



# San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Design Guidelines and Objective Standards

June 2022



*New corridor-appropriate buildings on San Pablo Avenue will revitalize the corridor, provide more housing, expand equity and inclusivity, and transform the character of the area.*

# San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

# DESIGN GUIDELINES AND OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

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## Applicability

Design guidelines apply to new development projects going through the City's design review process. This document is written for applicants, decision-makers, City staff, and community members to establish expectations for site and building design. Design guidelines primarily address new multi-family and mixed-use development and facade renovations of existing buildings. Existing businesses and properties making interior tenant improvements are not required to make upgrades in accordance with the guidelines.

Design guidelines identify the design intent behind detailed objective design standards. The numbered objective design standards are required for projects with residential units pursuing streamlined review under State law. Other projects, including non-residential projects and discretionary housing projects, should meet objective standards, to the extent practicable.

Design guidelines address private development and apply to both site design and building design. Design guidelines define what is important in the public realm, which is generally, what the public sees and experiences.

- **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.

Design guidelines and standards address the sidewalk area, but do not address street design and streetscape improvements beyond the curb. These components are under Caltrans' jurisdiction and are subject to other planning and implementation efforts described in San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.



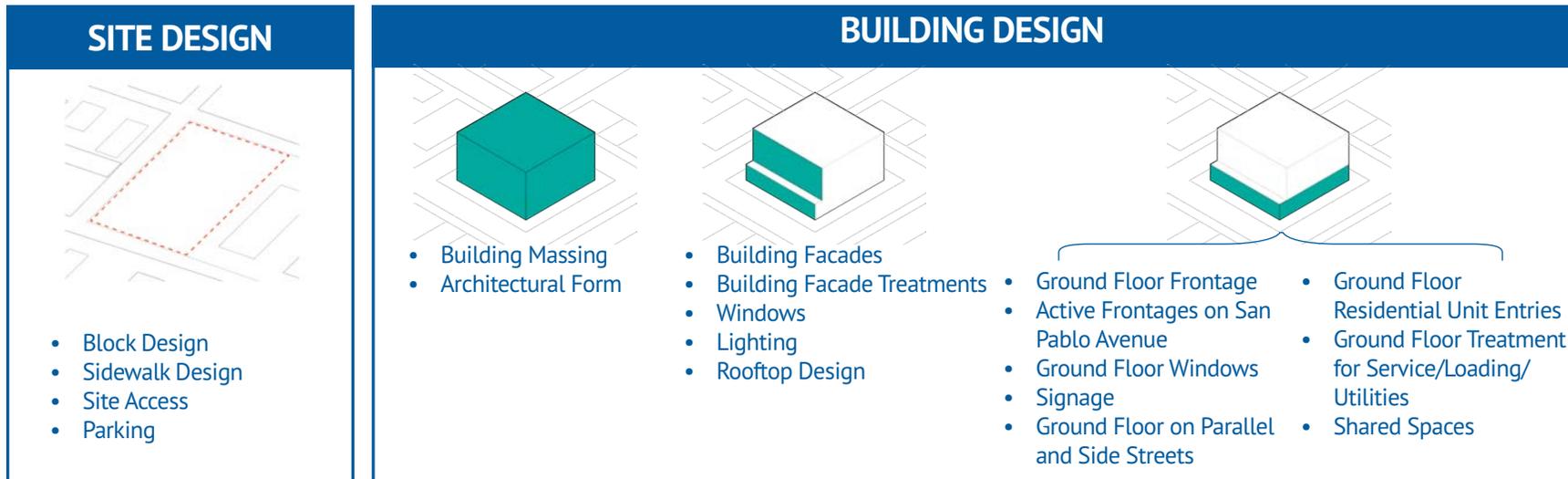
# Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles establish the overarching vision for urban design and a framework for subsequent design guidelines and standards:

- 1. New Building Types.** Transition San Pablo Avenue from a car-oriented commercial-focused environment to a walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use boulevard with multi-family housing. This will mean a transition to taller buildings at nodes, higher density housing types, and an urban boulevard character over time.
- 2. Convenient Walkable and Bikeable Community.** Create a compact, walkable, sustainable neighborhood that is well-served by and supportive of transit with neighborhood conveniences at nodes.
- 3. Social Interaction.** Support activity along San Pablo Avenue by filling in gaps with new development, placing active uses at the ground level, adding new public spaces at nodes, and adding amenities, and extensions of the public realm all along San

Pablo Avenue to encourage social interaction and to make the walking experience as interesting and complete as possible.

- 4. Height & Mass Transitions.** Design thoughtful transitions between larger buildings and neighboring smaller buildings, keeping in mind privacy and access to the natural environment, such as backyards.
- 5. Neighborhood Scale.** Maintain a neighborhood scale on Kains and Adams Street, the closest parallel streets to San Pablo Avenue. These narrower residential streets are distinct from San Pablo Avenue.
- 6. Variety & Identity.** Allow variation for architectural expression without dictating a particular architectural style, and encouraging memorable, attractive, and identifiable design to renew the character of San Pablo Avenue where landmarks are the buildings themselves.



# Site Design

## DESIGN GUIDELINES: BLOCK DESIGN

**Nodes.** The attraction of nodes is defined by a unique activity or feature that stands out amongst the other parts of San Pablo Avenue. Public Art can be used in the form of a mural, sculpture, or architectural feature to enhance the identity of the node. (Public Art requirements are defined by the Art in Public Places Program.)

**Shared/Publicly Accessible Open Spaces on San Pablo Avenue.** Shared, publicly accessible open spaces designed gathering and other active uses throughout the day and night for properties that front along San Pablo Avenue are encouraged. Incorporate publicly accessible spaces, such as plazas and pocket parks, into new and existing commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use developments. Spaces should be appropriately scaled, programmed, and designed to flexibly support social activity. Small plazas are encouraged where building and storefront entryways are set back. Preferably, more than one entrance opens directly on to the open space. Ideally, publicly accessible open space are located adjacent to indoor active uses.

**Mid-Block Connections.** Encourage mid-block paseos/passages to reduce large block sizes on through-lots (including consolidated parcels under the same ownership). The Specific Plan (Figure 3-2) illustrates potential locations. Where mid-block connections are provided, align the passageway with existing streets or passageways to complete the street grid.

**District Identity Elements.** Public art, enhanced architectural features, and signage create a sense of place for San Pablo Avenue in Albany. Draw on the geographic, cultural, historical, or aspirational themes for the area. The following elements are encouraged along the primary frontage to add district identity to San Pablo Avenue:

- Building elements using architectural features intrinsic to the building structure, such as balconies, terraces, bay windows, and towers.
- Premium materials or architectural details that embellish the design of the building frontage.
- Landscape planters and low walls not exceeding 30 inches from the height of the sidewalk.
- Public Art
- Signage

**Wayfinding and Directional Signage.** District wayfinding signage should provide a cohesive and legible physical and virtual navigation system. Design public wayfinding and informational signage to be visible and scaled for pedestrians and bicyclists. Emphasize destinations as well as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes, and the location of vehicle and bike parking facilities with directional signs or maps. Minimize the number of warning signs for parking, towing, and trespassing to avoid clutter.



## DESIGN STANDARDS: BLOCK DESIGN

### Nodes.

**SD-1: Node Enhancements Requirements.** Projects must provide the following node enhancements:

1. Benches or seat walls within the frontage zone or amenity zone of the sidewalk facing San Pablo Avenue (see Figure 1).
2. Enhanced landscaping along the frontage zone either integrated as part of the design of the ground floor or by using planters.

