

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan *Public Review Draft Plan*



URBAN FIELD

March 9, 2022

City of Albany
Planning & Zoning Commission

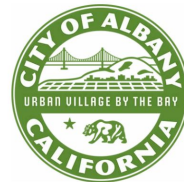




Agenda

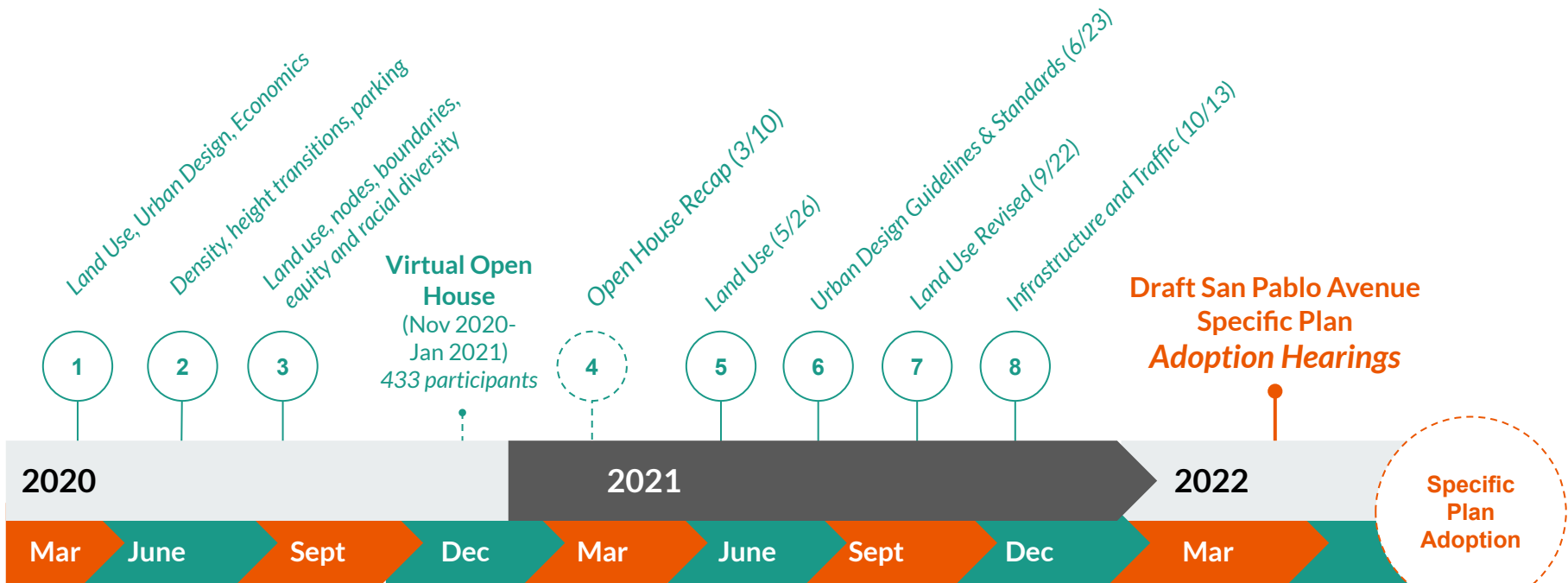
- 1) Plan Overview
- 2) Chapter Overviews
- 3) Next Steps and Ways to Participate
- 4) Discussion

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San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Public Review Draft: February 2022



Public Draft

Plan Overview



Vision & Objectives

VISION

To transform San Pablo Avenue into a walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use urban boulevard and sustainable, livable community that reflects Albany's unique identity. To add to the public realm with attractive building design that encourages social activity and supports economic, racial and ethnic diversity with a range of household types and integration of retail, services, restaurants.

Project Objectives

The Specific Plan aims to fulfill the policy objectives for San Pablo Avenue, as stated in the General Plan Land Use Designation for the corridor, to enable: **“a transformation of this corridor from auto-oriented commercial uses to more attractive, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development.”**

Although the vision for the corridor is set, existing zoning standards do not align with this objective. While lot coverage and setback regulations are generous, height, FAR, daylight plane, and residential density are limiting redevelopment potential and market viability.



Plan Organization

Chapters:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Land Use**
3. **Design Guidelines/Urban Design**
4. **Infrastructure & Mobility**
5. **Implementation**
6. **Appendix**



Within each substantive chapter, draft policies are divided into two categories:

1. **Guiding Principles or Design Guidelines**
2. **Implementing Policies or Standards**

Chapter Overviews

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE

Contents:

- Overview
- Guiding Principles
- Existing Conditions
- Housing Development
- Commercial Development
- Zoning Standards
- Opportunity Sites
- Potential Buildout
- Policies

- *Changes to Zoning and General Plan land use maps*
- *Outlook for new housing and commercial uses*
- *Rationale for proposed zoning changes that implement the General Plan vision for San Pablo Ave.*
- *Rationale for new standards that implement the General Plan vision for activity nodes and overlays*
- *Potential buildout (i.e., units and population) and opportunity sites*

Land Use Framework

- **Mixed-use buildings** fronting San Pablo, with ground-floor commercial and upper story residential
- Standards for **nodes**, which are generally identified in the General Plan
- Standards for **financially feasible development**, with building designs that are contextually appropriate and transition to adjacent residential uses
- Housing at a range of income levels and for a range of household types to support **economic, racial, and diversity**



