equity, promotes inclusivity, and strives to eliminate disparities

This document includes the following sections:

1. **San Pablo Specific Plan Area and Study Area** defines the Specific Plan Area, and the Study Area surrounding the Plan Area, and the methodology used in defining these planning areas.
2. **Community Demographics and Housing Characteristics** presents assessments of recent population change and shifts in racial and ethic diversity. It includes an overview of historic and current policies related to equity, and an assessment of household incomes, tenancy, and housing cost with the Study Area.
3. **Infrastucture Assessment** provides information on the relationship between expected growth in the Specific Plan Area and the capacity of utilities and other infrastructure to serve these expanded needs.
4. **Mobility Conditions, Projects, and Planning** describes existing traffic conditions, transit services, recent transportation safety conditions, and related plans and policies, including transportation improvement projects planned between 2025 and 2028.
5. **Land Use Planning Policies and Policy Gaps** provides an overview of existing land use, policies and standards, along San Pablo Avenue, State legislation and regional policies that will influence the development of the Specific Plan, an estimate of the housing capacity of existing policies, and a discussion of the policy gaps that the Specific Plan can address.
6. **Affordable Housing Policies and Potential Production** describes recent and the potential production of affordable housing in the Specific Plan Area given existing State and local policies, including Berkeley's affordable housing preference policy.
7. **Commercial Displacement Risk** provides an assessment of existing commercial conditions along San Pablo Avenue focusing on locally owned businesses. The assessment highlights the types of businesses that have a risk of displacement and the factors that influence the risk of displacement.
8. **Public Realm Assessment** describes the conditions that shape the public realm along San Pablo Avenue including streetscape, sidewalk conditions, and building and site frontages along the street. Safety conditions and people's perception of safety are discussed. An assessment of existing community life and the factors that shape the potential for community life along San Pablo Avenue is also included.
9. **Resilience and Climate Adaption Conditions and Plans** describes the elements and policies of the Local Hazard Mititgation Plan and the Climate Action Plan that are related to the Specific Plan Area. Relevant General Plan Open Space and Recreation policies, a discussion of San Pablo Avenue's urban tree canopy, and potential for the Specific Plan Area to be a designated Transit-Oriented Community are also provided.

San Pablo Specific Plan Area and Study Area

The San Pablo Specific Plan Area is informed by the existing Priority Development Area (PDA) boundary and is comprised of individual parcels for which the Plan's policies, standards, and implementation actions will apply. The City of Berkeley identified and nominated the PDA boundary along San Pablo Avenue during the formation of Plan Bay Area 2050 (2021) and in response to regional land use and transportation planning, and associated planning and funding opportunities.[1] These parcels primarily front onto San Pablo Avenue and are zoned **West Berkeley Commercial (C-W)**. In addition, adjacent parcels with the C-W zoning that are on side streets to San Pablo Avenue or in designated nodes are also included (see further discussion of nodes in the Land Use section). Along University Avenue, the majority of properties are zoned C-W and **University Commercial District (C-U)**, and these properties are included as well. Some parcels are "split zoned" between C-W and another zoning designation See **Figure 1**.

The Study Area includes the neighborhoods and employment areas that are proximate to and have a strong relationship with the uses along San Pablo Avenue. The Study Area extends from the I-80 freeway in the west to Sacramento Street in the east and from Albany in the north to Emeryville and Oakland in the south. See **Figure 1**. The Study Area is included in select existing conditions assessments to gain an understanding of the social and economic relationships between San Pablo Avenue and West Berkeley, to identify historic and culturally significant[2] locations in proximity to San Pablo Avenue, and to identify parks, open spaces, and other community assets that are used by people living and working in the Specific Plan Area.

[1] *Information regarding Priority Development Areas (PDAs) can be found on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's* *https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/land-use/priority-development-areas-pdas*

[2] For this analysis, Cultural Significance means that the business advances art and culture; meets a specific need for a particular group; or may hold a special meaning for a cultural group.

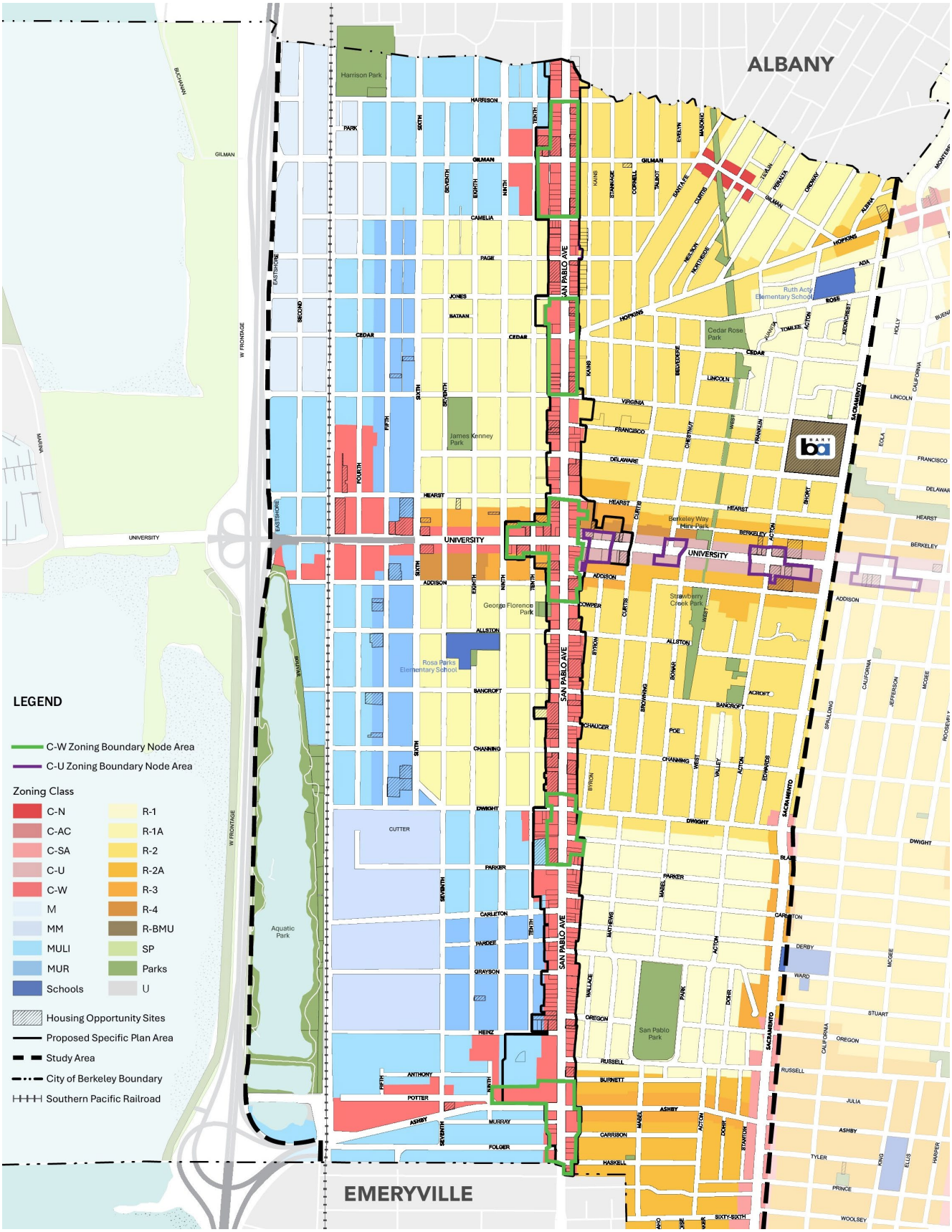


Figure 1. Proposed Specific Plan Area and Study Area. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), 2023.

Community Demographic and Housing Characteristics

Population Change

Berkeley's population grew by 9% from 2010 to 2020, to 122,580 people. In contrast, the Study Area grew by 16% in that time, to a population of 26,360 people, 22% of Berkeley's total population.[3]

The extent of population growth or decline varied in different parts of the city during this time. The western-most census tract in the city, portions of Downtown, and Southside experienced the largest population growth, increasing by 2,404, 1,019, and 2,877 people, respectively. The population of the western-most census tract in Berkeley, and in the Study Area, increased by 137%. See **Figure 2**. Other census tracts in the Study Area experienced population growth that was similar to other parts of the city.

Between 2010-2020, the number of housing units in Berkeley increased by 6% (2,877 units). New housing was primarily developed along major corridors, like San Pablo, University, Shattuck, Telegraph and Dwight Way. See **Figure 3**. The increased number of units in West Berkeley correlates with the population growth. The number of units in West Berkeley nearly doubled in the last decade, accounting for about one-fifth of the total housing growth in Berkeley.[4]

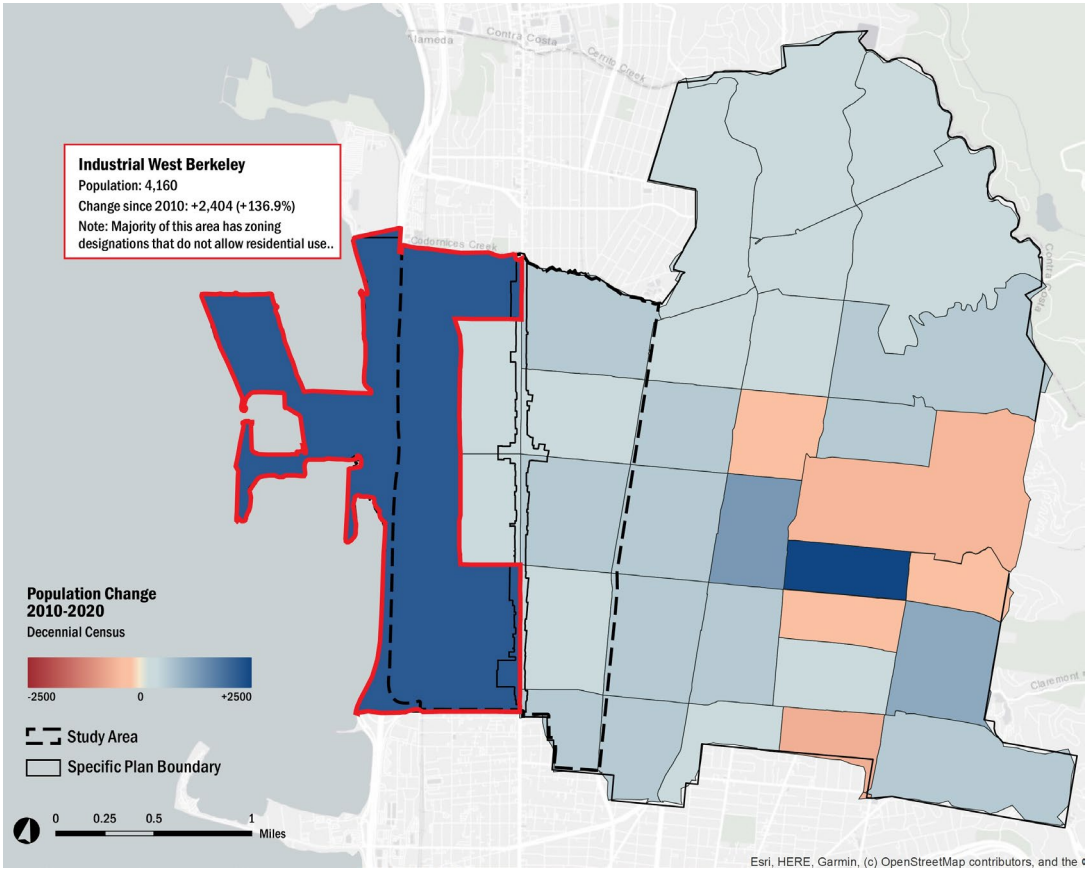


Figure 2. Population Change from 2010 to 2020. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, 2020, Table P1.

[3] United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010-2020, Table P1. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

[4] Markovich, Ally. "A Changing Berkeley: 6 Maps Show How the Past Decade Has Remade the City." Berkeleyside, 18 Oct. 2022. http://www.berkeleyside.org/2022/07/17/berkeley-population-demographics-housing-census-2020-maps

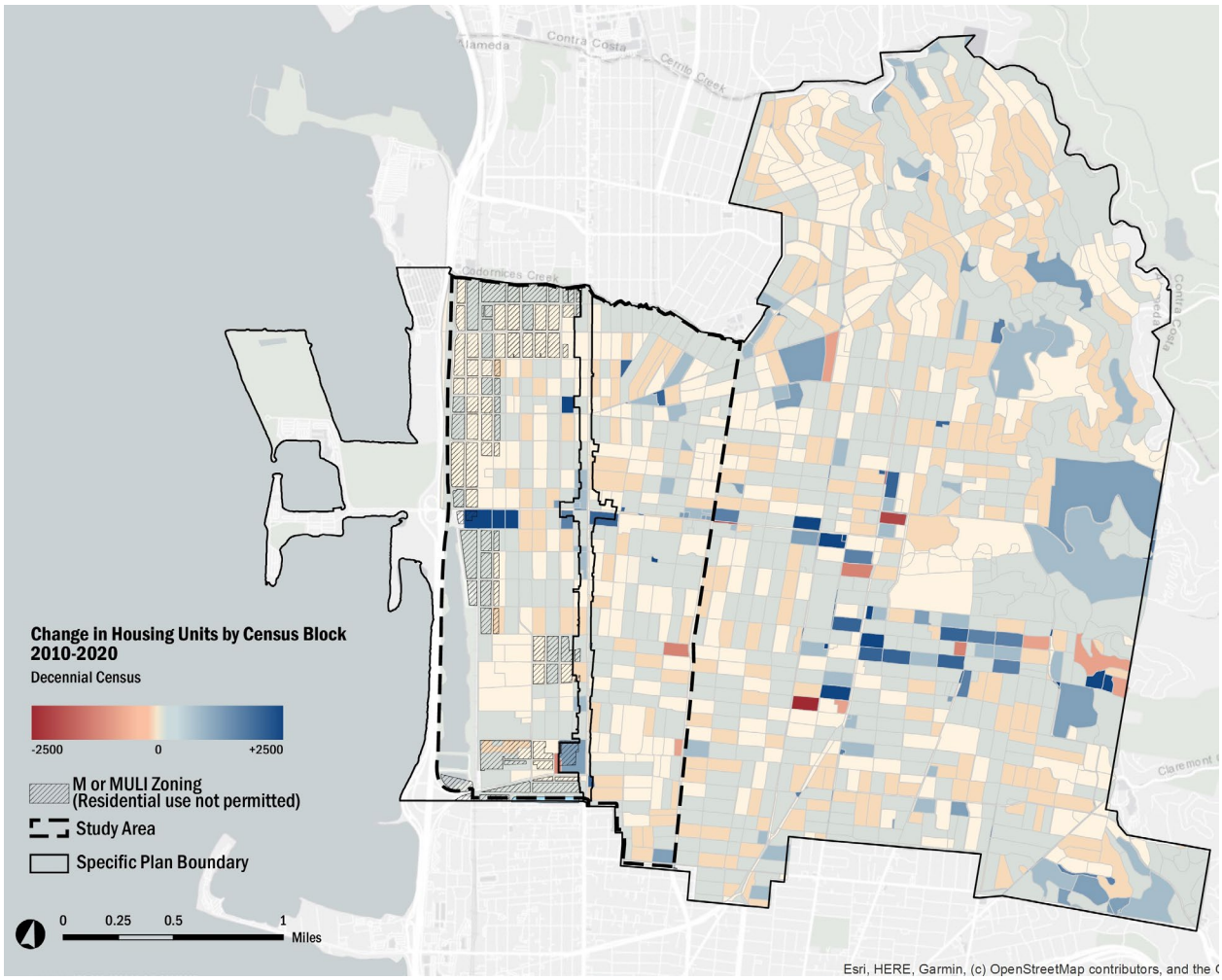


Figure 3. Change in Housing Units by Census Block, 2010 to 2020. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, 2020, Table H1.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Equity

Racial and Ethnic Population Change: The White population increased by over 3,900 (+45%) from 2000 to 2020. In the same time span, the Black population decreased by over 2,600 (-39%), while the population increase of Hispanic/ Latinx, Asians/ API, and other races was moderate. [5] See **Figure 4**. Historical data shows citywide Black population decreased from its peak of 27,421 (23.5% of total population) in 1970 to 9,812 (8% of total population) in 2020. See **Figure 5.**

Changes in Racial and Ethnic Diversity: From 2000 to 2020, the Diversity Index[6] for the Study Area decreased slightly from 72.8% to 71.6% while the city's Diversity Index increased from 63.9% to 67.6%. In comparison, the Alameda County's Diversity Index was 74.6% in 2020.[7]

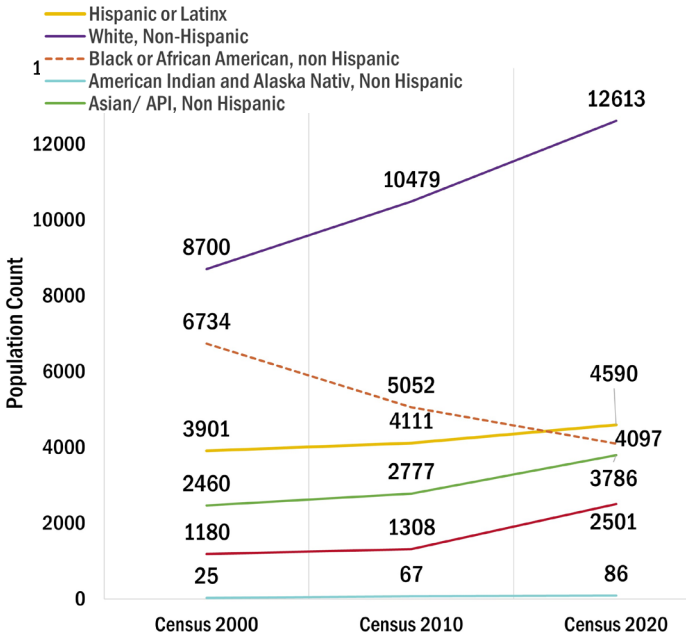


Figure 4. Population Shift by Race and Ethnicity in Study Boundary. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1.

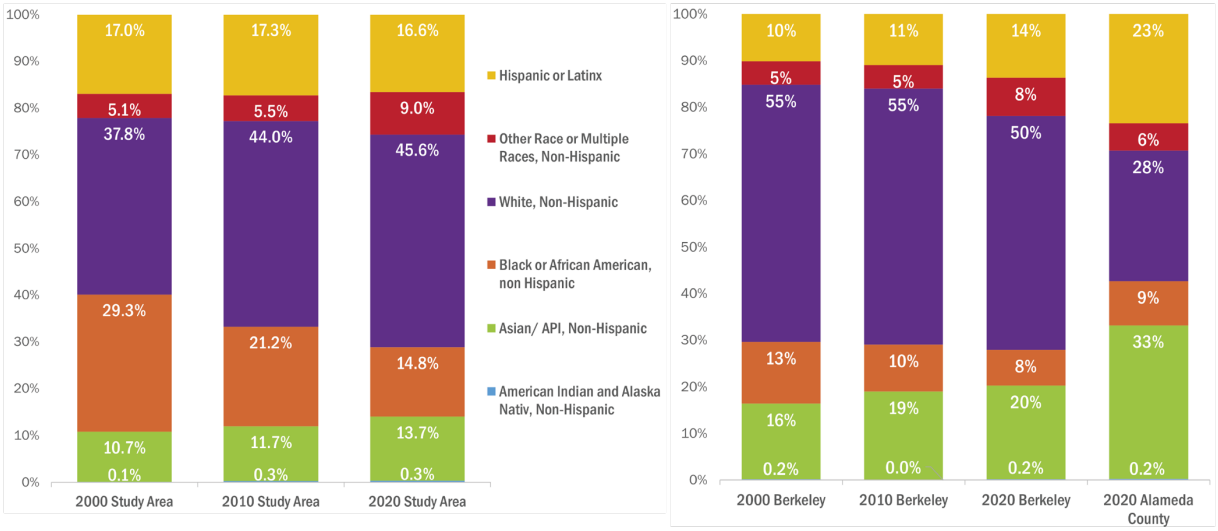


Figure 5. Comparison of Racial Composition in Study Area, Berkeley, and Alameda County. Source: United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2010, Table P7. 2020, Table P1.

Historic Redlining and Equity: In 1933, as part of the federal program and policies, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was created to refinance home mortgages and expand home buying opportunities. HOLC is the originator of the color-coded mortgage security risk practice known as redlining and redlined the majority of the Specific Plan Area and Study Area. See **Figure 6**. This discriminatory practice withheld significant investment to areas deemed "D (Hazardous)," because of adjacent industrial areas, older buildings, and the presence of "undesirable populations" (e.g., Jewish, Asian, Mexican, and Black families). Due to this redlining practice, marginalized minority

[5] United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2000, Table 7. 2010-2020 Table 9. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.
[6] A measure used by the U.S. Census Bureau that calculates the probability of two random people, picked from a population, are from different Racial and Ethnic Groups. The higher the number, the more diverse a population is.
[7] United States Census Bureau. Decennial Census. 2000, Table 7. 2010-2020 Table 9. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

communities were restricted to south and west Berkeley. Although effectively eliminated by 1966 by the Supreme Court, impacts are still seen today as areas that were redlined are often found to be more prone to racial and economic segregation, economic inequality, risk of displacement, and associated conditions.

As a result of being historically underserved, the Study area is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)'s Equity Priority Communities (EPCs)[8]. The EPC designation helps provide funding and assistance to census tracts that have a significant concentration of underserved populations, such as households with low incomes, limited English proficiency, zero-vehicle households, seniors 75 years and over, people with disability, single-parent families, and severely rent-burdened households, and people of color. EPC designations are used to make decisions about:

- Planning, including Plan Bay Area, the Transportation Improvement Program and equity analyses;
- Investment of funds, including the Active Transportation Program, OBAG Grants, Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants and the Lifeline Transportation Program; and
- Engagement with the community[9]

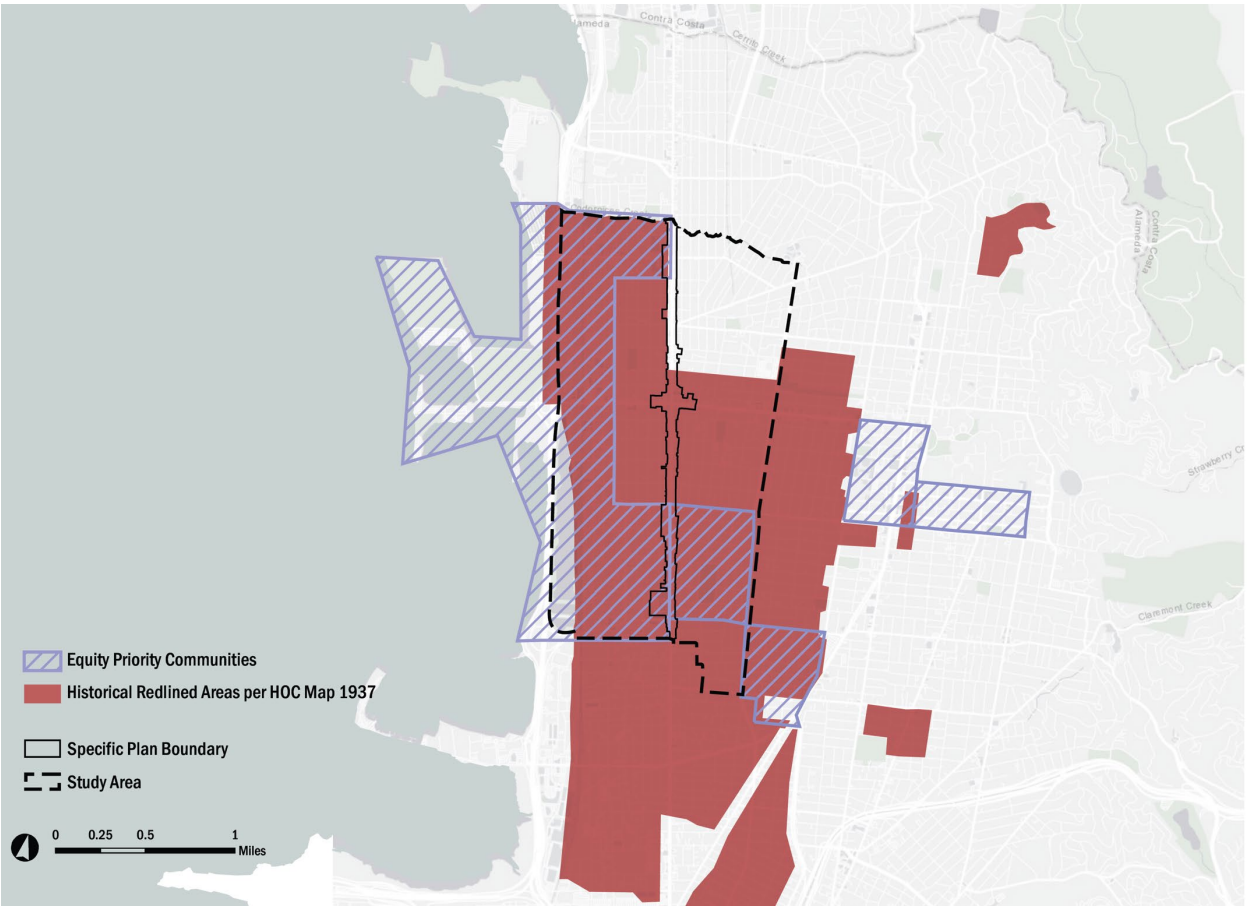


Figure 6. Equity Priority Communities and Historical Redlined Areas. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, Mapping Redlining, 2023. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Equity Priority Communities, 2021.

[8] Equity Priority Communities (EPC) is a term defined by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) that identifies Bay Area communities that are or have historically been underserved. For more information, go to: https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/equity-priority-communities.

[9] More about EPC priorities in funding programs can be found on the MTC weblink above.

Household and Housing Conditions

Household Income Distribution

The neighborhoods in the Study Area are a mix of high- and low-income households. To better visualize the location of lower-income households, **Figure 7** shows the household income range of the lowest twenty percent in each census tract in Berkeley. Neighborhoods to the south and east of San Pablo Avenue have the lowest income quintiles ranging from $15,000 - $45,000. The tracts north of University Avenue display higher quintile ranges, with lowest quintiles over $30,000.

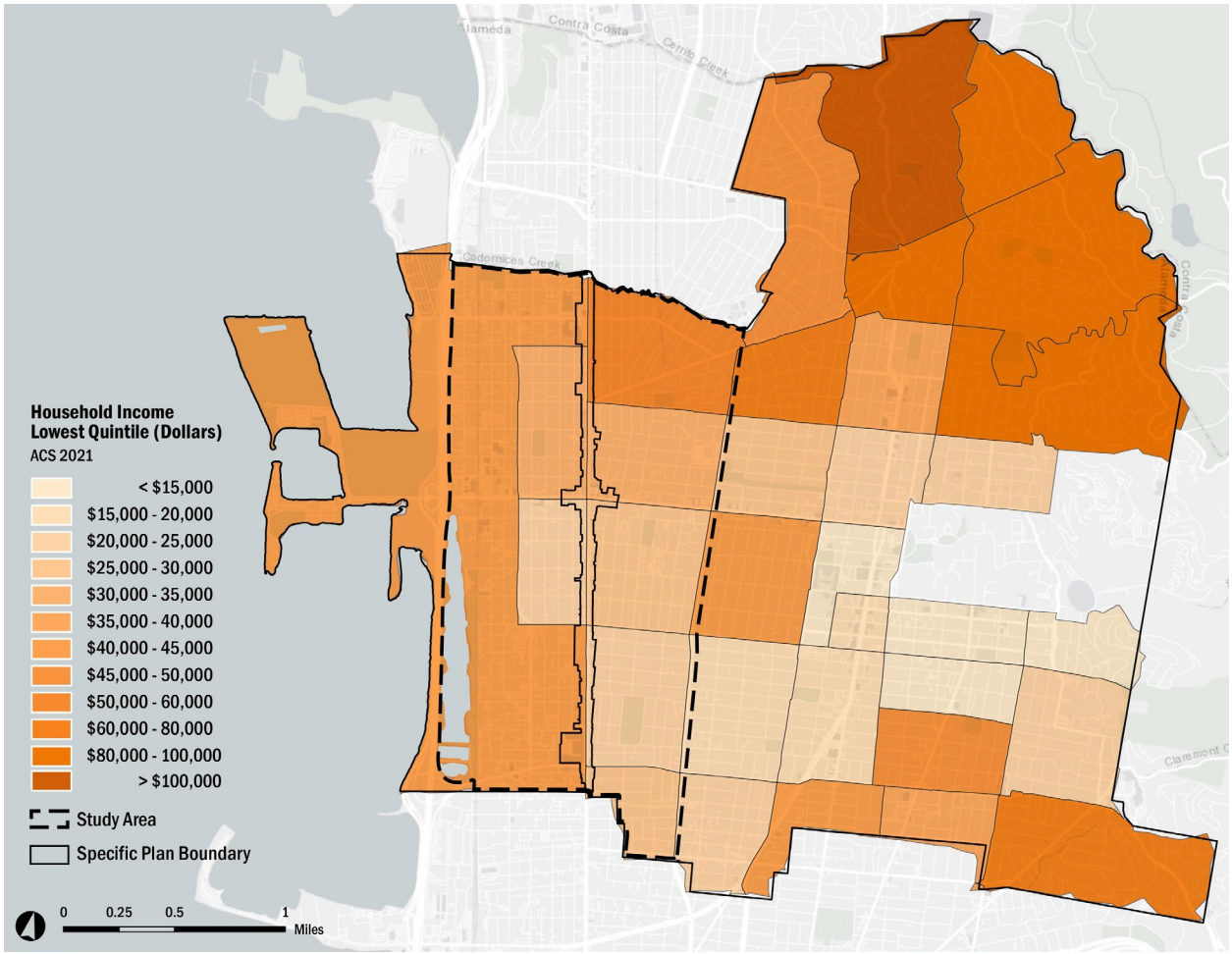


Figure 7. Household Income for Lowest Quintile. Source: United States Census Bureau. ACS. 2021, Table B19080.

Household Tenancy

Citywide Berkeley had more renter-occupied units (54%) than owner-occupied (46%) in 2021. The Study Area, with about 10,781 units, has a higher share of renters (55.3%) relative to owners (44.7%) compared to the Citywide share.[10] See **Figure 8**.

Overcrowded Housing

U.S. Census Bureau defines overcrowded housing as units with 1.01 or more persons per room, excluding bathrooms and kitchens.[11] If the occupancy surpasses 1.5 persons per room, a unit is classified as severely overcrowded. In 2021, the Study Area contained 319 occupied units that were overcrowded. This accounts for 30% of overcrowded housing citywide, while only 17% of the city's total households and 22% of the city's population live in the Study Area.[12] In the Study Area, significantly more renter-occupied households (237) were overcrowded than owner-occupied (82 households).