**SD-2: Additional Node Enhancements.** Projects must additionally provide at least one of the following node enhancements:

1. Street-facing, publicly accessible open space for gathering with at least one building entrance facing it, or
2. Public art, which may be in the form of a mural, sculpture, or integrated into the building design, or
3. Tall building features and building massing that frames and defines the node, differentiates the feature from the rest of the building, and serves as a landmark for the area.

**SD-3: Public Art.** Projects on parcels that are 10,000 square feet or greater are required to have on-site public art as part of new development and may not pay a fee in-lieu.

### Publicly Accessible Open Spaces on San Pablo Avenue.

**SD-4: Minimum Dimension for Publicly Accessible Open Space.** Publicly Accessible Open Space shall have a minimum dimension of 20 feet in either direction.

**SD-5: Location of Publicly Accessible Open Space.** Publicly Accessible Open Space shall be located adjacent to a public right-of-way or visible from the public right-of-way, and connected to a public sidewalk on San Pablo Avenue.

### Mid-Block Connections.

**SD-6: Mid-Block Connection Requirements.** Where provided, mid-block connections shall be an average 15-foot wide building-to-building pathway between San Pablo Avenue with the parallel public right-of-way. Mid-block connections may have built space above or below the pedestrian surface that provides a minimum clearance of 10 feet of height above the pathway. Mid-block connections must have end-to-end visibility from connecting public spaces. Notwithstanding SD-4, mid-block connections may be counted toward publicly accessible open space standards.

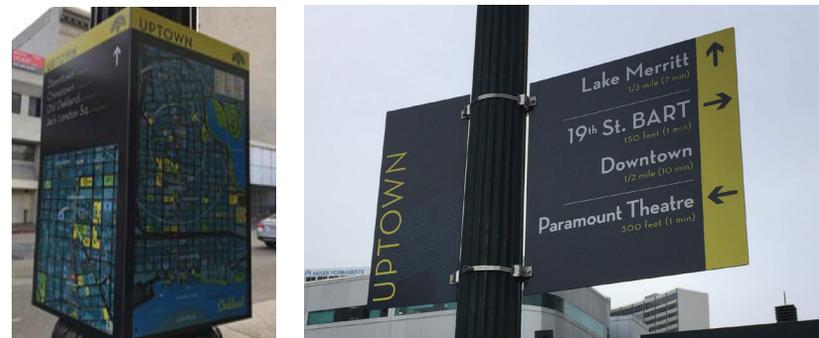
**SD-7: Pathway Accessibility.** Make pathways accessible to people with disabilities.

**SD-8: Hours of Public Access.** Preserve public access during daylight hours.

### Wayfinding and Directional Signage.

**SD-9: Signage Orientation.** Provide wayfinding signage at the pedestrian level that is oriented to people walking on the sidewalk, using blade signs.

**SD-10: Signage Accessibility.** Provide wayfinding signage accessible to people of all ages and ability levels, especially within a block of bus stops.



*Pedestrian-level wayfinding signage near transit makes it easier for people to navigate the area.*

## DESIGN GUIDELINES: SIDEWALK DESIGN

San Pablo Avenue sidewalks are composed of four zones (Figure 1): the multi-use street zone, amenity zone, pedestrian pathway, and frontage zone. This part of the street on San Pablo Avenue is under the jurisdiction of Caltrans, though the City is responsible for maintenance of the sidewalk.

**Multi-Use Street Zone.** The Multi-Use Street Zone is located within the street right-of-way adjacent to the curb. It is typically where vehicle parking or bicycle facilities are located, but may also include loading, parklets, extensions of the sidewalk for bus loading, landscaping, and other pedestrian bicycle amenities.

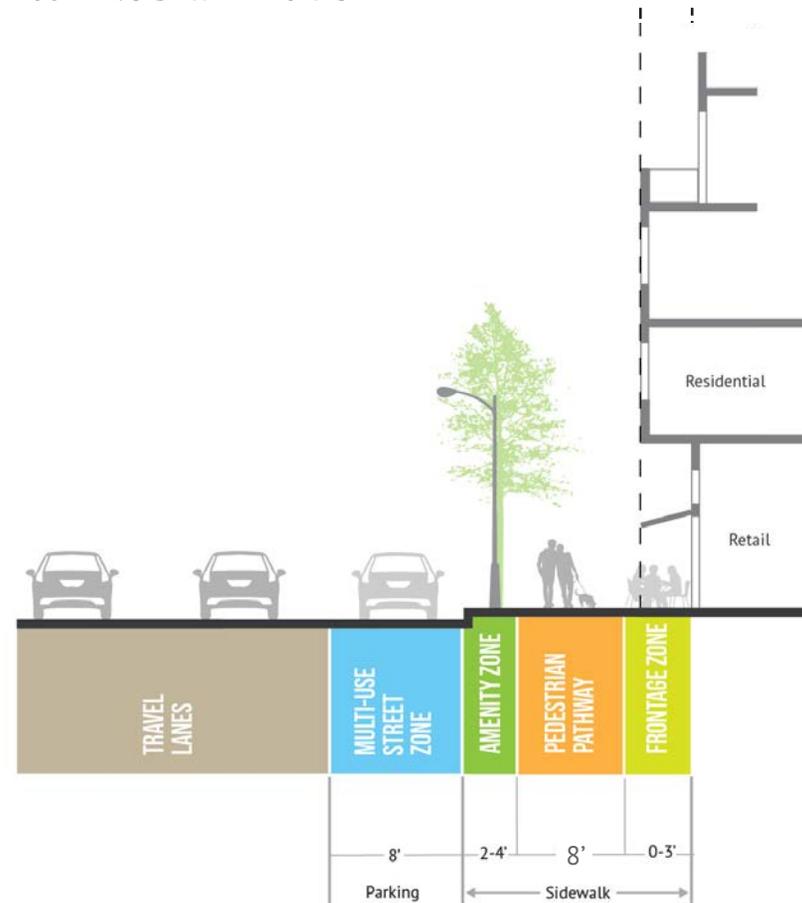
**Amenity Zone.** The Amenity Zone shall be a minimum of 2 feet wide, and ideally 4 feet. This is where street furniture, above ground utilities, street lighting, bicycle parking, transit shelters, street trees, bioswales, mailboxes, and signage may be located. On-Street Bike Parking is encouraged near building entrances (see short term bicycle requirements in the Zoning Ordinance). Permanent seating is encouraged in the Amenity Zone.

**Pedestrian Pathway.** A Pedestrian Pathway of 8 feet minimum width and must be clear of obstructions. If the existing sidewalk does not meet this minimum standard, a public access easement in the setback area shall be granted to extend the sidewalk width to the required minimum dimensions.

**Frontage Zone.** The Frontage Zone is located adjacent to the building. There is no requirement for a frontage zone. A public access easement in the setback area shall be granted to extend the sidewalk width to allow for a frontage zone. The Frontage Zone may include space for outdoor dining, more landscaping, or provide an extension to the sidewalk. Outdoor dining is encouraged in the frontage zone. Public art is encouraged in the Frontage Zone.

Active frontages influence the pedestrian environment. The design of ground floor building frontages with active uses is addressed in Building Design.