Older 4-story Apartment Building on Kains

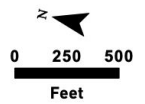
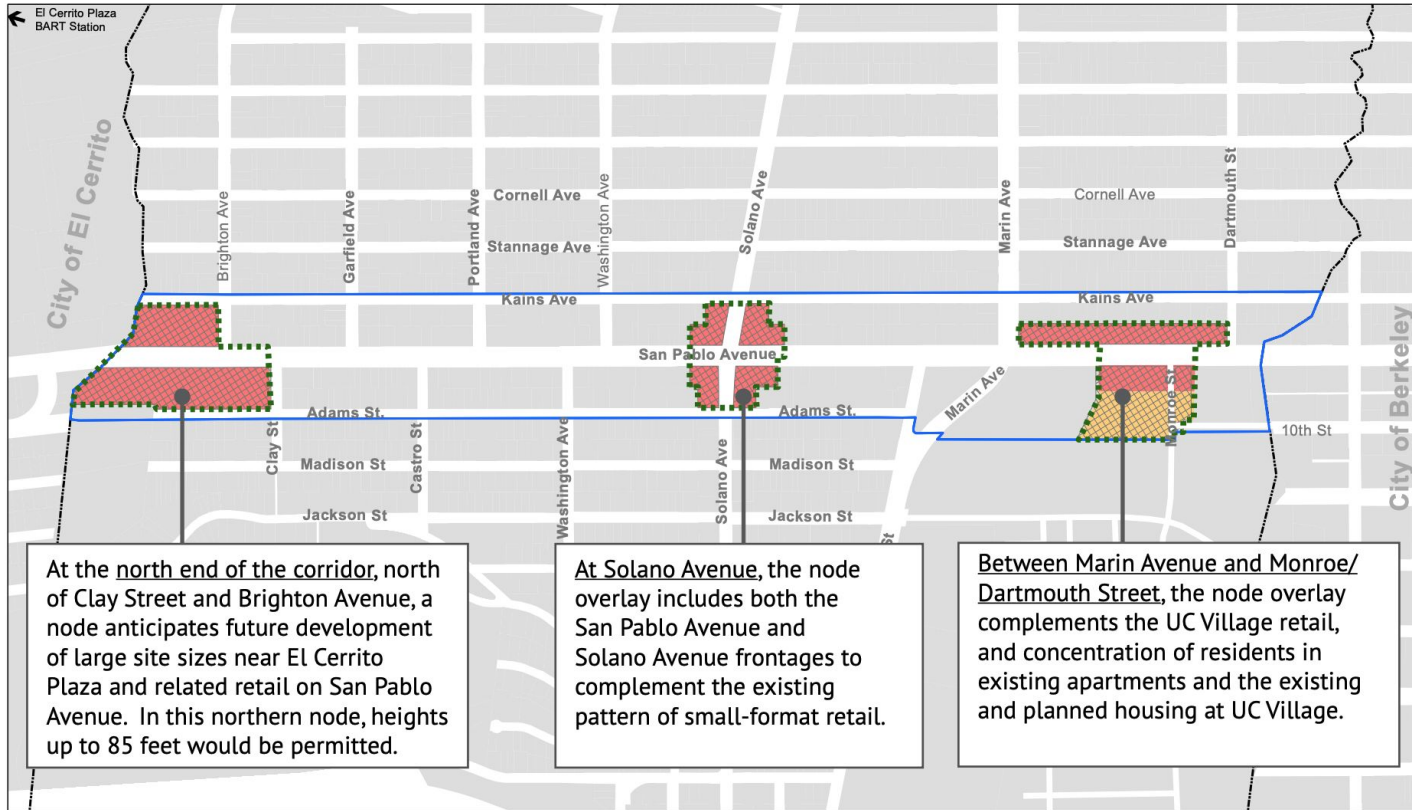


Mixed-Use Apartments on San Pablo Avenue



Senior Housing on San Pablo Avenue

FIGURE 2-8: COMMERCIAL NODES

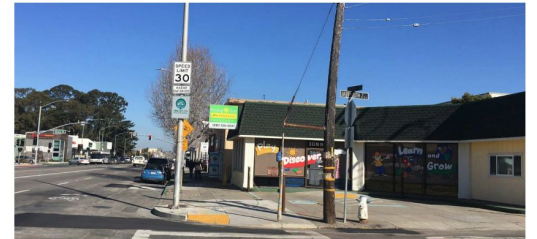


Key Policies

- Revisions to zoning standards: increase heights and FAR, eliminate residential density, replace daylight plane with a stepback requirement
- Revisions to zoning use regulations to prohibit commercial uses on upper floors in most locations
- Requirements for community amenities, including below-market rate housing and sustainability features
- Considering an affordable housing fee in lieu of on-site affordable housing
- Amortizing billboards to promote redevelopment



This southwest corner of San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue has greater potential for activity and placemaking.



The southern border of Albany at Dartmouth Street presents opportunities for a gateway feature to signify entry into Albany.