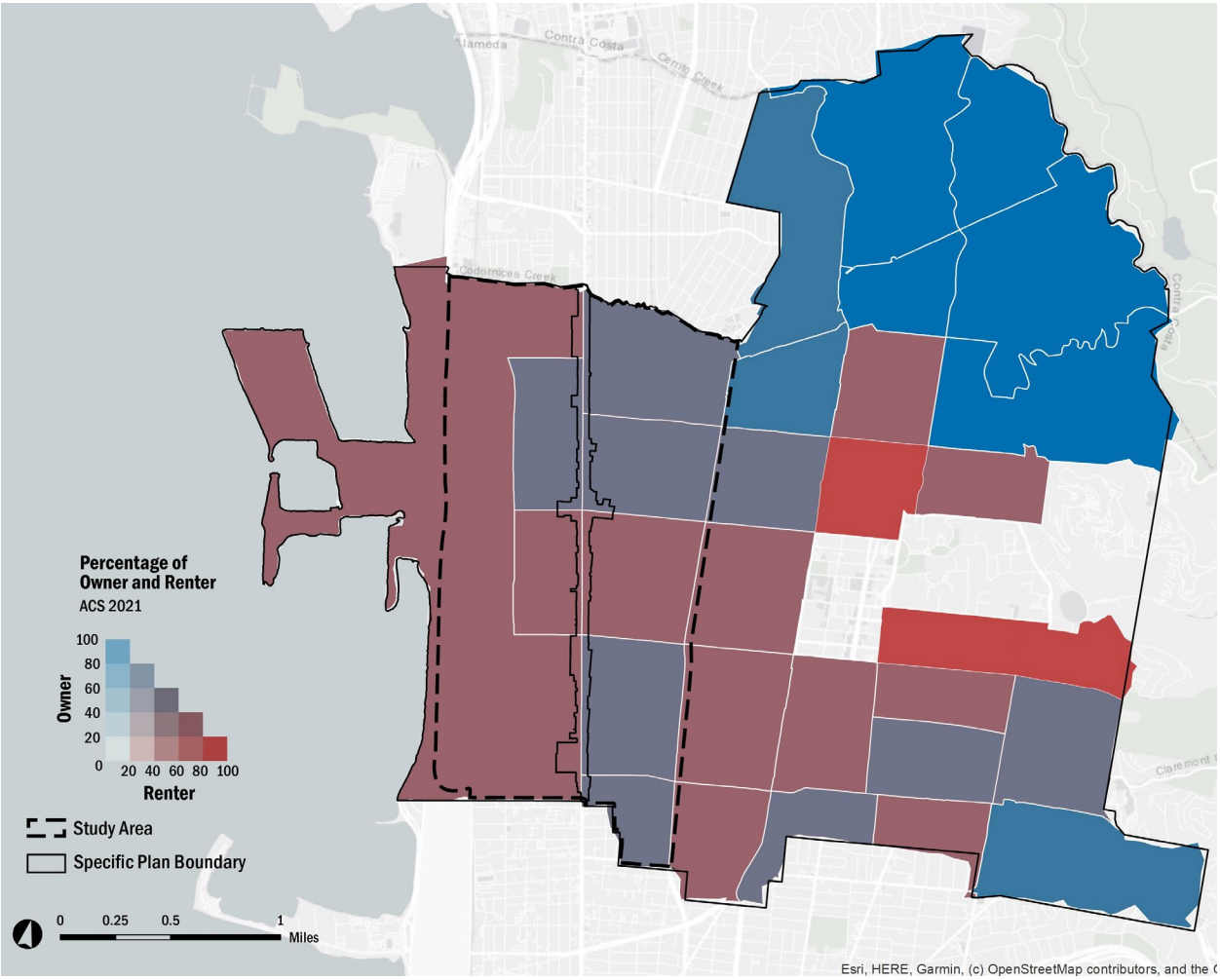


Figure 8. Mix of Households that Own or Rent in Berkeley. United States Census Bureau. ACS. 2021, Table DP04.

[10] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B25014. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

[11] Definition of overcrowding and severe overcrowding are from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. For more information, go to: hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-elements/building-blocks/overpayment-payment-and-overcrowding.

[12] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B25014. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

Household Income and Housing Cost

In 2021, the Study Area median household income ($93,871) was about $7,000 below the Berkeley median ($101,048). The median household incomes increased by similar levels in both the Study Area (+79%) and Berkeley as whole (+78%) from 2010 to 2021.[13]

Renters at the southern end of the Study Area pay higher shares of their income on rent on average. In several neighborhoods on the northern end of the Study Area, the average tenant is paying less than 20% of their income in rent, while there are several neighborhoods on the south end of the Study Area where the average is above 50%.[14] See **Figure 9.**

Owners in the area are spending a lower share of their income on housing costs, costs reflect sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts, on the property than renters are, on average.[15] See **Figure 10.**

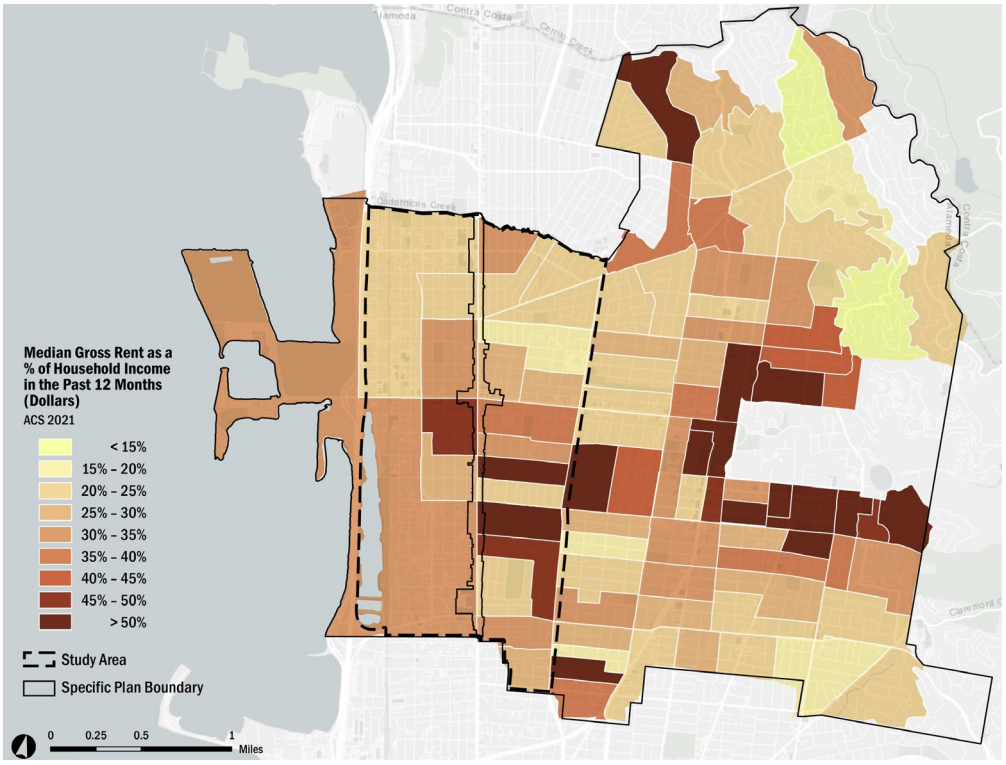


Figure 9. Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income. Source: United States Census Bureau. ACS. 2021, Table B25071.

[13] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table S2503. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

[14] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B25071. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

[15] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B25092. [Online] https://data.census.gov/.

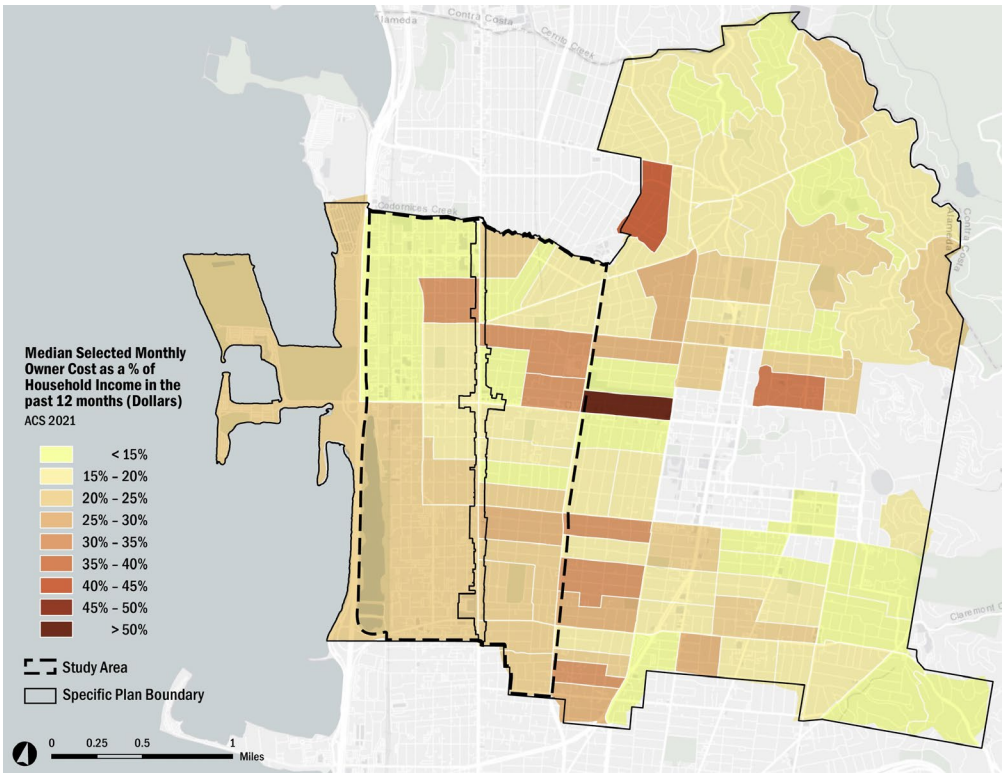


Figure 10. Median Selected Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income. [16]
Source: United States Census Bureau. ACS. 2021, Table B25092.

Housing Cost Burden

In the Study Area, more than half of tenants are cost-burdened,[17] meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their gross household income on rent and utilities. Of those tenants, 26% are severely cost-burdened, meaning they are spending more than 50 percent of their income.[18]

For severely cost-burdened households (1,513 households), 73 percent (1,118 households) earn less than $35,000 and spend more than 50 percent of their income for rent.[19]

Household Eligibility for Affordable Housing

Approximately half of Study Area households earn less than 80 percent of Area Median Income and a third earn less than 50 percent of Area Median Income.[20] These households would likely be eligible for affordable housing.

[16] "Selected Monthly Owner Cost" includes recurring payments like dept (if any), taxes, insurance and utilizes. For more information on definition and methodology, please visit: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/note/US/HSG650221

[17] Definition of cost-burden and severe cost-burden are from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. For more information, go to: hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-elements/building-blocks/overpayment-payment-and-overcrowding.

[18] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B25074. [Online] https://data.census.gov/

[19] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B25074. [Online] https://data.census.gov/

[20] United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2021, Table B19001 [Online] https://data.census.gov/, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Income Limits, 2021[Online] https://data.HUD.gov/ Street Level Advisors calculations.

Infrastructure Assessment

Infrastructure includes utility service for domestic water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, electricity, and natural gas. According to the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR), existing utility systems for domestic water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, electricity, and natural gas facilities in Berkeley have sufficient capacity to serve the planned housing developments. *Relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities resulting in significant environmental impacts would not occur, and adequate wastewater capacity exists to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments. Impacts would be less than significant.*[21]

Residential capacity based on existing zoning assumes 2,588 existing units in the Specific Plan Area and between 3,700 to 5,350 future multifamily units in the next 8 years. Existing versus future capacity for non-residential use is not anticipated to have much effect on utility upgrade needs. The Housing Element Update EIR studied the sites inventory including a total of 15,153 units. The increase in units in the San Pablo Specific Plan area is negligible in relation to the required infrastructure needs, however some localized improvements will likely be required.

- Localized upsizing of domestic water and wastewater in San Pablo Avenue may be necessary to accommodate the additional units. The City of Berkeley and EBMUD typically require individual developments to make these upgrades.
- Stormwater from new development will be required to comply with the Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit (MRP) requirements. Rainwater management including bioswales, permeable paving, underground stormwater storage and/ or rain gardens will be required.
- Telecommunications, electricity and natural gas upgrades will continue to be available from the providers. Typically, the utility companies will upgrade facilities as needed.
- Lighting is provided by the City's Public Works Department.

The Specific Plan process includes consideration of corridor wide and/or district level infrastructure improvements. This approach could result in efficiencies, multiple benefits, and could spread the cost of localized infrastructure upgrades over multiple developments.

[21] *City of Berkeley 2023-2031 Housing Element Update, Draft Environmental Impact Report; City of Berkeley; August 2022, page ES-21.*

Mobility Conditions, Projects, and Planning

Transportation Focus of the Specific Plan

San Pablo Avenue is a California state highway (State Route 123) and improvements within the street right of way require approval by Caltrans. The City of Berkeley is responsible for maintenance of the sidewalks and medians, including street trees and landscaping.

The Specific Plan is not making transportation improvements to San Pablo Avenue, because the Alameda Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) has completed a multimodal planning project for San Pablo Avenue throughout Alameda County. The project has led to three projects that will result in construction of safety improvements for all users, bus stop improvements, and parallel bicycle facility improvements, as well as a short segment of bicycle and bus lanes on the southern end of San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley.

The Specific Plan effort focused on the public realm of the sidewalks along San Pablo Avenue, parking management, and other transportation improvements that are not being addressed through the Alameda CTC efforts.

Traffic Volumes

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes along San Pablo Avenue average about 20,000 vehicles per day in Berkeley. In addition to serving as a major thoroughfare for local travel and providing access to local businesses and residents, San Pablo Avenue also is an alternative route for travelers on I-80 during periods of heavy freeway congestion. Cross streets providing interstate access include Gilman Street (9,000 AADT), University Avenue (19,000 AADT), and Ashby Avenue (42,000 AADT).[22]

Transit Network

AC Transit – AC Transit provides bus service throughout western Alameda County and Contra Costa County and operates 12 bus routes within the study area that provides direct access to the plan area. See **Table 1** and **Figure 11**. AC Transit developed a new network in response to changing travel patterns through the AC Transit Realign Plan, which was implemented in August 2025. The Realign Plan did not significantly alter the service within the Specific Plan Area.

Table 1: AC Transit Service Summary (August 2023)

Line	Route	Nearest Bus Stops	Weekday		Weekend	
			Hours	Headway	Hours	Headway
12	MLK Jr. – Temescal – Grand	On Gilman Street between San Pablo Avenue and Tenth Street	5:55 AM – 12:55 AM	20 min	6:00 AM – 12:00 AM	30 min
36	Dwight – Shellmound – Adeline	On Dwight Way between Tenth Byron Streets	5:50 AM – 12:35 AM	30 min	5:50 AM – 12:30 AM	30 min
51B	University – College – Rockridge	On University Avenue between Tenth and Curtis Streets	4:55 AM – 12:20 AM	15 min	5:00 AM – 12:20 AM	15 min
52	UC Village – Cedar – UC Campus	On San Pablo Avenue between Albany City Limit and Cedar Street	6:00 AM – 11:45 PM	15 min	8:15 AM – 8:25 PM	20 min

[22] San Pablo and Ashby Avenue data source – Caltrans Traffic Census Program, 2021; Gilman Street data source – collected for the Gilman Gateway rezoning project, 2019; and University Avenue data source: collected for the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project, 2018.

Line	Route	Nearest Bus Stops	Weekday		Weekend	
			Hours	Headway	Hours	Headway
72 / 72M	Hilltop – CCC – San Pablo / Macdonald – San Pablo	Along entire length of San Pablo Avenue	4:45 AM – 1:20 AM	15 min	4:55 AM – 1:45 AM	20 min
72L	San Pablo Rapid	Along entire length of San Pablo Avenue	6:00 AM – 8:15 PM	30 min	7:00 AM – 7:55 PM	30 min
800	Richmond – Oakland Transbay All Nighter	On University Avenue at San Pablo Avenue	12:20 AM – 7:25 AM	30 min	12:20 AM – 7:25 AM	30 min
802	San Pablo All Nighter	On San Pablo Avenue between University Avenue and Oakland City Limit	12:40 AM – 5:35 AM	60 min	12:40 AM – 5:35 AM	60 min
G	Colusa – Solano Transbay	On San Pablo Avenue between Albany City Limit and University Avenue	7:00 AM – 9:45 AM, 4:10 PM – 6:50 PM	30 – 60 min	No service	No service
FS	Shattuck – University Transbay	On University Avenue at San Pablo Avenue	6:10 AM – 8:30 AM, 4:30 PM – 7:25 PM	90+ min	No service	No service
J	Sacramento – Christie Transbay	On Ashby Avenue at San Pablo Avenue	7:10 AM – 10:10 AM, 4:45 PM – 7:00 PM	20 – 60 min	No service	No service

Source: AC Transit website, August 2025 Schedules; Fehr & Peers, CD+A, 2025.

West Berkeley Shuttle – This is a free shuttle funded by the Berkeley Gateway Transportation Management Association that provides transit connections between the Ashby BART station and major employment centers in West Berkeley. The shuttle operates on weekdays from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM with approximately 30-minute headways. The West Berkeley Shuttle does not currently have any stops on San Pablo Avenue or in the Specific Plan Area. See **Figure 11** illustrates the route alignment.

Bear Transit – This is UC Berkeley's shuttle system, primarily providing service between Campus Park, Downtown Berkeley, and Berkeley Hills. Bear Transit is free for the UC Berkeley community and members of the public may ride for a $1 fare. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bear Transit provided service to the plan area on the Campus Shared Services (CSS Line). The CSS line operated between the North Berkeley BART Station and the UC Berkeley Shared Services Building on 4th Street via Delaware Street, San Pablo Avenue, Cedar Street, and Virginia Street.

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBL) Shuttle – The LBL operates a free shuttle service for LBL employees and guests between LBL and North Berkeley BART and other destinations in West and North Berkeley. The shuttle provides morning service between 6:00AM and 11:00AM and afternoon service between 3:30PM and 7:30PM. The shuttle operates at 60-minute headways during both periods. The shuttle stops along San Pablo Avenue at Cedar Street, Gilman Street, and Buchanan Street during both morning and afternoon service.

Other Existing and Planned Shuttle Services – In addition to the shuttles described above, Kaiser Permanente used to operate an employee shuttle between the North Berkeley BART Station and its facility on Second Street at Virginia Street in West Berkeley prior to the pandemic. Although this shuttle crossed San Pablo Avenue, they did not directly serve the Specific Plan Area.

The Berkeley Commons Project (600 Addison Street), and TheLAB (747 Bancroft Way) are recently approved developments in West Berkeley that are conditioned to operate shuttles between the North Berkeley BART Station

and their respective sites. Although these shuttles would cross San Pablo Avenue, they are not expected to directly serve the Specific Plan Area.

BART – BART provides regional commuter rail transit in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. As of August 2023, BART trains operate weekdays from 5:00 AM to 2:00 AM, Saturdays from 6:00 AM to 2:00 AM, and Sundays from 8:00 AM to 2:00 AM. The North Berkeley, the Downtown Berkeley, and the Ashby BART stations are located to the east of San Pablo Avenue. **See Figure 11**.

These stations are served by the Richmond-Berryessa-North San José (orange) and Richmond-Millbrae/SFO (red) lines. Other destinations in the BART system can be reached by transferring at stations in Oakland. As of August 2023, the Berryessa-North San José line provides service every 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays. The Richmond-Millbrae/SFO line provides service every 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays. In June 2023, there were approximately 3,400, 8,900, and 3,700 entries and exits on an average weekday from the North Berkeley, Downtown Berkeley, and Ashby BART stations, respectively.[23]

Capitol Corridor - Amtrak's Capitol Corridor route operates between San Jose and Sacramento and stops at the Berkeley Rail Station. The station is located under the University Avenue overpass, about 0.5 miles west of San Pablo Avenue. There are 12 daily weekday departures and arrivals and 11 daily weekend departures and arrivals per direction at the Berkeley Station.[24] In FY2021, the station served about 26,000 rail passengers.[25] The Amtrak station is served by AC Transit Line 51B, with additional bus service nearby. The station provides basic amenities, including outside seating and automobile and bicycle parking.

[23] Bay Area Rapid Transit 2019 Monthly Ridership Reports.

[24] Amtrak Capitol Corridor Schedule.

[25] Amtrak California Fact Sheet, Fiscal Year 2021.

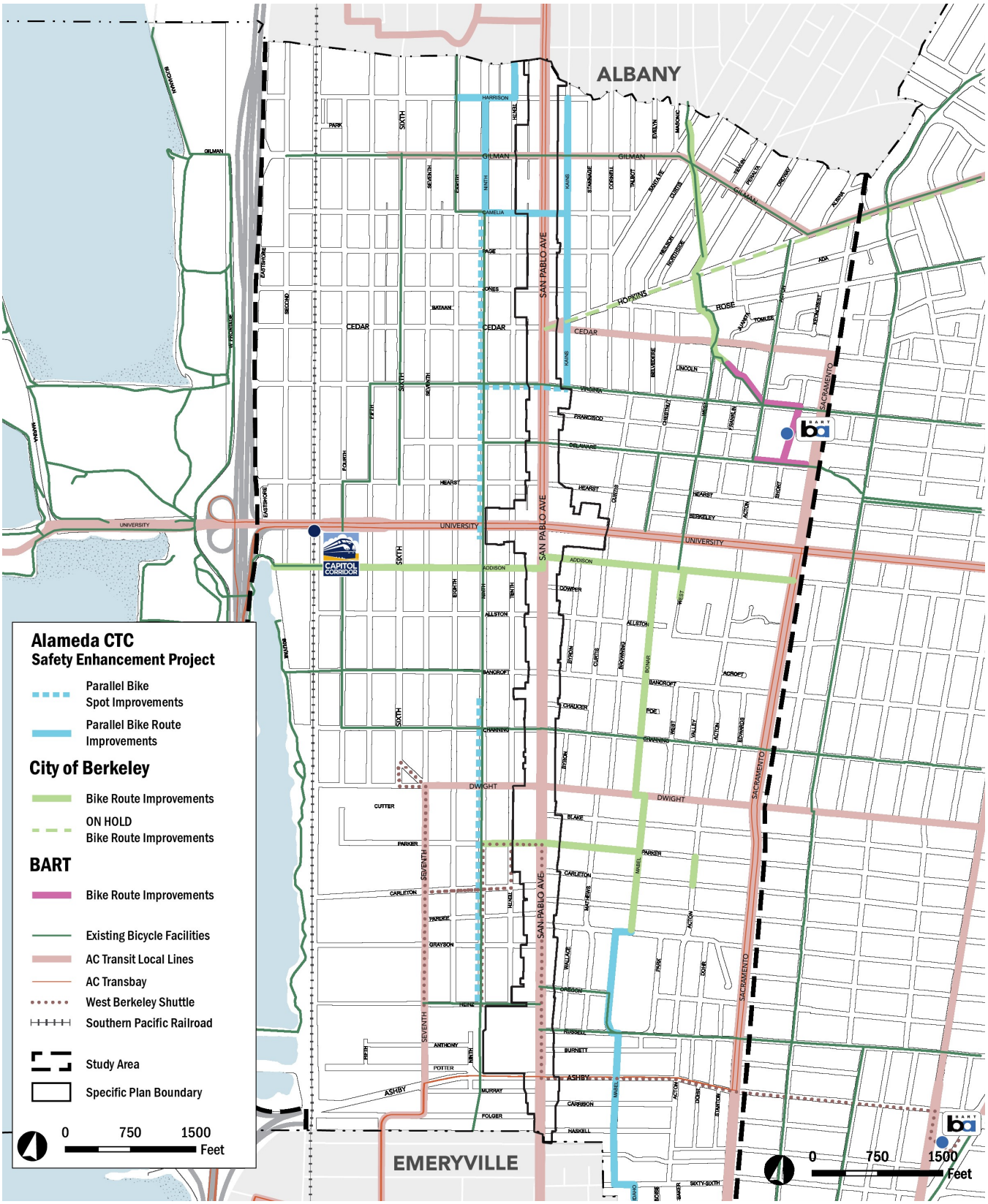


Figure 11. Transit Lines and Bicycle Routes. Source: City of Berkeley, Alameda CTC, and Fehr & Peers, 2023.

Transit-First Policy Implementation Plan – December 2022

This plan provides policies and guidelines for implementing the City's Transit-First Policy (Berkeley General Plan Policy T-4) and for future planning for the City's existing transit priority corridors. The plan aligns with the City's Climate Action Plan goals to prioritize transit over single-occupant vehicles and reduce emissions. Objectives of the plan include improving transit efficiency, reliability, and accessibility, increasing transit ridership, and prioritizing transit corridors.

It identifies San Pablo Avenue as a Primary Transit Route and a corridor for future study of transit infrastructure needs based on the AC Transit Major Corridors Study (2016). San Pablo Avenue Corridor together with the Telegraph and University Avenue Corridors are AC Transit designated future Bus Rapid Transit Corridors and part of the AC Transit Long-Term Improvements (by 2040) plan.

The document describes Alameda CTC's San Pablo Corridor Project as the lead project for the design of future transit improvements to San Pablo Avenue, and recommends continuing work with Alameda CTC, Caltrans, and neighboring cities to develop a long-term implementation plan for the whole corridor to meet projected transit needs of planned land uses and anticipated growth of housing.

Council Referral for BRT in Berkeley

In September 2023, the City Council referred to the City Manager to move forward with a feasibility analysis and community engagement process to develop options for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for AC Transit's 51B route, including on University Avenue which is designated a Primary Transit Route by AC Transit through their Major Corridors Study.

If the City continues to pursue implementation of BRT service on University Avenue to Downtown this would improve transit access from the San Pablo Specific Plan Area to Downtown, UC Berkeley, BART, and other locations proximate to University Avenue. It would also reinforce the importance of the San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue Node.

Transportation Safety

The entire length of San Pablo Avenue is included in the City of Berkeley's High-Injury Network. Between 2017 and 2021, there were 190 collisions on San Pablo Avenue that resulted in an injury or death, representing 7% of the Berkeley total.[26]

Vision Zero Action Plan - This plan was approved March 10, 2019, and describes the goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries in Berkeley by 2028 through data-driven engineering strategies. The plan prioritizes infrastructure within an Equity Priority Area, which includes much of the Study Area. Between 2008 and 2018, 46% of severe and fatal collisions within Berkeley occurred within the EPA area. The plan also identifies San Pablo Avenue as a High-Injury Street, the streets in Berkeley with the most severe injury or fatality collisions between 2008 and 2018. During that time, there were multiple collisions on San Pablo Avenue that resulted in severe injury to pedestrians and vehicle occupants, but no reported fatalities.

Implementation of the Alameda CTC San Pablo Corridor Project's Safety Enhancements Project and the bike infrastructure projects are described below. This work will improve traffic calming and pedestrian safety and support the goals of the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Ongoing Projects, Approved Plans and Future Planning

Current City, countywide, and regional action plans focus on multimodal strategies to achieve improvements for all modes of transportation in San Pablo Specific Plan and Study Areas. The alignments of these improvement projects are mapped in **Figure 11**.

[26] Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) via Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), 2017-2021.

San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project – This project is led by the Alameda County Transportation Commission ("Alameda CTC") and consists of three near-term projects in the Specific Plan Area to improve safety and transit reliability along the San Pablo Avenue Corridor. Additional information about these projects can be found on the Alameda CTC web site.[27]

- The **Safety Enhancements Project** will construct improvements for pedestrians and cyclists to cross San Pablo Avenue more safely and improve transit speed and reliability along San Pablo Avenue. Transit improvements include bus stop bulb-outs for Rapid Bus stops, lighting upgrades, and some bus stop relocations to improve bus operations. Within Berkeley, improvements will extend between Heinz Avenue and the northern city limit.
- The **Parallel Bike Improvement Project** will construct bike safety and connectivity improvements along streets parallel to and across San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley, Albany, and Oakland. Improvements on parallel streets will consist of diverters, traffic circles, modifications to existing stop controls, traffic humps, and vertical separation for bicycles.
- The **Bus and Bike Lanes Project** located primarilly within the Cities of Oakland and Emeryville will convert one travel lane in each direction on San Pablo Avenue to a bus-only lane and convert on-street parking lanes to protected bike lanes. In Berkeley, the Project's bicycle improvements will extend along San Pablo Avenue from the southern city limit to Heinz Avenue, a distance of approximately 0.25 miles, and the bus improvements will end at the Ashby Avenue intersection.

Other multimodal projects – The City is moving forward with implementation of several projects identified in the 2017 Bike Plan within the Study Area. These, combined with the Alameda CTC projects, will improve accessibility and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, enhancing connectivity between the Specific Plan Area and the surrounding Study Area. The project include:

- **Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project –** This project will improve a portion of the existing pathway from Virginia Gardens to the crossing of Santa Fe Avenue. The project is in conceptual design and has completed initial public engagement. Design is expected to be completed in mid-2024 with construction occurring soon after, assuming necessary additional funds are secured.
- **Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study –** A small portion of this project, from Gilman Street to Sacramento Street is within the Study Area. The project's goal is to make the street safer and more accessible for all modes of transportation. As of November 2023, the project is on hold due to City staffing constraints and a final decision by City Council regarding project design.
- **West Hopkins Corridor Street Rehabilitation Project –** This project includes Hopkins Street from Gilman Street to San Pablo Avenue. Similar to the other Hopkins Study, as of November 2023, the project is on hold.
- **Parker-Addison Mobility and Safety Improvement Project –** This project will provide bike boulevard and associated improvements to connect from the West Street multiuse pathway to San Pablo Park via Bonar and Mabel Streets. It will also improve Parker Street to connect with the 9th Street Bike Boulvard. Design is nearly complete and construction is expected to occur in 2024.
- **Addison Street Bicycle Boulevard Project –** This project has received funding, but design and public involvement has not yet begun. The project's goal is to make improvements to the Addison Street Bicycle Boulevard from Aquatic Park to Sacramento Street.
- **North Berkeley Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Improvements –** This is a BART project that is under construction and is improving bicycle and pedestrian access at and around the North Berkeley BART Station to improve connectivity from the Ohlone Greenway at Virginia Gardens to the crossing and connection to the Ohlone Greenway at Sacramento Street.

[27] General website for the Alameda CTC project can be found here https://www.alamedactc.org/programs-projects/multimodal-arterial-roads/sanpabloave. Boards illustrating the locations for specific improvements for the Safety Enhancement and Parallel Bike Improvement Projects can be found on the "Key Materials" page.

Land Use Planning Policies and Gaps

Existing Land Use Policies and Standards

General Plan

The General Plan land use designation along the entire San Pablo Avenue frontage is **Avenue Commercial**. The land use designations for properties adjacent to the corridor include **Manufacturing**, **Manufacturing Mixed-Use**, **Low Medium Density Residential**, **Medium Density Residential**, and **High Density Residential.** The Study Area, beyond the Specific Plan Area, includes a broader range of land uses including **Neighborhood Commercial**, **Institutional**, **Open Space**, and **Low Density Residential** in addition to those above. See **Figure 12**.

