

**From:** [aimee baldwin](#)  
**To:** [Burns, Anne M](#); [Rivera, Robert](#)  
**Cc:** [meryl siegal](#)  
**Subject:** Beautiful San Pablo Notes from San Pablo Ave Specific Plan Walking Tour  
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Hello Design Review Committee,

We wanted to share a large number of our own notes from this last Saturday's San Pablo Ave Specific Plan Walking Tour led by the Planning Department.

Sincerely,

Aimee Baldwin and Meryl Siegal  
Beautiful San Pablo

Employ CPTED!!!

Aimee's opinion piece on CPTED

<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2024/06/25/opinion-berkeley-should-design-streetscapes-that-create-safe-neighborhoods>

International CPTED Association intro to CPTED principles

<https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>

Assist Businesses

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Amend Demolition Ordinance tenant protections to *include small businesses* relocate or return (maybe depending on how long the business has been in operation in Berkeley, minority ownership...etc. "legacy" or "essential service" status?). This is probably extremely tricky, as landlords seem willing to end leases early and sit on vacant buildings for YEARS in anticipation of selling lots to developers...etc. It's probably hard to define a business losing space explicitly for the purposes of a new development, (so there probably needs to be a parallel law to address commercial vacancies). If a successful restaurant is displaced, the new replacement commercial space needs to be *move-in-ready* to accommodate an equivalent restaurant as soon as any of the rest of the building is ready to be occupied (NOT like what happened to the Fine Arts Cinema which left the "space available" for the FAC, but was a completely unfinished cement box with a gravel floor that FAC couldn't afford to build from scratch into a theater). Should be able to skip permitting needs to build out the space...etc.

- Customer Parking requirement in buildings for the businesses (especially at the nodes)
- Loading zones

#### Open Space/Nature

- Create a system to acquire public open spaces or parks, such as fees for the city to *purchase* property for public parks
- Create spaces with greenery, access to sunlight, gathering space, proximity to businesses/amenities evenly along the corridor (one single park added on SPA is not enough) [Privately Owned Public Open Spaces?]
- Nodes *MUST have publicly accessible gathering space*: parks or plaza
- Widen Sidewalks (suggest setbacks, at least 15-16 feet) for taller buildings, and include lots of greenery and small garden areas in front of buildings. Setbacks make walking inviting.
- Add narrow swales to cross street corner storm drain areas (where new state law prohibits parking 20 feet from intersections). Adds greenery, mitigates runoff and street toxins. \*\* images below
- Native plants!
- Can something be done to reduce the heat island effect? Green roof requirements? Not just a requirement to install street trees, but keep them alive and replace as many times as necessary to have living trees forever? Etc.
- Maintain or enhance the amount of mature trees along the Ave

#### Aesthetics and streetfront experience/activation

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Some historic (facade?) preservation requirements, which could hopefully start designating at least a dozen buildings immediately with the adoption of the SPA Specific Plan

- Prevent the blank wall (live/work) problem, especially at designated nodes, including requiring a publicly accessible/open/active retail/commercial use on ground floors (not blank live/work!!!). Maybe no live/work at nodes?
  - Design Live/Work spaces to have at least one panel of showcase window (like a 8" or deeper shadow box accessible from inside the unit, which allows maintaining privacy within the living space, but can hold objects) that must be filled with some indication that a human lives there: preferably what is the "work" part of the live/work. Or if the "work" needs to be kept secret, it could hold houseplants, favorite movie posters, old household items for sale, patio, showing off your kid's drawings....whatever. Something to create a "human" aspect to the space for people on the street to connect with.
- Minimum requirement for active commercial streetfront: sliding scale of % ground floor on SPA depending on the building size or street-frontage length?
- If a building/lot has space to have a courtyard, that at least a portion of the courtyard faces towards San Pablo Ave. I.E. U-shaped buildings become H-shaped, and L-Shaped buildings become T-shaped. This adds eyes on the street and connects residents to life/activity on SPA (CPTED), adds openness to the SPA side of the building (less monolithic looming facades), but hopefully doesn't shift the looming problem to the neighboring residences.
- Reduce use of hyper reflective window treatment for business store fronts, or have a strip around eye-level be more see-through. Owner of Sweet Bite Bakery (in the Elegance Building) said that it is difficult to see into the cafe through the reflective windows, so people don't know it even exists from the sidewalk –it blends with the rest of the building which doesn't house businesses. Also again see CPTED.
- Make sure that business storefronts remain small (but can be combined to create larger units), to keep on human scale, and more affordable to small

businesses.