FIGURE 1: SIDEWALK ZONES



*San Pablo Avenue sidewalks are composed of four zones: the multi-use street zone, amenity zone, pedestrian pathway, and frontage zone. See Specific Plan SD-19 for build-to zone standards.*

## DESIGN STANDARDS: SIDEWALK DESIGN

**SD-11: San Pablo Avenue Sidewalk Width.** The minimum sidewalk width on San Pablo Avenue shall be 12 feet.

### Multi-Use Street Zone.

**SD-12: Loading.** Accommodate curbside drop-offs for carshare vehicles and delivery vehicles on projects with at least 20 dwelling units.

**SD-13: Parklets.** Parklets may front streets perpendicular to San Pablo Avenue, such as Solano Avenue.

**SD-14: Multi-Zone Clearance.** Street furniture may not obstruct the pedestrian pathway on sidewalks and may not extend into the Multi-Use Zone.



Not Desired: Above Ground Utilities

*Pedestrian Pathway: Keep the pedestrian pathway clear. Do not locate utilities in the pedestrian pathway. Provide a clear pedestrian pathway between furnishing and landscaping on the sidewalk.*

### Amenity Zone.

**SD-15: Street Tree Requirements.** Street trees shall be planted following City and Caltrans requirements for spacing and species to maintain sight lines for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

**SD-16: Street Tree Size and Location.** Where new or replacement trees are proposed, a minimum of one 24-inch box size or greater tree shall be planted per landscape area. A minimum 10-foot separation is required from driveways and above-ground utilities.

### Pedestrian Pathway.

**SD-17: Utilities and Equipment.** Utility boxes shall be placed below grade, or away from the primary frontage. Any above-ground utilities and equipment shall be integrated into building and landscape design to minimize the impact on the pedestrian experience. Project sponsors should coordinate with utility providers and the Albany Fire Department early in the planning process to identify locations for any required on- or off-site infrastructure.

**SD-18: Bicycle Parking.** Locate short-term bicycle parking near street edges in the public realm. Bikes shall be parked parallel to the street to avoid obstructing the pedestrian pathway.

## Frontage Zone.

**SD-19: Building Build-to-Zone.** At least 60% of the building must occupy the build-to-zone along San Pablo Avenue excluding areas for mid-block connections and publicly accessible open space. Exception are allowed for a diagonal façade at a street intersection.

**SD-20: Maintaining the Minimum Pedestrian Pathway.** 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.

**SD-21: Building Orientation.** Primary building frontages for all buildings along San Pablo Avenue shall face the public sidewalk on San Pablo Avenue.

**SD-22: Street-Level Frontage Design.** The building may be designed to open directly on to the frontage zone where there is ground floor retail or restaurant uses. Completely fencing off the frontage zone is not allowed.

**SD-23: Frontage Zone Landscaping.** A minimum of 5% of the linear building frontage must include landscaped areas or planters. Landscaping must be clear of the pedestrian pathway.



*Landscaping in the frontage zone and amenity zone enhances the pedestrian experience and beautifies the edge between public and private spaces.*

## Sidewalk Elements.

**SD-24: Fences.** Fences must be no taller than 42 inches and be at least 40% transparent.

**SD-25: Sidewalk Landscaping.** Landscape planters and low walls shall not exceed 30 inches in height from the sidewalk grade.

**SD-26: Clearance.** All associated private movable fixtures, furnishings, and equipment must be clear of the pedestrian pathway and at least 10-feet of any driveway, and do not impede bus stops and loading zones.

**SD-27: Storage of Movable Fixtures, Furnishings, and Equipment.** Private movable fixtures, furnishings, and equipment intended to support outdoor uses, such as tables/chairs, umbrellas, heaters, generators, trucks, and trailers shall be stored in a secure place on private property when not in use.

**SD-28: Outdoor Lighting.** Outdoor lighting fixtures must be shielded to direct the light away from adjacent parcels.



*Sidewalk elements such as fences, landscape planters, and fixtures, furnishings, and equipment need to be clear of the pedestrian pathway.*

## DESIGN GUIDELINES: SITE ACCESS

**Primary Frontage on San Pablo and Parallel Streets.** Street Frontage is important on San Pablo Avenue and the parallel streets Kains and Adams. Where applicable, the design of buildings should orient and design entrances to treat the San Pablo Avenue, Kains, and Adams Streets as primary frontages.

**Individual Entrances.** For individual residential entrances, doorways should face the street and provide a transition zone. Design entrances to be clearly identifiable and inviting, located to encourage pedestrian interaction. The frontage zone should be distinguished from the pedestrian pathway using different materials, treatment, or landscaping to define the edge of the zone.

**Bicycle Access.** Bicycle rooms should have a direct entrance from San Pablo Avenue. Sliding doors with card entry are recommended for easy access to bicycle rooms.

**Continuity of Commercial Entries.** Residential lobby entrances should be placed on either side of ground floor commercial to allow for the most continuous retail possible.

**Vehicular Access.** Separate vehicular access from pedestrian and bicycle circulation to avoid pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts with vehicles at driveways along San Pablo Avenue. Avoid locating parking entrances in the middle of the street frontage; locate entrances to the side of a continuous row of ground floor retail.

**Curb Cuts.** Minimize curb cuts on San Pablo Avenue to maintain clear safe pedestrian circulation and reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. New curb cuts and driveway entrances should be located on Kains or Adams Streets, or perpendicular streets. Curb cuts may be located on San Pablo Avenue only if San Pablo Avenue is the only public frontage.

**Service Areas.** Minimize the visibility of service and loading areas and avoid potential conflicts between service/refuse pick-up and pedestrians/transit vehicles. Avoid designing a condition where parked vehicles and refuse collection vehicles conflict.

## DESIGN STANDARDS: SITE ACCESS

### Pedestrian Access.

**SD-29: Multi-Family Residential Lobbies/Entrances on San Pablo Avenue.** Mixed-use building street frontage on San Pablo Avenue shall have a pedestrian entrance to upper level residential units located on San Pablo Avenue to activate the street, with the exception of a lobby on a side street to accommodate the full frontage of commercial retail.

### Commercial Entrances.

**SD-30: Commercial Entrances on San Pablo Avenue.** For mixed-use buildings with commercial frontages facing San Pablo Avenue, at least one publicly-accessible street-level entrance shall be provided for every 40 feet. Commercial entrances are limited to San Pablo Avenue, except within 40 feet of the corner on a side street.

### Vehicular Access.

**SD-31: Curb Cuts.** Each development project site shall be limited to one curb cut per frontage. Project sponsors should coordinate with Caltrans early in the planning process in order to obtain an encroachment permit for a required curb cut.

**SD-32: Driveway Configuration.** Driveways along San Pablo Avenue are required to be a right-in, right-out configuration, unless controlled with a traffic signal.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES: PARKING

Parking requirements for bicycles and vehicles are contained within the zoning code. These design guidelines address parking design and placement.

**Bicycle Parking.** Design bicycle parking to be attractive, well-lit, and convenient to encourage and accommodate bicyclists of all ages and abilities. To ensure safety and avoid conflicts, locate bicycle parking as part of the pedestrian network, not as part of vehicular access. Locate long-term shared bicycle parking near building entrances in safe, pleasant, and convenient places. Integrate bicycle amenities, such as repair stations, vending machines, water fountains, electrical outlets, into bicycle rooms.

**Shared Surface Parking.** Existing surface parking lots are encouraged to create shared parking agreements to make parking more efficient and easier for customers to access.