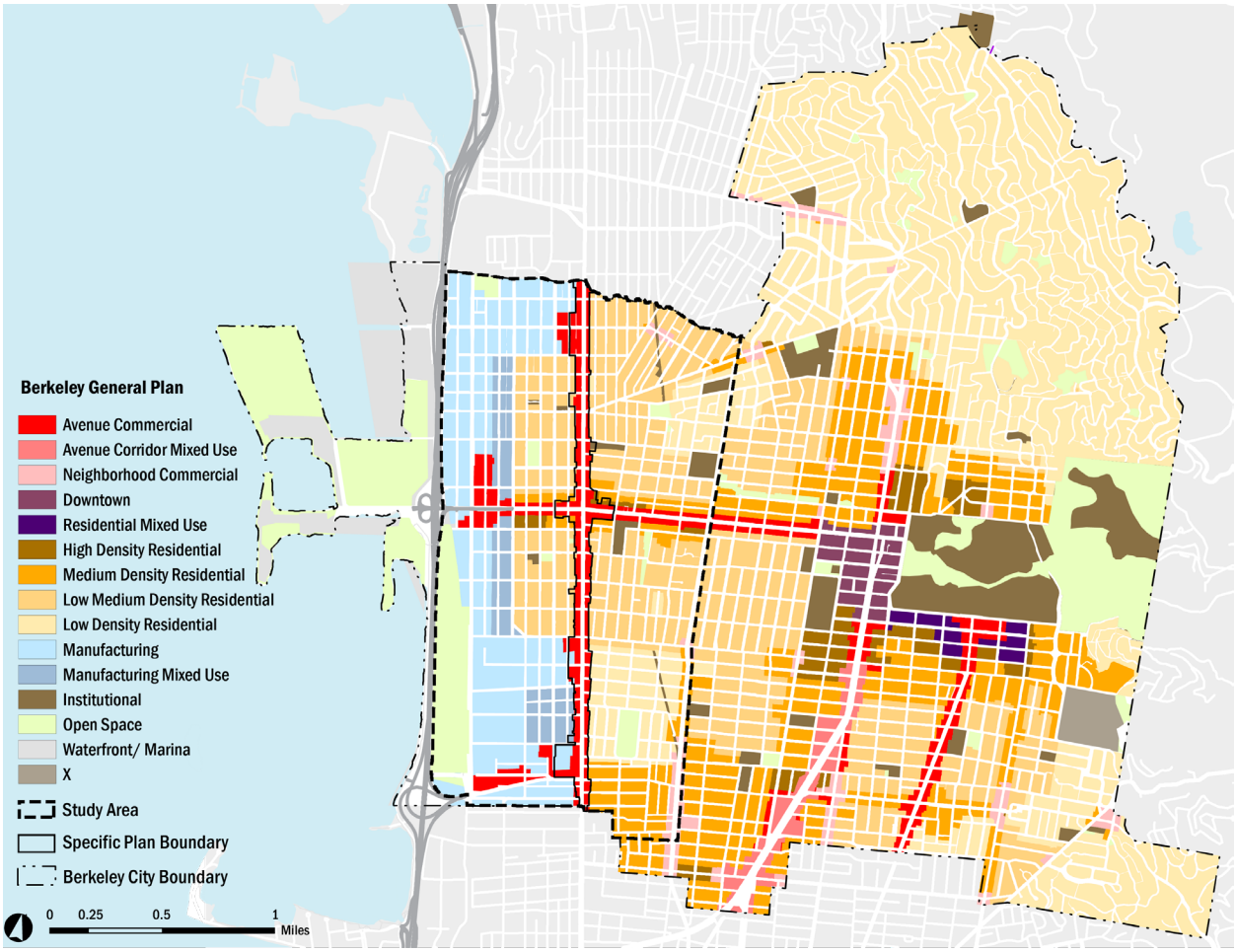


Figure 12. Berkeley General Plan. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023.

2023-2031 Housing Element Update

The City's 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (as amended on February 17, 2023) identifies the City's specific housing needs and outlines goals, policies, and programs to address them, including housing affordability and diversity. The City also provides annual reports on its progress toward meeting Housing Element Program objectives. Some key 2023-2031 Housing Element Update goals and programs include:

Housing Element Goals:

- **Goal A Housing Affordability:** Berkeley residents should have access to quality housing at a range of housing options and prices. Housing is least affordable for people at the lowest income levels, especially those with extremely low income, and City resources should focus on this area of need.
- **Goal B Housing Preservation & Improvement:** Existing housing should be maintained and improved. The City should promote efficiency in new and existing housing to improve building comfort and safety, reduce energy and water use and costs, provide quality and resilient housing, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Improvements that will prepare buildings for a major seismic event should be encouraged.
- **Goal C Housing Production:** Berkeley should provide adequate housing capacity to meet its current and future housing needs, including coordinating with the UC and other agencies. New housing should be developed to expand opportunities and choices to meet the diverse needs of all socioeconomic segments of the community, and should be safe, healthy and resilient.
- **Goal D Special Needs Housing & Homelessness Prevention:** Berkeley should expand the supply of housing for special needs groups, including housing affordable to those with extremely low incomes.
- **Goal E Affirmatively Further Fair Housing:** The City should continue to take meaningful actions to affirmatively further fair housing choices in Berkeley.
- **Goal F Mitigate Governmental Constraints:** Berkeley should identify and mitigate barriers to the construction and improvement of housing.

Housing Element Programs:

- **Program 27 – Priority Development Areas (PDAs), Commercial and Transit Corridors.** In 2022, the City initiated the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan project to increase allowed densities, study design standards, public improvements, and mechanisms to incentivize affordable housing. The plan will also coordinate with other PDAs and commercial corridors to expand opportunities along transit corridors.[28]
- **Program 1 - Affordable Housing Berkeley.** The Berkeley Housing Authority (BHA) established Affordable Housing Berkeley Inc., as a non-profit entity to act as the development arm of the BHA and produce affordable housing units in Berkely. In October 2023, the BHA approved a strategic plan for Affordable Housing Berkeley Inc., which is geared towards small housing purchase of up to seven building units.
- **Program 2 – Housing Choice Vouchers.** The City assists up to 2,000 households by providing Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-based Section 8 Vouchers, Moderate Rehabilitation (SROs), Emergency Housing Vouchers, Mainstream Voucher Program, and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing. In 2024, BHA housed an average of 1,759 households and is continuously issuing new vouchers to families on the waitlist.
- **Program 4 – Housing Trust Fund.** Berkeley's Housing Trust Fund (HTF) pools funds for affordable housing construction from a variety of sources with different requirements, and makes them available to developers through a single application process.
- **Program 5 – Preservation of At-Risk Housing.** The City will monitor and assist in preserving deed-restricted housing.
- **Program 10 - Housing Preference Policies**. In July 2023, Berkeley adopted a policy to provide a preference for current residents and descendants of residents of the city's historically redlined areas. Households with ties to redlined areas receive priority in leasing new City funded or regulated affordable units.
- **Program 11 – Rental Assistance.** The City utilizes CDBG and local Measure P funding to contract with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide supportive services. These services help stabilize households in rental assistance programs and to move unhoused community members into permanent supportive housing.
- **Program 12 – Workforce Housing.** Support local efforts to expand the construction of workforce housing that is affordable to households earning between 60 and 120 percent of area median income (AMI). In March

[28] City of Berkeley, 2025. Housing Element and General Plan Annual Progress Report. Available at: https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03-28%20%20%20Housing%20Element%20and%20General%20Plan%20Annual%20Progress%20Reports.pdf

2023, the City achieved its goal of entitling 110 affordable units, with a preference for Berkeley Unified School District employees.[29]

- **Program 14 – Housing for Homeless Persons with Disabilities.** provide local subsidy to Resources for Community Development (RCD) for a 119-unit very low income development for households earning between 10 and 50 percent AMI (Supportive Housing in People's Park) with at least 50 percent of the units dedicated to previously unhoused residents with mental health conditions.

The full list of Goals, Policies and Programs is available in the City's Housing Element Update. However, as illustrated here, between current State Law and the City's Housing Element, there is a strong foundation for affordable housing production throughout Berkeley, including within the Specific Plan Area.

Zoning

As noted above, properties fronting San Pablo Avenue are predominantly zoned West Berkeley Commercial (C-W). See **Figure 13**. The City's zoning also delineates Commercial Designated Nodes along San Pablo and University Avenues. The **West Berkeley Commercial Designated Nodes** are located in areas around major intersections along San Pablo Avenue with Gilman Street, Cedar Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue. The intent of these nodes is to intensify retail, commercial, and mixed-use activity to support a strong commercial and pedestrian-oriented environment by requiring that ground floors be activated with select commercial uses. A **University Commercial District Node Area** is located on the east side of the University and San Pablo intersection. This designation requires that new residential uses be integrated with non-residential uses. The existing characteristics of the nodes are discussed below in the existing land use section.

Development Standards

The development standards and ground floor uses, as of November 2023, for the zoning districts within the Plan Area are outlined in **Appendix A1**.

Within the C-W and C-U zoning districts, which make up the majority of the Specific Plan Area, key standards include:

- Non-residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR)s of 2.2-3.0.
- Maximum height in the C-W district of three stories and 40 feet for residential- or commercial-only development, and four stories and 50 feet for mixed-use and live-work developments.
- Maximum height in the C-U of three stories and 36 feet for single use and mixed-use development *outside the nodes*, and four stories and 48 feet for mixed-use *within the nodes*. Residential-only development in the nodes requires a use permit.
- Ground floor commercial uses in the C-W zone are only required in the designated nodes. Outside the nodes, ground floor uses are permitted in accordance with Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) 23.204-1. Unpermitted uses in the C-W designated include open air markets, vehicle rentals and washes. Within both the C-U zone nodes and non-nodes areas, ground floor residential uses require a Use Permit.

[29] Ibid.

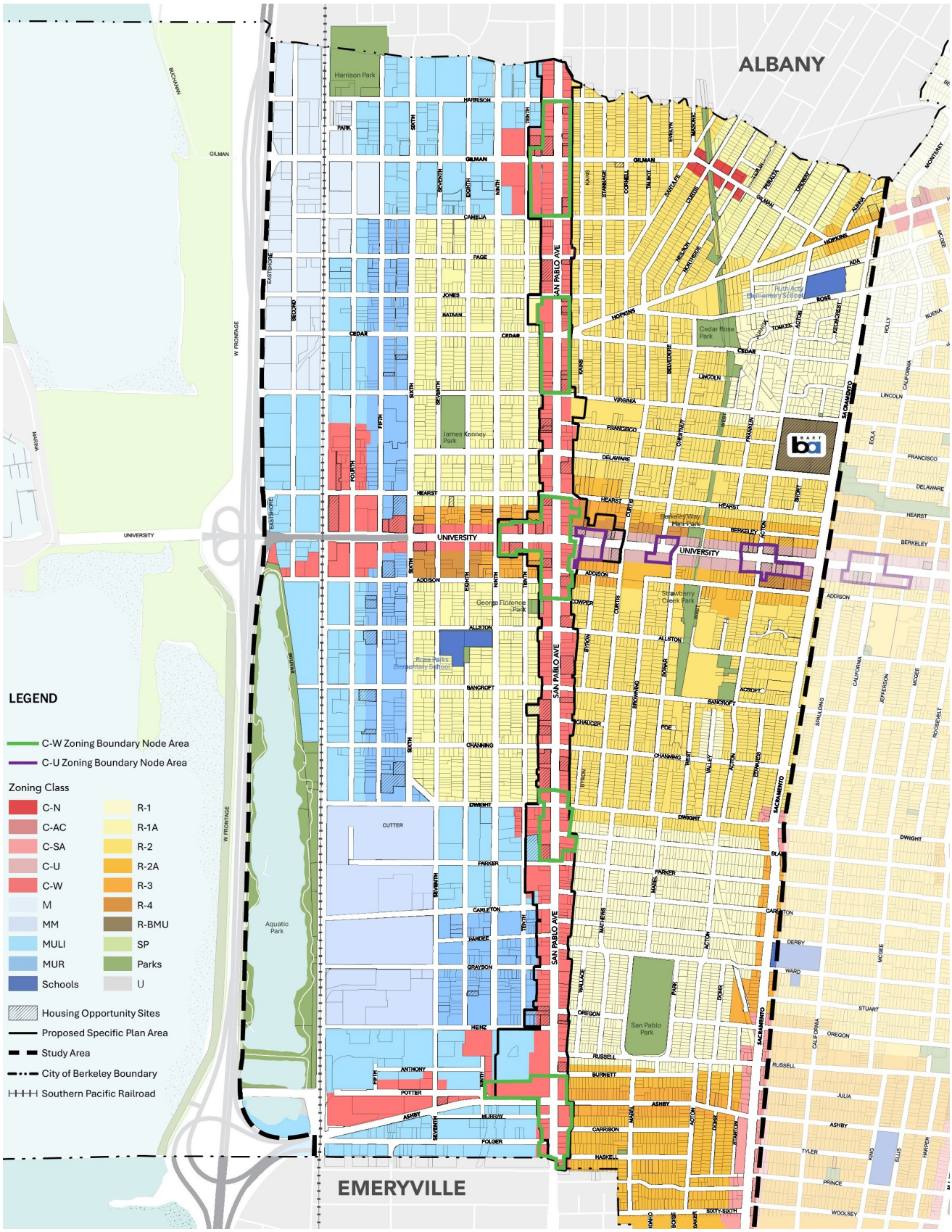


Figure 13. Zoning Map with designated nodes in the Specific Plan and Study Areas. Source: City of Berkeley

Permit Review Process

Ministerial and Discretionary Review Ministerial review is a process for development approval involving little or no personal judgement by the zoning officer or Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB). The zoning officer or ZAB ensures that the proposed development meets all the "objective zoning standards" and "objective design review standards" in effect at the time that the application is submitted but uses no special discretion or judgement in reaching a decision. In contrast, *Discretionary Review* is a process for development that is subject to public notice to neighbors, and in some cases, a public hearing.

Residential and Mixed-Use Review within the Specific Plan Area – As shown in the **Table 2** below, most of the residential and mixed-use development within the Specific Plan Area, which is predominantly zoned C-W, requires an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) or Use Permit (UP), which require discretionary review. Design Review is also required for projects in any non-residential zone, such as the C-W zoning district.

Recent state legislation has established and expanded eligibility for streamlined and/or ministerial review and approval for projects (see the overview of recent state laws below). Legislation includes changes to the development review process timeline and requirements, as well as limitations on the City's discretion regarding project approval, imposing certain development standards, and the applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Existing Land Use

The Study Area has a mix of existing land uses with a significant amount of single and multi-family residential that vary significantly in density and scale ranging from 6 du/acre for R-1 single-family to 75 du/acre for R-4 multi-family. Other uses include light industrial, commercial, including retail, vehicle repair, offices and food and alcohol service, personal and household services, retail financial services, and public and quasi-public uses.

Ground Floor Uses vary throughout the corridor. See **Figure 14**. Residential uses include multifamily, mixed-use, live-work, and a few single-family homes. Live-work spaces are a built space used or designed to be used both as a workplace and as a residence by one or more persons, and a mixed-use space is a use of a lot or building with two or more different land uses.[30] There are a variety of existing commercial ground floor uses, however the main uses include services, retail, and auto. A more detailed overview of the existing commercial uses is provided in the Commercial Risk Displacement section below.

Upper Floor Uses are primarily residential with some commercial office uses.

Table 2: Typical Permits Required, by Housing Type[31] (Orange indicates design review required)

Housing Type	R-1	R-1A	R-2	R-2A	R-3	R-4	C-U	C-W	MU-LI	MU-R
Duplex	NP	UP	UP	UP	UP	UP	UP [1]	UP	NP	UP [2]
Multi-family	NP	NP	UP	UP	UP	UP	UP [1]	UP	NP	AUP/UP [2,3]
Mixed-Use Projects	NP	NP	UP	UP	UP	UP	UP [1]	ZC/AUP/UP [4]	NP	AUP/UP [2,3]
Live-work							ZC	AUP/UP [5]	AUP/UP [6]	AUP/UP [6]
Group Living Accommodation	NP	NP	NP	NP	UP	UP	UP [1]	UP	NP	UP [2]
ZC = Zoning Certificate, AUP = Administrative Use Permit, UP = Use Permit, NP = Not Permitted										

[30] City of Berkeley, 2023. Municipal Code section 23.502.020 Defined Terms.

[31] City of Berkeley, 2023. 2023-2031 Housing Element Update, pg. 81-82.

[1] Residential uses must be part of a mixed-use development within University Avenue Node Areas; outside of Node Areas exclusively residential projects are permitted with a use permit.

[2] UP required within 150' of M or MM district or a construction product manufacturing or primary product manufacturing use. See BMC Section. 23.206.090.B.8.

[3] AUP required for 3-4 units; UP required for 5 or more units. See BMC Section 23.206.090.B.7. For mixed use projects, see also Section 23.206.090.B.9.

[4] Permit required dependent on project size and other factors. See BMC Section 23.204.140.B.2.

[5] AUP required when a project has 9 or fewer live/work units and does not involve conversion of an existing dwelling unit. All other live/work projects require a use permit. See BMC Section 23.312.030.C.3.

[6] Permit required dependent on floor area, number of units, and other factors. See BMC Section 23.312.030.D.

Clusters of Related Uses – As seen in **Figure 14**, a mix of uses are distributed throughout San Pablo Specific Plan Area without distinct pattern or clustering of related uses. Many of the predominant land uses, such as auto, manufacturing, and services, are dispersed along the street, with the exception that retail uses are mostly located within the designated commercial nodes. Many businesses including a diverse range of restaurants, grocers, and retailers are distributed throughout the corridor (see Commercial Displacement Risk section below for additional detail on the existing commercial uses within the Specific Plan Area).

Designated Nodes – The West Berkeley Plan adopted in 1993 identified Commercial Nodes along San Pablo Avenue. The Berkeley Zoning Ordinance identifies these nodes as "Designated Nodes" within the C-W zone. Overall, the existing uses within the Designated Nodes are consistent with the C-W zoning allowed-uses.

The **Gilman Node** currently includes a substantial amount of retail including two clusters of commercial chain stores, some auto-oriented businesses, and restaurants, and other businesses. It lies adjacent to mixed-use light industrial zones to the west and residential neighborhoods to the southwest and the east. The 55-year-old KC's BBQ restaurant closed their location in this node in April 2023.



Gilman intersection looking east.

The **Cedar Node** includes the Jones, a mixed-use project. The node accommodates small retail businesses, food establishments, and auto-related ventures. In 2022, the nearby former motels—Golden Bear Inn and Quality Inn were converted to permanent housing for persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Retail queues, such as for Acme Bread, add to pedestrian activity in the area. A long-time business, Animal Farm Discount Pet Foods and associated Wild Bird Annex closed in 2023.



Jones building to the northwest of the Cedar intersection.

The **University Node** has historically been an active area. In recent years the northern portion of the node has experienced business closures with several larger retail spaces and the former Wells Fargo Bank remaining unoccupied, while the southern section experiences more consistent use and pedestrian activity, thanks to its collection of restaurants, bars, and services. The eastern and western parts consist of a blend of South Asian businesses situated amidst surface parking lots. The Specific Plan boundary includes an adjacent University Avenue Node to the east of San Pablo Avenue.



University intersection looking northeast.

The **Dwight Node** is a walkable center of mixed commerce. Aside from the auto-oriented businesses in the northwest portion of the node, much of the node features restaurants, offices (including several non-profit organizations), and retail, as well as some multifamily buildings. The southern end of the node includes a Housing Element opportunity site (opportunity site #32).



Café Chiave at southwest corner of Dwight intersection.

The **Ashby Node** is characterized by two new housing developments that incorporate mixed-use retail spaces on their ground floors (3015 and 3006 San Pablo Avenue). The northern side of the node includes the historic Heinz building which features a substantial setback (approximately 32 feet) and a narrow sidewalk (approximately 6 feet). It includes office and institutional uses, such as the Kala Art Institute. Ashby Plaza includes Looking Glass Photo & Camera, which has been based in Berkeley for over 50 years. The former Walmart building on the northeast corner has been vacant since 2021.



Looking south towards Ashby intersection from in front of the historic Heinz Building.

There are other areas not defined as nodes that provide neighborhood serving commercial retail, such as the intersection at Bancroft Avenue and south of Delaware Street.



Storefronts on the southeast corner of Delaware Street.



Map Segment 1: Albany to University Avenue Node



Map Segment 2: University Avenue Node to Emeryville

Ground Floor Use*

- Residential: R-1/ R-2
- Multi-Family: 5 units or more
- Mixed-Use
- Retail
- Food & Beverage
- Vacant Commercial
- Institutional
- Personal Services/ Medical
- Manufacture/ Wholesale
- Trade Services (Auto)
- Entertainment
- Professional Services/ Office
- C-W Zoning Boundary Node Area
- University Ave Node Area
- Specific Plan Boundary

*Note: Ground Floor Use is based on the Land Use Codes, which have been summarized to reflect main use for the individual parcels. The current ground floor acivity on site might differ.

Figure 14. Ground Floor Use based on Land Use Codes. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023. Alameda County Assessor, 2023.

State Legislation and Regional Policies

Several state laws and regional policies have been approved since the adoption of the City's General Plan in 2002. Many of these laws have made changes to the development review process, timeline, and requirements, as well as defined limitations on the City's discretion regarding project approval, conformance with certain development standards, and the applicability of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Berkeley Municipal Code continues to be updated to remain consistent with the laws and policies. The following provides an overview of relevant legislation and policy to the Specific Plan.

State Legislation

- **Senate Bill 375** (2009): This legislation requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by setting reduction targets, preparating regional Sustainable Communities Strategies, and aligning land use, housing, and transportation planning processes. As a Priority Development Area, the Specific Plan Area is part of the Bay Region's Sustainable Communities Strategy, which could help qualify Specific Plan implementation projects for funding.
- **Housing Accountability Act** (HAA): This legislation limits cities' ability to deny, reduce the density of, or make infeasible housing development projects or emergency shelters that are consistent with the City's objective local development standards and contribute to meeting housing need. The HAA was first enacted in 1982 and is continually amended to expand and strengthen its provisions. This effects how the Specific Plan's standards can be written and enforced.
- **Senate Bill 330** (2019): This legislation limits cities' ability to impose restrictions on housing developments. SB 330 seeks to expedite the housing approval process, enhance housing supply, and ensure predictability for developers by reducing regulatory uncertainty and potential obstacles to new housing construction. This also effects how standards can be written and enforced.
- **Senate Bill 35** (2017): SB 35 streamlines the housing approval process for qualifying multifamily residential projects with certain minimum affordable housing. This allows such projects to move more quickly through the City's review process and restricts the City's ability to reject these proposals to encourage the development of affordable housing. See more at the Housing and Community Development SB 35 Guidelines.
- **Assembly Bill 1397** (2017): AB1397 requires that sites identified under the 5th RHNA cycle for development that were unused be incorporated into the 6th cycle, with by-right approval for developments that include at least 20% affordable units for lower incomes.
- **Density Bonus** (Gov Code 65915): State density bonus provisions have changed frequently and significantly in recent years to further incentivize certain types of housing, including but not limited to various levels of affordability, senior, transitional, veterans, and student. In exchange for a commitment to build the specified housing type or meet a specified level of affordability, the City must allow a density bonus — an increase over the maximum allowable residential density. In addition to increasing density under density bonus law, developers can use "waivers" and "concessions" to reduce, modify, or waive development standards. The City cannot deny a requested concession or incentive unless they can make a written finding, based upon substantial evidence, that the requested incentive or concessions: 1) does not result in identifiable and actual cost reductions, 2) would have a specific adverse impact on public health, safety or on property which is listed on the state Register of Historical Resources and there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate the specific adverse impact without making the project unaffordable to the affordable households; or 3) would be contrary to state or federal law. The use of concessions can limit the applicability of development standards and other requirements for projects that quality for a density bonus.
- **Assembly Bill 2011** (2022): AB 2011 allows for by-right approval of one-hundred percent affordable and mixed-income housing projects in zones where office, retail, or parking are the principally permitted use. This allows for the development of housing along commercial corridors when projects meet specific development standards, with one-hundred percent affordable projects facing the fewest requirements.

- **Senate Bill 6** (2022): SB 6 passed alongside AB 2011 and also allows for the development of housing where office, retail, or parking are the principally permitted use. SB 6 does not contain any explicit affordability requirements, nor does it allow for by-right approval. Should project applicants choose to adhere to the affordability requirements of SB 35, they may receive a streamlined approval process.
- **Assembly Bill 2097** (2022): This legislation prohibits parking requirements on most residential, commercial, and industrial development projects located within one-half mile of a major transit stop, unless the local agency makes certain findings. Stops along San Pablo Avenue have AC Transit bus service that qualifies them as major transit stops. Findings that could necessitate minimum parking requirements include: the project advances the City towards meeting its lower-income Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), it fulfills specific housing needs, such as housing for people with disabilities, or it is within one-half mile of existing residential or commercial parking.
- **Assembly Bill 101** (2019): AB 101 requires that Low Barrier Navigation Centers (LBNC) receive by-right approval in areas zoned for mixed-use and nonresidential zones permitting multi-family uses. LBNCs are housing first, low barrier, service-oriented shelters that aim to help people experiencing homelessness find permanent housing.
- **Assembly Bill 2162** (2018): This legislation requires that supportive housing be considered an allowed use by-right in zones where multi-family and mixed-uses are permitted, provided that the proposed project meets specified criteria.

Regional Policies

- **Plan Bay Area and Priority Development Areas:** Plan Bay Area 2050 is a long-range regional plan developed by MTC and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) that integrates strategies to improve housing, the economy, transportation, and the environment with a focus on the region as a whole. The plan utilizes a combination of regulatory measures, funding mechanisms, community engagement, and ongoing assessment to implement these strategies. Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are designated areas that align transit access with opportunities of increased density of development. The majority of the San Pablo Specific Plan Area is a PDA.
- **Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy:** In 2022, MTC adopted a regional TOC Policy. The potential application of the TOC Policy to the San Pablo Specific Plan is discussed in the Reslience and Climate Adaptation section of the document below.

Existing Policy Capacity Assessment

As of 2020, there were 2,588 existing housing units in the Specific Plan Area. The majority of existing housing units, 2,018 homes, are in multi-family housing with 5 or more units. See **Figure 15**.

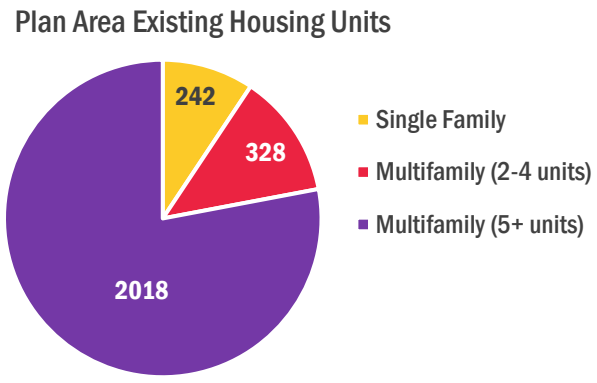


Figure 15. Distribution of Existing Housing Units in the Plan Area by Type. Source: City of Berkeley, 2023.

The Housing Element sites inventory analysis identifies 75 sites for potential housing development within the Specific Plan Area (representing 20% of all the sites identified citywide). Based on existing land use and zoning regulation, the Housing Element demonstrates capacity for approximately 3,700 units on the 75 sites (representing 28% of the total capacity of the Housing Element sites inventory citywide). See **Figure 16** and **Appendix B**.

The Housing Element Update sites inventory identifies sites under three categories: likely sites, pipeline sites, and opportunities sites. Likely sites and pipeline sites include housing projects that have either already been approved or are actively engaging with the City in anticipation of submitting an application for review. The Housing

Element Update identifies 51 opportunity sites, 9 likely sites, and 15 pipeline sites within the Plan Area. Opportunity sites are vacant or underutilized sites with near-term potential for residential or mixed-use development. A range of land uses exist on opportunity sites. See **Table 3.** The majority of opportunity sites within the Plan Area are commercial uses at 35%, followed by vacant or parking lots at 27%.

Table 3: Existing Use of Specific Plan Area Housing Element Opportunity Sites

Existing Use	# of SPA Boundary Opportunity Sites	% of SPA Boundary Opportunity Sites
Auto-related uses (auto-body shops, car washes, smog shops, one gas station)	8	16%
Commercial uses (incl. storage facilities and one laundromat)	18	35%
Retail/restaurant uses	9	18%
Vacant/parking lot	14	27%
Single-family/parking lot	1	0.02 %
Public Lands	1	0.02%

Source: Street Level Advisors and Gordon Consulting, 2023.

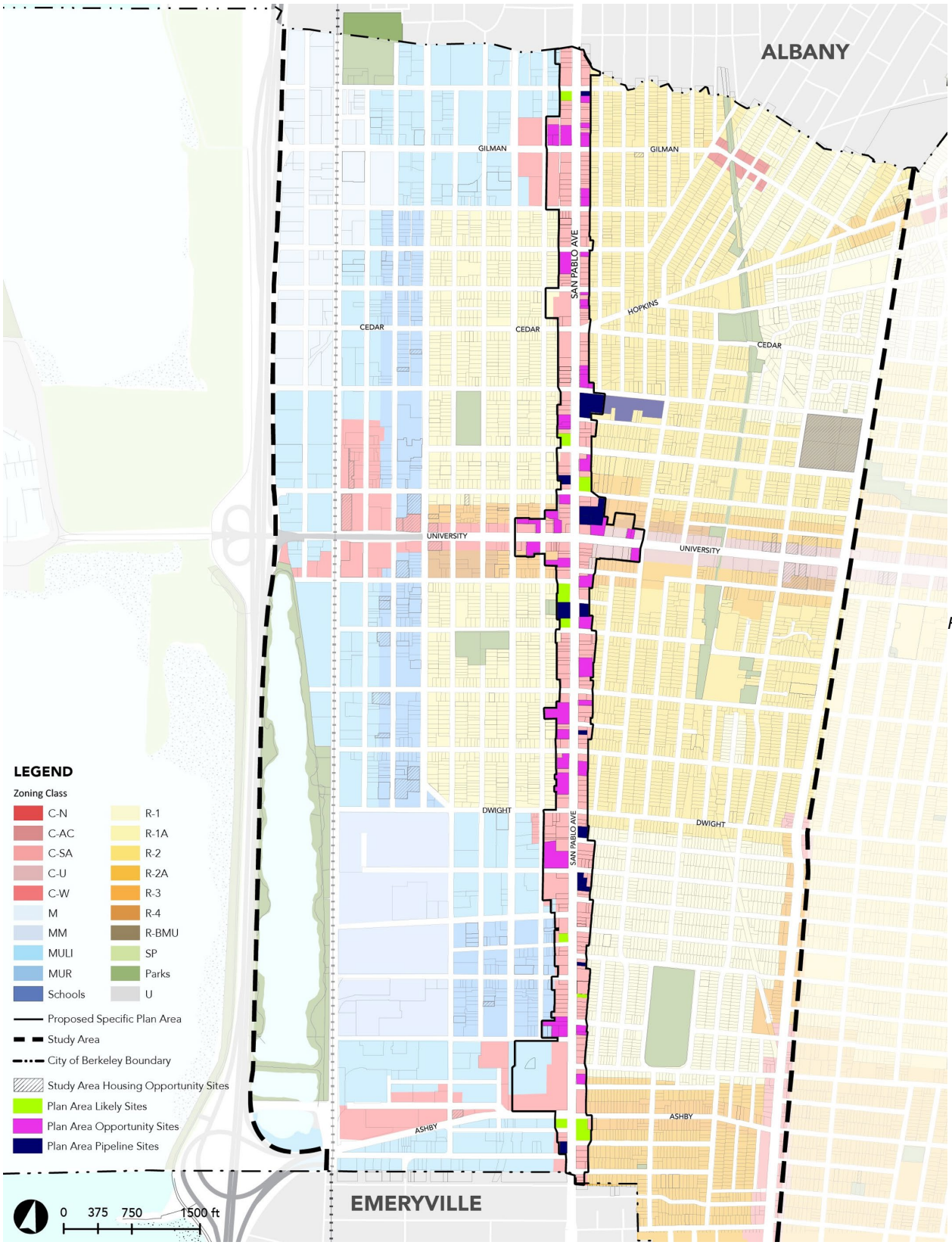


Figure 16. Plan Area Housing Element Update Housing Sites Inventory. Source: City of Berkeley. "Housing Element Update 2023-2031", 02.17.236

The Housing Element sites inventory shows **capacity** for an additional 3,700 units within the Specific Plan Area, based on existing zoning regulations. However, **actual** housing production relies on a number of factors including the housing development community (both private and non-profit) market conditions, construction costs, the decisions of individual property owners, and other factors that are not controlled by the City. In addition, and as outlined above, developers may use Density Bonus state law, which would allow for additional units. However, higher construction costs and increases in financing costs could reduce the anticipated housing production.

Affordable Housing Policies and Potential Production

Recent and Current Production

Citywide income restricted affordable units made up approximately 12.6% of housing units completed between 2015 and 2022.[32]

Potential Production

- As of 2022, there were 11 housing development projectsthat had been entitled along San Pablo Avenue but not yet issued Certificates of Occupancy. These buildings will provide 589 housing units, including an estimated 111 restricted affordable units (19.7%). An additional 2,029 units are under plan review.[33]
- The City's Housing Element identifies an additional 51 opportunity sites in the Study Area that could accommodate 2,023 housing units. If these projects use state density bonus at the rate that has been typical of recent projects in Berkeley, the City may see development of over 2,700 housing units.
- The approved and anticipated sites along San Pablo Avenue could accommodate approximately 5,349 housing units including 824 deed-restricted affordable units (15.4% of the total). See **Table 4**.
- If a regional housing bond is approved in November 2024, a higher share of Study Area sites are likely to be developed as 100% affordable housing projects.
- In addition to onsite affordable units, this level of development could generate roughly $20 million in in lieu fees which is sufficient to fund about one-third of the local subsidy needed to support the projected number of 100% affordable buildings in the Specific Plan Area.