Zoning & General Plan Amendments

Zoning Amendments

- Zoning changes are temporarily included in the draft plan
- Standards will be rewritten as zoning amendments and policies simplified in the next draft

General Plan Amendments

- The Specific Plan is rooted in the General Plan's vision for San Pablo Avenue
- No substantial policy changes in the General Plan are proposed
- Amendments will be limited to specific standards and map amendments that support the General Plan vision

FIGURE 2-1: GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND OVERLAYS (EXISTING AND PROPOSED)

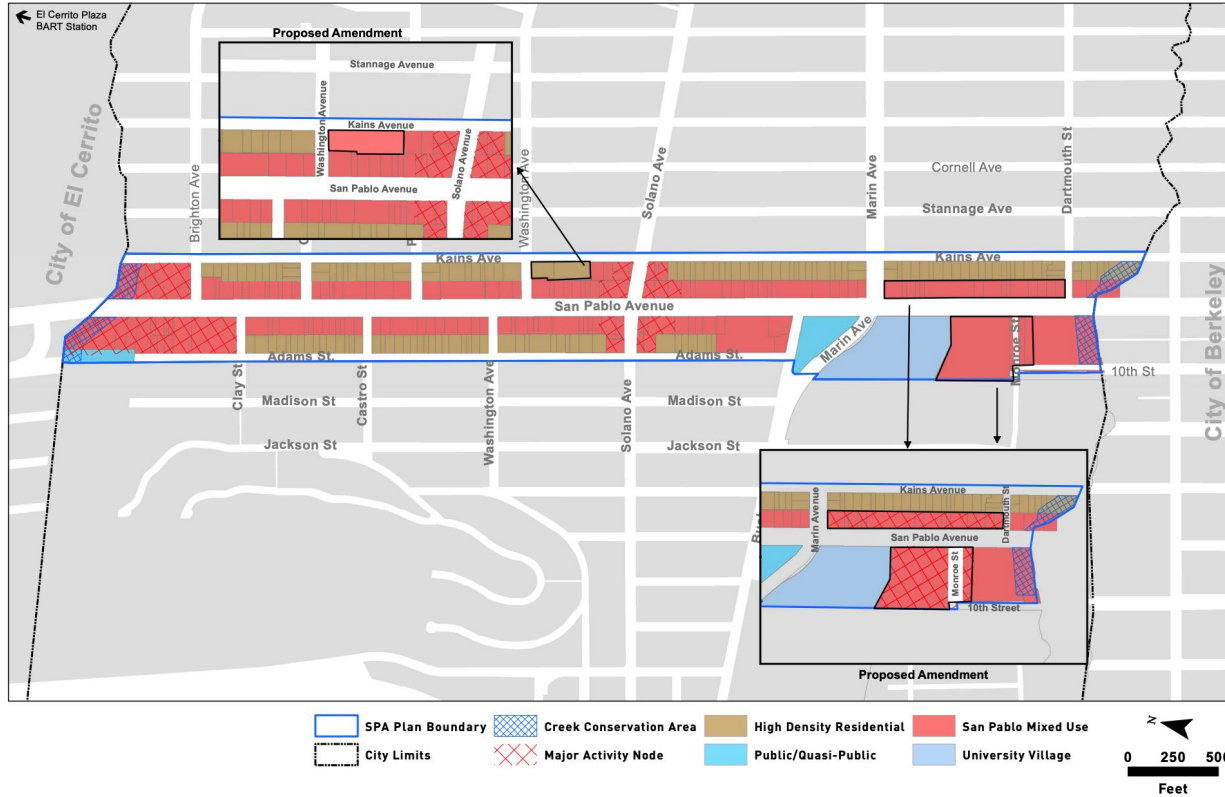


TABLE 2-1: DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR THE SAN PABLO AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

TYPE	UNIT/SQ .FT.
RESIDENTIAL	UNITS
Multifamily Apartments/Condos	1,130
Townhomes	30
Subtotal	1,160
Existing Dwelling Units	651
Total 2040 Dwelling Units (Rounded)	1,810
COMMERCIAL	SQ. FT.
New	45,000
Lost due to New Housing	119,000
Net Change	-74,000
Existing	482,000
Total 2040 Commercial (Rounded)	408,000

Source: Alameda County Parcel Data, 2020; Lexington Planning, 2021.

FIGURE 2-2: ZONING DISTRICTS AND OVERLAYS (EXISTING AND PROPOSED)

