

# Appendix C: Buildout Summary Memorandum

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

- Public Review Draft -

# San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

[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.*”<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> City of Berkeley Housing Element 2023-2031; as amended on February 17, 2023; page C-17.  
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additional sites. This includes the expanded C-SP nodes compared to the existing C-W nodes. This includes the following assumptions:

- **Rezoning:**
  - o Rezone existing C-W zoned parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP.
  - o Rezone existing C-U parcels within the Specific Plan Area to C-SP
  - o 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:**
  - o 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
<b>Baseline Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 135 du/ac in and outside of nodes</li> <li>• Proposed or entitled unit counts for pipeline and likely projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 du/ac</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Outside of Nodes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> <li>• 140 du/ac outside of nodes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> <li>all C-U parcels are within Tier 1 node</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlay</li> <li>• 140 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Tier 1 Nodes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP and Tier 1 Node</li> <li>• 250 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlay</li> <li>• 250 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Tier 2 Nodes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP and Tier 2 Node</li> <li>• 135 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlay</li> <li>• 135 du/ac</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoned to C-SP</li> </ul>

## 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) <sup>A</sup>	Average Net Density (DU/AC) <sup>B</sup>	Increase from Baseline		Commercial Space Net Change <sup>C</sup>		New Commercial Space (SQ FT)
			Units	Percent	(SQ FT)	Percent	
<b>Baseline Growth</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>-150,000 to -215,000</b>	<b>-10% to -14%</b>	<b>70,000 to 105,000</b>
<b>Proposed SPA SP</b>	<b>6,500 To 6,750</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>3,000 To 3,250</b>	<b>86% to 93%</b>	<b>-225,000 To -320,000</b>	<b>-15% to -21%</b>	<b>65,000 to 90,000</b>

Notes:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