Table 4: Potential Housing Production

	Total Units	100% Affordable	Onsite Affordable	% Affordable
Approved	589	63	52	19.7%
Permit Applications, etc	2,029	110	192	14.9%
Housing Element Opportunity Sites (including potential density bonus units)	2,731	148	258	14.9%
Total All Sites	5,349	321	503	15.4%

Source: City of Berkeley, Annual Progress Reports 2018-2022 and 6th Cycle Housing Element, Street Level Advisors calculations.

Berkeley Affordable Housing Preference Policy – In July 2023, Berkeley adopted a policy to provide a preference for current residents and descendants of residents of the city's historically redlined areas. Households with ties to redlined areas receive priority in leasing new City funded or regulated affordable units.

[32] CA Department of Housing and Community Development, 5th Cycle RHNA Progress Report.

[33] City of Berkeley Annual Progress Reports to the California Department of Housing and Community Development 2018-2022.

Commercial Displacement Risk

Existing Commercial Conditions

Local and Regional Commercial Tensions – Berkeley's Office of Economic Development's (OED's) 2016 Economic Development Work Session identified two primary commercial tensions on San Pablo Avenue.

- Local and regional interests for transportation and land use compete for space.
- Demand for housing development in the area threatens the existing concentration of auto businesses along San Pablo Avenue.

Local interests for the corridor emphasize better walkability, multi-modal transportation options, a broad range of businesses, and housing infill development. Regional interests support car access, street parking, and clusters of specialized businesses not widely available in other parts of Berkeley. This assessment suggests that those tensions continue in the Specific Plan Area.

Pandemic and Broader Economic Impacts – Nationally, small businesses closed at unprecedented rates from February to April of 2020**.** African-American, Latinx, Asian, immigrant, and women business owners were disproportionately affected, with African-American businesses owners most impacted.[34] Since then, many small businesses have re-opened or opened for the first time. During 2023, business owners cite inflation, supply chain effects, and filling open jobs as among their primary concerns.[35] Given this context, locally owned businesses on San Pablo Avenue are likely facing a baseline of vulnerability to displacement and/or closure given the pandemic, supply chain shifts, and inflation; businesses owned by people of color, immigrants, and women are likely feeling these pressures more acutely.[36]

Vacancy Rates – According to OED data, San Pablo Avenue's ground floor commercial vacancy rate (by square footage) doubled from 5.5% in 2017 to 10.8% in 2022. This rate increased most significantly, by three percentage points, from 2020 to 2021 and then again from 2021 to 2022, likely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This vacancy rate was notably higher than other commercial corridors such as Solano (3.7%), Elmwood (7.7%), and North Shattuck (4.4%), but similar to University (12.8%), Downtown (11.9%) and South Berkeley (11.8%) neighborhoods. By November 2024, the citywide ground floor commercial vacancy rate decreased from previous years, specifically San Pablo Avenue's vacancy rate dropped to 7.1%, which was lower compared to Downtown Berkeley (10.8%) and Telegraph Avenue (9.9%)[37]



Figure 17. High-profile commercial closures include, from left to right, Ohmega Salvage and Albatross Pub.

[34] Fairlie, Robert. "The Impact of Covid-19 on Small Business Owners: Evidence of Early-Stage Losses from the April 2020 Current Population Survey." 05, 2020.
[35] National Federation of Independent Business. Small Business Optimism Index, October 2023.
[36] Fairlie, Robert. "The Impact of Covid-19 on Small Business Owners: Evidence of Early-Stage Losses from the April 2020 Current Population Survey." 05, 2020.
[37] City of Berkeley. Berkeley Economic Dashboards Update. Special Meeting – City Council Work session, Feb 26, 2025, page 3. Accessed August 29, 2025

Locally Owned, Brick and Mortar Businesses and Associated Displacement Risks

The inventory of businesses on San Pablo Avenue was constructed based on the City of Berkeley's Business License database and a site visit conducted on August 3, 2023, along San Pablo Avenue. Because the scope of this analysis is limited to displacement risk and is not a broad market analysis, the inventory focuses on the narrower universe of businesses that are more likely to face consequential displacement pressures: locally owned businesses with brick-and-mortar storefronts on the corridor. These businesses were then classified according to type (see **Figure 20** for a map of these ground floor businesses) and according to displacement risk (dependence on car access and street parking; key business-owner demographics; historic and cultural significance; and accessibility to lower-income residents). A summary of key findings is below.

Locally Owned[38], Brick and Mortar Business Characteristics: Because the City does not collect demographic data about local business owners, this inventory used business-owner information from the active business license dataset, business websites, news articles, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Yelp to make exploratory conclusions about business-owner demographics; this assessment did not include a survey that asked business owners to share their demographic characteristics. Preliminary findings include:

- 90% of brick and mortar businesses on the corridor are likely locally owned businesses;
- 21% of those businesses are likely owned by women;
- 41% are likely owned by people of color; and,
- 28% likely hold some form of historic or cultural significance.

Given that a significant number of businesses on the corridor are likely owned by women and/or people of color and they may be facing baseline pressures coming out of the pandemic and due to inflation and additional structural barriers to capital, contracts, and market access, there is an opportunity during the Specific Plan process to direct additional time and attention to these businesses to understand how to best support their success and longevity on the corridor.

Commercial Parking Needs – Businesses along the street rely on customers being able to access the corridor via car and street parking. Several local businesses, such as Tokyo Fish Market, Emerald City Gowns, East Bay Nursery, and Cafe Leila, have small parking lots specific to those businesses, but most do not. Prior City assessments have identified auto and home improvement businesses as particularly dependent on street parking. Based on active business license data, auto businesses comprise 20% of brick and mortars and home improvement businesses make up 12% of brick and mortars. This assessment also estimates that businesses that A) are specialized and may need to attract customers from a broader geographic radius or that B) may be particularly difficult to shift to a customer base that relies on walking, biking and/or public transit (e.g., a customer base of families with children) are especially dependent on car access and street parking. All told, this category of businesses that are likely to be especially reliant on car access and street parking includes 35% of locally owned, brick and mortar businesses on the corridor.

[38] Whether businesses were locally owned was determined primarily according to owner information in the City's business license database and business websites and social media platforms. Local ownership means that the owner is based anywhere in the nine-county Bay Area.



Figure 18. *Examples of businesses with small off-street parking lots, from left to right, Tokyo Fish Market and East Bay Nursery.*

Auto Businesses – Auto businesses are prevalent and dispersed across the corridor. Many of these businesses opened in the 1970s and 1980s, although one appears to go back as far as 1946. There is an opportunity for the Specific Plan to evaluate the desire and needed policies for auto businesses to remain on the San Pablo corridor, particularly as auto technology continues to evolve.

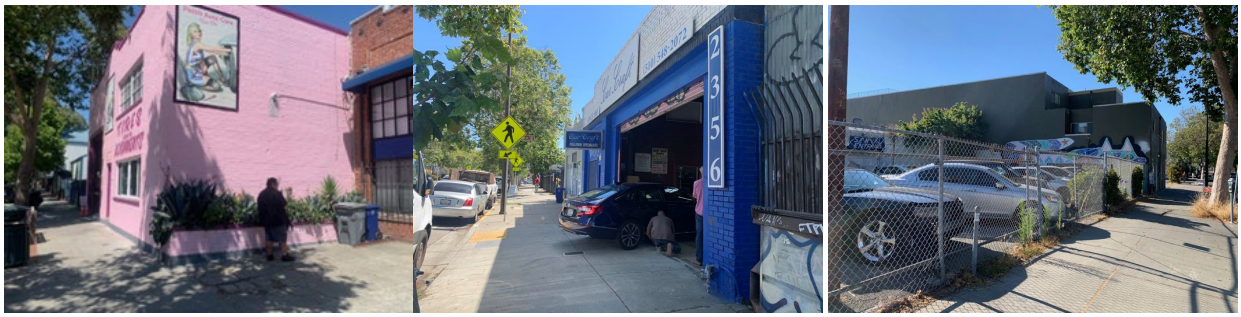


Figure 19. *Example auto businesses include, from left to right, Patti's Auto Care, Car Craft Collision Specialists, and Used Car Sales.*

Businesses potentially accessible to low-income residents – This inventory anecdotally identified businesses that meet the criterion of offering a lower relative price point for their goods or services and finds that approximately 10% of locally owned brick and mortar businesses may be particularly accessible to low-income residents in the area. These businesses were identified because they a) are a type of business that typically markets to lower-income residents (e.g., laundromat, corner store, to-go restaurant); b) they were described in online reviews as offering lower prices than their competitors; or c) they offer lower prices than similar businesses on the corridor (e.g., a vegetarian egg breakfast costs $10.95 vs. $19). The businesses identified include retail stores, a laundromat, restaurants, grocery stores, beauty salons, and several corner stores. As more market-rate housing is built on San Pablo Avenue, these businesses may face increased displacement pressures if the overall population becomes higher-income and rents and property taxes increase.

Potential Future Changes to Supply of Commercial Space

Current zoning does not require ground floor commercial space outside of commercial nodes. But the zoning code does allow extra height for mixed-use buildings along the corridor, and this appears to be encouraging developers to propose mixed-use projects along the corridor, with a few exceptions. The zoning code requires and encourages ground floor commercial space at the intersection of major transit corridors within commercial nodes. Discussions with developers, leasing agents, and real estate professionals indicate that a combination of rental costs, general retail and business conditions, and physical design of spaces (e.g., configuration and size of spaces, service and utility design) constrain the ability to lease these new commercial spaces.



Figure 20. Mix of ground floor locally owned, brick and mortar businesses. Source: Street Level Advisors and Gordon Consulting, 2023.

Public Realm Assessment

The public realm along San Pablo Avenue is defined by the qualities of streetscape - the sidewalk area within the public right of way and the improvements and activities that take place there. The context along the street affects the quality and experience of the public realm. The context includes the buildings, parking lots, and other frontages next to the street and the activities that occur there. Also, the conditions and quality of the roadway, median, and parking/loading lanes of San Pablo Avenue have an impact on the quality and experience of the public realm.

The public realm along San Pablo Avenue varies in quality and character See **Figure 21**. The Specific Plan process will explore options for common elements throughout the corridor, such as trees, and the potential for segment or district improvements. Places could have distinct decorative features like pedestrian lighting, artwork, and planting to create an inviting atmosphere. Currently, some uses and buildings provide distinct features that enhance the public realm, such as restaurants, cafes, and small businesses. These create a more engaging and active public realm.

Stretches with poor sidewalk conditions and landscaping that is not maintained, paired with vandalized or vacant building frontages or high fencing, contrast with the areas of activity. Those locations have less foot traffic and fewer parked cars.



Figure 21. The public realm along San Pablo Avenue varies in quality and character.

Streetscape Conditions

Landscape

The street trees along the sidewalks and landscaped medians are an asset for San Pablo Avenue's public realm. See **Figure 22**. However, there are gaps in the tree canopy and maintenance issues with trees and tree wells along the sidewalks.



Figure 22 Mature London Plain trees define the character of San Pablo Avenue.

In addition, there is limited landscaping along most of the sidewalks. See **Figure 23.** Some other major streets in Berkeley have business improvement districts that manage installation and maintenance of landscape, but San Pablo Avenue does not have any improvement districts.



Figure 23. The condition of tree wells varies throughout the corridor.

Lighting

Existing lighting along the street primarily illuminates the roadway and intersections. Nighttime sidewalk lighting levels tend to be low between intersections, unless storefront uses, buildings, or pedestrian lights at bus stops illuminate the sidewalk. See **Figure 24.** The 2004 Improvement Plan identified this issue and set new lighting standards. While there has been some implementation of the standards in front of new development, there have not been recent publicly funded pedestrian lighting improvements along San Pablo Avenue. The Alameda CTC Safety Enhancement Project will upgrade lighting at some improved bus stops and pedestrian crossings.



Figure 24. Existing roadway and pedestrian lighting.

Street Furnishings

Street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles are almost exclusively at bus stops. There are some businesses that provide outdoor "café" seating for their patrons. See **Figure 25.**



Figure 25. Existing private outdoor "café" seating.

Sidewalk

Sidewalk conditions are variable. There are locations where adjacent parcels are vacant, underutilized, or for other reasons trash, leaf, and debris clutter the sidewalk. There are also places where the sidewalk needs repair. Typically, when development occurs adjacent sidewalks are reconstructed by the developer. See **Figures 26, 27, and 28**. There are several locations along the street where the sidewalks are new and are in good condition. The two Alameda CTC

projects will be making some sidewalk improvements, including widened sidewalks with bus bulbs into the parking lane at bus stops served by AC Transit Rapid service, see further discussion in the Mobility section.



Figure 26. Existing 13 ft. wide sidewalk.



Figure 27. Many existing sidewalks are in poor condition.



Figure 28. Some buildings provide additional sidewalk space.

Building and Site Frontages

There is a wide variety of frontage conditions along San Pablo Avenue today from tall fences or blank facades to active "storefront" restaurants and sidewalk tables.

There are older buildings that are vacant, several of which appear to not be actively on the market to be leased. Some, but not all, older buildings along the street have articulation, building form, and materials that are visually engaging and include murals. **Figure 29**.



Figure 29. Painted storefronts with murals provide visual interest when the building does not allow for windows and can represent the culture and values of the local community.

Some new developments have contributed to the landscape character of the street by setting back the ground level of the building to provide additional sidewalk and space of landscape, such as the landscape planters at The Jones north of Cedar Street. **Figure 30**. Others like Aquatic at Ashby have a small seating area and a bench and rain shelter built into the additional sidewalk level space. **Figure 31**.



Figure 30. Ground floor setback and planters at The Jones.

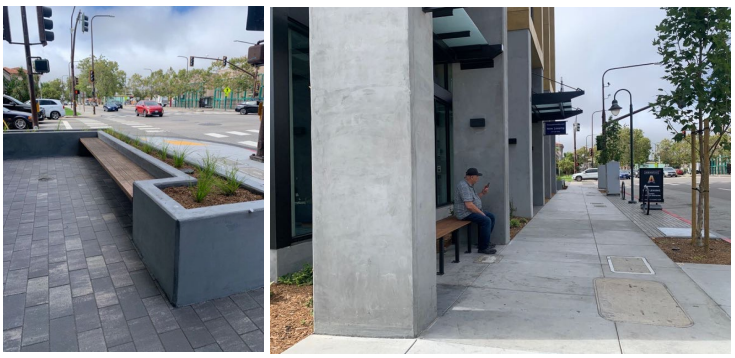


Figure 31. Semi-public space with seating and bus stop integrated in the Aquatic at Ashby frontage.

Parking Lots and Gas Stations

There are locations with larger parking lots or other auto circulation, such as the Solar Car Wash, the REI shopping center parking lot, and the McDonald's, which cater to vehicular movement, as opposed to pedestrians. The sidewalk frontages of these sites are typically not supportive of pedestrian activity along the street.

Activity and use of underused spaces. In some locations food trucks and trailers utilize former and current gas station locations as semi-permanent locations, which include makeshift outdoor seating. **Figure 32**. These illustrate the potential for active use of underutilized parking lots even if the parking is more heavily used on particular days or seasons.



Figure 32. Food trucks and trailers use underutilized parking and sites.

Safety

Conditions along the street can create an environment that feels unsafe. Assessment of crime data from the Berkeley Police Department from August 2022 to August 2023 shows a total of 578 incidents in the Specific Plan Area, which makes up 5 percent of the overall crime incidents in Berkeley during that time. Improved lighting at night, improvements to the general condition of the public realm, and development that supports activity along the street can change the impression that San Pablo Avenue is a particularly unsafe place.

Community Life along San Pablo Avenue

Community life describes the condition of people being in a public space and feeling part of and having the opportunity to interact with other community members who use the space. The physical constraints of the street and development patterns along San Pablo Avenue restrict public space to the typical 13-foot-wide sidewalks along the street.

Designated Nodes and Clusters of Activity

San Pablo Avenue features clusters of retail and other uses adjacent to five major intersections—Gilman Street, Cedar Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue—these are nodes of activity, each presenting a distinct mix of businesses and urban form that supports that activity. See **Figure 34** (Method of assessment, see **Table 5**). The 1993 West Berkeley Plan identified these locations as Commercial Nodes, and other public policies and regulations have been shaped to reinforce these nodes. The current zoning ordinance also provides some special standards, as discussed in the Land Use Planning policies section above. These have been successful to a greater or lesser extent in each node, and the extent of success has been affected by economic realities and property owner decisions.

Semi-Public Spaces

While there are no public parks along San Pablo Avenue, there are small enclaves of semi-public space, often as private outdoor spaces associated with restaurants and cafés. Also, some parking lots or other paved areas are used by adjacent businesses. Some new developments have included public benches or other elements in ground floor setbacks that are also semi-public.

Table 5: Methodology of assessing frontage activity along San Pablo.

	Sidewalk	Building Frontage	Other
Frontages that activate the sidewalk	Maintained and landscaped if any	Well maintained brick-and-mortar with pedestrian engaging features, such as storefront windows, murals, etc.	
Inactive Frontages that support some aspects of a comfortable walking environment	Maintained and landscaped if any	Landscape buffered setback, murals with minimal or no visible activity.	Maintained, landscaped buffered parking lots, or yards of auto-oriented uses.
Inactive Frontages	Poorly maintained and landscaped if any	Poor maintained, visibly damaged and/or looks unoccupied/ abandoned.	Parking lots and yards without landscape buffer. Fenced vacant land

Source: CD+A, 2023

Community Events and Social Engagement

There are existing organizations in the area that do provide community gathering venues, like Brasarte and Ashkenaz. Also, there are existing models for short term use of streets as public spaces – the SF Bay Brazilian Day & Lavagem festival, **Figure 33**, events during street closures in the Gilman District, and neighborhood street parties on blocks of streets that cross San Pablo Avenue.



Figure 33. 1901 San Pablo Avenue houses Brasarte and other Brazilian culturally oriented groups. The center and left photos show the 2023 Brazilian Day & Lavagem event on the block of Hearst St just east of San Pablo Avenue.

Study Area Community Spaces

The limited sidewalk or other public space within the San Pablo Avenue right of way make it make it difficult to create community gathering spaces within the Specific Plan Area. While opportunities may exist to create some smaller community spaces on side streets, residents and users of the Specific Plan Area are likely to rely on community space in the surrounding Study Area. The Specific Plan process can define ways to improve connections between the Specific Plan Area and surrounding parks, schools, and other community spaces can be improved.



Map Segment 1: Albany to University Avenue Node



Map Segment 2: University Avenue Node to Emeryville

Frontage Activity

- Frontages that Activate the Sidewalk and Support a Comfortable Walking Environment
- Inactive Frontages that Support Some Aspects of a Comfortable Walking Environment
- Inactive Frontages that do not Support a Comfortable Walking Environment

Commercial Nodes

- C-W Zoning Boundary
- University Ave Node Area

- Study Area
- Specific Plan Boundary

Figure 34. Observation of Frontage Activity *along the corridor. Source: City of Berkeley. CD+A. 2023.*

Resilience and Climate Adaptation Conditions and Plans

Existing Plans

Local-Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), 2019 – The LHMP serves to assess current hazards and vulnerabilities, outlines a five-year Mitigation Strategy to reduce vulnerabilities through various actions, and ensures eligibility for pre-disaster mitigation grants and post-disaster federal and state recovery funding by meeting Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requirements[39].

- **Risk of Liquifaction:** During a major earthquake event, much of the study area and westernmost parts of the city are at risk of liquefacation. Liquefaction can destroy pavements and dislodge foundations.
- **Potentially Seismically Vulnerable Buildings:** The LHMP discusses the Retrofit Grants Program and the updating of the city's inventory of Seismically Vulnerable Buildings in 2018. The update added 1,047 potentially vulnerable building that had not been previously identified. This increase was mainly due to the expansion of building construction types that were considered at risk. A number of the seismically vulnerable buildings are in the San Pablo Specific Plan Area, see **Figure 35**. This map reflects properties that are eligible for the Cal OES/FEMA Grant Program.
- **Floods:** Creek flooding in Berkeley has the potential to affect about 675 structures, mainly in the western, industrial area of the city. Storm drain overflow creates localized flooding in many intersections in Berkeley. FEMA flood risk maps illustrate the risks in the western industrial area. While this is within the Study Area, the flood risk maps indicate a very smail area of flood risk potential on two properties in the Specific Plan area adjacent to Codornices Creek and the city of Albany. The LHMP also describes areas of the city that are at risk to localized flooding from storm drain overflow. San Pablo Avenue within the Potter Watershed between Ward and Murry Street has the potential to experience storm drain overflow.[40]
- **Hazardous Materials Transportation:** San Pablo Avenue is one of the streets in Berkeley that is a hazardous materials transportation route. Collisions with trucks carrying dangerous materials have occurred and can be expected to occur in the future.
- **Climate Change**: Like regions across the globe, the San Francisco Bay Area is experiencing negative impacts of climate change. Berkeley's Climate Action Plan identifies the City's plan for emissions reductions, known as climate change mitigation.
- **Hazardous Material Release:** The City has identified 15 facilities in Berkeley with sufficiently large quantities of toxic chemicals to pose a high risk to the community. Eleven of those 15 facilities are distributed in the most western parts of the Study Area, with 10 located south of University Avenue. Natural hazards identified in the plan could trigger the release of hazardous materials and put nearby residents at risk of exposure.

Climate Action Plan (CAP) – The plan, adopted in 2009, represents key strategies for achieving a sustainable future in Berkeley. Within transit corridors such as the San Pablo Avenue corridor, the City's CAP advocates for smart growth and increased 'walkability', 'bikeability', and public transit ridership.

- General Plan Open Space and Recreation:
    - As part of the City of Berkeley's General Plan, the City adopted the Open Space and Recreation Element in 2002. The Open Space and Recreation Element applies the following policies to the various parks and other natural areas in the Study Area, which include Strawberry Creek Park, George Florence Park, and San Pablo Park.

[39] See Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regulations and Guidance for further information.

[40] City of Berkeley. "2019 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan", 12.10.2019, p.9. https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-2019.pdf

- Policy OS-4 Working with Other Agencies: Work with the Berkeley Unified School District, the University of California, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, and the East Bay Regional Park District to improve, preserve, maintain, and renovate their open space and recreation facilities.

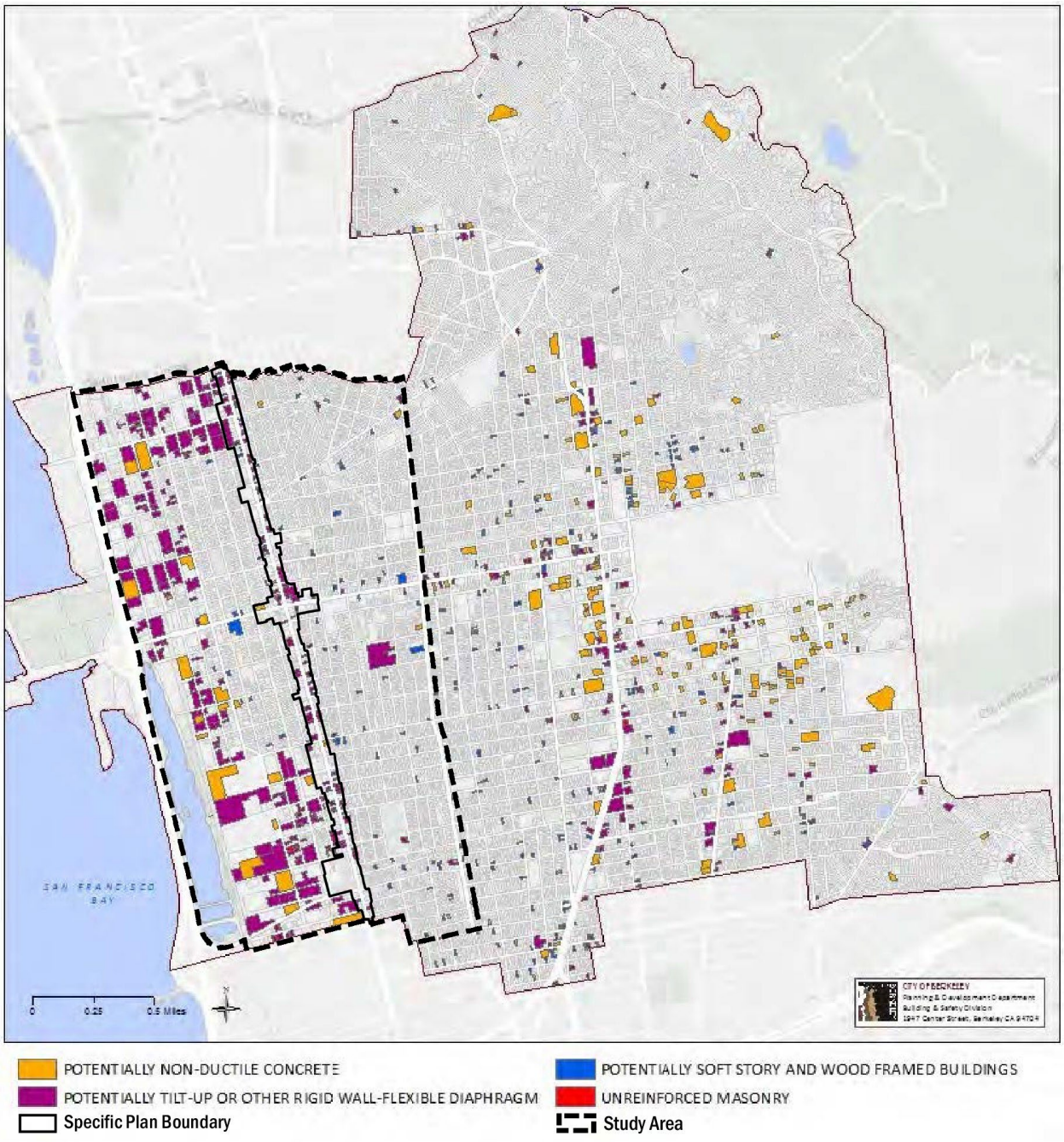


Figure 35. Updated Inventory of Seismically Vulnerable Buildings (2018). Source: 2019 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- Policy OS-7 Serving Disadvantaged Populations: Within the context of open space resource allocations for new or expanded facilities, give high priority to providing additional facilities for populations that are disadvantaged or underserved.
- Policy OS-10 Access Improvements: Improve transit, bicycle, disabled, and pedestrian access to and between open space and recreation facilities.

Urban Tree Canopy – Berkeley's tree canopy encompasses approximately 38,000 trees. The Climate Action Plan recognizes an inequitable distribution of urban tree canopy in Berkeley, with fewer trees located in the West and South Berkeley neighborhoods, which includes the Study Area. This disparity in the tree canopy is graphically represented in **Figure 36**. The 2023 Climate Action Plan Update report recognizes this existing condition and states that the city will plant 1,000 new street trees along streets in West and South Berkeley neighborhoods over the next two years.

In contrast to the overall distribution throughout the city, San Pablo Avenue displays a relatively even distribution and dense tree coverage when compared to other corridors like University Avenue. This is due to three rows of trees (along both sidewalks and in the median of San Pablo Avenue) that are relatively consistent throughout the corridor. This is the result of efforts over the past 10 or so years to fill in gaps in the tree canopy along San Pablo Avenue.

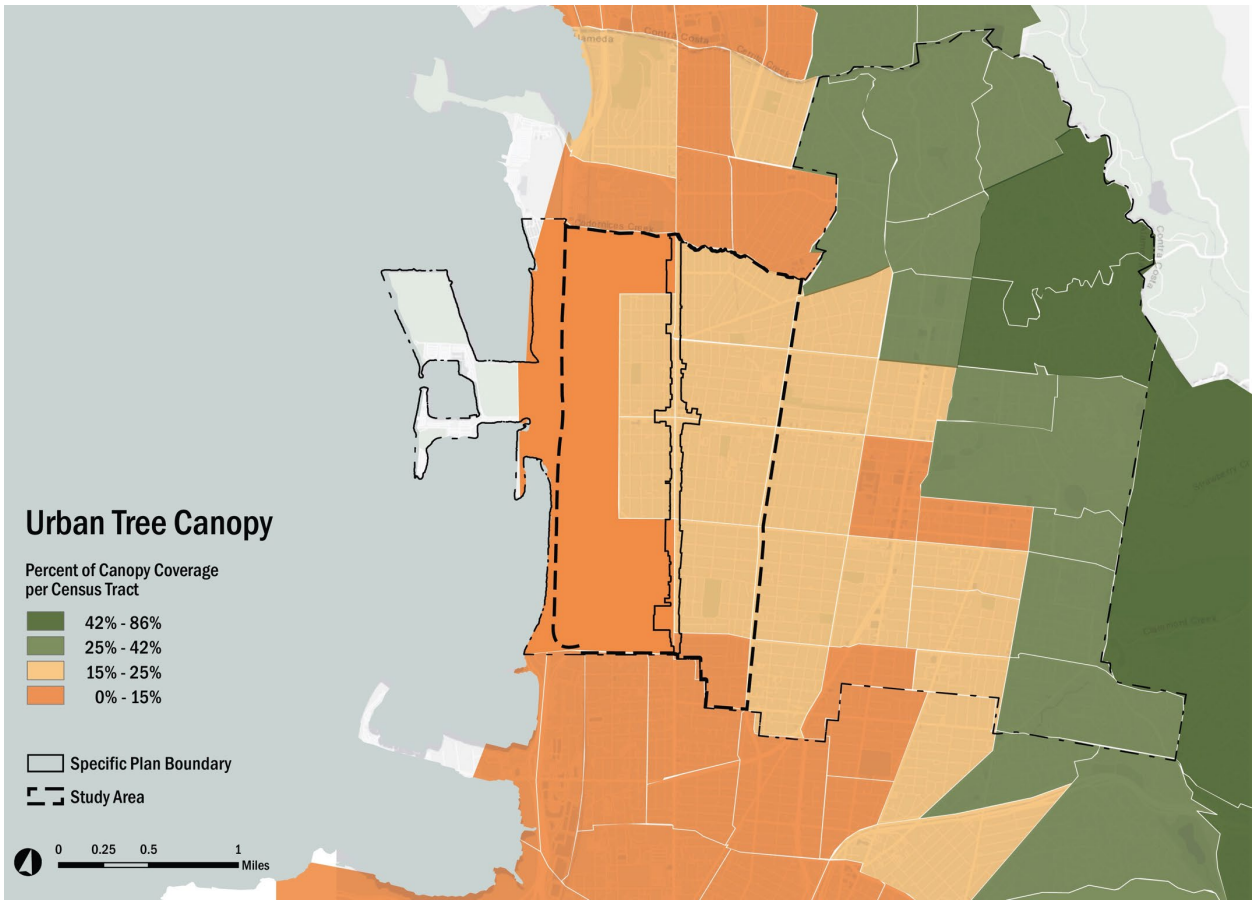


Figure 36. Urban Tree Canopy - percent coverage per Census Tract. Source: EarthDefine, USDA Forest Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2018.

Potential Future Opportunities

Transit-Oriented Community (TOC) Designation – In 2022, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) adopted a TOC Policy to boost the overall housing supply and increase residential densities in transit-rich areas of the Bay Area; spur commercial development near transit hubs; promote bus transit, walking, biking and shared mobility; and foster partnerships to create transit-oriented communities where people of all income levels, racial and ethnic backgrounds, ages and ability levels can live, work and thrive. Future MTC One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) funding cycles will consider funding revisions to prioritize investments in TOCs.