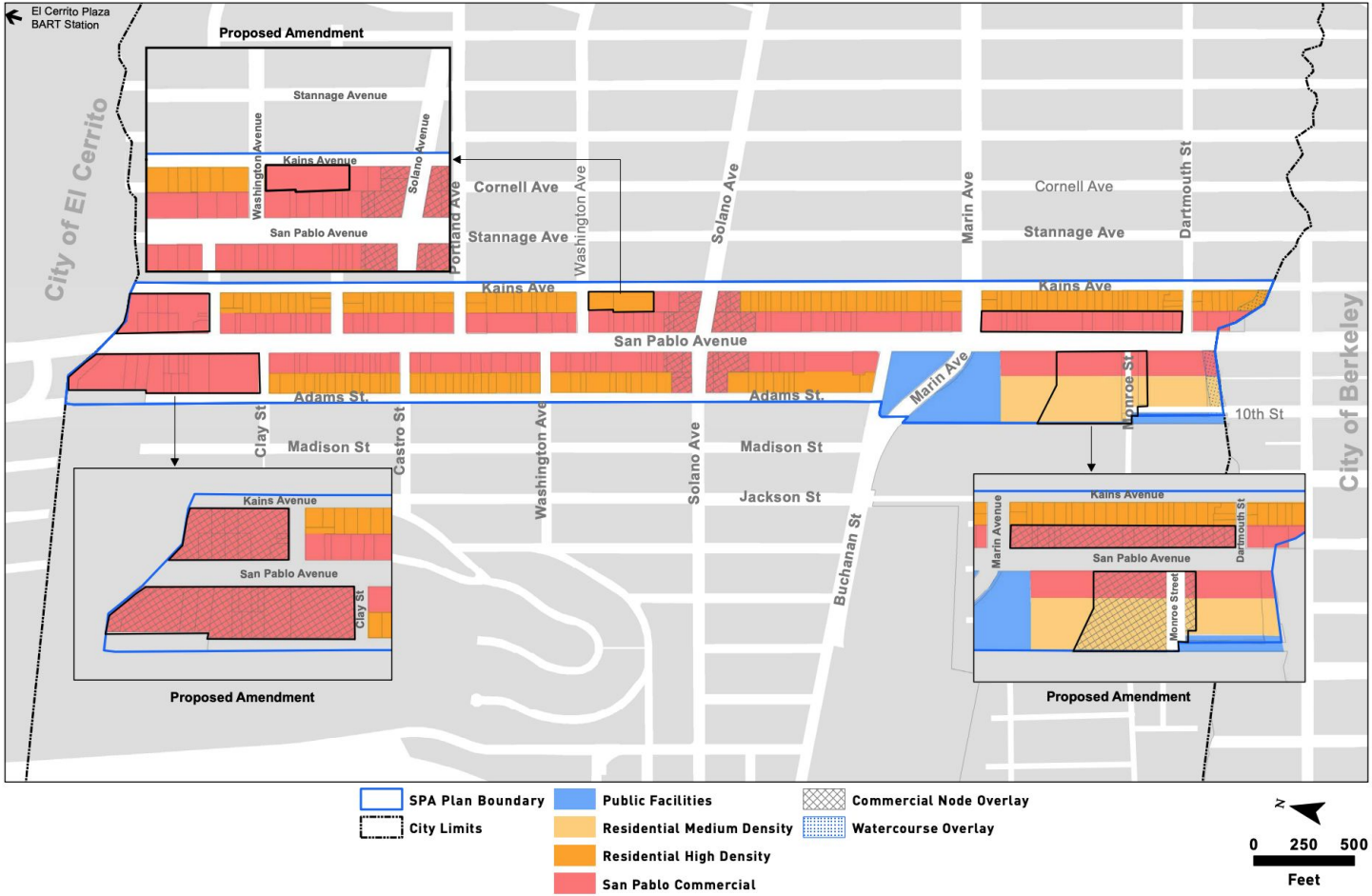
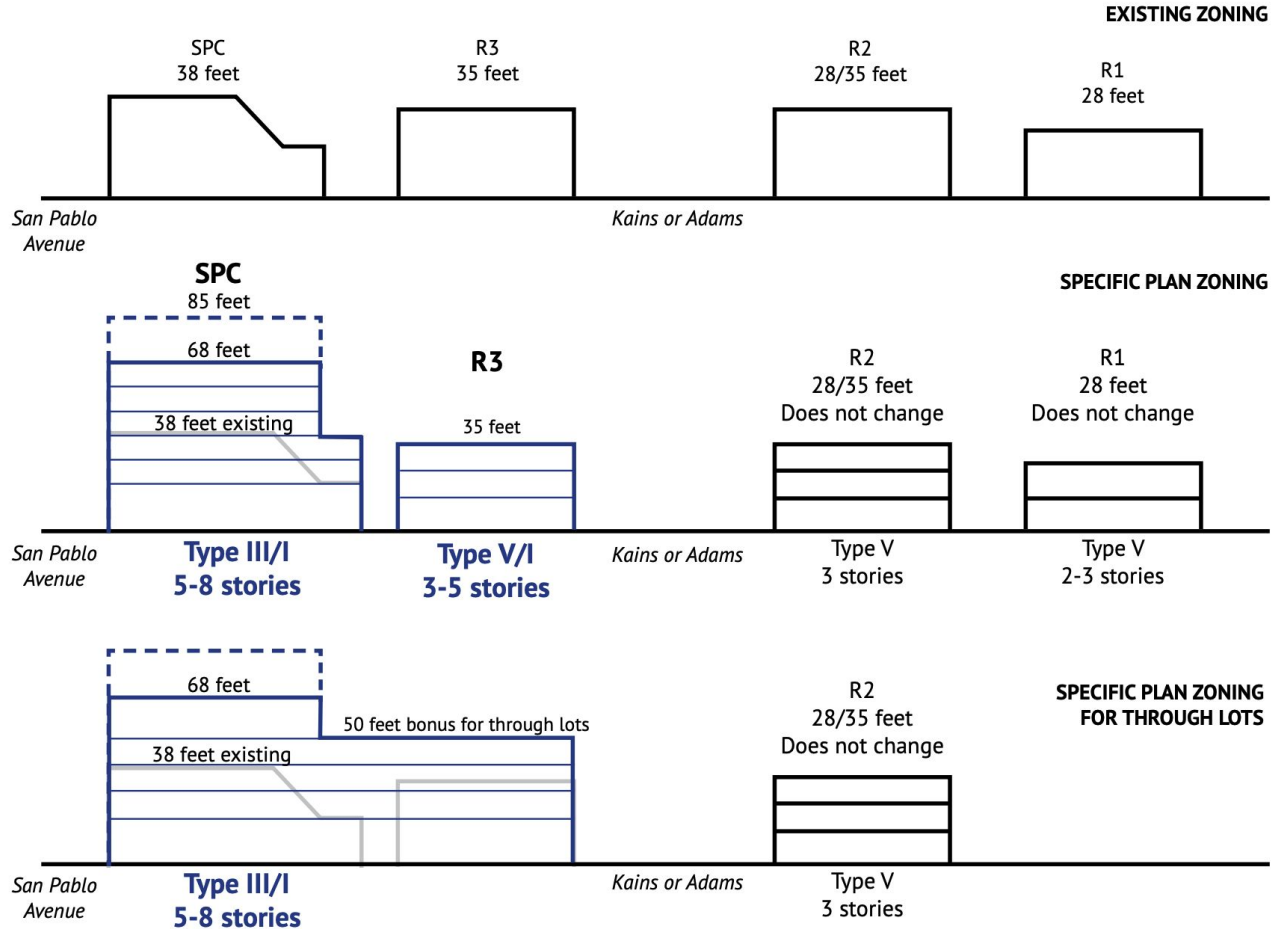
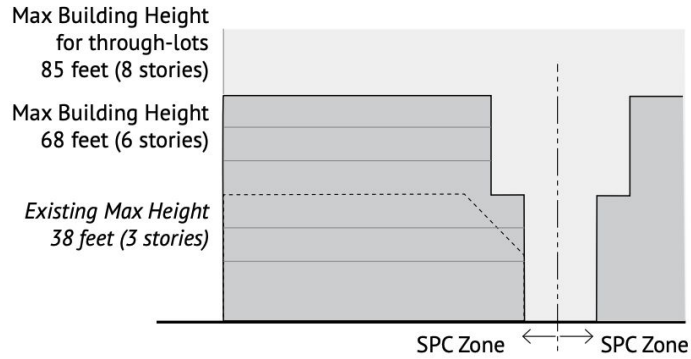
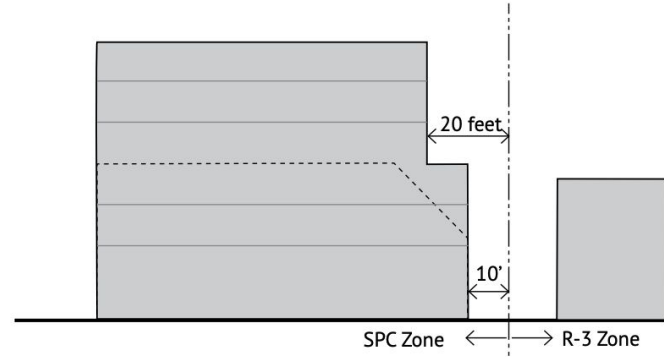