**Vehicular Parking.** The design of the building frontage should not prioritize the vehicular entrance to the parking garage. Use public art, landscaping, and the form of the building to minimize the visual impact of parking facilities. Garages should incorporate features to add interest to the building facade and avoid blank unadorned walls.

Commercial parking may be separated from residential parking with a gate located internally. Parking lifts may be used to increase the efficiency of space dedicated to parking. Design parking garages in anticipation of converting or adapting to other uses in the future by designing flat floor plates and ramps that can easily be removed.



*A well-equipped bicycle parking facility, located conveniently near the entry, can help encourage cycling over driving.*



*The ground level of the Belmont Village in Albany is a parking garage which is designed to be integrated with the appearance of the main building. The design includes decorative metal grates that screen the vehicles inside and human scaled, high quality materials at the pedestrian level.*

## DESIGN STANDARDS: PARKING

### Bicycle Parking.

**SD-33: Pathways to Bicycle Parking.** There must be at least one pathway to bicycle parking that does not cross vehicular parking or drive aisles.

**SD-34: Shared Bicycle Parking Facilities.** Bicycle parking that does not require lifting needs to be provided for a minimum of 20% of the bicycle parking spaces, ideally located near electric outlets.

**SD-35: In-unit Bicycle Parking.** Design at least 30% individual units to accommodate in-unit bicycle parking in the foyer. Show designated areas on the plan set.

### Parking Garage Design.

**SD-36: Active Uses Lining Parking Garages.** Street level frontage of parking structures must include active uses on San Pablo Avenue to screen the parking structure and activate the street edge.

**SD-37: Garage Frontage on San Pablo Avenue.** No more than 30% of the San Pablo Avenue frontage shall be devoted to garage openings, service/loading entries. This limitation does not apply to frontages on side streets and alleys and narrow lots.

**SD-38: San Pablo Avenue Frontage for Narrow Lots.** For narrow lots with frontages on San Pablo Avenue that are 100 feet or less in width, parking entrances may be designed to be bi-directional with 12-foot minimum width entrances.

**SD-39: Parking Entrances.** 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.

**SD-40: Parking Garage Visibility.** No more than 50 percent of a building's street-facing facade can have a visible parking garage. Any part of the parking garage that is visible to a public street must use screening, such as landscaping, decorative cladding, grates, or screens.

**SD-41: Parking Garage Treatment.** All portions of visible parking structures shall be designed and treated with the same level of articulation and detail to the building(s) that they serve so that they appear integrated in design.

**SD-42: Screening Upper Floors.** Upper floors of parking garages that are visible to a public street must screen the view of cars and parking structure lighting.

**SD-43: Parking Lifts.** Parking lifts may only be used for residential parking and may not be used for commercial parking, except employees.



*Vehicular entrances, like this one on a 50-foot wide interior lot on San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley, may be designed to be bi-directional and minimal width entrances no wider than 18 feet. The parking garage shown above is also less than 50% of the frontage on San Pablo Avenue. The parking entrance is designed so that the retail frontage and entrances are more prominent than the vehicular entrances.*

# Multi-family and Mixed-Use Building Design

## DESIGN GUIDELINES: BUILDING MASSING AND FORM

**Distinctive Innovative Architecture.** Buildings are encouraged to have their own identity and use contemporary methods to define the character of the district. Design creativity and variation in built form and architectural expression through variation in building massing, form, and articulation to generate visual interest.

**Architectural Form for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Buildings on San Pablo Avenue.** Building massing should be clear and coherent with a strong organizing concept. New development shall continue to reinforce the street wall on San Pablo established with existing buildings. Buildings should be articulated through such features as projecting or recessed windows and entries, and variations in roof lines. Mark building entrances with distinguishing elements that contrast with the rest of the street and building. Overall massing shall emphasize the vertical dimensions of the building, as a means of balancing the horizontal effect of the width of the street.

**Facade Composition.** Avoid long, flat, rectangular, regular patterns. Organize the overall facade composition to be varied. Use three-dimensional forms to create different combinations of mass and bays to embellish design beyond rectilinear massing. Incorporate elements that convey information about the building's structural framework and scale. The ground floor is ideally divided by architectural details into bays to create a rhythm at the ground floor level.

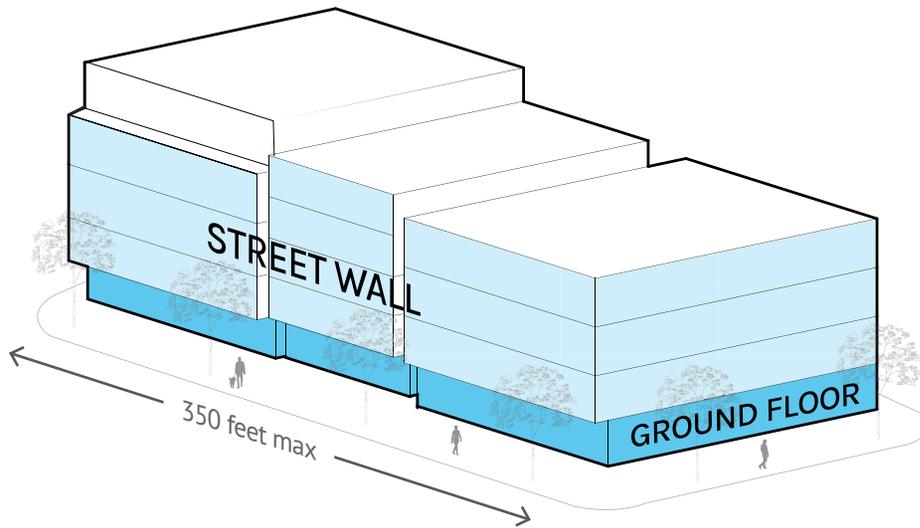
**Distinguish buildings at nodes.** Design to clearly differentiate node buildings from the rest of San Pablo with distinguishing elements using massing, public art, a change in plane, differentiation in building height, use of color, setback, or projection, especially at corners.

**Design Considering the Adjacency to Existing Residential.** In addition to required side yard setbacks, design to minimize the transition between existing buildings and taller new buildings. Landscape the setback between new buildings and the property line. Use opaque glazing or architectural screening to obscure upper floor windows that directly face existing windows.

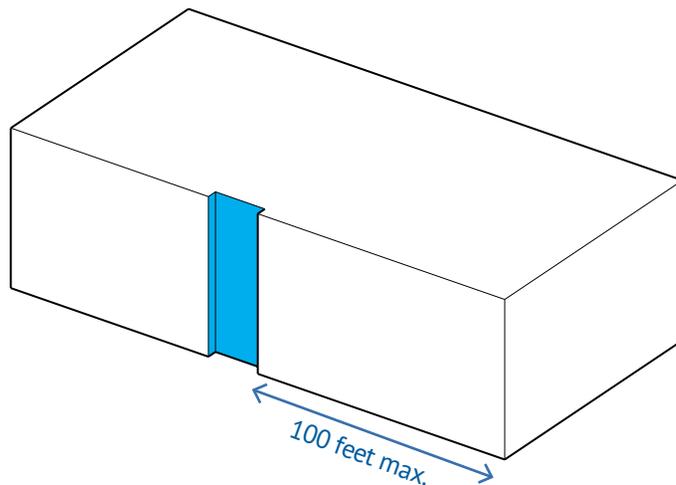


*The design of the buildings above highlight building massing and form to avoid long, flat rectangular, regular patterns. They define a base for the building, separation between distinctive volumes of massing with changes in the facade plane, roof line, and window patterns to express variation and break up the building massing to provide a human scale.*

**FIGURE 2: SAN PABLO AVENUE STREET WALL**



**FIGURE 3: MASSING BREAKS**



## DESIGN STANDARDS: BUILDING MASSING AND FORM

### Building Massing.

**BD-1: Maximum Building Length.** Building shall not exceed 350 feet in length, see Figure 2.

### Architectural Form.

**BD-2: Massing Breaks.** Buildings over three stories tall shall provide major massing breaks at least every 100 feet along San Pablo Avenue-facing facades through the use of varying setbacks, roof line building entries and recesses, courtyards or structural bays to break up the mass of the building, see Figure 3. Massing breaks shall be a minimum of 2 feet deep. Massing break shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide and maximum of 40 feet wide. The break shall extend from the finished ground floor through the full height of the building including breaking the roof plane.