Although not currently designated, the San Pablo Specific Plan Area is a potential future TOC given its mix of land uses including housing, jobs, services, and shopping with close proximity to transit. While only a small portion of the

Specific Plan area is within proximity to the types of existing transit that meet the requirements for TOC designation, see **Figure 37**, the City could choose to "opt in" the area as a TOC. The intersection of University and San Pablo Avenues is within ½ mile of the Berkeley Capitol Corridor Station (Tier 4 TOC designation). Should AC Transit implement bus rapid transit (BRT) service on San Pablo Avenue, the Specific Plan Area would qualify as a Tier 3 TOC. This designation could provide opportunities for the City to receive targeted funding for public improvements in the Specific Plan Area. To be eligible for OBAG 4 and other discretionary MTC funds that may be linked to TOC Policy compliance, the City would need to demonstrate compliance with TOC requirements prior to the adoption of OBAG 4 funding requirements which is expected to occur in 2026. [41]

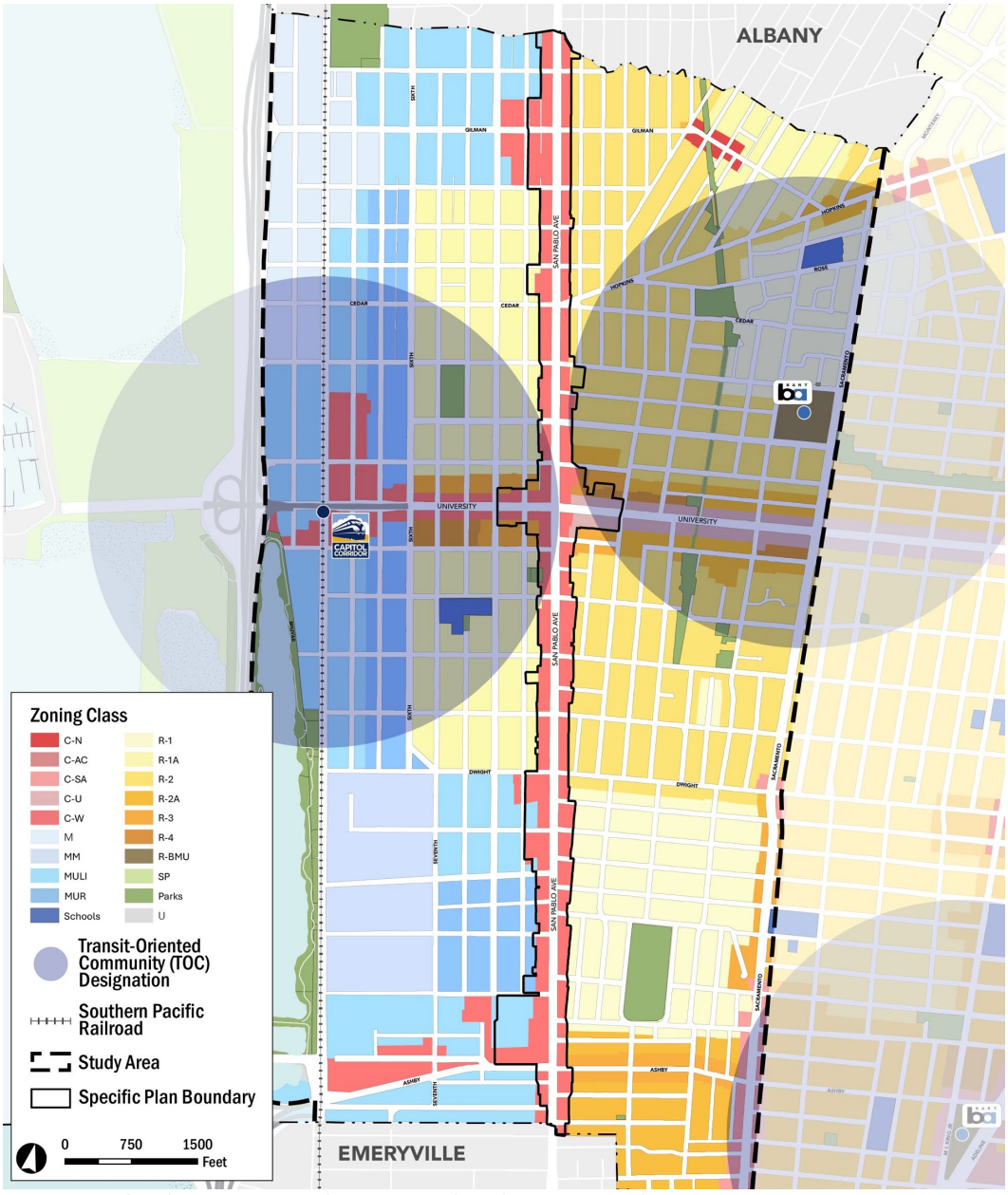


Figure 37. Transit Oriented Community (TOC) Designation. Source: City of Berkeley, MTC, 2023.

[41] *More information about MTC's TOC policy can be found at https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/land-use/transit-oriented-communities-toc-policy.*

Appendix A.1

Table 1: Residential District Development Standards

Zoning District	Min Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Density (sq. ft.) Min Lot Area Per Unit	Height Limit			Yard[3]						Maximum Lot Coverage			Usable Open Space Per Unit (sq. ft.)	Density Assumption for Housing Element Update (du/acre) [7]
			Avg. Height	Max. Height (height overlay)	Stories (#)	Story	Front	Rear	Side	Street Side	Building Separation	Main Building Height (stories)	Interior and Through Lots (%)	Corner Lots (%)		
R-1 Single Family	5,000	__	28' [1]	35'	3	All	20'	20'	4'	4'	__	1 to 3	40	40	400	6
R-1A Limited Two Family	5,000	__	28' [1]	35'	3	1	20'	20'	4'	4'	8' [6]	1	40	45	400	15
						2	20'	20'	4'	4'	12' [6]	2	40	45		
						3	20'	20'	4'	4'	16' [6]	3	40	45		
R-2 Restricted Two Family	5,000	2,500	28' [1]	35' [2]	3	1	20'	20'	4'	10'	8'	1	45	50	400	20
						2	20'	20'	4'	10'	12'	2	40	45		
						3	20'	20'	6'	10'	16'	3	35	40		
R-2A Restricted Multiple Family	5,000	1,650	28' [1]	35' [2]	3	1	15'	15'	4'	6'	8'	1	45	50	300	25
						2	15'	15'	4'	8'	12'	2	40	45		
						3	15'	15'	6'	10'	16'	3	35	40		
R-3 Multiple Family	5,000	__ [3]	35'	35' [10]	3	1	15'	15'	4'	6'	8'	1	45	50	200 [5]	40
						2	15'	15'	4'	8'	12'	2	45	50		
						3	15'	15'	6'	10'	16'	3	30	45		
R-4 Multi Family	5,000	__ [3]	35' [8]	35' [9]	3 [4]	1	15'	15'	4'	6'	8'	1	45	50	200 [5]	75
						2	15'	15'	4'	8'	12'	2	45	50		
						3	15'	15'	6'	10'	16'	3	40	45		
						4	15'	17'	8'	12'	20'	4	35	40		
						5	15'	19'	10'	14'	24'	5	35	40		
						6	15'	21'	12'	15'	28'	6	35	40		

[1] Up to 35' allowed with an AUP.

[2] May exceed with an AUP.

[3] No minimum lot area per unit except for Group Living Accommodations (GLA). 1 GLA room for every 350 sq. ft; additional room allowed for any remaining lot area of more than 200 sq. ft.

[4] Main Buildings may exceed 35 ft. and three stories in height, to a height of, but not exceeding, 65 ft. and six stories subject to obtaining a Use Permit.

[5] 200 sq. ft. for each dwelling unit, 90 sq. ft. for each person in a Group Accommodation Room.

[7] As noted on page C-17 of the housing element. These Average Densities are conservative estimates of the number of units that could be developed. Table C-7 in the HEU demonstrates the Average and Maximum Density.

[8] Main Buildings may exceed 35 ft. and three stories in height, to a height of, but not exceeding, 65 ft. and six stories subject to obtaining a Use Permit.

[9] Up to 35' allowed with an AUP, 65' and six stories allowed with Use Permit.

[10] Residential Additions max. 16' or 35' with an AUP.

Table 2: Commercial and Mixed-Use and Residential Development Standards

Zoning District	Max. FAR (Non-Res/MU only)	Max. Height (Com-Res-Only/MU)	Max. Stories (Com-Res-only/MU)	Open Space (SF/unit) (MU/Res. only)	Max. Coverage (Com-Res-Only/MU)	Setbacks[3]		Main Building Separation	Min. Lot Area (SF)	Density (DU/acre)	Density Assumption for Housing Element Update (du/acre) [7]
C-U University Avenue	2.2-3.0/None	36-48' [1]/36'	3-4 [1]	200	100%/40-50%	Res/Non. Res. Uses	**Front/street (non-res. fronting on University Avenue)**: • Avg 2' • 2' at all sidewalk pedestrian entries. **Front/street (res. fronting on University Avenue):** • Avg 2' • Max 10'[5] **Front/street (not fronting University Avenue and confronting a non-res. district):** No minimum. **Rear (south side of University Avenue; abutting res. district):** Min 10' or 10% of lot depth, whichever is greater, and average of 20'[6] **Rear (south side of University Avenue not abutting res. district):** No minimum. **Rear (north side of University Avenue)**: per section 23.204.060.D.5, must not cast a shadow at noon more than 20' onto any lot in a residential district as calculated when the sun is at a 29-degree angle above the horizon (winter solstice). **Interior side:** No Minimum **Street side:** 2' average	Res. only projects: • 1st story: 8' • 2nd story: 12' • 3rd story: 16'	None/5,000 [2]	None	150
						Res. Only Uses[8]	**Front[9]:** • Avg 2' • Max 10' **Rear:** 15' **Interior:** • 1st story: 4' • 2nd story: 4' • 3rd story: 6' **Street side:** • 1st story: 6' • 2nd story: 8' • 3rd story: 10'				
C-W West Berkeley	3.0	40-50'	3-4 [4]	40	100%	None [3]		None	None	150	

[1] 3rd floor and above residential only.

[2] Standards included are for residential or mixed use. Standards differ slightly for live/work project.

[3] Lots abutting/confront a residential district: same as required front and street side setback in adjacent residential district, 5 ft interior side, and 10 ft or 10% of the lot depth, whichever is less, rear setback. See Section 23.304.030.C.2.

[4] 50 ft. and 4 stories allowed for mixed-use projects. The 4th floor must be residential or live/work.

[5] A maximum setback of 10 ft is only permitted for landscaping that enhances the streetscape and provides privacy for residential units on the first floor.

[6] See 23.304.030(C)(2)(b) (Modifications in Commercial Districts) for allowed reductions.

[7] As noted on page C-17 of the housing element. These Average Densities are conservative estimates of the number of units that could be developed. Table C-7 in the HEU demonstrates the Average and Maximum Density.

[8] May be modified with a UP(PH).

[9] Setback area must be used to accommodate landscaping that enhances the streetscape and provides a sense of privacy for residential units on the first floor.

Table 3: Manufacturing Districts Development Standards

Zoning District	Min Lot Area (sq. ft.)		Min. Lot Width	Height Limit		Lot Line Setbacks				Building Separation	Maximum Lot Coverage	FAR	Usable Open Space Per Unit (sq. ft.)		Density Assumption for Housing Element Updates (du/acre)[7]
						Front	Rear	Side	Street Side						
M Manufacturing	20,000		N/a	45'		No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	100%	2.0	N/A		N/A
MM Mixed Manufacturing	20,000		N/a	45'		No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	100%	2.0	N/A		N/A
MU-LI Mixed Use-Light Industrial	No Minimum		N/a	45'		No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	100%	2.0	N/A		N/A
MU-R Mixed Use-Residential District[8]	New Lot	No Minimum	40'	Live/work	28' and 3 stories[3]	5'	No Minimum[5]	No Minimum	5'	No Minimum	100%	1.0/1.5[6]	Per Dwelling Unit	150	24.5
				Residential or mixed-use[2]	35' and 3 stories										
	Per Dwelling Unit or Live/Work Unit	1,250[1]		All other uses	35' and 2 stories[4]								Per Live/Work Unit	40	

[1] One additional dwelling unit allowed for remaining lot areas between 750 and 1,250 square feet.

[2] Mixed use is defined here as a building with 50 percent or more of gross floor area used for residential (including live/work) purposes.

[3] Maximum 35 ft. with a Use Permit.

[4] Maximum 3 stories for arts/craft studios and light manufacturing (with no other non-residential uses) on a block without dwelling units.

[5] Minimum 5 ft. if rear of lot abuts a street.

[6] Maximum 1.5 for buildings with 50 percent or more residential or live/work floor area.

[7] As noted on page C-17 of the housing element. These Average Densities are conservative estimates of the number of units that could be developed. Table C-7 in the HEU demonstrates the Average and Maximum Density.

[8] Standards included are for residential or mixed use. Standards differ slightly for live/work project.

Table 4: Ground Floor Uses along San Pablo Avenue

	Allowed Ground Floor Uses	Allowed Ground Floor Uses with Use Permit	Minimum Floor to Ceiling Height	Minimum Floor Area[2]	Minimum Street Frontage[3]	Minimum Area for Retail Sales, Personal and Household Services, or Food Service[4]	Maximum Area for Office Use[4]
C-W	See Table 23.204-1.[1]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C-W Designated Nodes	Retail Sales, personal and household services, retail financial services (banks), food and alcohol service, lodging, entertainment and assembly uses, gasoline/vehicle fuel stations, vehicle repair, new car sales, used vehicle sales, required access to and lobbies serving upper-story uses. Prohibited Uses: Vehicle rentals, used vehicle sales when not principally in buildings, vehicle washes, tire sales and service, open air markets, circus/carnivals. Public utility substation buildings or tanks.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C-U	See Table 23.204-1 and BMC 23.204.060.B.	Residential Only Uses, Ground floor residential uses (incl. leasing and management offices and other similar resident-serving uses).	12 ft.	15% 10% with Use Permit	50%	No minimum	No maximum
C-U Designated Node	Residential uses must be integrated with non-residential uses in a mixed-use development.	N/A	12 ft.	30% 20% with Use Permit	75%	75% 50% with Use Permit	25%

[1] Mixed-use projects in C-W are subject to permit requirements in Table 23.204-41.

[2] Calculated as percent of project land area.

[3] Calculated as percent of project's University Avenue frontage.

[4] Calculated as percentage of minimum required ground floor commercial floor area.

Appendix A.2

Table 1: Housing Sites Inventory for the Plan Area and City of Berkeley

				Affordability												Total		
				Extremely Low / Very Low			Low			Moderate			Above Moderate					
	City	SPA SP		City	SPA SP		City	SPA SP		City	SPA SP		City	SPA SP		City	SPA SP	
	(sites)	(sites)	(% of City)	(units)	(units)	(% of City)	(units)	(units)	(% of City)	(units)	(units)	(% of City)	(units)	(units)	(% of City)	(units)	(units)	(% of City)
Pipeline Sites - Applications Under Review or Anticipated	69	15	22%	437	134	31%	142	54	38%	41	30	73%	3,991	921	23%	4,611	1,139	25%
Likely Sites - Entitled Projects since 2018	48	9	19%	133	34	26%	166	0	0%	9	0	0%	1,793	486	27%	2,101	520	25%
Opportunity Sites: Underutilized	158	46	29%	1,571	560	36%	1,557	555	36%	1,831	473	26%	1,205	337	28%	6,164	1,925	31%
Opportunity Sites: Vacant	101	5	5%	37	0	0%	36	0	0%	36	36	100%	216	62	29%	325	98	30%
Total	**376**	**75**	**20%**	**2,178**	**728**	**33%**	**1,901**	**609**	**32%**	**1,917**	**539**	**28%**	**7,205**	**1,806**	**25%**	**13,201**	**3,682**	**28%**

Source: City of Berkeley, 2023. 2023-2031 Housing Element Update. Tables C-3, C-6, and C-10.

Appendix B: Opportunity Sites

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

- Public Review Draft –

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Opportunity Sites Tables

Table 1: List of 2023-2031 Housing Element Update Opportunity Sites Within the Specific Plan Area

HE Site Number	APN	Address	Vacant Lot	Existing Land Use	Acres
12a	060 235401100	1041 GILMAN ST	No	Parking lot	0.19
12b	060 235401302	1233 10TH ST	No	Parking lot	0.32
12c	060 235401200	1031 Gilman St	No	Parking lot	0.15
13a	057 208801100	1071 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	Parking lot	0.3
13b	057 208801500	1917 10TH ST	No	Parking lot	0.25
15a	059 228702500	1629 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story retail (party store)	0.11
15b	059 228702400	1633 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story retail (party store)	0.11
15c	059 228702102	1639 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-2 story commercial	0.3
16	060 235401001	1049 GILMAN ST	No	1-story retail (liquor, Dollar Tree)	0.61
17	059 233100200	1440 SAN PABLO AVE	No	2-story freestanding furniture strip retail and parking lot (West Berkeley Commercial Center)	0.67
18	056 198303103	2235 SAN PABLO AVE	No	2-story storage facility and parking lot (Berkeley Self Storage)	0.7
19	056 193200803	2424 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Self-service car wash	0.73
22	056 193300602	2332 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story commercial building and open lot dedicated to plants - East Bay Nursery	1.03
32	054 178000801	2546 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story Bank of America (temporarily closed) and large parking lot	1.43
38	057 208502600	1111 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	1-story commercial (Halmar Work Clothes Center)	0.47
46	056 198304001	2197 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story standalone restaurant (Jack in the Box) and parking lot	0.4
47a	060 240502100	1275 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story garage or storage facility	0.06
47b	060 240502000	871 HILLSIDE AVE	No	1-story auto-related office and parking lot (smog shop)	0.29
48a	058 212701200	1730 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story commercial (building materials store); adjacent to parking lot	0.07
48b	058 212701101	1726 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Parking lot for building materials store	0.14
48c	058 212700901	1724 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story retail (Cafe Leila, accessories shop) and parking lot	0.26
49a	053 166101900	1043 HEINZ AVE	No	Large parking lot and single family house	0.2
49b	053 166101801	2840 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Parking lot	0.26
50a	060 240401801	1399 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Chevron Gas Station	0.21

50b	060 240402000	1337 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Autobody shop and parking lot	0.22
51a	053 166101400	2830 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1- story commercial	0.15
51b	053 166101501	2832 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1- story commercial	0.31
52a	057 208901201	1011 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	2-story standalone vacant commercial building (former Premier Cru wine store).	0.24
52b	057 208901500	1925 9TH ST	No	Public land, parking lot behind Bauman College	0.15
53	056 192802701	2407 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Cement lot with storage sheds	0.36
54	056 198200201	2111 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Parking lot	0.42
55	057 208602903	1819 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story autobody shop and parking lot, (Nate's Green Garage, auto detailing)	0.42
56	056 193200401	2400 SAN PABLO AVE	No	2-story retail and cement lot (Nu Gu Na restaurant + Ohmega Salvage)	0.44
58	056 197300601	1010 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	UA Homes parking lot	0.46
59	056 197800802	2040 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Vacant 1-story commercial building	0.46
107a	057 208500702	1187 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	1-story laundromat, last sold in Oct 2016, 10 surface parking spaces, no lease or tenant data available on CoStar, Walker's Paradise (97), Good Transit (65); lot owned by same owner as adjacent lot (057 208500801)	0.08
107b	057 208500801	1181 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	1-story restaurant (Eat @ Thai – tenant since Jul 2016), no sale data available on CoStar; Walker's Paradise (97), Good Transit (65); lot owned by same owner as adjacent lot (057 208500702)	0.11
109	056 197900100	1198 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	Auto car wash	0.28
111	060 239501700	1501 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Vacant 1-story commercial building	0.07
112	053 166202100	2835 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Vacant 1-story commercial building (former BPOE Lodge - permanently closed)	0.08
113a	060 239503100	1513 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story autobody shop	0.06
113b	060 239503301	1507 SAN PABLO AVE	No	Vacant 1-story storefront for sale	0.15
114	060 239500100	1100 PAGE ST	No	Parking lot	0.11
115	060 240502401	1229 SAN PABLO AVE	Yes	Vacant 1-story commercial building, for sale sign	0.12
116	053 166200101	2825 SAN PABLO AVE	Yes	Vacant lot	0.17
117	060 240503101	1205 SAN PABLO AVE	Yes	Vacant lot	0.17
118	056 192602000	2309 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story commercial + parking lot (Afghan Burrito)	0.19
121	053 162901901	2959 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story commercial/auto-related use (Berkeley Star Smog)	0.25
122	057 208800400	1900 SAN PABLO AVE	Yes	Vacant lot	0.27

124	056 193302403	2366 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story commercial building + parking lot (Berkeley Patients Group)	0.33
195	059 228702000	1117 VIRGINIA ST	Yes	Vacant lot, same owner as 1639 San Pablo	0.06

Table 2: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Proposed Opportunity Sites

SP Add. Sites #	APN	Address	Vacant Lot	Existing Land Use	Acres	Site Criteria / Rationale
A	053 165200105 and 053 165200101	1099 ASHBY AVE	No	1 and up to 3 story commercial with large surface parking	6.32	Large property with significant surface parking, overall low FAR. Could infill parking lot with structured parking and new development. Historic buildings likely a combination of preserving some full buildings and some only preserving street facing facades. Have factored down site area to assume 60% of total site being developed.
B	053 166102000	1035 HEINZ AVE	No	1 story light industrial	0.14	Same ownership as adjacent HE Opportunity site parcels.
C	053 166102100	1033 HEINZ AVE	No	1 story light industrial	0.12	Small property surrounded by other properties under one ownership.
D	053 162802601	2995 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1 story commercial and surface parking lot	0.60	Large parcel with vacant building (former Walgreens) and relatively low FAR
E	054 178601600 and 054 178601401	2625 AND 2641 SAN PABLO AVE BERKELEY	No	1 story commercial and surface parking lot	0.44	Two parcels with one owner, low FAR current development
F	054 178401900	2551 SAN PABLO AVE BERKELEY	No	1 story commercial with side service and parking area	0.32	Currently a towing service, low FAR
G	056 193300500	2300 SAN PABLO AVE BERKELEY	No	Surface Parking Lot	0.23	Different owner address from adjacent East Bay Nursery (a HE Opp Site) but both in Moraga; suspect could be one development project
H	57-2085-7-1	1199 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	1-story commercial building (Foster's Freeze)	0.21	Same ownership as adjacent HE Opportunity site parcels.
I	57-2085-14-1	1101 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	1 story 2-3 tenant commercial building with some parking	0.30	Has been vacant for several years, appeared to have last sold in 2023

J	057 208901401	1001 UNIVERSITY AVE	No	1-2 story community building	0.48	This is the city-owned parcel at northeast corner of 9th and University.
K	057 208800500 and 057-2088-6	1920 and 19xx SAN PABLO AVE	Yes	1 parcel w/ 1 story commercial building and some open space other parcel vacant	0.32	Same ownership two parcels
L	060 235401403	1235 10TH ST	No	1-story commercial building and parking	0.26	C-W zoned property about 0.6 FAR recommending to add to Gilman Node
M	060 235400300 and 060 235400402	1212 and 1214 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1- story vacant commercial building and 1-story light industrial/auto serving bldg	0.29	Same owner as approved project to the north
N	060 239501600	1443 SAN PABLO AVE	No	1-story commercial building	0.17	HE Opp Site #114 is a parking lot that serves adjacent building and has same property owner.
O		1095 University Ave	No	2-story vacant commercial	0.11	Former Wells Fargo Bank building