FIGURE 2-7: ZONING HEIGHT LIMITS FOR SAN PABLO AVENUE IN ALBANY

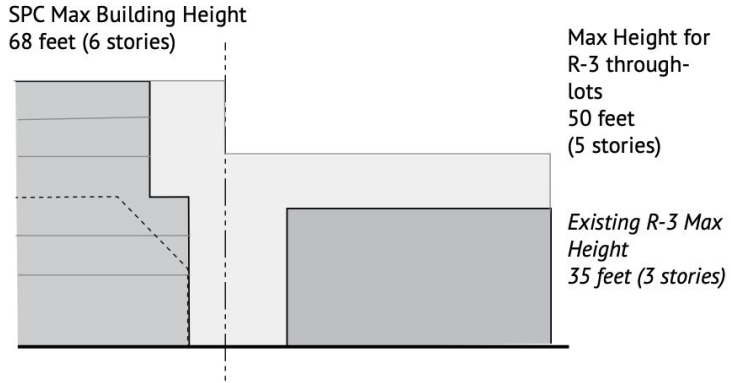




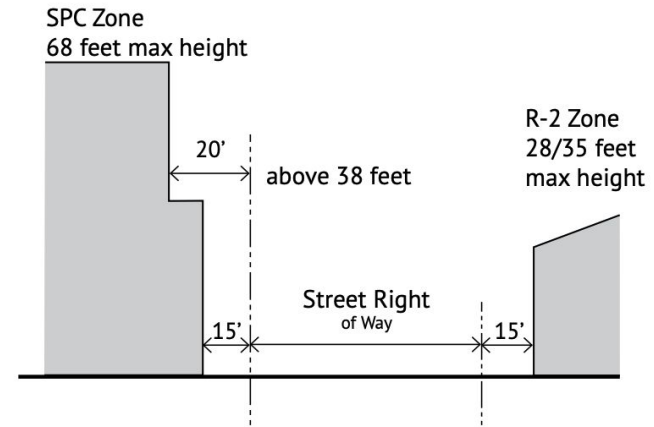
SPC Height Limits



Setback as Height Transition: SPC Abutting R-3 Setbacks (rear yard)



R-3 High Density Residential Height Limit



Setback as Height Transition: Setbacks for SPC when located across the Street from R-3, R-2 or other residential zones

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Contents:

- Overview
- Context
- Applicability
- Nodes
- Guiding Principles
- Design Guidelines
 - Site Design
 - Building Design

Overview

This Specific Plan supports transformation of the corridor to enable an active, walkable, and vibrant neighborhood. Development can redefine the corridor with a street, a greater sense of place, and active ground floor. This chapter outlines design guidelines that reflect the City's priorities for site and building design and establish objective standards in the Zoning Ordinance.

