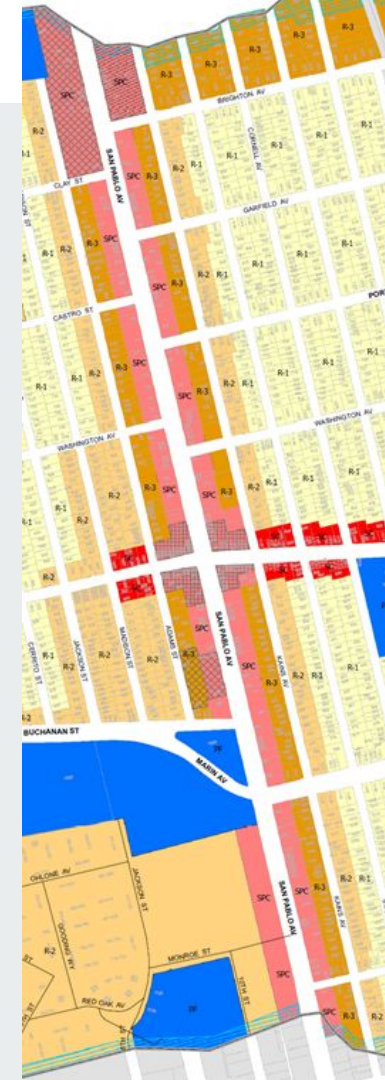




# San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan: *Density, Height & Parking*

July 22, 2020  
City of Albany  
Planning & Zoning Commission

Lexington Planning and Urban Field Studio



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# Agenda

1. Key Standards:
  - Building height, residential density, and floor area ratio
  - Height transitions
  - Vehicular and bicycle parking
2. Polling
3. Questions & Discussion
4. Next Steps
  - Land use
  - Height/density nodes
  - Plan area boundaries



---

# May 27th Planning Commission Study Session

## *Commissioner comments:*

- Remove regulatory barriers to build higher density (5+ stories)
- Require height transitions
- Explore alternate ways to regulate massing
- Some concerns that parking and open space requirements are too high
- Include the street and streetscape in the planning process
- Create nodes where higher densities are allowed
- Mixed reactions to changing ground-floor commercial requirement
- Create a sense of place through public and private design



---

# May 27th Planning Commission Study Session

## *Public comments:*

- Include bike parking in the plan and future projects
- Some concerns about increasing the height limit and potential impacts on adjacent lower density/height housing
- Some concern about amending the General Plan to allow taller heights
- Some other commenters supported removing barriers to develop housing
- Desire for affordable housing; concerns about displacement
- Importance of the street and public spaces, including safety and developing civic spaces