Opportunity Sites Key Map

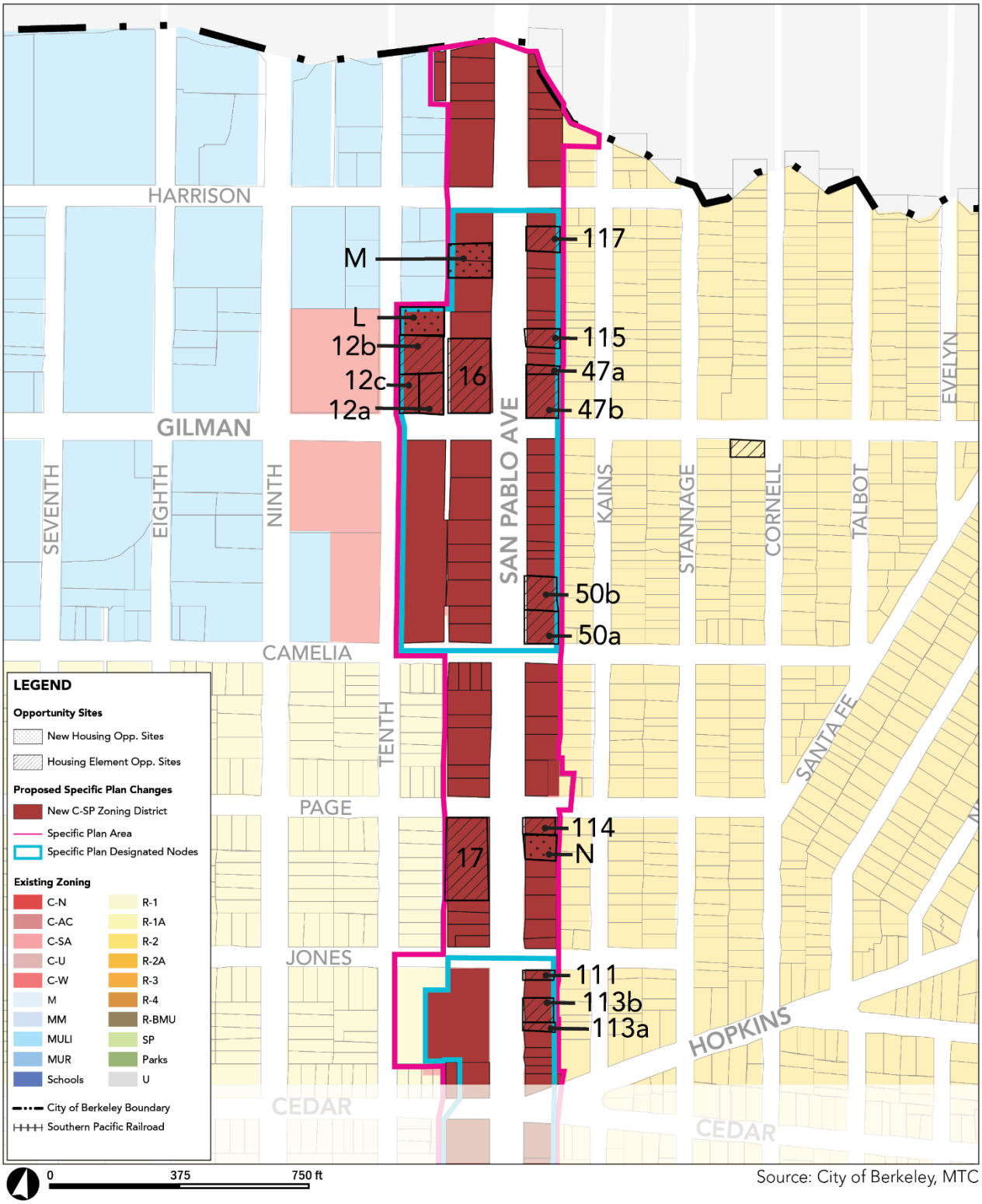


Figure B.1 Opportunity Sites Map – Part 1

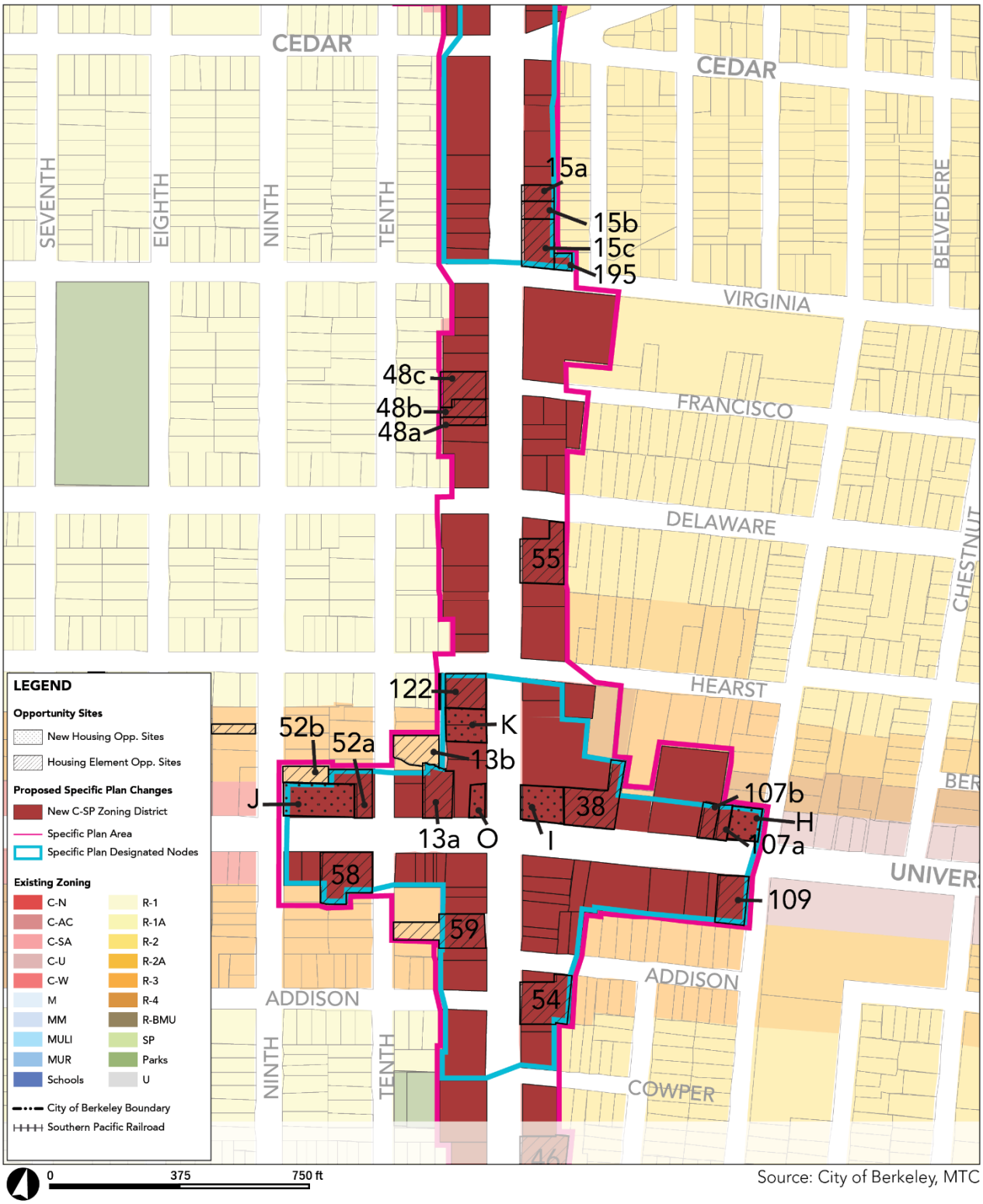


Figure B.2 Opportunity Sites Map – Part 2

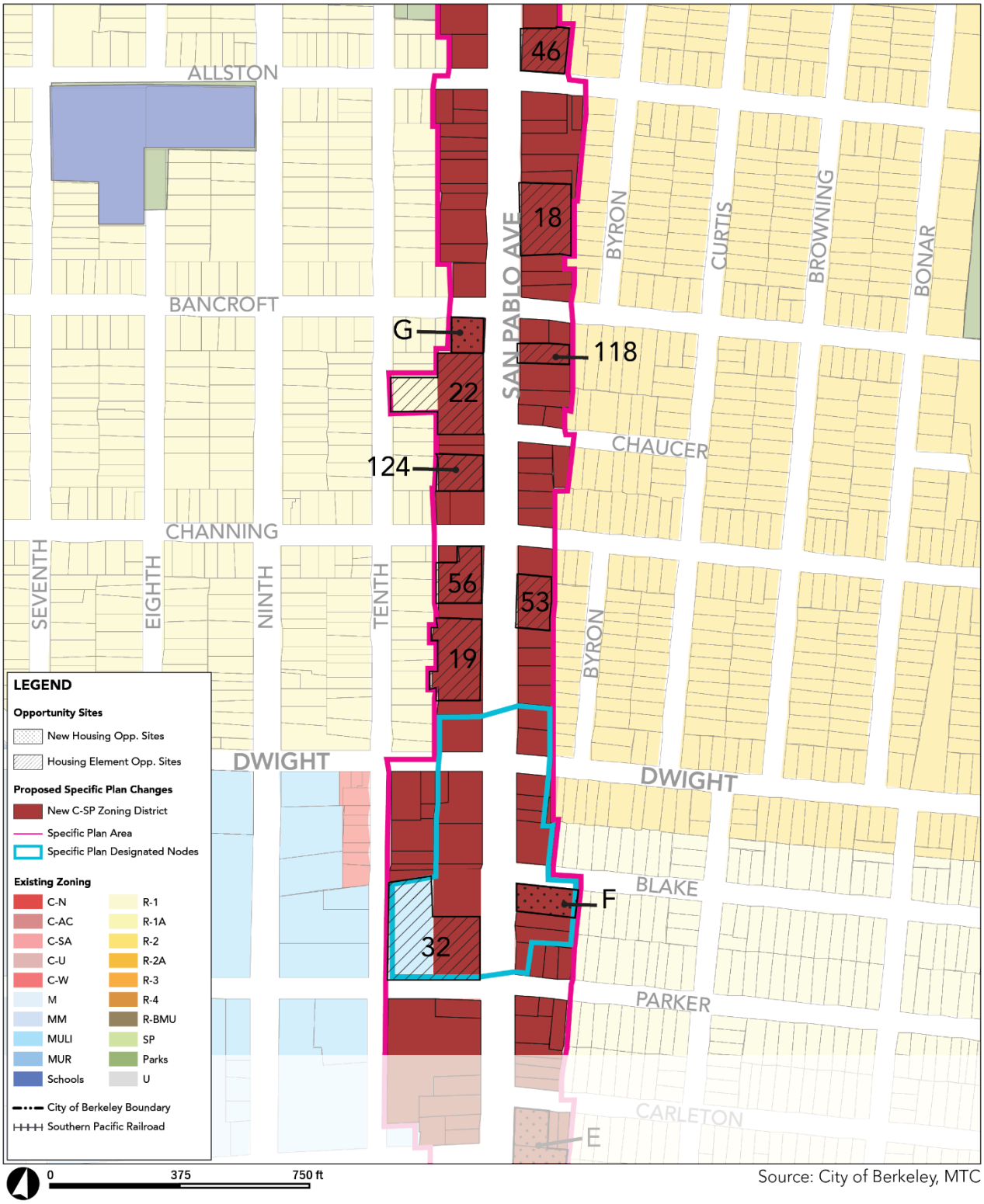


Figure B.3 Opportunity Sites Map – Part 3

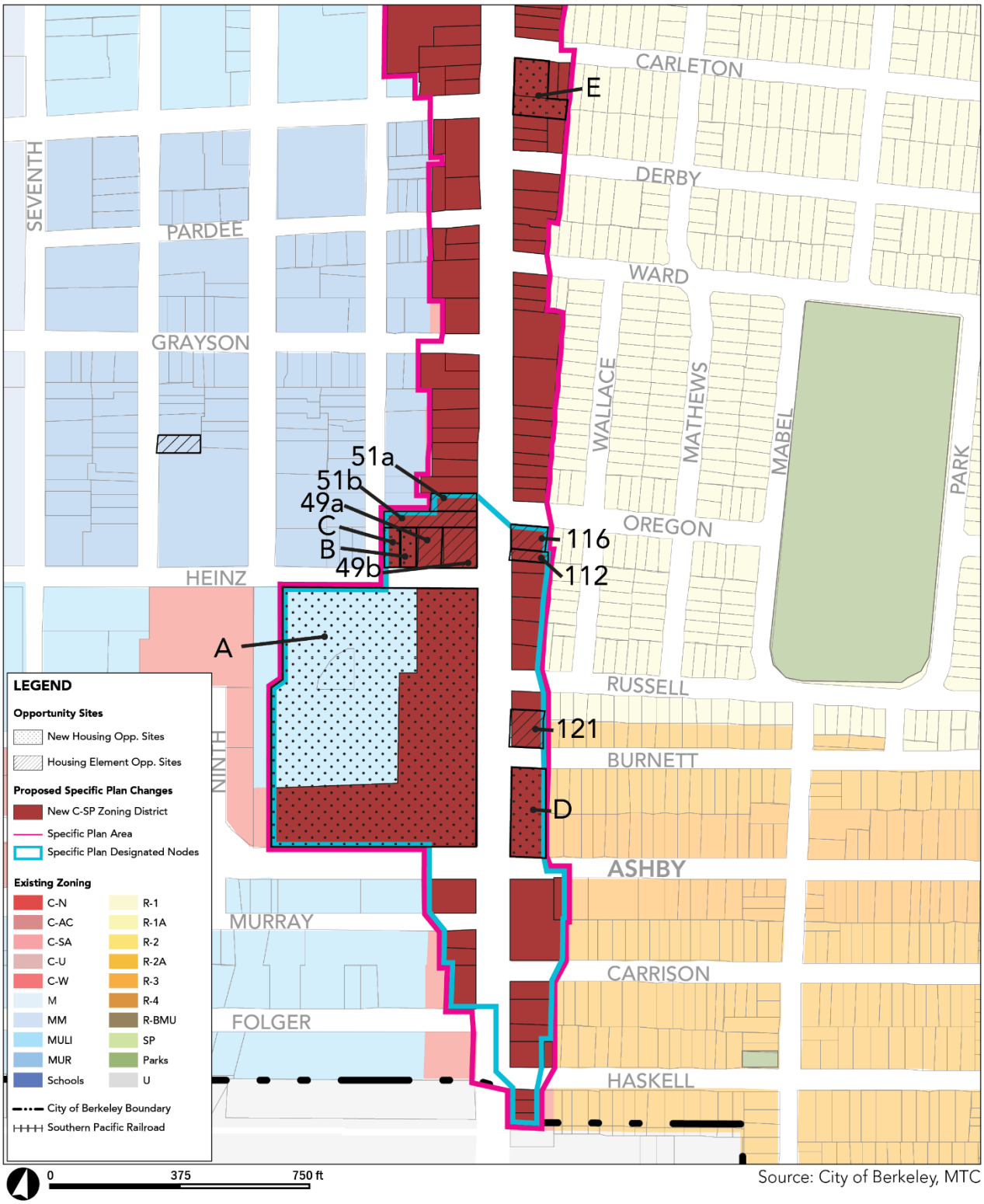


Figure B.4 Opportunity Sites Map – Part 4

Appendix C: Buildout Summary Memorandum

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

- Public Review Draft –



Internal

Date: 10.29.2024 (Revision #1 – August 29, 2025)

To: Robert Riviera and Anne Hersch, City of Berkeley

From: Phil Erickson and Dewi Bleher, Community Design + Architecture
Lynette Dias and Hannah Chan Smyth, Urban Planning Partners

Re: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (SPA SP)– Task 5.3 Build-out Summary Staff Memorandum

This memorandum summarizes the baseline and updated build-out scenarios for opportunity sites, pipeline sites, and likely sites in the Specific Plan Area identified in the Berkeley Housing Element and additional potential opportunity sites identified through the community assessment process of the Specific Plan, see maps at end of memorandum.

Build-out Density Assumptions

Residential Density

The starting point for the residential density assumptions used in this assessment are the density assumptions and methodology used for the Berkeley Housing Element. The Housing Element states, "*The City estimated development potential for the sites by calculating the average baseline density (without density bonus) achieved for recently approved, under construction, or completed mixed-use and residential projects per zoning district.*"[1]

Table 1 below describes the housing densities used for Baseline Growth and the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan's (SPA SP) Buildout. The Baseline Growth density assumptions are those defined in the Housing Element. Adjustments are made to the baseline density assumptions for each scenario based on the modifications to proposed zoning and development standard modifications.

Table 2 below summarizes the residential and commercial build-out of the opportunity sites for the Baseline Growth and the SPA SP Buildout.

Baseline Growth: Housing Element Opportunity Sites (Baseline)

This is the Housing Element estimate for the 51 housing opportunity sites, 12 pipeline sites, and 6 likely sites within the Plan Area. The Baseline estimates about 26 acres being developed.

The following scenarios align with those described in the Policy Options and Development Framework Memorandum.

SPASP Buildout:

This includes the sites identified in the Baseline and the 15 additional housing opportunity sites identified through the SPASP community assessment work. This applies the Specific Plan Zoning Framework to the 51 HEU opportunity sites and the 15

[1] City of Berkeley Housing Element 2023-2031; as amended on February 17, 2023; page C-17.

additional sites. This includes the expanded C-SP nodes compared to the existing C-W nodes. This includes the following assumptions:

- **Rezonings:**
  - Rezone existing C-W zoned parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP.
  - Rezone existing C-U parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP
  - Rezoning some parcels to eliminate existing split-zoned properties. These changes are limited to parcels fronting on either San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue. In cases where the split zoned portion of a parcel fronts on a side street, the split zone is maintained.
- **Housing Overlay:**
  - Assumes C-SP development standards for 100% affordable or family housing on MU-LI sites.
- **Density Outside the nodes:** The density assumption used for the HEU opportunity sites of 135 du/ac is adjusted to 140 du/ac based on the assumption that 70% of development outside of the nodes will take advantage of In-Lieu Mixed-Use approach outlined in LU-P.9 that permits projects outside of the nodes to substitute residential use in place of required non-residential use on the ground floor. Note the SPASP does increase mixed-use building height from 50 to 55 feet to allow for a taller ground floor and account for a sloping roof parapet. However, the adjustment does not impact overall building area or density.
- **Density in Tier 1 Nodes:** Density is increased to 250 du/ac to account for the increase in height from 50-feet to 85-feet and associated increase in FAR from 3.0 to 5.0.
- **Density in Tier 2 Nodes:** The density assumption used for the HEU opportunity sites of 135 du/ac applies here. Increased height is permitted to allow for taller ground floor and account for sloping roof parapet. However, the adjustment does not impact overall area or density.

Table 1. Residential Density Assumptions

Scenario	Zoning District West Berkeley Commercial (C-W)	University Ave. Commercial (C-U)	MULI	MUR	R-3	R-2
Baseline Growth	• 135 du/ac in and outside of nodes • Proposed or entitled unit counts for pipeline and likely projects	• 150 du/ac	• Not applicable	• 25 du/ac	• 40 du/ac	• 20 du/ac
Proposed Outside of Nodes	• Rezoned to C-SP • 140 du/ac outside of nodes	N/A all C-U parcels are within Tier 1 node	• Overlay • 140 du/ac	• Rezoned to C-SP	• Rezoned to C-SP	• Rezoned to C-SP
Proposed Tier 1 Nodes	• Rezoned to C-SP and Tier 1 Node • 250 du/ac	• 250 du/ac	• Overlay • 250 du/ac	• Rezoned to C-SP	• Rezoned to C-SP	• Rezoned to C-SP
Proposed Tier 2 Nodes	• Rezoned to C-SP and Tier 2 Node • 135 du/ac	N/A	• Overlay • 135 du/ac	• Rezoned to C-SP	• Rezoned to C-SP	• Rezoned to C-SP

Commercial Intensity

Commercial intensity refers to the net amount of commercial space anticipated in future mixed-use developments, calculated similar to how average residential density is assessed in the Housing Element.

The analysis calculates net commercial square footage by comparing existing commercial space as defined through the Assessor's Use Codes with the average new commercial area that recent development projects have proposed. The existing commercial space area (square feet) on the opportunity sites was estimated using data from the County Assessor's office with some adjustments made from review of aerial photographs and data included in staff reports for proposed development projects. The commercial space within new mixed-use developments was estimated based on recently constructed and proposed mixed-use projects in the Specific Plan Area, applying an average FAR of 0.12 to the total site acreage of mixed-use projects in each development scenario. The net reduction in commercial space is derived by adding the estimate of new commercial space in mixed use developments to the estimated loss of existing commercial space due to the demolition of existing buildings on the opportunity sites.

Baseline Growth: Housing Element Opportunity Sites (Baseline)

This is the Housing Element estimate for the 51 housing opportunity sites, 12 pipeline sites, and 6 likely sites within the Plan Area, assuming all proposed projects will be mixed-use. These sites represent about 20% of the total existing commercial square foot area within the Specific Plan area.

Proposed SPASP

This scenario includes the sites identified in the Baseline and 15 additional housing opportunity sites identified through the SPASP community assessment work (Baseline + SPASP). This scenario assumes that 70% of the developments outside of the nodes will utilize the LU-P.9 In-Lieu Mixed-Use definition to propose residential on the ground floor, and therefore, have zero proposed commercial space for these developments. As a result, this buildout projects that 30% of the developments outside and 100% of the developments in the nodes will be mixed-use projects.

Table 2. Build-out Summary

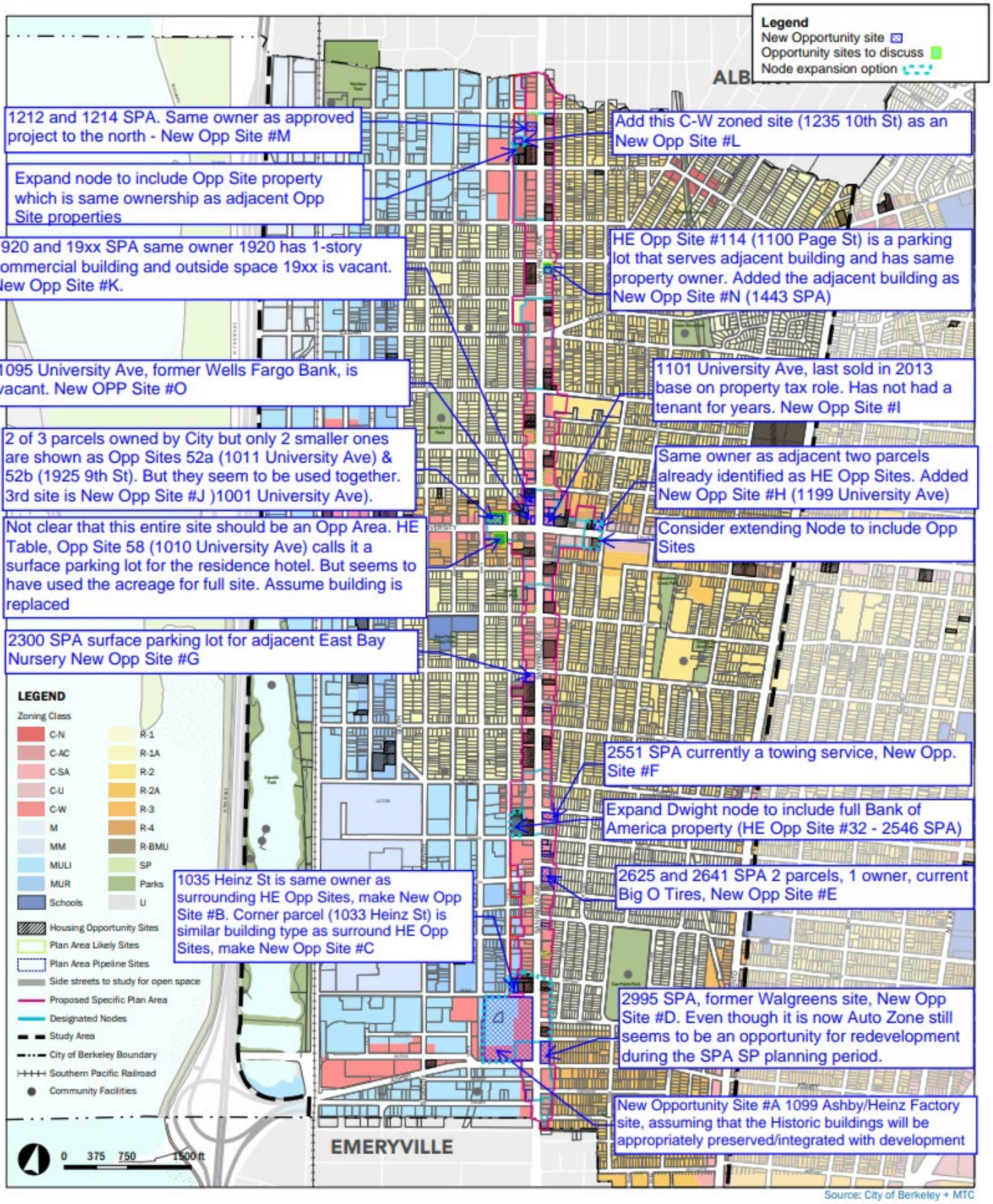
Scenario	Net New Units (DU) [A]	Average Net Density (DU/AC) [B]	Increase from Baseline		Commercial Space Net Change [C]		New Commercial Space (SQ FT)
			Units	Percent	(SQ FT)	Percent	
Baseline Growth	**3,500**	**135**	**0**	**0%**	**-150,000 to - 215,000**	**-10% to -14%**	**70,000 to 105,000**
Proposed SPA SP	**6,500 To 6,750**	**185**	**3,000 To 3,250**	**86% to 93%**	**-225,000 To -320,000**	**-15% to -21%**	**65,000 to 90,000**

Notes:

A. The range of units is an estimate intended to reflect that within the timeframe of the Specific Plan not all opportunity sites will be redeveloped and will not all include the maximum number of units possible. It is unlikely that every site will be developed.

B. This is an estimate of the averaged net density for all the opportunity sites based on their zoning designation net of the 75 existing units that are replaced by new development.

C. This is an estimate of the net change in commercial space that results from redevelopment of the opportunity sites; the square footage of commercial space removed net of the estimate of new commercial space in new mixed-use projects. This is expressed as a range recognizing potential variation in commercial space developed in each project and that not all opportunity sites are likely to be redeveloped within the timeframe of the Specific Plan.



Source: City of Berkeley + MTC

San Pablo Ave Specific Plan — Housing Element and New Proposed Opportunity Sites

09.20.2024

Appendix D: Street Improvements

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

- Public Review Draft –

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Overview

This appendix provides an overview of transportation projects that are already underway at the time of the Specific Plan's publication, along with recommended improvements at key locations identified through the planning and community engagement process. Many of these projects are expected to be implemented in the coming years and will significantly reshape travel conditions in the area. The Specific Plan's proposed improvements are designed to build upon this ongoing work, treating these near-term changes as the new baseline for future transportation planning and investment.

Comprehensive List of Existing Projects

City of Berkeley Projects

Current Projects (2025)

Parker-Addison Mobility and Safety Improvements Project[1]

This project will provide a bike boulevard and associated improvements to connect the West Street multiuse pathway to San Pablo Park via Bonar and Mabel Streets. The project also includes a new bike boulevard on Parker Street from San Pablo Avenue to Mabel Street.

Addison Street Bike Boulevard Connector Project[2]

The Addison Bike Boulevard will provide an east-west connection between Milvia Street and Sacramento Street to connect West Berkeley to Downtown Berkeley. The Project proposes a Class III bike boulevard on Addison Street from the Aquatic Park eastward to Sacramento Street and from Martin Luther King Jr. Way through downtown to Oxford Street. It would connect to the previously-constructed (phase 1) portion of this project between Sacramento Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way, thereby creating a continuous bike boulevard from the Aquatic Park to the western edge of the UC Berkeley campus. The project also includes construction of a Class IV separated bikeway connector across San Pablo Avenue to reduce future collision risk for vulnerable users crossing the street and will address a key barrier to east-west bicycle connectivity; this connector on San Pablo Avenue will be implemented as part of the Alameda CTC Safety Enhancements Project, described below.

Street Rehabilitation - Hopkins Corridor Improvements[3]

This project includes Hopkins Street from San Pablo Avenue to Sutter Street. The project began in 2020 and was put on hold in 2023. As of the fall of 2025 there is no definitive timeline has been established for restarting the effort.

Other Currently Planned Projects

Ashby/San Pablo Traffic Improvements – Design is currently underway for this intersection improvement project, which includes a dedicated left-turn lane with a signal phase and upgraded curbs to enhance safety and traffic flow. Construction is anticipated in Fiscal Year 2027.

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[1] City of Berkeley. Parker-Addison Mobility and Safety Improvements Project. City of Berkeley. Accessed 6 May 2025.
[2] City of Berkeley. Addison Street Bike Boulevard Connector Project. City of Berkeley. Accessed 6 May 2025.
[3] City of Berkeley. Street Rehabilitation – Hopkins Corridor Improvements. City of Berkeley. Accessed 6 May 2025.

Alameda CTC Projects

The Specific Plan will not focus on making transportation improvements to San Pablo Avenue, because the Alameda Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) has completed a multimodal planning study for San Pablo Avenue throughout Alameda County. The study has led to three improvement projects that will result in construction of safety improvements for all users, bus stop improvements, and parallel bicycle facility improvements, as well as a short segment of bicycle and bus lanes on the southern end of San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley:

The Parallel Bike Improvement Project

This will construct bike safety and connectivity improvements and pedestrian, ADA upgrades along streets parallel to San Pablo Avenue, as well as creates safer bicycle crossings for existing or proposed bicycle routes as designated in the Berkeley Bike Plan (2017). Improvements on parallel streets will create or enhance bike boulevards consist of diverters, traffic circles, modifications to existing stop controls, speed humps, and wayfinding improvements for bicycles. This project is expected to start construction in Spring 2026. See Chapter 5 – Streets, Figure 5.8 *Connections Map*.

The Safety Enhancements Project

This will construct improvements for pedestrians and cyclists to cross San Pablo Avenue more easily and improve transit speed and reliability along San Pablo Avenue. Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements on San Pablo Avenue include median islands, and crossing beacons; and the Class IV separated bikeway on San Pablo Avenue between the off-set intersections with Addison Street. This project will also include ADA upgrades to curb ramps. Transit improvements include bus stop bulb-outs for high-use stops, intersection lighting upgrades, and some bus stop relocations to improve safety and bus operations. Within Berkeley, improvements will extend between Heinz Avenue and the northern city limit. This project is expected to start construction in mid 2026.

The Bus and Bike Lanes Project

This project is located primarily within the Cities of Oakland and Emeryville, and will convert one travel lane in each direction on San Pablo Avenue to a bus-only lane and convert on-street parking lanes to separated bike lanes. In Berkeley, the Project's bicycle improvements will extend along San Pablo Avenue from the southern city limit to Heinz Avenue, approximately 0.25 miles, and the bus improvements will end at the Ashby Avenue intersection. This project is currently in the conceptual design phase.

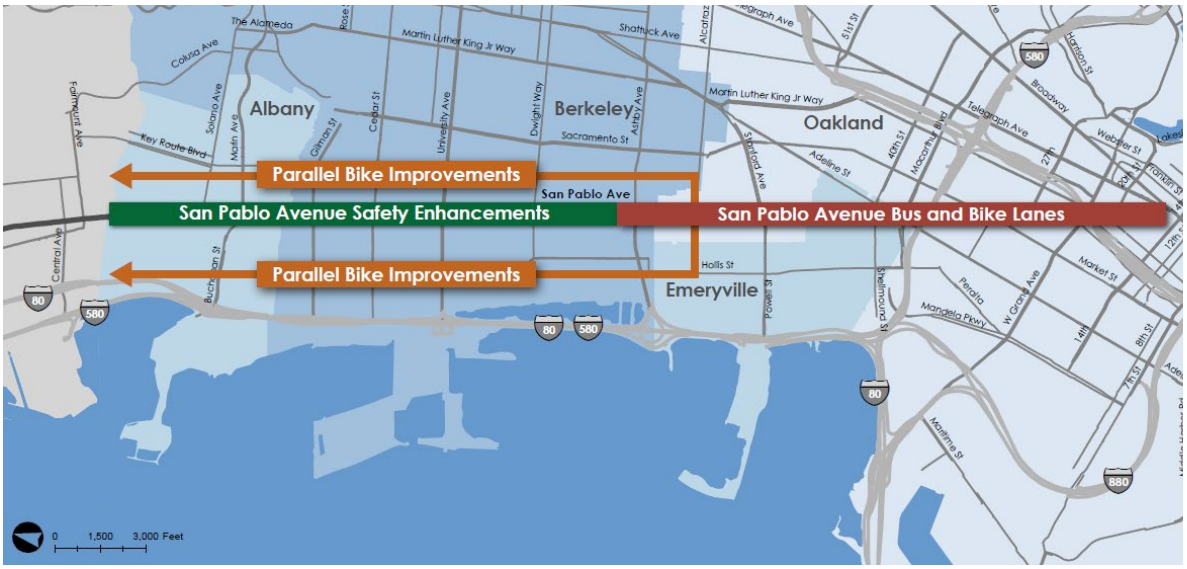


Figure D. 1 Alameda CTC. San Pablo Avenue Multimodal Corridor Overview Map

Alameda Countywide Bikeways Network

In December 2022, the Commission adopted a resolution establishing an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bikeways policy and standard. The policy directs that Countywide Bikeway Facilities incorporate AAA design principles, as defined by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Contextual Guidance for Selecting All Ages and Abilities Bikeways. This policy aligns with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's existing standards for the regional Active Transportation Network, of which the Countywide Bikeways Network is a subset. As San Pablo Avenue is designated as a major bus and bikeway corridor within the Countywide Network, it is subject to these design expectations.

Proposed Improvements

The Specific Plan summarizes a set of recommended improvements that are not currently addressed by existing or planned projects from the City of Berkeley and Alameda CTC. The methodology for summarizing these recommendations integrates proposals from the Pedestrian Plan (2020) and the Berkeley Bike Plan Update (2025), and was further refined through input from City of Berkeley staff and accident history. The **Table D.1 List of Intersection Improvements** providing an overview of these proposed improvements, listing strategies to address existing mobility gaps and plan for enhancements beyond currently planned projects. This list is intended to be a living document and updated periodically as conditions change, evolving safety needs, community input, and coordination with future planning and capital improvement efforts. For example, the city will likely be updating the Pedestrian Plan in the next couple of years. Many of intersection improvements listed below align with Policies and Standards presented in Chapter 5 – Streets, *Continue to improve Intersections*, page X of the Plan.

Figure D.2: Connections & D3 Mid-Block and Side-Street Plaza Options presents a consolidated overview of potential pedestrian crossing locations based on Pedestrian Crossing Frequency Standards described in T-S.1. It also provides an overview of potential side-street plaza sites, policy PR-P.14.

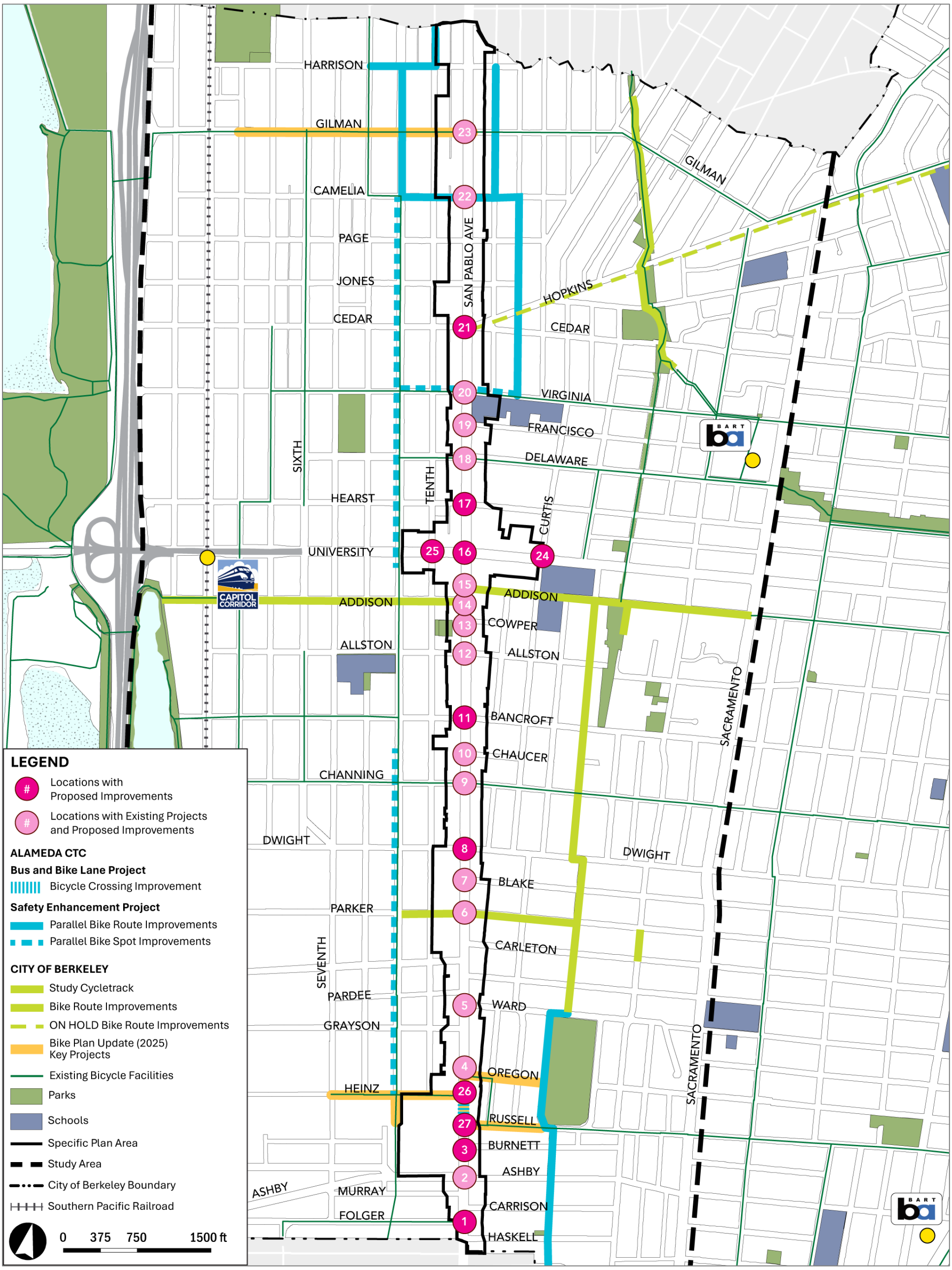
Table D.1 List of Intersection Improvements

No.	Existing Project	Proposed Improvement	Nearest Intersection	Source
1		RRFB and Ped Refuge Island	Folger Ave and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
2	Others	Restrict Right Turn on Red, Median Refuge Island, Curb Extension, Widen Sidewalk at Bus Stop Pedestrian Plan (2020): High-Visibility Crosswalk, Hardened Centerline	Ashby Ave and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
3		RRFB and Ped Refuge Island	Burnett St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
4	Alameda CTC And City of Berkeley	RRFB at South Leg (where Safety Enhancement Project is implementing a Pedestrian Refuge Island) Potential Protected Intersection improvements connecting with Separated Bike Lanes on San Pablo Ave. to Heinz St. (see Intersection 26)	Oregon St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)
5	Alameda CTC	RRFB at North Leg	Ward St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
6	City of Berkeley	Bike Crossing	Parker St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
7	Alameda CTC	RRFB at South Leg	Blake St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
8		Median Refuge Island	Dwight Way and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)
9	Alameda CTC	Raised Crosswalk PHB	Channing Way and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)
10	Alameda CTC	RRFB	Chaucer St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
11		Widen Sidewalk at Bus Stop, High-Visibility Crosswalk, Curb Extension, Median Refuge Island	Bancroft Way and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Pedestrian Plan (2020)
12	Alameda CTC	High-Visibility Crosswalk, Consolidate Driveways, Curb Extension, Median Refuge Island, Widen Sidewalk at Bus Stop	Allston Way and San Pablo Ave	Pedestrian Plan (2020)
13	Alameda CTC	RRFB, Curb Extension	Cowper St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Pedestrian Plan (2020)
14	City of Berkeley	Median Refuge Island on Southern Addison 2-Way Cycle track Connector	Southern Addison St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)