Context

These design guidelines supersede the San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines prepared for the City of Albany in 1989. The 1989 Design Guidelines largely addressed auto-oriented development and did not address mixed-use or multi-family housing along San Pablo Avenue. Relevant guidelines from the 1989 Design Guidelines are incorporated into these design guidelines. In addition to established practice, the design guidelines incorporate the City of Albany's award-winning Residential Design Guidelines in 2018, which focused on single-family residential

- *Design context*
- *Applicability, by type (new construction vs. rehab) and use (i.e., residential projects subject to State housing law protections vs. other projects)*
- *Design guidelines to convey design intent*
- *Site design standards (block design, sidewalk design, parking, and amenities)¹*
- *Building design standards (massing, ground floor design, facades, articulation, materials, windows, etc.)¹*

Design Framework

- Supports transformation of the existing commercial corridor to enable an **active, walkable, and attractive urban environment**, consistent with the General Plan
- Development can redefine the corridor with new buildings lining the street, a greater **sense of place, and activity and public life** along the ground floor
- Outlines design guidelines that express the **City's priorities for site and building design** and establish the intent for objective standards



Illustration of potential future development on San Pablo Avenue looking north at the intersection with Solano Avenue

Design Guidelines

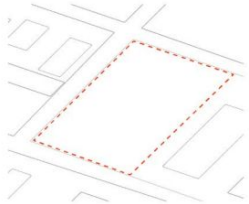
- Draft design guidelines would replace the existing San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines
- Despite the heightened focus on “objective” standards for housing, as required for projects undergoing streamlined review, guidelines are still important for conveying the City’s priorities and establishing intent for objective standards
- Guidelines would also apply to projects that are not subject to State housing law protections; the Commission and City Council would consider these guidelines during design review



Design guidelines address private development and the interface with the public realm, which is generally what the public sees and experiences. Guidelines and standards are broken into two key sections:

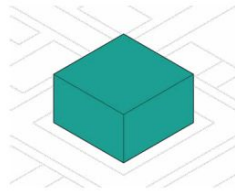
- *Site Design* includes block design, sidewalk design, parking, and shared amenity spaces—elements that consider the ground plane of the parcel.
- *Building Design* addresses building massing, the street wall, building facade, the design of the ground floor and design for privacy and access to light and air.

SITE DESIGN

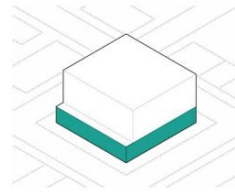


- Block Design
- Sidewalk Design
- Access
- Parking
- Shared Spaces

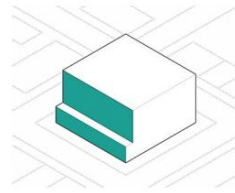
BUILDING DESIGN



- Building Massing and Form



- Ground Floor Frontage
- Residential Unit Entries

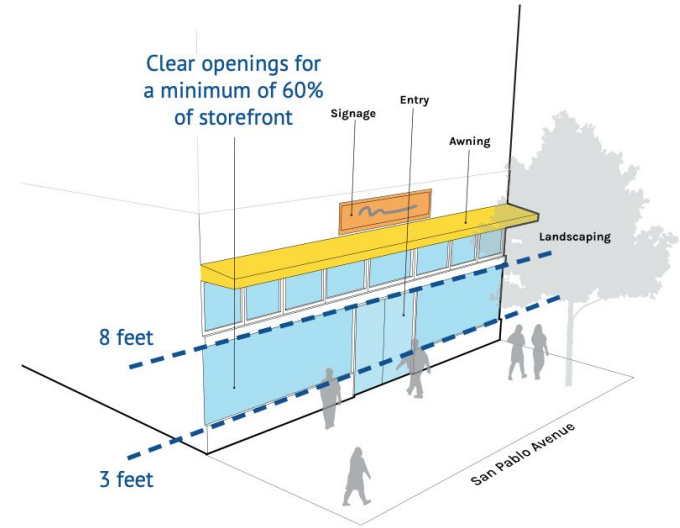


- Building Facade
- Windows
- Adjacencies

Compendium Document

- For the purpose of public review and transparency, the draft design guidelines and objective design standards currently appear in the draft plan
- However, they will be relocated into a separate design document prior to adoption
- This will allow the City to more easily make changes over time—rather than having to amend the Specific Plan—and create a stand-alone compendium document that developers, property owners, community members, and decision-makers can refer to during individual project review

FIGURE 3-5: STREET FRONTAGE ON SAN PABLO AVENUE

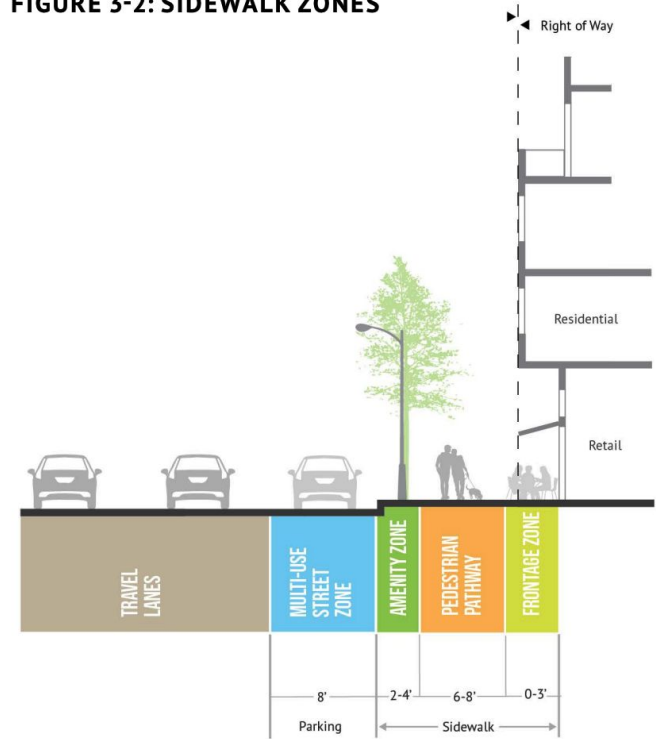


The ground floor street frontage on San Pablo Avenue should be designed to support activity on the street and provide a pleasant pedestrian experience. The design of the ground floor frontage should include visibility of active uses and greater attention to detail at the ground level.