**BD-3: San Pablo Avenue Street Wall.** Building facades facing San Pablo Avenue shall maintain a street wall of three stories above the ground floor at the front property line before step backs are allowed.

**BD-4: Design Massing to Minimize Appearance of Height Differences.** Utilize setbacks, building form design, and integrated building features such as a change in color or material to create the appearance of a shorter massing and provide additional transition between existing smaller neighboring buildings and buildings that are taller than two stories.

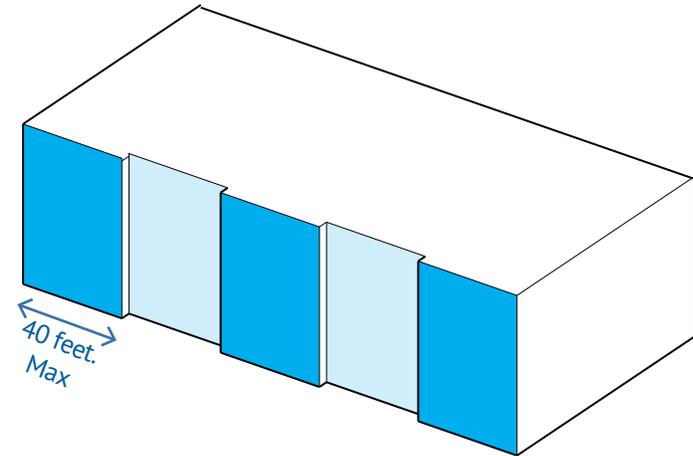
## Building Facades.

**BD-5: Facade Modulation.** For facades that face public streets, a vertical change in plane, change in material or color, or utilization of delineating architectural detail is required at least every 40 feet to modulate the facade, see Figure 4. For changes in plane, the recess or projection shall have a minimum depth of 6 inches. Horizontal modulation can also be utilized to modulate the façade (e.g. a band, cornice, or frame).

**BD-6: Facade Variation.** The massing of buildings must be composed of at least two distinctive features in its composition to be considered varied. Facade variations could be demonstrated using at least one of the following:

- a) Base-Middle-Top. Define the base of the building with a change of facade plane, change in material or color, or with an architectural feature like a band or cornice to differentiate the base from the rest of the building at a minimum. A differentiated top is also preferred.
- b) Modulate the Building Mass. Define a separation between building and building parts using projections or recesses by including horizontal shifts or changes in floor plates, projected or recessed entryways, windows, bays, canopies, awnings, balconies, setbacks, and other features that create interest and change the effects of light and shadow.
- c) Roof line Variation. Vary the roof/building height for a minimum of 30% of the building frontage using architectural elements such as parapets, varying cornices, reveals, clerestory windows, and materials. The minimum change in roof/building height shall be 4 feet of change from the primary facade. Differentiate buildings taller than three stories by embellishing the roof line to create interest when viewed along San Pablo Avenue.

**FIGURE 4: FACADE MODULATION**



*Modulation using recesses, varied setbacks, and roof line changes, help to break up long rectangular facades. The top image is an example of a modulated building facade. The bottom image is an example of roof line variation with changes in height, setback, color, awnings, balconies, and changes in the material to create visual interest.*



*Murals on side facades at the zero lot line should be enhanced with public art. (The Exchange, Salt Lake City, UT - Francisco Kjolseth | The Salt Lake Tribune)*



*Example of painted vents, gutters, and downspouts.*

### **Building Facades Treatments.**

**BD-7: Treatment of All Sides.** All sides 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.

**BD-8: Interior Side Facades.** 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.

**BD-9: Treatment Variation.** Provide at least three changes for material type, material size, texture and pattern, 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.

1. Any one material must comprise at least 20% of the building frontage, excluding windows and railings.
2. Low quality materials such as T1-11 siding, foam trim (EIFS), spray on stucco, vinyl and flat grill windows are prohibited.
3. Plywood, vinyl, plastic and plastic laminate, and fiberglass are prohibited siding materials.
4. Focus high-quality and human-scale materials on the ground floor.
5. Do not create visually busy facades with decorative elements that do not relate to the building's form, structure, use, or scale.

**BD-10: Minimize Visibility of Building Utilities.** Minimize the visibility of vents, galvanized metal gutters, downspouts, flashing, and electrical conduits by aligning them on the facades and painting them to match the color of the adjacent surface. Gutters, downspouts, and flashing that utilize decorative metals such as copper do not need to be painted.

## Windows.

**BD-11: Window Variation.** Provide at least two changes in size, proportions, pattern, depth or projection. Facades or portions of facades using a curtain wall are exempt from these standards.

**BD-12: Window Relief.** Window frames must be recessed a minimum of two inches from the surrounding wall plane. Thick muntins are preferred and flat muntins are not desired. Flat or flush windows in the facade are prohibited unless there is a projection or recess of 4 inches of depth from the primary facade, see Figure 5.

**BD-13: Glazing.** Mirrored glass is prohibited to minimize off-site glare and maximize transparency.

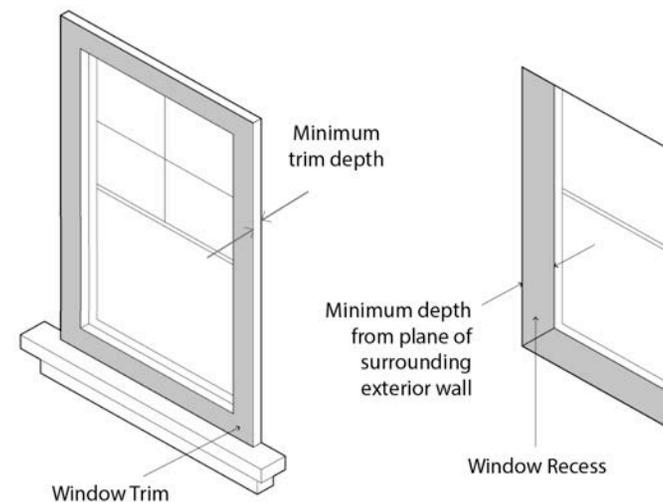
1. Transparent glazing shall be a maximum of 15% reflective, visible light transmittance greater than 80%, and without tint or coloration in the glass substrate.
2. Ground floor commercial facades shall have a minimum of 50% transparent glazing, a maximum of 50% reflective, visible transmittance greater than 80%, and without tint or coloration in the glass substrate.
3. Ground floor residential facades shall have a minimum of 30% transparent glazing, a maximum of 50% reflective, visible transmittance greater than 80%, and without tint or coloration in the glass substrate.