No.	Existing Project	Proposed Improvement	Nearest Intersection	Source
15	City of Berkeley	Bike Box for left-turning North bikes turning onto San Pablo. Bike signal detection and RRFB/PHB for peds and bikes coming from the northern Addison who will then turn left going SB on San Pablo and then turning right to head WB on Addison. Raised Crossing for ped/ bikes 2-Way Cycle track Connector	Northern Addison St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)
16		Restrict Right Turn on Red, Median Refuge Island, Curb Extensions	University Ave and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Pedestrian Plan (2020)
17		Ped Refuge Islands	Hearst Ave and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
18	Alameda CTC	Ped Refuge Islands. Tighten Intersection	Delaware St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
19	Alameda CTC	RRFB	Francisco St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
20	Alameda CTC	Raised Intersection	Virginia St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff
21		Median Refuge Island, Widen Sidewalk at Bus Stop	Cedar St and San Pablo Ave	Bike Plan Update (2025)
22	Alameda CTC	Raised Intersection PHB	Camelia St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)
23	Alameda CTC and City of Berkeley	Ped Refuge Islands Potential Protected Intersection Treatments on west side and shortening of pedestrian crossing of Gilman St	Gilman St and San Pablo Ave	City Staff Bike Plan Update (2025)
24		Curb Extension, Consolidate driveways, Median Refuge	Curtis St and University Ave	City Staff
25		Curb Extension, Median Refuge	10th St and University Ave	City Staff
26	Alameda CTC or City of Berkeley	2-Way Cycle track Connector either to Oregon St (Intersection 4) or Russell St (Intersection 27), Protected Intersection on west side, and Shortened Pedestrian Crossing.	Heinz St and San Pablo Ave	Bike Plan Update (2025)
27	Alameda CTC or City of Berkeley	2-Way Cycle track Connector to Heinz St (Intersection 26), Protected Intersection on east and west sides, and Shortened Pedestrian Crossing of Russel St, Median Refuge	Russell St and San Pablo Ave	Bus and Bike Lanes Project Bike Plan Update (2025)

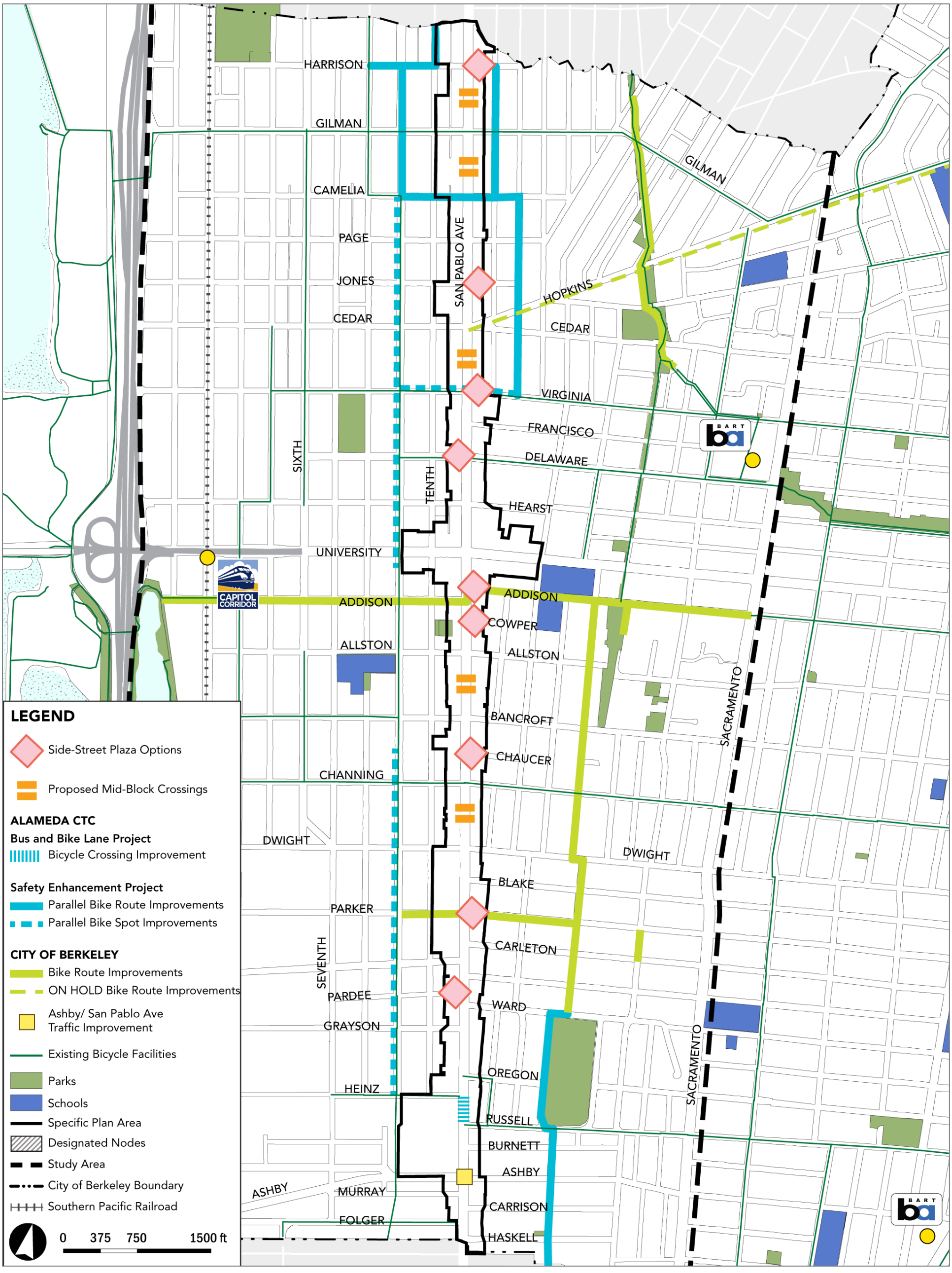
Ped = Pedestrian; RRFB = Rectangular Flashing Beacons; PHB = Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons

Figure D.2: Connections & Intersection Improvements



Source: City of Berkeley, Alameda CTC, CD+A. 2025.

Figure D.3: Connections & Mid-Block and Side Street Plaza Options



Source: City of Berkeley, Alameda CTC, CD+A. 2025.



Appendix E
Objective Design Standards

- Public Review Draft -

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Introduction

Applicability

The intent of the Objective Design Standards (ODS) is to allow flexibility and creativity in design while providing a clear set of standards and expectations that align with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. The ODS apply to new private development in the Specific Plan Area, with the exception of automotive uses on an automotive site (BMC Section 23.204.140.B.3 (Automotive Uses)). The ODS are in addition to the development standards found in this chapter and the City's Zoning Ordinance. The standards are organized by topic area and building type, which are described in greater detail in the following section. The applicability of certain standards by building type is indicated in the name and in parentheses following the title (e.g., (M/L)).

Building Types

The following objective design standards provide design requirements based on the size and type of residential buildings. The name and definition of residential building types allowed and encouraged within the Specific Plan are as follows:

Small/Middle Housing (S)

Small and middle housing types include townhomes, triplexes/quadplexes, multiplexes, and low-rise/courtyard apartments. These housing types are typically similar in scale and form to a single-family house, usually 3 stories in height. They feature individual yards and/or shared open space and surface, tuck-under, or garage parking.



Townhomes

Townhomes are **attached single-family units** that share a common wall. Townhomes are typically configured into clusters of 2 to 8 individual attached units.



Triplex/Quadplex

Triplexes and quadplexes are **walk-up buildings featuring 3 (triplex) or 4 (quadplex) dwelling units** that typically share a single entry or feature individual unit entries from the street. Dwelling units may be oriented side-by-side and/or are stacked atop one another.



Multiplex

Multiplex apartment buildings are single buildings featuring **5 or more dwelling units** arranged side-by-side and/or stacked, typically with a shared entry or individual unit entries from the street. Multiplex buildings feature dwelling units that are generally accessed through a shared elevator and corridor.



Low-Rise/Courtyard Apartments

Low-rise and courtyard multifamily developments are generally made up of two or more buildings typically two to four stories in height, organized around a shared courtyard/central open space. Unit types may include multi-level townhomes, stacked flats, or a combination of both. They typically feature individual entries or shared entryways accessed from the courtyard, the street, or both.

Medium/Mid-Rise Multi-Family Housing (M)



Mid-rise building types are typically 4-8 stories in height and feature shared entries, surface and/or underground or wrapped parking, and private and/or shared open space. Medium-scale, mid-rise buildings include stacked apartments with ground-level residential entries/stoops, podium buildings (residential units above a concrete podium base that may contain structured parking or non-residential ground-floor uses), and wrapped multi-family structures (residential units wrapped around a central parking structure (typically concrete)).

Large/High-Rise Multi-Family Housing (L)



Large-scale, high-rise buildings include podium buildings and wrapped multi-family structures typically 9-12+ stories in height. They are often designed with a clear podium and tower form, with a smaller tower footprint above the base to reduce perceived bulk and improve light and air access. Units include shared entries, underground or wrapped parking, and shared open space.

Building Modulation and Articulation

Intent:

- Reduce the perceived scale, massing, and bulk of buildings through modulation and reductions in upper floor massing.
- Create cohesive and well-crafted building façades with human-scaled details and variations on large facades that support a comfortable, engaging pedestrian experience.
- Encourage high-quality materials that provide visual interest and promote long-term durability.
- Ensure compatibility in scale and character, solar access, and privacy for residential properties adjacent to the corridor.
- Balance predictability with creative flexibility to support high-quality and context-sensitive architecture along the corridor.

Modulation and Articulation

Medium + Large Buildings (M/L)

The following standards apply to medium/mid-rise and large/high-rise building types. **Primary Building Façade** is defined as San Pablo Avenue and the following cross streets in the Nodes – Gilman, Cedar and Hopkins, University, Dwight, and Ashby.

ODS.1 Maximum Building Length: Buildings shall not exceed 300 feet in length or width.

ODS.2 Major Massing Breaks: Medium and large buildings shall provide major massing breaks as follows:



a. Primary Building Facades **between 100 and 200 feet in length** shall provide at least one major massing break that is at least 6 feet wide and 5 feet deep, and extends the full building height, including the roofline.

b. Primary Building Facades **greater than 200 feet in length** shall provide at least two major massing breaks. One shall be a minimum 15 feet wide and 5 feet deep, extend the full building height, and include a roofline break. The second break may be minimum 6 feet wide and 5 feet deep, extending from the second floor through the roofline.

c. Facade planes shall not exceed 150 feet measured from a building corner or major building break.

d. Facades abutting a property line may reduce major break depth to minimum two feet for the first floor. Planters up to three feet in height are allowed where a major break meets the ground.

ODS.3 Reduced Massing for Large/High-Rise Buildings. Buildings over eight stories shall provide a variety of building heights and reduce upper floor massing through one or more of the following techniques:

a. Building floorplates above eight stories shall be less than 75% of ground floor or Podium-Level area =, whichever is less.

b. Step back façades above eight stories along minimum 60% length facing a public right-of-way, private street, or publicly accessible pathway. Step back shall be a minimum of six feet in depth.

ODS.4 Vertical Rhythm/Façade Articulation. Building facades facing publicly accessible streets, pathways, and/or open spaces shall express a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the size and scale of a residential unit and/or individual rooms or shall be designed with custom details to create an ornamental facade. Facade planes 75 feet or longer and fronting a public street or publicly accessible space shall meet ***either*** the **Minor Massing Breaks** or **Ornamental Facades** standard below**.** Facade planes are measured from corner of building to corner of the building or major break.



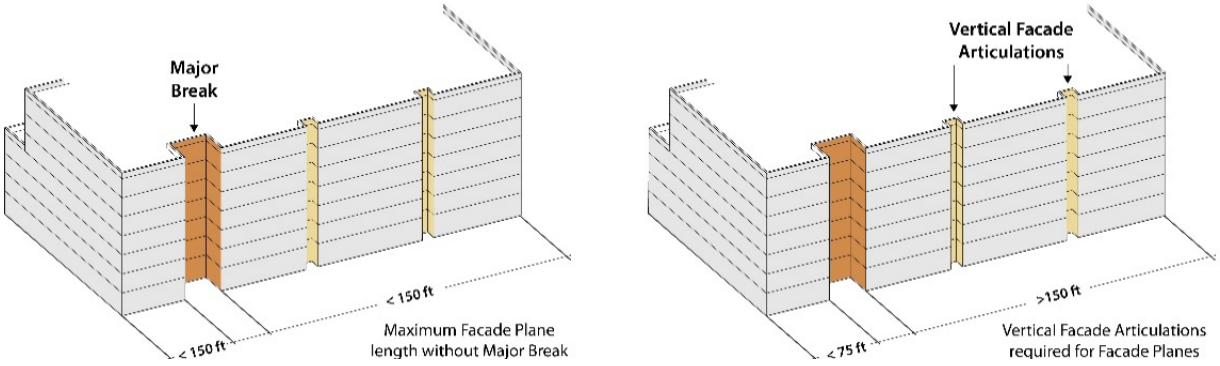
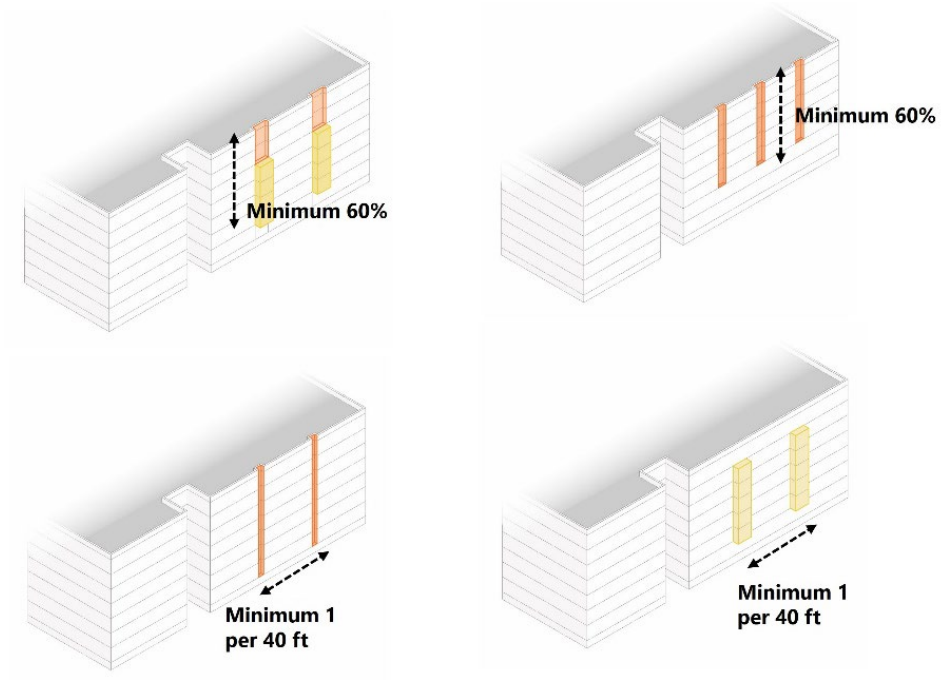


Diagram of Major Breaks and Vertical Façade Articulations

a. **Minor Modulation/Massing Breaks:** A vertical recess, projection, or change in the facade plane of the building massing shall occur at an average minimum of one per 40 feet of linear facade length with no facade length greater than 50 feet in width without a vertical recess, projection, or change in the facade plane that meets the standards below.

   i. The vertical recess, projection, or change in the facade plane of the building massing shall be at least 2 feet deep.
   ii. The vertical recess, projection, or change in the facade plane shall occur for a minimum 60% of the facade height measured from the average ground plane to the top of structure for the specific facade plane of the minor break/modulation.
   iii. The recess or change in the facade plane shall be minimum 2 feet and maximum 40 feet wide. Recesses and changes in the facade plane shall extend through the roof plane.
   iv. The projection shall be minimum 4 feet and maximum 15 feet wide.
   v. Change in plane may be a combination of recesses and projections that meet the standards above.



Source: Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS)

Diagram of Vertical Façade Articulation Types. Source: Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS)

b. Ornamental Facade.

i. Ornamental facades shall include a distinct building base, middle, and top. The top shall be defined by a cornice with a minimum height of 8 inches and minimum projection depth of 6 inches. Cornices defining a building top shall have at least two depth levels.

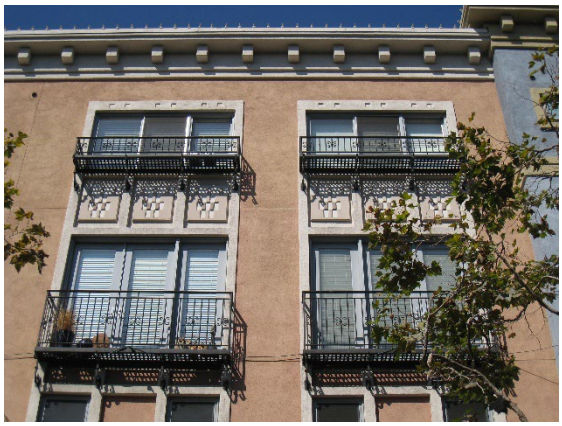
ii. Ornamental facades shall exceed 5% of the facade area. Ornament shall include features such as cornices, sculptures, artistic inlays or reliefs, decorative tile, decorative molding around windows, or other artistic add-ons to the facade. Ornamentation must deviate in color or material from the wall material behind it or be of high-quality material such as brick, stone, ceramics, metal, wood, tile, or fiber-cement board. Ornament shall not include built-up stucco trim or molding (also known as "plant-ons").

iii. Windows shall be punched with a minimum recess of 4 inches from the facade.



Diagram of Ornamental Façade. Source: Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS)

ODS.5 Facade Articulation. All facades shall include at least ***two*** of the following facade articulation strategies to create visual interest, which may also serve to satisfy other required elements, such as façade rhythm (see ODS.4):



a. Recesses. Vertical and horizontal recesses such as a pattern of recessed grouping of windows, recessed panels, entryways, or similar strategies.

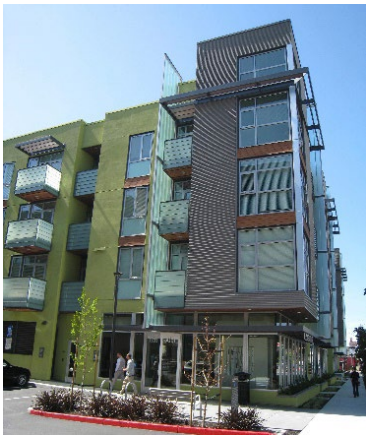
b. Projections. Vertical and horizontal projections such as projecting entries, bay windows, shading and weather protection devices (for windows), decorative architectural details, or similar strategies. Shading and weather protection projections shall be a minimum of two feet in depth. Unless otherwise noted, architectural projections shall be a minimum of four inches in depth.

c. Datum Lines. Horizontal lines that continue the full length of the building, such as cornices, with minimum height of 8 inches and minimum projection depth of 6 inches.

d. Balconies. Balconies or Juliet balconies. Balconies shall be a minimum of five feet wide and deep ; Juliet balconies shall be a minimum of 12 inches deep and three feet wide.

e. Screening Devices. Screening devices such as lattices, louvers, shading devices, perforated metal screens, or similar strategies.

f. Ornamental Light. Ornamental building-mounted lighting.



ODS.6 Treatment of Corner Buildings. Buildings at the corners of San Pablo Avenue and Dwight Way, Cedar Street, Ashby, University, and Gilman Avenues shall include the following special features:

a. Massing at corner:
    i. Locate building facade at the minimum front and side setback or build-to lines for minimum 50 feet combined along both frontages at corner; OR set back the building corner to provide a privately owned public open space (POPOS). For minimum POPOS dimension(see *LU-S.2 Privately-Owned Public Open Space within Nodes*). For POPOS policy, see *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces* in **Chapter 5 Streets**.
b. Entrance Proximity: ground floor retail entrance or primary building entrance shall be within 25 feet of building corner.
c. Corner articulation: The corner of the building shall include one or more of the following features:
    i. A different material application and/or fenestration pattern from the rest of the façade.
    ii. Height variation of at least four feet greater or less than the abutting primary facade.
    iii. A special architectural feature : a rounded corner, chamfered/cut corner, or tower/cupola..

ODS.7 Blank Walls. Along publicly accessible streets, sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, and open space areas, blank walls (facades without doors, windows, landscaping treatments, or public art) shall not exceed 20 feet in length for ground floor storefront frontages, and 30 feet in length for all other frontage types.

ODS.8 Treatment of All Facades. All facades of buildings on a block shall be designed and detailed in a similar manner, except for interior courtyards and interior side facades of interior lots at the zero lot line. Interior side facades at the zero lot line shall be enhanced with public art or landscaping to create visual interest and to strengthen the identity of the neighborhood.

Small/Middle Housing (S)

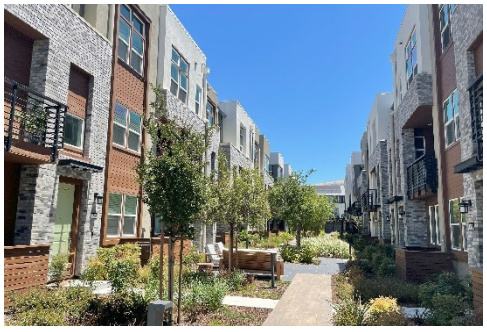
The following standards apply to small/missing middle housing building types. Standards with the word “Townhome” in the title of the standard only apply to the townhome building type. Others apply to all small/middle housing building types.



Townhomes facing street.

ODS.9 Townhome Along a Central Path/Outdoor Space.

When townhomes face eachother along a landscaped central path/open space (personal and/or common), the open spaceshall be a minimum width of 30 feet from building face to building face (balconies may project up to 5 feet from either building face). Other building projections are allowed to encroach within the minimum width of the common path/open spaceper MMC Section 17.42.070 (Yards).



Townhomes facing central courtyard.

ODS.10 Townhome Massing. The maximum number of townhouse units in any one contiguous building is 8.

ODS.11 Modulation. Residential units shall employ *at least two* of the following building modulation strategies:

a. Varied roof forms, including but not limited to changes in roof height, offsets, change in direction of roof slope, dormers, parapets, etc.;
b. Use of balconies, front porches, overhangs, or covered patios; and/or,

c. Projections, offsets, and/or recesses of the building wall at least two feet in depth, such as bay windows.

ODS.12 Articulation. All building elevations that face a street, open space, or a shared driveway shall employ varied facade articulation of wall surfaces. Facades shall incorporate at least three of the following features which provide articulation and design interest:



Decorative eave detailing, window lintels, and railings.

a. Variation in texture or material;
b. Building base (typically bottom three feet) that is faced with a stone or brick material, or is delineated with a channel or projection;
c. Railings with a design pattern and materials such as wood, metal, or stone;
d. Decorative trim elements which could include door surrounds with at least a two-inch depth, decorative eave detailing, and belt courses;
e. Decorative window elements which could include lintels, shutters, and window boxes; and/or,
f. Roof overhangs at least 24 inches deep.

ODS.13 Corner Side Units. Any end unit where the side facade faces a public right-of-way, private street, or publicly-accessible pathway is considered a Corner Side Unit and shall meet the following standards:



a. The Corner Side Unit building facade shall be at least 15 percent glazed.
b. The Corner Side Unit facade shall have at least one architectural projection that projects a minimum of 18 inches from the street facing facade (e.g., bay windows on the exterior of the house, canopies/screening devices, etc.) with a minimum width of two feet.

ODS-14 Townhome Variation. In addition to the requirements above, attached side-by-side dwelling units shall be distinguished through methods such as:

a. Variations of two feet or more between the horizontal planes of the primary entrance façade of adjacent units.
b. A change in roof orientation between adjacent units (e.g., a gable roof adjacent to a hipped roof). If rowhomes are proposed with no roof variation, then change of entry and additional feature is required, such as bay or box window.
c. A roof line offset of at least 18 inches for each unit exposed on the associated elevation.
d. Change of colors or materials.
e. Change of entry design.

Stepbacks/Neighborhood Transitions (M/L)

The following standard applies to medium/mid-rise and large/high-rise building types and provides a specific design requirement to ensure compatibility in scale and character, solar access, and privacy for existing low-density residential properties adjacent to the corridor.

ODS.15 Transition to Lower Density Building Types. When a building has a rear and/or interior side property line abutting an R-1, R-2, or R-2A zoned parcel, all floors above 5 stories shall be stepped back from the floors below by a minimum of 10 feet.

Roof Treatments (S/M/L)

The following standards apply to all building types.

ODS.16 Roof Edge Treatment. Buildings shall have at least one of the following roofline edge treatments:

a. A decorative cornice treatment (other than just colored "stripes" or "bands"). Cornices shall project a minimum of six inches from the facade.

b. A sloped roof with overhangs and brackets.

c. A parapet, which shall include a cap and corner detail to create a shadow line to enhance the building.



ODS.17 Minimum Depth of Overhanging Eaves. Overhanging eaves, if provided, shall extend a minimum of 18 inches beyond the supporting wall.

Fenestration (S/M/L)

The following standard applies to all building types.

ODS.18 Windows shall meet ONE of the following requirements. Built-up stucco trim or molding (also known as "plant-ons") are prohibited.

a. Windows shall be recessed at least three inches from the plane of the surrounding exterior wall or shall be framed with a minimum projection of 4 inches from the façade.

b. Windows shall provide a combination of trim and recess with a minimum one-inch recess and two-inch trim.

c. Windows that are flat or flush with the facade are prohibited unless applied to a recessed portion of the building facade with a minimum of four inches in depth. Vertical window edges shall be directly adjacent to recess.



Framed windows and windows within a recess

Colors and Materials (S/M/L)

The following standards apply to all building types.

ODS.19 Variation in Materials and Colors. Buildings shall include at least three variations in material type, material size, texture and pattern, and/or color. Colors should be used to bring out contrast between walls, windows, and trim. Use of color is encouraged to make the area vibrant. Any one material must comprise at least 20% of the building frontage, excluding windows, railings, base bulkheads, and trim.

ODS.20 Material Changes at Corners. A change in material shall be offset by a minimum of two inches in depth. Materials shall



continue around corners for a minimum distance of four feet. If feasible, the same material should continue to the next change in the wall plane.

ODS.21 Durable Materials. Buildings shall incorporate durable finish and/or accent materials, which include masonry, tile, stone, stucco, architectural grade wood, brick, glass, and finished metal that will not rust. Low quality materials such as T1-11 siding, plywood, plastic and plastic laminate siding, fiberglass, foam trim (EIFS), vinyl, and flat grill windows are prohibited.

ODS.22 Building Component Colors. All vents, flashing, and electrical conduits shall be painted the same color as the adjacent surface. Gutters and downspouts shall be painted the same color as the adjacent surface. Alternatively, gutters and downspouts may be a decorative material such as copper.

Ground Floor Design

Intent:

- Create active, transparent, and visually engaging ground floors that enliven the street, enhance safety, and contribute to a vibrant pedestrian environment.
- To encourage design elements—such as entries, windows, and frontage types—that clearly define the transition between public and private space.
- To provide ground floor space for inviting retail and commercial frontages that promote visibility into interior spaces and provide opportunities for outdoor dining and gathering.
- To design ground floor residential uses to support privacy while offering individual unit identity and contributing to street-level activity.
- To provide weather protection and other comfort features to ensure ground floors are welcoming and usable in all seasons.

Ground Floor Typologies

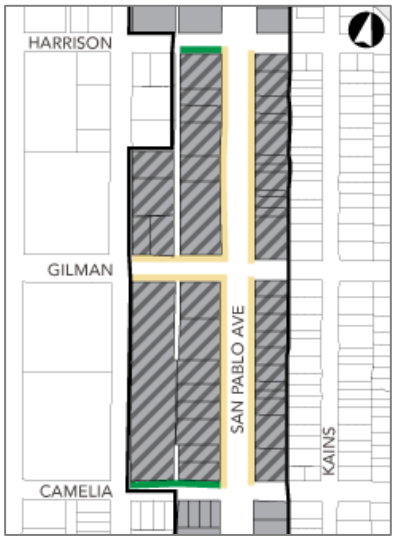
As established in *LU-P.10 Establish Ground Floor Typologies to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors*, each of the four ground floor typologies has distinct design standards for the interface of the building and the street:

Storefront Ground Floor: Provides the highest level of visibility from the sidewalk into the interior. This type provides a low proportion of "blank" walls, high window percentage and frequent entries. Storefront Ground Floor Design is required within the nodes, except were shown in Figure ODS.1 and subject to corner wrap standards (see OD-S.6.).

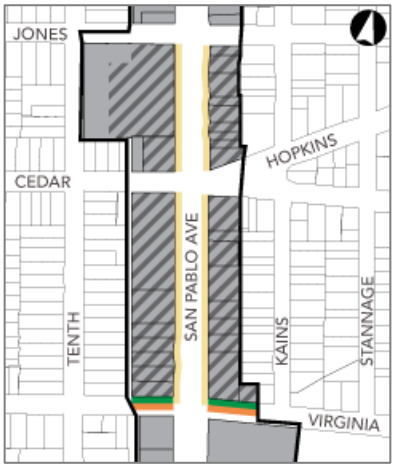
Other Non-residential Ground Floor: Allows greater flexibility in design and use and subject to standards under *Other Non-residential Ground Floor*.

Active Residential Ground Floor: Applies to residential units located at the ground floor and is subject to standards under *Active Residential Ground Floor*.

Live-work: Applies to ground floor spaces designed to combine living and working, subject to Standards Under *Live-work*.



Gilman Node



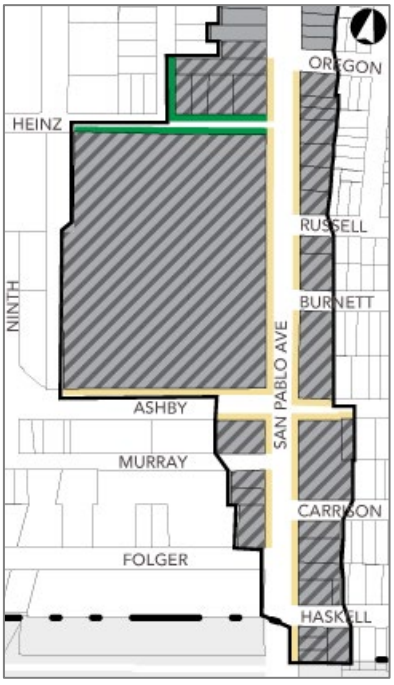
Cedar Node



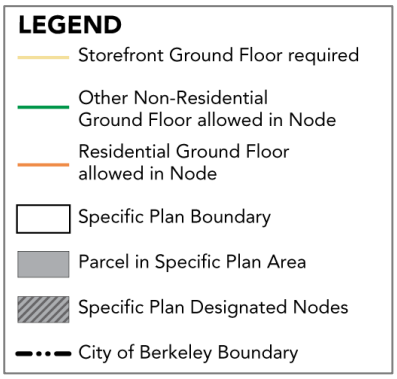
University Node



Dwight Node



Ashby Node



Required and Allowed Frontage Types in Nodes

Storefront Ground Floor

The intent of the Storefront ground floor frontage type is to provide a building form that will be functional for active commercial uses where the design of the building provides visibility between the public realm of the sidewalk and the activities of the business inside the building.

Frontage Setbacks and Character



Generally the building frontage has a zero setback, although a building entry forecourt can be provided (see Entries standards below). A sidewalk easement can be provided to allow for outdoor dining, display spaces, and other extensions of the public sidewalk.

Setbacks. See *LU-S.4 Development Standards*, Table 3.1 for lot line setbacks.