Key Guidelines and Standards

- Minimum sidewalk width of 12 feet and recommended “zones” for amenities and clear pedestrian paths
- Ground floor access and design standards to facilitate active and vibrant frontages for commercial uses and privacy for residential uses
- Transitions and privacy between new uses and existing residential uses, such as landscaping, glazing treatments and window alignment, upper setbacks, and parapets
- Minimum design standards for shared spaces and amenities (e.g., tenant storage, package delivery rooms).

FIGURE 3-2: SIDEWALK ZONES



San Pablo Avenue sidewalks are composed of four zones: the multi-use street zone, amenity zone, pedestrian pathway, and frontage zone. The build-to-zone extends from the front property line/ right-of-way to a maximum setback defined in the Zoning Code. At least 60% of the building must occupy the build-to-zone. A public access easement in the build-to-zone shall be granted to extend the sidewalk width to allow for a frontage zone or minimum pedestrian pathway.



Illustration of potential future development on San Pablo Avenue viewed from the intersection with Garfield Avenue, looking South.

CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE & MOBILITY

Contents:

- Overview
- Water
- Sanitary Sewer
- Stormwater
- Electric, Gas, and Communications
- Waste and Recycling
- Public Safety
- Streets & Transportation
- Guiding Principles
- Implementing Policies

Overview

This chapter describes transportation changes in demand for new development. It identifies development or that can other vision for revitalization. New policies are included to provide service delivery.

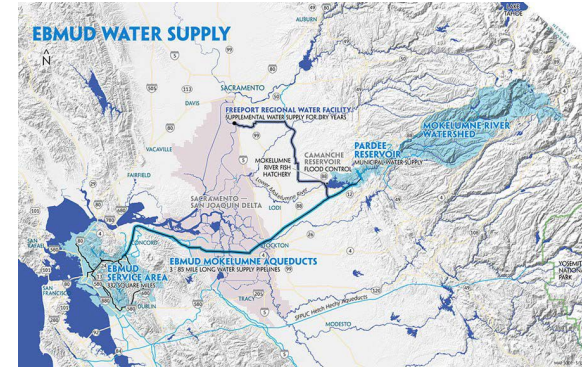
Water

The City of Albany water supply is provided by the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). 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

- *Analysis of impacts to utilities*
- *Analysis of impacts to public safety services*
- *Implementation of adopted plans and policies for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements*
- *Incentives to increase travel by walking, biking, and transit in exchange for reduced vehicle parking requirements*

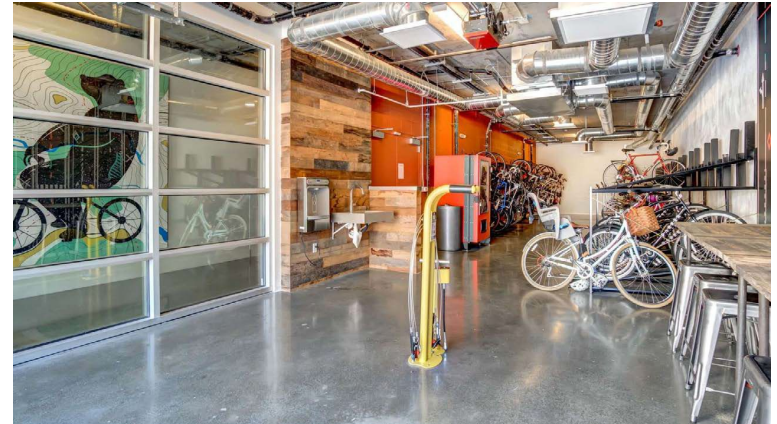
Framework

- Describes transportation and infrastructure systems
- Analyzes changes in demand for services that could be generated by new development
- CEQA analysis will also include a discussion of infrastructure capacity and necessary improvements
- Identifies improvements required to serve new development or that can help support this Specific Plan's vision
- New policies and policies from existing adopted plans are included to provide direction for capital improvements and service delivery



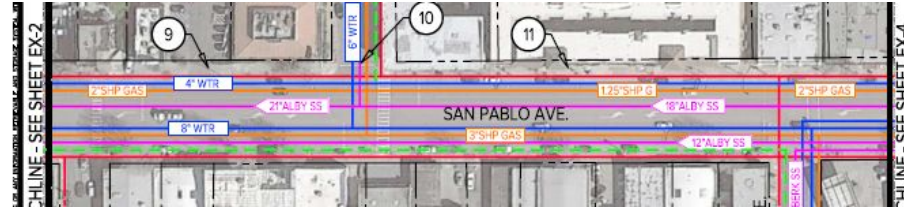
Key Mobility Policies

- Incorporates **ongoing circulation planning work** related to:
 - San Pablo Avenue Complete Streets
 - Alameda County Transportation Commission corridor project
 - General Plan
 - Active Transportation Plan
- Requirements for **long-tail** and **electric bikes**.
- Allowances for reduce vehicle parking standards in exchange for **amenities that support transit, biking and walking**



Key Infrastructure Policies

- Coordination with EBMUD on planned upsizing of aging 4-inch water lines
- Support for green stormwater infrastructure and climate-adaptive landscaping
- Support for all-electric construction for new buildings and major renovations
- Addition of a fee on new development that contributes to the cost of new fire department apparatus that supports fire suppression of taller buildings



CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

Contents:

- Overview
- Entitlement Process
- Environmental (CEQA) Review
- Phasing
- City Responsibilities for Implementation Program & Timing
- Implementing Policies

Overview

This chapter serves two key purposes in this Specific Plan. First, it guides the process and requirements for development projects in accordance with the zoning approval and building development fees. Second, it provides guidance to city members and decision-makers on development applications, implementation, and how to monitor the success of plan implementation.