**BD-14: Acoustic Design.** Design residential units along the first four floors of the street wall facing San Pablo Avenue to include windows, walls, and treatments that reduce the sound of traffic to exceed the standards for acoustics in Title 24.



*A variety of window changes in size, proportions, patterns, depth and projection.*

**FIGURE 5: WINDOW RELIEF**



*Window frames must be recessed to show depth and shadow on the facade.*

**BD-15: Bird-safe Glazing.** Treat glazing with features that enable birds to perceive the glass as a solid object. The requirement may include but need not be limited to the following techniques:

- a) Light-colored blinds or curtains;
- b) Opaque glass, translucent glass, or opaque or translucent window film;
- c) Paned glass with mullions on the exterior of the glass;
- d) Glass covered with permanent patterns, which may be etched, fritted, stenciled, silk-screened, applied to the glass on films or decals, or similar method;
- e) Ultraviolet (UV)-pattern reflective glass, laminated glass with a patterned UV-reflective coating, or UV-absorbing and UV-reflecting film that is permanently applied to the glass; or
- f) Other glazing treatments that provide an equivalent level of bird safety and approved by the Planning Director as part of building plan review.

**BD-16: Bird-safe fenestration design.** Incorporate building and fenestration designs and/or operational measures that will minimize bird collisions and achieve an equivalent level of bird safety. Design and operational solutions may include but need not be limited to the following techniques, singularly or in combination:

- a) Layering and recessing glazed surfaces
- b) Angled or faceted glazing that minimizes reflectivity and transparency
- c) Louvers, overhangs and/or awnings
- d) Glass block
- e) Decorative grills that allow birds to perceive the grills, together with the glass behind them, as solid
- f) Glass embedded with photovoltaic cells; and
- g) Placement of landscaping in such a way as to minimize bird collisions.

**BD-17: Security Bars.** Bars and security gates over windows and doors must fully retract out-of-site from the frontage along San Pablo Avenue.

### Lighting

**BD-18: Exterior Lighting.** All exterior lighting included as a part of the proposed project shall light downwards instead of towards the sky, interior lights shall be dimmed or turned off at night and limited to required security lighting.

### Rooftop Design

**BD-19: Screen Rooftop Equipment.** Rooftop elements including roof access, mechanical equipment, and other utility features on the rooftop shall be located to minimize visual impact by stepping back from the top of the parapet or roof edge and screened to a height equal to the height of the equipment if greater than the height of the parapet wall. Solar panels, wind generators, and green roof features, and other features less than two feet in height are exempt from these requirements.

**BD-20: Parapets for Rooftop Open Spaces.** Provide parapets, design features, and landscaping to screen activity from neighbors and conceal upper level open spaces.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES: GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGE

**Active Frontages on San Pablo Avenue.** Active uses generate pedestrian visits over an extended period of the day. Active frontages provide visual engagement between those walking by on the street and those on the ground floor.

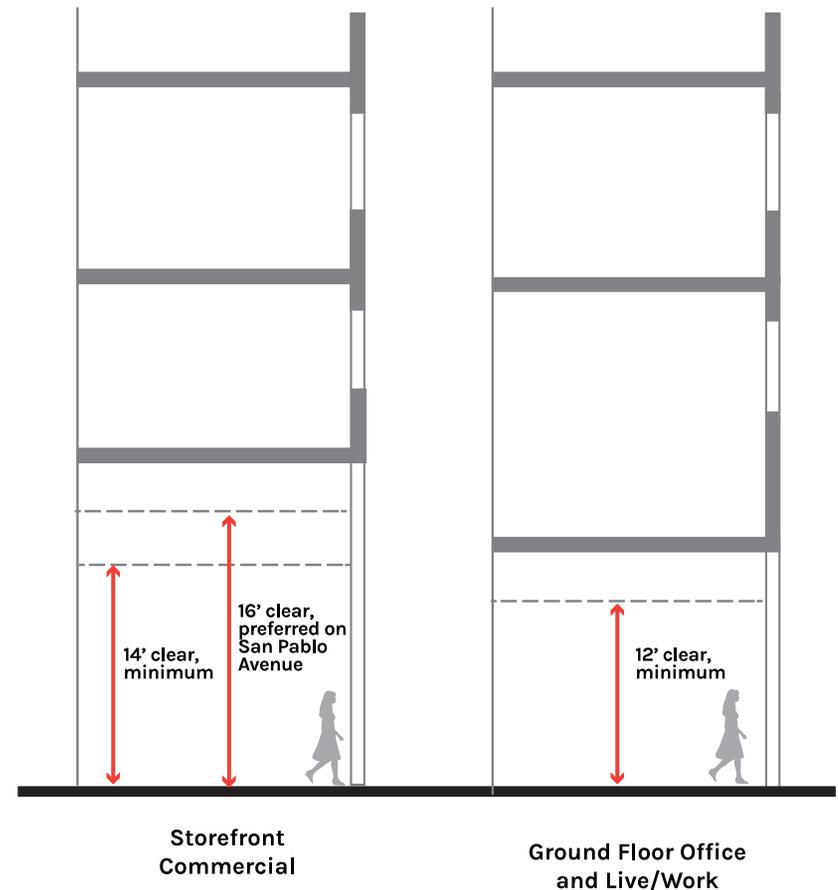
Active Frontage Types include:

- Storefront Commercial, for example shops and cafes.
- Ground Floor Office
- Live/Work
- Ground Floor Residential Units with individual unit entries
- Ground Floor Residential Accessory spaces, for example indoor community rooms and gyms.

**Commercial Storefronts on San Pablo Avenue.** Design to the human scale by detailing the facade at the pedestrian level through the use of awnings, storefront window systems, signage, high quality base wall treatments, building lighting, and landscaping.

**Ground Floor Frontage on Parallel and Side Streets.** Parallel and side streets to San Pablo Avenue should incorporate individual entries to units, front entry treatment, landscaping, and/or minimized vehicular entry.

**FIGURE 6: CLEARANCE HEIGHTS OF ACTIVE USES ON SAN PABLO AVENUE**



## DESIGN STANDARDS: GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGE

### Active Frontages on San Pablo Avenue.

**BD-21: Active Frontage Requirements on San Pablo Avenue.** Active frontages are required for a minimum of 50% of each building facade facing a San Pablo Avenue.

**BD-22: Storefront Commercial Floor-to-Floor Heights.** Minimum floor-to-floor heights: 14 feet clear minimum, with a preference for ground floor spaces to be 16 feet clear on San Pablo Avenue, see Figure 6.

**BD-23: Ground Floor Office and Live/Work.** Minimum floor-to-floor heights: 12 feet clear minimum on San Pablo Avenue, see Figure 6.

**BD-24: Exemptions.** Projects with 100% below-market rate units (except for the manager's unit and up to 120% of AMI) are exempt from minimum floor-to-floor heights.