Landscaping. See **Chapter 5 Streets**, PR-S.1 for Frontage Zone dimensions and landscaping requirements.

Ground Floor Dimensions + Interior Requirements



ODS.23 Storefront Ground Floor Height. The minimum ground floor height for commercial/retail space with a Storefront frontage is 15 feet floor-to-floor).

ODS.24 Tenant Space Depth. All ground floor commercial/retail tenant spaces shall be at least 40 feet deep for a minimum of 50% of primary street building facades in Tier 1 Nodes. All other commercial frontages shall be a minimum 30 feet in depth. Sidewalk easements/outdoor dining may count towards the minimum depth.

ODS.26 Venting/Grease Interceptors. All commercial/retail spaces in the Nodes shall provide grease interceptors and vertical mechanical chases for venting. The grease interceptor(s) shall be underground and "stubbed in" the infrastructure. Residential units above commercial spaces shall be constructed with mechanical shafts to the roof. The development plans must show the location(s) of grease interceptors and the vertical mechanical chase. Side discharge vents are discouraged.

Entries

ODS.27 Number and Orientation of Primary Entries. Each ground floor tenant shall have its own primary ground-floor entrance. Primary entries shall face or be directly visible from the public right-of-way or a publicly-accessible path/open space. This may be through a lobby or forecourt (or combination).

ODS.28 Weather Protection. Primary ground floor entrances shall include weather protection that is a minimum six feet wide and four feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods.

Windows + Façade Design



ODS.29 Transparency. Storefronts shall contain transparent openings, doors, and windows for a minimum of 60% of the total wall area located between three and seven feet above ground level for the first floor facades facing sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly-accessible open space areas. Transparent glazing shall have a visible light transmittance (VT) greater than 80%, without tint or coloration in the glass substrate.

ODS.30 Bulkheads and Solid Base Walls. If provided, bulkheads and solid base walls shall not be less than 12 inches or higher than 30 inches from finished grade.

Recommendation: Commercial clerestory and transom windows are recommended to provide a continuous horizontal band or row of windows across the upper portion of the storefront.

ODS.32 Awning and Canopies.

a. Awnings and canopies shall provide a minimum of eight feet of vertical clearance over the sidewalk.

b. When transom windows are provided above display windows, awnings, canopies, or similar weather protection elements shall be installed between the transom and display windows. These elements should allow for light to enter the storefront through the transom windows and allow the weather protection feature to shade the display window.

c. Awnings may be fixed or retractable.

d. Awnings, canopies, and other weather protection elements shall not extend across more than 80 percent of the facade. Instead, individual segments shall be divided into sections to reflect the major vertical divisions of the facade and shall be installed over each shopfront entry or set of shopfront windows. Awnings shall not extend across wall sections, across multiple sets of windows, or over columns or structural piers/pilasters.

e. Awnings and canopies shall be made of acrylic, glass, wood (synthetic or weather treated), metal, or a combination of such materials. Canvas, cloth, vinyl and plastic awnings are prohibited. All awnings and canopies shall be maintained in good condition and repaired or replaced as needed.



Service Access

ODS.33 Service Access. Refuse, recycling, and other service areas for non-residential tenants shall be accessible to building tenants via a service corridor or similar (see also Services and Utilities section below).



Other Non-Residential Ground Floor

Setback and Frontage Character

The intent of this ground floor type is to allow more flexibility in building design outside of nodes. The flexibility allows for frontages that may directly meet the desires of a broader range of non-residential uses, such as offices, maker spaces, doctors' offices, and other uses. This frontage type also applies to lobbies, common amenity spaces (e.g., gyms, community rooms), leasing offices, and similar shared ground floor spaces in residential and mixed-use buildings with the exception of locations where a storefront frontage type is required.



Setbacks. See *LU-S.4 Development Standards*, Table 3.1 for lot line setbacks.

Landscaping. See **Chapter 5 Streets**, PR-S.1 for Frontage Zone dimensions and landscaping requirements.

Ground Floor Dimensions

ODS.34 Non-Residential Ground Floor Height. The minimum ground floor height for other non-residential uses (e.g., office) is 15 feet floor-to-floor.

ODS.35 Non-Residential Ground Floor Depth. All ground floor non-residential frontage shall be a minimum 30 feet in depth.

Entries

ODS.36 Orientation of Primary Entries. Primary entries shall face or be directly visible from the public right-of-way or a publicly-accessible path/open space. This may be through a lobby or forecourt (or combination).



ODS.37 Number of Entries. At least one pedestrian entry is required for each building on a primary street frontage, unless a greater number is required by the adopted Building or Fire Codes. A single corner entry may be provided to fulfill this requirement.

ODS.38 Weather Protection. Primary entries for individual tenant entries shall include weather protection that is minimum six feet wide and four feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods. Primary entries for shared tenant entries shall include weather protection that is a minimum eight feet wide and six feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods.

Windows + Façade Design

ODS.39 Transparency. Other non-residential ground floor facades shall contain transparent openings and windows for a minimum of 50% of the total wall area located between three and seven feet above ground level of the first floor facades facing sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly-accessible open space areas. Transparent glazing shall have a visible light transmittance (VT) greater than 80%, without tint or coloration in the glass substrate.

ODS.40 Awnings and Canopies. See "Awnings and Canopies" standard in Storefront Ground Floor section above.

Residential Ground Floor

Setback and Frontage Character



The intent of the residential ground floor frontage type is to allow for residential ground floor units and entries (e.g., stoops, terraces) that foster social interaction and activate the street, while providing appropriate transitions between public and private space.

Setbacks. See *LU-S.4 Development Standards*, Table 3.1 for lot line setbacks.

ODS.41 Front Setback Landscaping. A minimum of 30% of the front setback area shall be landscaped.

Ground Floor Dimensions

ODS.42 Minimum Height Above Grade for Ground Floor Units. To provide privacy to ground floor residential units, the finished floor of units facing publicly-accessible streets or pathways shall be raised a minimum 2 feet above sidewalk grade and windowsills shall be a minimum 3 feet above finished floor height (ADA units are exempt from this requirement) or shall be set back an additional 2 feet (minimum of 6 feet and a maximum of 8 foot setback)

Entries

ODS.43 Primary Shared Residential Entries. Primary entries shared by multiple units (e.g., leading to upper stories) along street frontages shall meet the following standards (excludes individual residential entries). See ODS.58 (Building Access) for additional entry requirements for through-block sites.

a. At least one pedestrian entry is required for each building on a primary street frontage, unless a greater number is required by the adopted Building or Fire Codes. A single corner entry may be provided to fulfill this requirement.



b. At least one primary shared building entrance shall be provided for every 200 feet of building frontage.

c. Primary shared building entries shall face or be directly visible from the public right-of-way or a publicly-accessible path/open space. This may be through a lobby, front porch, or forecourt (or combination).

d. Primary shared entries shall provide weather protection that is a minimum eight feet wide and six feet deep by fully or partially recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods.

ODS.44 Primary Individual Residential Entries.



a. 100% of ground floor residential units that face a public right-of-way shall have unit entries that face the street. A minimum of 50% of the ground floor residential units that face a publicly-accessible path or open space shall have unit entries that face the path or open space (senior units or other deed-restricted units for special populations are exempt).

b. Primary ground-floor entrances serving individual residential units shall include weather protection that is a minimum of four feet wide and four feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods.

Windows + Façade Design

ODS.45 Transparency. Residential ground floor facades shall contain transparent openings and windows for a minimum of 30% of the total wall area located between four and seven feet above ground level of the first floor facades facing sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly-accessible open space areas. Transparent glazing shall have a visible light transmittance (VT) greater than 80%, without tint or coloration in the glass substrate.

Live/Work

In addition to the requirements of BMC Chapter 23.312 (Live/Work), live/work units shall meet the following design standards, and these standards take precedent over any conflicts with the BMC chapter.

Open Space

ODS.46 Open Space.

a. At least 40 square feet of usable open space shall be provided for each live/work unit.
b. For live/work units established through change of use of an existing building, the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) may approve a Use Permit to substitute interior space accessible to all residents for the required open space in the project, if it finds that it is not practical or desirable to provide exterior open space.

Setback and Frontage Character

Setbacks. See *LU-S.4 Development Standards*, Table 3.1 for lot line setbacks.

Landscaping. See **Chapter 5 Streets**, PR-S.1 for Frontage Zone dimensions and landscaping requirements.

ODS.47 Business Presence. Live/work units shall have a business presence on the street by providing one of the following:

a. Window display spaces at least four feet in depth.
b. Roll-up doors at the street or storefront style windows that allow interior space to be visible from the street.
c. A business entrance that is oriented towards the street with a sign or other means that identifies the business. .

Ground Floor Dimensions + Interior Requirements

ODS.47 Ground-Floor Height. The minimum ground floor height for live/work units is 15 feet floor-to-floor.



ODS.48 Minimum Non-Residential Portion Design and Dimensions. The portion of each such live-work unit in which work/business is conducted must be a minimum of 300 square feet and must be located between the street and the residential portion of the live/work unit, or on the ground floor with the live portion located on an upper floor. If the workspace is less than 300 square feet, the unit is considered a dwelling unit and is subject to all requirements applicable to dwelling units. The non-residential portions of the unit shall meet the following:

a. 15 feet minimum interior depth of work/business space.
b. Not contain any of the primary features of the residential (live) portion of the live/work unit, such as kitchen, sleeping, or laundry facilities, or bathrooms containing a shower or bathtub; and
c. Include a divider or partition between the non-residential and residential portions of the unit.
d. Must be reserved for and regularly used by one or more live/work unit residents and be consistent with City administrative guidelines for live/work design.

ODS.49. Kitchen. A cooking space and sanitary facility in conformance with applicable building standards adopted by the City is required.

ODS.50 Ventilation. All live/work units shall be provided with at least one operable window. A ventilation system shall be installed subject to the approval of the Chief Building Official and Fire Marshal for any live/work activity which requires additional ventilation, or which generates hazardous fumes or dust.

Entries

ODS.50 Entries. Each live/work unit shall have a pedestrian entry on the street-facing facade that provides direct access to the non-residential portion of the unit. A separate entry for the residential portion of the unit shall be provided through a consolidated/central entrance or individual residential entries accessed from an interior corridor or located at the rear or side of the building.

ODS.51 Weather Protection. Primary ground floor entrances shall include weather protection that is a minimum four feet wide and four feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods.

Windows + Façade Design

ODS.52 Transparency. Live/work ground floor facades shall contain transparent openings and windows for a minimum of 40% of the total wall area located between three and eight feet above ground level of the first floor facades facing sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly-accessible open space areas. Transparent glazing shall have a visible light transmittance (VT) greater than 80%, without tint or coloration in the glass substrate. Transparent areas shall be designed and maintained to provide views into and out of the non-residential portion of the live/work unit.

ODS.53 Bulkheads and Solid Base Walls. If provided, bulkheads and solid base walls shall not be less than 12 inches or higher than 30 inches from finished grade.

Licensing and Operations

ODS.54 Business License. At least one resident in each live/work unit shall maintain at all times a valid City Business License and Zoning Certificate or Use Permit for a business on the premises.

ODS.55 Unit Rental and Sale. No portion of a live/work unit may be separately rented or sold as a commercial space for a person or persons not living on the premises, or as a residential space for a person or persons not working on the premises.

Change of Use

ODS.56 Change of Use.

a. To change a dwelling unit to a live/work unit, the findings required by BMC Section 23.326.040 (Eliminating Dwelling Units through Conversion and Change of Use) must be made.
b. Establishing or changing the work use of a live/work unit to medical offices or group instruction requires ZAB approval of a Use Permit subject to BMC Section 23.312.050.
c. Outside of Nodes, live/work units may be changed to exclusively residential use or the residential floor area increased only if all requirements for establishing a residential use are met.
d. Live/work units may be changed to exclusively commercial use, provided that they are on the ground floor. All such changes are subject to BMC Section 23.326.040 (Eliminating Dwelling Units through Conversion and Change of Use).

Private Open Space

Intent:

- Encourage publicly-accessible open spaces at key nodes to foster community interaction and activate the public realm.
- Promote integration of open space as an essential element of site and building design, with usable, well-landscaped areas at ground level, podiums, and rooftops.
- Provide meaningful outdoor spaces that enhance resident quality of life and support a range of social, recreational, and passive uses.
- Ensure that common open spaces are functional, shaded, and furnished to support gathering, play, health, wellness, and relaxation.
- Provide private outdoor areas, such as balconies and terraces, that offer individual access to fresh air, views, and personal retreat.

Privately Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS)

POPOS are encouraged in new developments. See the following for policies and standards for POPOS:

- **Chapter 3:Land Use**, *LU-S.2 Privately-Owned Public Open Space within Nodes*.
- **Chapter 5 Streets** *Public Realm Expansion and Improvements*.



Publicly-accessible Plaza

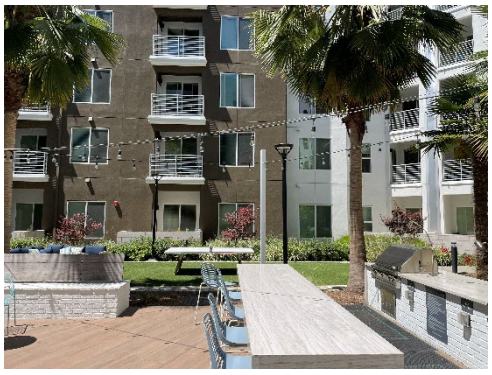
Common Private Open Space

Common private open spaces are shared and accessible only to building residents and their visitors. They can be located at the ground level, on parking podiums, or on rooftops, provided they are adequately landscaped. Common private open spaces may include courtyards, gardens, play areas, outdoor dining areas, recreational amenities, rooftop amenities, and community rooms. Required setback areas with a dimension of less than 20 feet shall not be counted toward common private open space requirements. See *LU-S.2 Privately-Owned Public Open Space within Nodes* for potential use of POPOS to reduce the requirement for common private open space. POPOS design standards are defined in LU-S.2 and *PR-P.18 Privately Owned Public Open Spaces*.

ODS.57 Common Private Open Space Design and Dimensions. Common private open spaces shall meet the following standards:

Dimensions. Minimum dimension of 20 feet in any direction and 400 square feet in area. Courtyards enclosed on three sides shall have a minimum dimension of 30 feet in all directions. Courtyards enclosed on four sides shall have a minimum dimension of 40 feet and have a minimum courtyard width to building height ratio of 1.25:1.

a. **Shading**. A maximum of 25% of the common open space square footage may be covered by a shading device, roof structure, building balcony, bay, or other building extention at least 8 feet above grade of open space.



b. **Seating**. The open space shall include seating (e.g., benches, planter seats, etc.) and provide required ADA access to seating and tables.

c. **Landscaping.** A minimum of 40% of the open space area shall be planted with trees, ground cover, and/or shrubs, or provided via planters. A minimum of one tree shall be planted per 600 square feet of the common outdoor space area (aggregated across all common outdoor space areas). This standard does not apply to rooftop open spaces.

d. **Slopes.** Slopes shall not exceed 8% and ADA compliant circulation must be provided.

ODS.58 Common Spaces and Privacy. Units that are on the same level as common private open spaces shall be screened or buffered from adjacent shared open spaces with landscaping, fencing, walls, or other screening elements. Bedroom windows located within 5 feet of an internal pathway or common private open space shall have landscaped visual barriers such as tall bushes or trees.

Recommendation: Multi-family and residential mixed-use developments are encouraged to provide a variety of recreational amenities within the site such as a swimming pool, spa, clubhouse, playground, picnic shelter/barbecue area; sports facilities, exercise equipment, or day care facilities. For example, family-friendly housing developments should provide a tot lot or play equipment for children.

Personal Private Open Space

Personal private open space areas are intended for private use for each dwelling unit and may include balconies (covered or uncovered), private yards, terraces, decks, and porches, among others.

ODS.59 Private Open Space Design and Dimensions. Private open spaces shall meet the following standards:

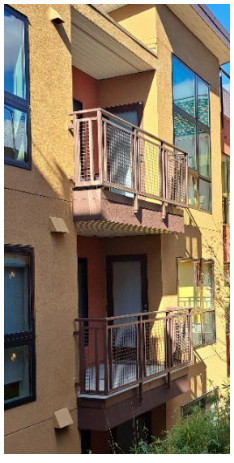
a. Shall be directly accessible from a residential unit.

b. Minimum Dimensions:

i. Ground-floor private outdoor space (e.g., terrace/patio): Minimum eight feet in at least one direction and five feet in other directions.

ii. Upper-floor private outdoor space (e.g., balconies): Minimum five feet in any direction.

iii. Minimum clear height dimension of eight feet, measured from the ground-level floor or decking.



Site Design

Intent:

- Promote walkable and connected sites by breaking up large blocks, prioritizing pedestrian circulation, and linking to surrounding streets, open spaces, and transit.
- Minimize the visual and physical impact of vehicles by locating and screening parking and service areas appropriately.
- Improve safety and the user experience through consolidation of access points and thoughtful placement of pathways, entries, driveways, and loading zones.
- Support active ground-floor frontages and encourage compact, transit-oriented development patterns.
- Locate and integrate utilities and service areas into building and landscape design in order to minimize impacts on the pedestrian experience.

Access and Connectivity

Multimodal access to and within developments is primarily addressed by Building and Fire Codes, ADA accessibility requirements and standards in the Berkeley Municipal Code related to parking and other access requirements. Within the Specific Plan area, most properties would be developed with one or two buildings, and their connections to their fronting streets are addressed in the entry standards outlined in the Ground Floor Design section.

This section provides additional direction on site and building design standards for through-block sites, as well as vehicle access and parking standards for all sites.

Through-Block Access and Connectivity

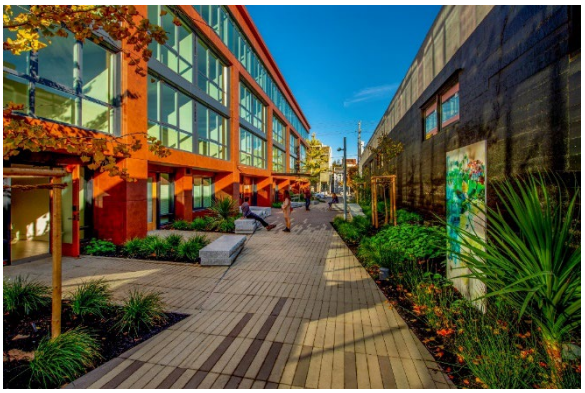
ODS.60 Building Access. New developments located on sites with street frontages on opposite sides of a block shall provide building entries on both frontages, consistent with the standards for the applicable building frontage.

ODS.61 Mid-Block Passages. New through-block developments with frontages on opposite sides of a block that exceed 170 linear feet of site frontage along San Pablo Avenue or University Ave, per *LU-S.8 Mid-Block Passages*, are required to provide a Mid-Block Passage. Mid-block Passages are a type of POPOS (see PR-P.18) and may take the form of pedestrian walkways, multi-use paths, or private publicly accessible streets designed to accommodate vehicles to and through the site. Mid-block passages shall be designed as follows:

a. **Dimensions.** Mid-block passages shall be a minimum 16-foot clear width and 16-foot clear height, allowing for built space above and/or below the surface of the passage.

b. **Visibility.** Mid-block passages shall provide unobstructed visibility from one public space to another, preferably providing a direct visual connection from the sidewalk on San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue to the sidewalk on the adjacent parallel street.

c. **Lighting.** All mid-block passages shall include nighttime illumination pursuant to the City of Berkeley Ordinance N.S.-7424 and *PR-P.3 Improve Street Lighting for the Safety and Comfort of all Users*.

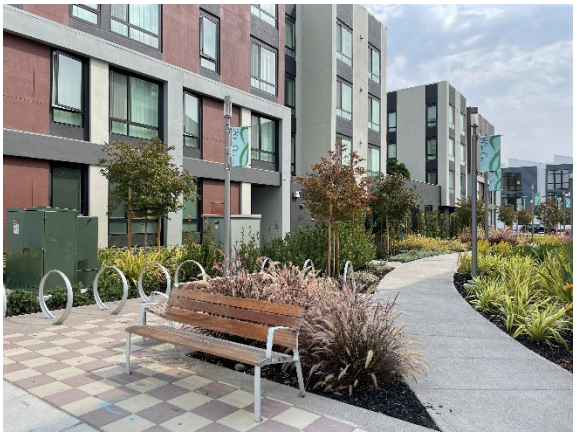


Mid-block Crossing "The Dogpatch Artwalk", San Francisco. Source: Fletcher Studio.

ODS.62 On-site Pedestrian Access. Pedestrian accessways shall be provided for all new development sites with multiple buildings, in accordance with the following standards:

d. **Internal Connections.** A system of pedestrian walkways shall connect all buildings on a site to each other, to on-site bicycle and automobile parking areas, to any on-site open space areas or pedestrian amenities, and to the publicly accessible pedestrian circulation network outside of the development site.

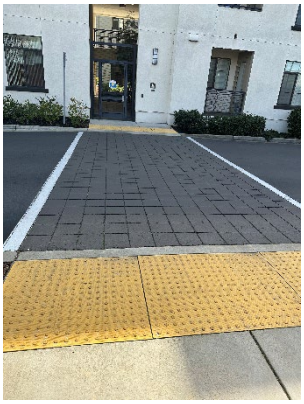
e. **Illumination.** Pedestrian-oriented lighting shall be placed along onsite pathways at minimum intervals of every 40 feet to improve pedestrian comfort, security, and safety.



Sidewalk and Pathway Dimensions.

- For sidewalk dimensions, refer to **Chapter 5 Streets** (Sidewalk Space).

ODS.63 Crossings. Any walkway that crosses private publicly accessible streets, parking areas, loading areas, or other vehicular routes shall be clearly identifiable through the use of one or more of the following: grade change (raised), change in paving material, color, or striping, bollards, or similar method to enhance pedestrian safety.



ODS.64 Driveways and Curb Cuts.

a. Driveways shall be a minimum of 50 feet from any street intersection. For parcels less than 75 feet wide, driveways shall be located as far as possible from the intersection.

b. Each development project site shall be limited to one curb cut, including driveways and private/service streets, per 400 feet of public street frontage, or for parcels less than 400 feet long, one curb cut per street frontage (unless otherwise required for emergency vehicle access).

Caltrans Encroachment Permits

Caltrans requires encroachment permits for new curb cuts on San Pablo Avenue. The city encourages applicants to collaborate with Caltrans in early project phases to ensure compliance with sight line, garbage/recycling pickup location, and other requirements. Temporary encroachment permits may also be needed during construction of new projects and remodeling of existing buildings.

ODS.65 Parking Access Hierarchy. Parking and service area access shall be provided from the following, in order of preference, with review and approval of Public Works:

a. From an alley;

b. In the absence of an existing or proposed alley, access shall be from a driveway shared with a property abutting the development site;

c. In the absence of an alley or shared driveway, access shall be from a side-street;

c. In the absence of a side-street, from a curb cut/driveway along the primary street frontage.

Parking

ODS.66 Parking Location and Frontage:



a. Parking areas shall be located behind, within, or underneath buildings, with the exception of curb-side pickup/drop-off areas and ADA spaces.
b. If a site has more than one street frontage, the parking shall not be located along the primary frontage.
c. No more than 30 feet of the linear primary street frontage along San Pablo, Ashby, Dwight, Cedar, University, and Gilman Avenues shall be devoted to parking garages and openings, service, and loading entries.

ODS.67 Parking Entries.

Parking entrances shall be no wider than 18 feet maximum width. Entries to structured parking when combined with loading, and utility service areas shall not exceed 22 feet in width. This limitation does not apply to frontages on side-streets and alleys.

a. Entries to structured parking garages shall be integrated into building façades using architectural techniques such as matching façades, material treatments, or recessed garage entries.

ODS.68 Parking Garage Design and Screening. New structured parking shall be designed to meet the following standards:

ODS.69 Ground Level. Except for garage entrances, any ground floor parking level facing a public right-of-way or publicly-accessible open space or path (including partially subgrade parking visible above grade) shall:

a. Be lined/wrapped with residential or commercial with a minimum depth of 20 feet or the required active frontage depth for that location (whichever is greater); or,
b. Be designed and treated with the same level of detail, material quality, and facade articulation as other facade areas and/or screened with landscape screening (e.g., shrubs, landscaped trellises) and/or crafted ornamental metal screens.



Ornamental screening.

ODS.70 Upper Levels. Parking levels above the ground level may extend to the building facade but shall be designed and treated with the same level of detail, material quality, and façade articulation as other facade areas (e.g., facade articulation and modulation, use of real windows with glazing or false windows defined by frames, lintels, or sills) and/or incorporate screening devices or design features such as public art, murals, or other architectural treatments. The parking structure shall be designed such that the facade conceals parking decks, ramps, and parked vehicles. No more than two upper levels of parking shall extend to the building facade within Nodes; no more than one level of parking shall extend to the building façade outside of Nodes.

ODS.71 Light Screening. Parking garages shall be designed such that interior lighting is fully shielded and automobile headlamps are not visible from adjacent buildings, parcels, streets, public parks, or publicly accessible open spaces.

ODS.72 Garage Pedestrian Entry. Parking garage pedestrian entrances shall be provided at-grade, connecting directly to the public pedestrian circulation network, on each street-facing frontage.

ODS.73 Townhouse Garage Frontages. Townhouse garages shall not face San Pablo Avenue. Garages that face other public streets shall not occupy more than 60% of the width of the street-facing building facade (this limitation does not apply to frontages along alleys or private drives). ***Exception:*** Front/Street-facing double-loaded garages that occupy more than 60% of the width of the unit façade may be allowed provided they are set back at least five feet behind the front facade of the dwelling or the front of a porch/stoop, or at least partially below grade.

Services and Utilities

ODS.74 Underground Utilities. All new utilities and utility connections shall be placed underground, unless otherwise prohibited by the utility provider (e.g., water backflow prevention device that must be placed above ground).

ODS.75 Location of Above-ground Building Utilities, Service, Storage, and Goods Loading Areas. All above-ground utility equipment (e.g., electric and gas meters, fire sprinkler valves, etc.), service, storage areas, and loading for goods shall be integrated into building and landscape design and located to minimize impact on the pedestrian experience and neighboring properties by following the standards below (except as required by utility providers, building and fire codes):





a. Building utilities and equipment, service, storage, and loading areas for goods shall be located inside of buildings, closets/enclosures, on non-primary street frontages (unless all frontages ar primary), alleys, parking areas, and/or at the rear or side of buildings and shall be fully screened from view per ODS.74 (Screening of Above-Ground Utilities, Service, Storage, and Goods Loading Areas) below.
b. Building utilities and equipment, service, storage, and loading areas for goods shall not be located within the front or street side setback area of the lot or development site.
c. Utilities and equipment, service, storage, and loading areas for goods shall not be located along or within 25 feet of a mid-block pedestrian connection or Privately Owned Public Open Space (POPOS), within the public right-of-way, or within 25 feet of the street corner.
d. Service entries shall be located at least 25 feet from the primary pedestrian entrance to the building, and preferably the maximum distance that is feasible. For developments with more than one street frontage, service entries shall be located on the non-primary street frontage (unless all frontages are primary).
e. Backflow preventors shall be located within landscaped setback areas and painted black or dark green to minimize visual impact. Where no landscaped setback areas exist the backflow preventors shall be incorporated into the front of the building and architecturally screened to minimize visual impact.

ODS.76 Screening of Above-Ground Utilities, Service, Storage, and Goods Loading Areas. All above-ground utilities and equipment, service, storage, and outdoor goods loading areas or enclosures shall meet the following screening standards:



a. Height: Screening shall match or exceed the height of the equipment to be screened, unless specified otherwise.

b. Materials: Screening shall use primary exterior finish material used on other portions of the building(s), architectural grade wood or masonry, metal, or landscape screening that forms an opaque barrier when planted.

ODS.77 Rooftop Equipment. Rooftop elements, including roof access, mechanical equipment, and other features needed for the function of the building, shall be located to minimize visual impact by meeting the following requirements. Mechanical equipment that is less than two feet in height, solar panels, wind generators, or green roof features shall be exempt from these requirements.

a. Mechanical equipment shall be set back minimum 10 feet from the roof edge or screened with parapet walls, towers, or other architectural features such that it is not visible from any point at or below the roof level of the subject building (see ODS.74 (Screening of Above-Ground Utilities, Service, Storage, and Goods Loading Areas)).

b. If equipment is visible from adjacent taller buildings or from higher grades, it shall be painted to match the rooftop in color.

Recommendation: Rooftop equipment should be grouped together where practical.

ODS.78 Refuse Collection Areas. Communal refuse, recycling, and compost/green waste collection areas shall integrate into building and landscape design and minimize pedestrian and neighbor impacts by complying with the following standards:

a. **Size.** Provide a refuse room or enclosure structure adequate in capacity, number, and distribution to accommodate all site waste. The number and type of containers and collection areas shall be reviewed and approved by the local disposal service provider.

b. **Location.**

    a. Refuse collection areas shall not be located within required front yard or street side yards, parking spaces, required landscaped areas, or open space areas.

    b. Refuse collection areas shall be located inside of buildings or inside of covered enclosures located along alleys, in parking areas, or at the rear and side of buildings.

    c. Refuse collaction areas shall be located as far as possible from the residential portion of mixed-use buildings and open space areas.

    d. Refuse and recycling containers shall not be stored in a place visible from a public street nor conflict with circulation or parking on site.

c. **Enclosure Design.** Communal refuse enclosures shall meet the following standards.



    i. Enclosures shall have both a vehicular access gate with a concrete apron and a pedestrian entrance to encourage the main service gates to remain closed.

    ii. Enclosure height shall fully screen containers and materials.

    iii. Enclosures shall be opaque and made of a primary exterior finish material(s) used on other portions of buildings, masonry, decorative block, or architectural grade wood, and may be accented with metal. Barbed wire and chain-link fencing are prohibited.

    iv. Enclosures shall include a roof covering.

    v. Enclosure doors shall not swing into any public right-of-way, driveway approaches, or drive aisles. In these cases, sliding doors may be used.

Public Art

All proposed private development projects in Berkeley that are larger than 10,000 square feet or have five or more housing units are required to include an on-site publicly accessible artwork or pay an in-lieu fee per BMC Chapter 23.316 (Percentage for Public Art on Private Projects). In addition to complying with the existing Guidelines and Procedures of the Public Art in Private Development Program (2018) public art shall meet the standards in this section.

Intent:

- Create a sense of place along San Pablo Avenue and celebrate the neighborhood's identity through integrated, high-quality public art.
- Activate key nodes, open spaces, and building frontages with artwork that enhances the visual experience of the corridor.
- Encourage collaboration with local artists and inclusion of art that reflects community.

Public Art on Private Development

ODS.79 Location. Public art shall be located in visible areas, particularly at key Nodes or within public or common open spaces, such as building entries, courtyards, plazas, and pedestrian walkways. Art may be freestanding or incorporated into building elements (e.g., façades, paving, railings, columns), provided it remains distinct and publicly visible.

For developments with Privately Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS) or side-street plazas (see PR-P.14 Side-Street Plazas), artwork shall be located within or clearly visible from these spaces to enhance their public character.

ODS.80 Visibility and Access. Public art shall be clearly visible from a public right-of-way (preferably from San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue), publicly accessible plaza, or designated pedestrian pathway, and shall be accessible without barriers or restricted access during daylight hours. In addition, privately funded art installations on buildings and other private properties that are visible to the public are encouraged. Examples include building murals, murals on fencing, and art installations in parking lots, landscaped areas, or inside businesses with visibility from the public realm within the Specific Plan Area.

Recommendation: Projects are encouraged to provide on-site public art, particularly in Tier 1 Nodes.



Examples of art on buildings and POPOS. Left: Public art Wall Mosaic at 2352 Shattuck Avenue. Right: Privately funded artist painting on pavement in reuse of former parking lot at Broadway and 21st Street in Oakland.