Entitlement Process

Development projects in the Planning Area typically require two phases of review and approval: the zoning permits/design review phase and the building permit phase.

- *Guidance for developers*
- *Guidance for City staff, officials, and community members*
- *Key implementation steps for the City*
- *Key conditions of approval (i.e., emissions reduction and noise reduction during construction, and soils and groundwater management plans for sites with potential hazards) to reduce potential impacts*

Implementation Framework

Guide for Property Owners/Developers:

Explains process and requirements for entitling and building projects in accordance with the Specific Plan. This includes expectations for the zoning approval and building permit process, CEQA review, and development fees.

Guide for City Staff, City Officials, and Community Members:

Provides guidance about how to review individual development applications, implement City programs and policies, and monitor the success of the plan.

TABLE 5-2: IMPLEMENTATION TASKS AND TIMING FOR CITY STAFF/DEPARTMENTS

TASK	SHORT-TERM (0-5 Years)	MEDIUM-TERM (5-10 Years)	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	DETAILED ACTIONS
Revise Development Standards (Chapter 2 Policies)	✓		Planning Division	Adopt simultaneously with Specific Plan
Add Objective Design Standards (Chapter 3 Policies)	✓		Planning Division	Adopt simultaneously with Specific Plan
Affordable Housing Fee Study (Policy LU-5)	✓		Planning Division	Prepare updated study for the appropriate inclusionary housing in-lieu fee for for-sale and/or rental projects citywide
Development Impact Fee Update	✓		City Manager's Office	Update impact fees to support improvements to parks and recreation, other government facilities, and police and fire facilities, including a fee for new development to support the cost of new fire apparatus
Amortize Billboards (Policy LU-9)	✓	✓	Planning Division	Pursue amortization of billboards in the short-term though removal may require longer term implementation
Coordinate with EBMUD on Upgrades to Water Infrastructure (Policy INF-1)	✓	✓	Public Works	Encourage prioritization of upgrades to 4-in water lines
Coordinate with ACTC on Evolving Corridor Plans (Policy MOB-7)	✓	✓	Transportation Division	Advocate City's position on location for bicycle facilities and other improvements
On-Street Parking Monitoring and Evaluation (Chapter 2 Policies)		✓	Transportation Division	Identify deficiencies and optimize efficiency to 85% on-street occupancy. Consider adjustments to pricing, off-street standards, or other strategies such as residential permit programs
Plan Monitoring and Evaluation		✓	Planning Division	Evaluate whether Specific Plan is meeting vision and guiding principles; assess unit and retail floor area creation; quality of design; and achievement of public amenities (see text box)

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Summary of Key Zoning Standards (To Come)

Appendix B. Zoning Ordinance Modifications (Redlines) (To Come)

Appendix C. General Plan Modifications (Redlines) (To Come)

Appendix D. Relevant General Plan Goals and Policies

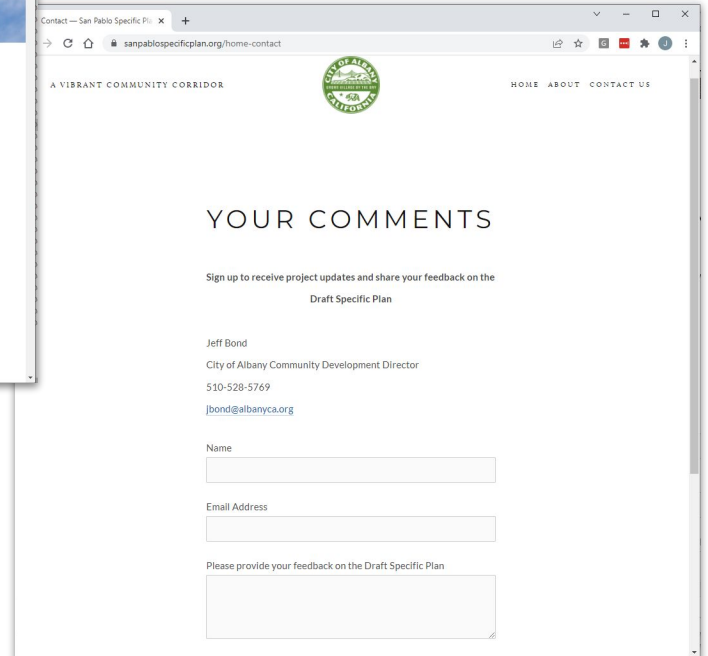
Appendix E. Financing Strategies

Next Steps and Ways to Participate

Public Comments



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City Council Study Session

(March 21, 2022)

City staff will gather feedback from the Commission and community members, and present this feedback along with the draft plan to the City Council

P&Z Commission Recommendation on *updated Draft*

(Summer 2022)


City staff will present the updated draft, along with the zoning and General Plan amendments, and CEQA documentation, to the Commission for a recommendation to the Council

City Council Adoption Hearings (Summer 2022)

Draft Specific Plan, zoning modifications, design standards, and General Plan amendments will be adopted concurrently with the Specific Plan. CEQA documentation will be considered prior to plan adoption



Discussion



San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan *Public Review Draft Plan*



URBAN FIELD

March 9, 2022

City of Albany
Planning & Zoning Commission