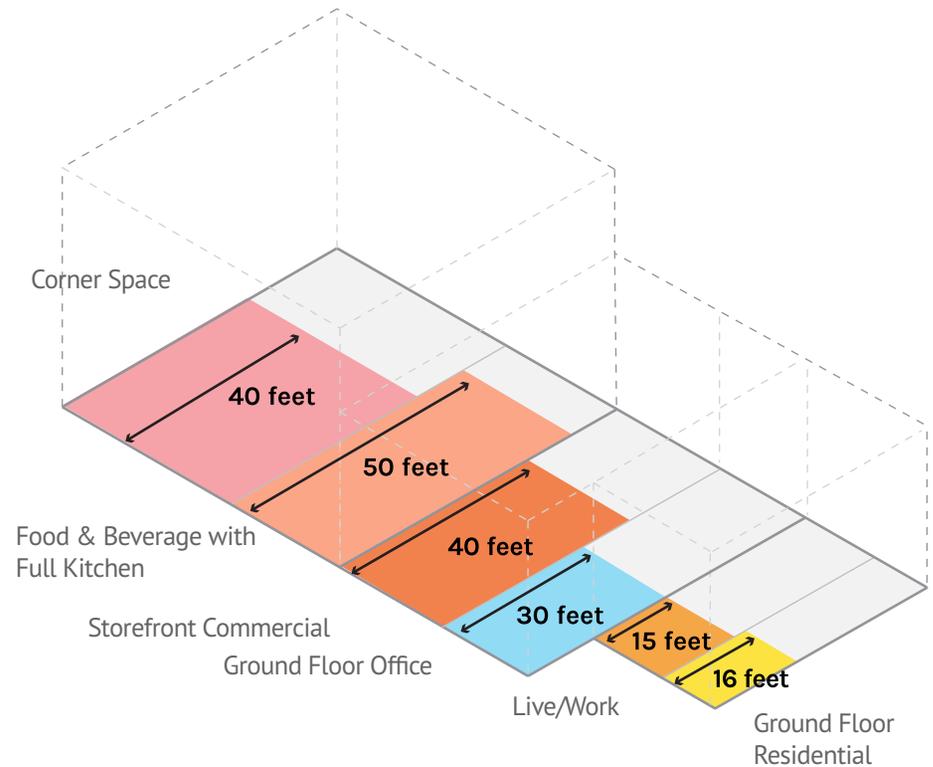
### Minimum Depth of Active Uses on San Pablo Avenue

**BD-25: Minimum Depth for Active Uses.** Active frontage uses shall have a minimum interior depth of gross building area by use type, see Figure 7.

**BD-26: Minimum Interior Depths.** All active uses must be a minimum interior depth of 20 feet for the gross building area with the exception of ground floor individual residential units and live/work units. Ground Floor Residential Accessory Spaces, such as lobbies, community rooms, and shared spaces must provide a minimum depth of 20 feet.

**BD-27: Minimum Commercial Depths.** Storefront Commercial must provide a minimum interior depth of 40 feet for a minimum of 50% of the width of the frontage, and 20 feet minimum depth. Corner commercial spaces must provide a minimum depth of 40 feet on all frontages. Ground Floor Office uses must provided a 30 feet minimum depth.

FIGURE 7: MINIMUM DEPTH OF ACTIVE USES



**BD-28: Minimum Food and Beverage Depths.** For food and beverage service that requires a full kitchen, there must be at least one 50-foot dimension that is at minimum 25% of the total depth or width, whichever direction is most applicable.

**BD-29:** Live/Work units must provide a 15 feet minimum depth for a minimum width of 15 feet or 50% of the unit frontage, whichever is greater.



*Live/work units on the ground-floor (Adrienne Doyon)*



*Ground-Floor commercial retail*

## Ground Floor Windows.

**BD-30: Commercial Storefronts.** Commercial storefronts shall have windows on the ground floor street frontage that provide views into the buildings and/or provide space for public display of merchandise or other materials, or otherwise offer public attraction as determined in the design review process. Alterations or treatments for the purpose of making windows obscure shall be prohibited.

**BD-31: Clear Openings.** Storefronts in new mixed-use developments shall contain clear openings and windows for a minimum of 60% of the total area of the first floor facades facing San Pablo Avenue sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly accessible outdoor areas, where it is between 3 feet and 8 feet above elevation of adjacent sidewalk, see Figure 8.

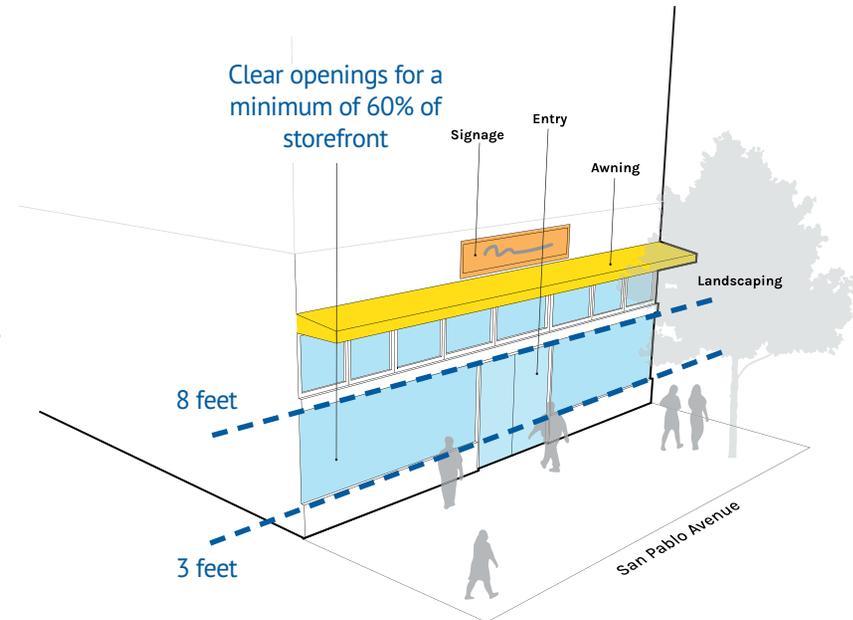
## Signage.

**BD-32: Sign Design.** Signs shall be either attached to the walls or printed onto awnings, and be proportional to the size of the building. Internally illuminated signs shall be composed of individual channel letters, as opposed to can signs enclosing copy on an illuminated sheet surface.

**BD-33: Sign Location.** No signs shall be permitted on Kains Avenue or Adams Street except for directional signs and other signs that are allowed without permits by Section 20.32 of the Zoning Ordinance.

**BD-34: Wayfinding and Directional Signage.** New development with a commercial component or more than 20 units shall support district wayfinding and direction signage by highlighting opportunities for public transit, walking, and cycling at the pedestrian level.

**FIGURE 8: 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.*

### Ground Floor Frontage on Parallel and Side Streets.

**BD-35: Parallel and Side Streets to San Pablo Avenue.** Where there are provided, individual unit entrances may not be spaced more than 30 feet apart.

**BD-36: Through Lots.** Lots that have frontage on both San Pablo and the parallel streets of either Kains or Adams are required to design both frontages with the same quality and care as the San Pablo Avenue frontage. For through lots, San Pablo Avenue will remain the primary commercial face of the building. A second entry for residential is required for through-lots.

### Ground Floor Residential Unit Entries.

**BD-37: Residential Unit Entry Transition Zone.** Provide a transition zone between the public pathway and the front entry for individual units that includes landscaping and features that help to define a semi-private and open areas.

**BD-38: Stoops.** Stoop heights shall be within 1 step of finished floor height of adjacent unit. Stoop entry landings shall be a minimum of 4 feet in depth.

**BD-39: Porches.** Porches shall have a minimum dimension of 6 feet. The maximum porch floor height from the back of sidewalk grade shall be 5 feet.

**BD-40: Patios.** Patio area shall have a minimum dimension of 8 feet in either direction. The patio shall use one of the following features to demarcate the private space from public space

- h) Planting that does not exceed 42 inches in height.
- i) A metal or wood fence or stone wall that does not exceed 36 inches in height with a gate, and a minimum of 18-inch landscaping strip on the sidewalk side of the fence or wall within the property line.