- Aesthetic decorative elements along sidewalk

## Zoning

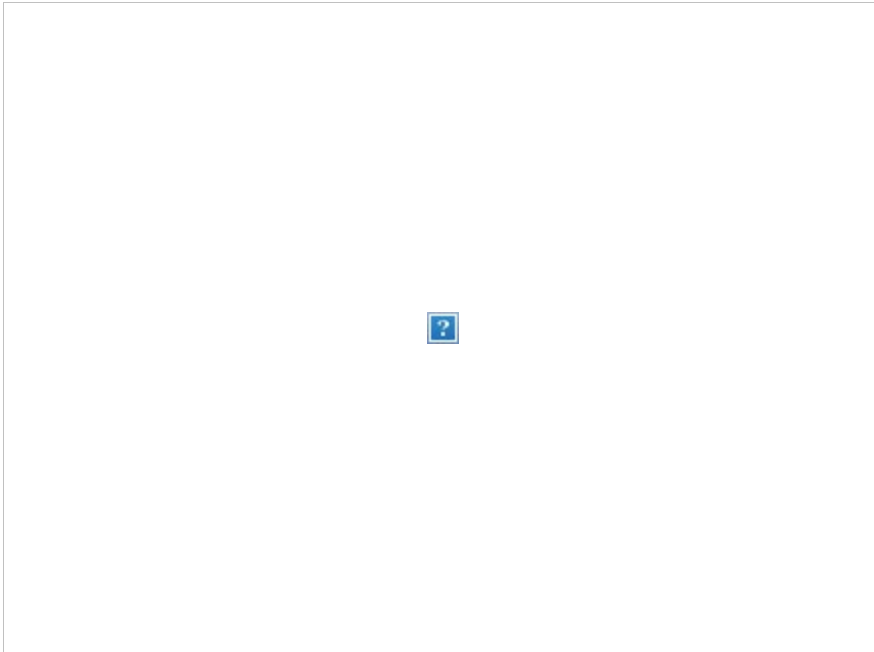
- Allow artisan makers in Commercial-West zoning (artisan crafts, foods). Does this mean adding "Light Industrial"?? –not sure what scope of potentially hazardous, toxic, or loud uses fall into this LI category (toxins and noise should have restrictions in mixed residential). Possibly only add "light industrial" to sites which currently house auto-mechanics?
- Consider diverse housing such as co-ops, condos, etc.

## Other

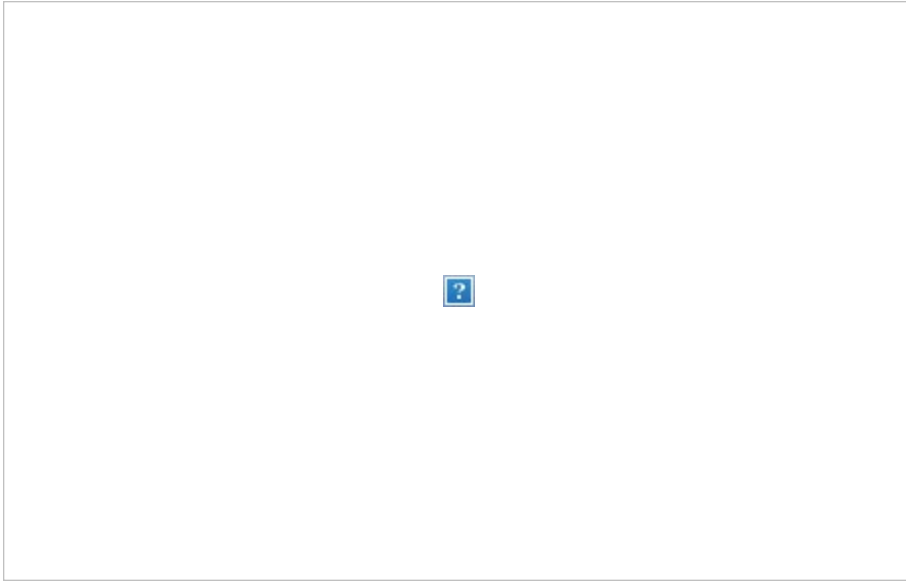
- MAXIMIZE SOCIAL INTEGRATION within buildings, and across the whole SPA community: mix socio-economic class, family size, age, profession, race, religion, background...etc. Incentivize on-site inclusionary affordable units in all developments. Reduce buildings targeting single socio-economic or other single class of residents. Do not allow GLA buildings to cluster in one spot (I object to whole GLA buildings anyway). Do not allow gentrifying 100% market rate housing. Do not allow ghettoizing clustering of 100% subsidized housing. Encourage a mix of condos and rentals. Encourage mix of unit size. Eliminate socio-economic stratification of our community.
- Buses operated by AC transit are noisy, overly large and loud. Explore/incentivize innovative types of transportation (grant writing group to get these?) like clean energy shuttles on SPA for all to use (like electric Emery-Go-Round?).
- Keep neighborhood and community access to amenities from becoming exclusively "pay to play". As an example, parklets are nice, but community members should have access to such spaces without always being expected to buy something, be a member, or in some other way pay for access.
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Make interior building amenities available to neighbors (gym use?, community rooms? laundromat?). Otherwise encourage gym to be actual storefront businesses (discounts or free use for building residents), or community rooms to be space-rental type businesses (like Sway, at 2043 San Pablo)...etc

- Explore creating business BIDs and property owner BIDs on the Avenue
- Create a team of neighbors, developers and professional grant writers to secure grant funding for innovative housing that is inclusionary and architecturally innovative.
- Public electric vehicle charging
- Secure bike parking (at least at nodes). Like the bike station in downtown?



Swale in front of McDonalds on San Pablo Ave.



Swale at Spruce and Vine. The bad part of this swale is how the plant is obstructing visibility of pedestrians or cross traffic.