*Individual Residential Entries shall provide a transition zone between the public pathway and the entrance to the unit. This can be accomplished with a stoop, porch, or patio.*

### Ground Floor Treatment for Service/Loading/Utilities.

**BD-41: Service Areas.** All service areas shall be enclosed or otherwise architecturally concealed from the street. Locate services for loading, delivery, trash and infrastructure inside the building structure to the rear of buildings, or in a screened enclosure. Locate service entries at least 25 feet from the primary pedestrian and bicycle entrance to the building along the same street, and preferably the maximum distance that is feasible.

**BD-42: Screening.** Screening shall be equal to or higher than the height of the equipment to be screened. Screening shall be made of a primary exterior finish material used on other portions of the building. If screening is designed as landscaping, the planting must form an opaque barrier when planted. Screening can take form as decorative grates, structures, architectural screens, or landscaping.

**BD-43: Refuse Collection Areas.** Refuse collection areas shall not be located within required front yard or street side yard, parking spaces, required landscaped areas, or open space areas. Refuse and recycling containers shall not be stored in a place visible from a public street nor conflict with circulation or parking on site. Refuse collection areas shall be located as far as possible from the residential portion of mixed-use buildings and open space areas.

**BD-44: Utilities.** Utilities and equipment, service, storage, and loading areas for goods shall be located inside buildings or on facades other than the primary building frontage at the rear or side of the building. Utilities and equipment, service, storage, and loading areas for goods shall be consolidated in a single area whenever possible that is not within the frontage zone, mid-block connections, or within 25 feet of open spaces, within the public right-of-way, or within 25 feet of the street corner. Ground-level utilities shall be located inside buildings, closets, or underground unless prohibited by the utility provider.

**BD-45: Grease Interceptors.** Allocate vertical space for venting and underground grease interceptors located for easy maintenance, at the conceptual development stage, to support food related uses.

**BD-46: Backflow Preventers.** Backflow preventers should be located within landscaped setbacks to minimize visual impact.



*The service area is placed on a side street and is concealed from the street. The refuse containers are out for pickup in this image.*



*Ideally, utility boxes are screened or hidden behind landscaping or architectural screening.*

## Shared Spaces.

Shared on-site amenity spaces are associated with multi-family and mixed-use housing and include spaces both indoors and outdoors. Shared spaces should be designed for communal function, gathering, and socializing. The required amount of shared space can be found in the zoning ordinance. The following are standards and guidelines that apply to the design of shared spaces.

Shared open spaces are preferably sited with a southern exposure in a way that maximizes sunlight exposure during midday and afternoon. Ideally there are units facing the space to activate the space. Use massing to enhance access to daylight and ventilation of interior spaces and frame on-site open spaces.

Design units around common spaces so that views into bedroom windows are screened or obscured by locating away from common spaces. Avoid aligning bedroom windows directly opposite from existing windows. Ideally, orient living rooms, kitchens, dining areas, and balconies to face common spaces instead of bedrooms so that there is shared visibility of common spaces for natural surveillance.

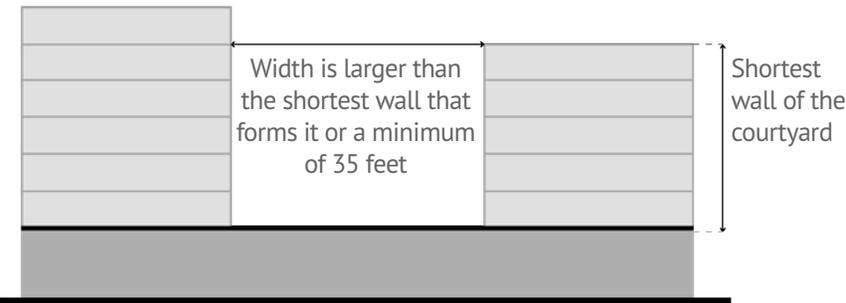


*Well-design shared spaces, such as shared open spaces and lobbies, provide places for gathering and connection.*

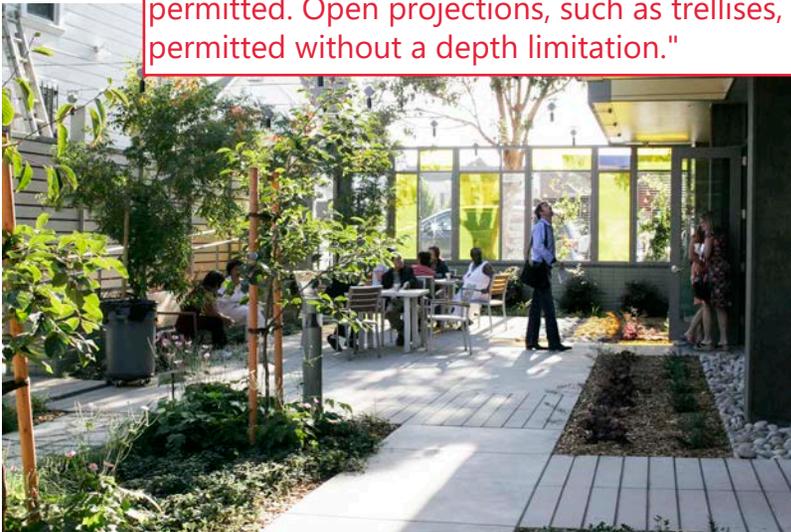


*The design of spaces next to courtyards should consider privacy for bedroom windows. The orientation of kitchens, living rooms, and dining areas to the courtyard is encouraged to activate the courtyard.*

**FIGURE 9: ENCLOSED COURTYARDS**



Revise BD-50 to encourage more openness and make less prescriptive: "Shared open space shall be designed open to the sky and free of permanent weather protection. Encroachments up to 3 feet in depth are permitted. Open projections, such as trellises, are permitted without a depth limitation."



*Podium top landscaping in shared open spaces must utilize native, drought-tolerant Bay Friendly plants. (Cliff Lowe Associates)*

**BD-47: Shared Spaces.** Multi-family and mixed-use residential developments with at least 20 dwelling units must provide a lobby and mail room and additional indoor and open spaces amenities as required in the zoning code.

**BD-48: Common Shared Space Requirements.** Common shared spaces shall be accessible to all residents for at least 12 consecutive hours of the day. Common shared spaces shall be accessible from the lobby with wayfinding signage and adjacent to common spaces, or hallways. Design common shared spaces to be visible from the adjacent units for natural surveillance.

**BD-49: Shared Open Space Requirements.** Shared open spaces shall have a minimum of 20% landscaping. Landscaping must utilize native, drought-tolerant, Bay Friendly plants, and plants that are attractive to birds and bees. At least 2 feet of planting medium is required for landscaping on top of podiums.

**BD-50: Openness.** Shared open space shall have a minimum of 60% of the area open to the sky and free of permanent weather protection or encroachments. Trellises and similar features are permitted.

**BD-51: Enclosed Courtyards.** For shared open spaces that are enclosed on all four sides, the minimum width of the court shall be equal to or greater than the shortest wall that forms it or a minimum width of 35 feet, whichever is greater, see Figure 9.

**BD-52: Common Spaces and Privacy.** Units that are on the same level as courtyards 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 a pathway or common open space must have landscaped visual barriers like tall bushes or trees.



# **San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan: Design Guidelines and Objective Standards**