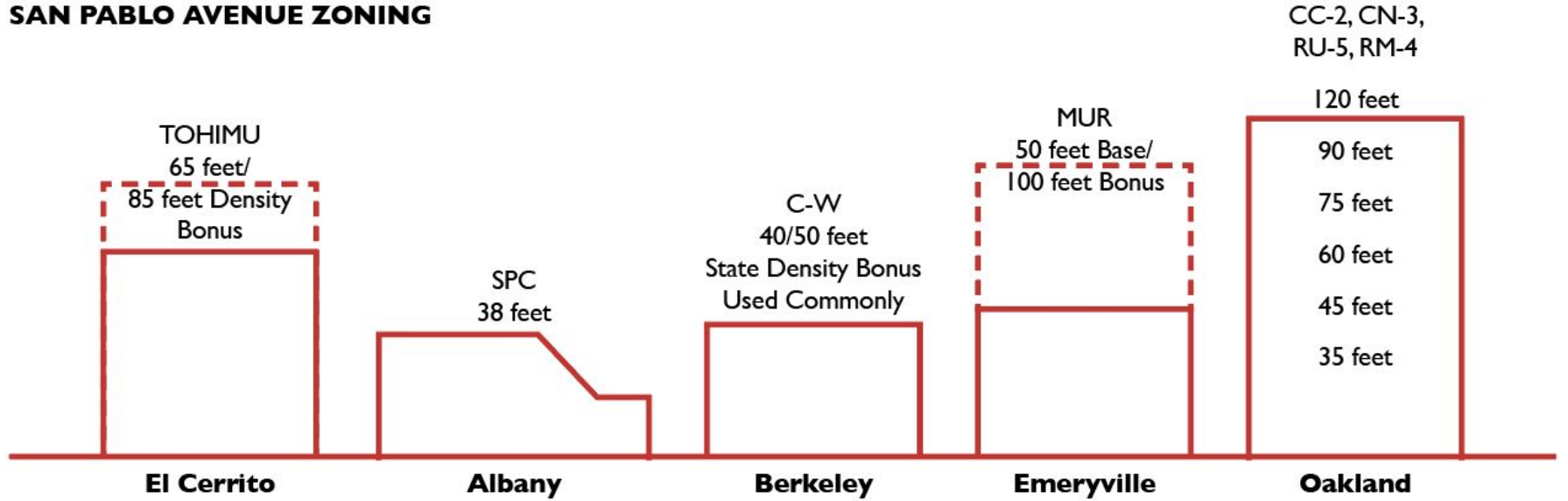


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# Key Zoning Standards that Affect Site Development:

*Building Height, Residential  
Density, FAR, Parking*

# SAN PABLO AVENUE ZONING





Type V Wood Frame Construction



Type I, II, III Concrete/steel/wood frame Construction



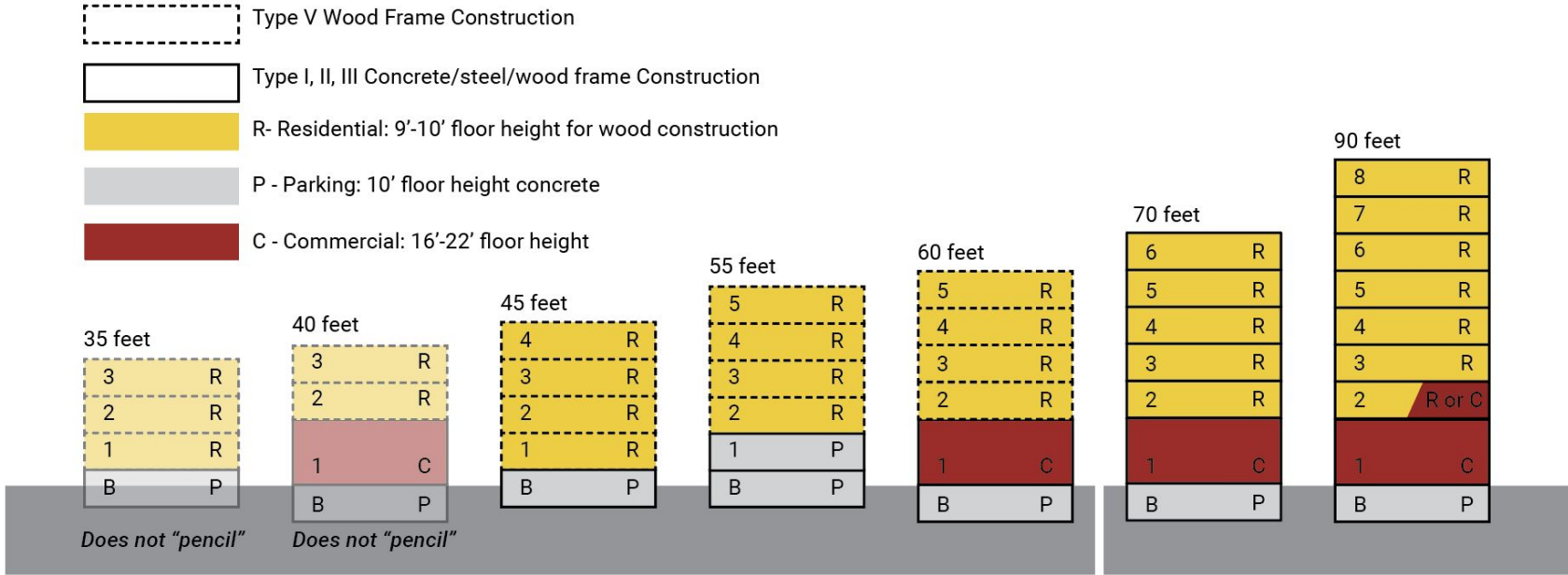
R - Residential: 9'-10' floor height for wood construction



P - Parking: 10' floor height concrete



C - Commercial: 16'-22' floor height



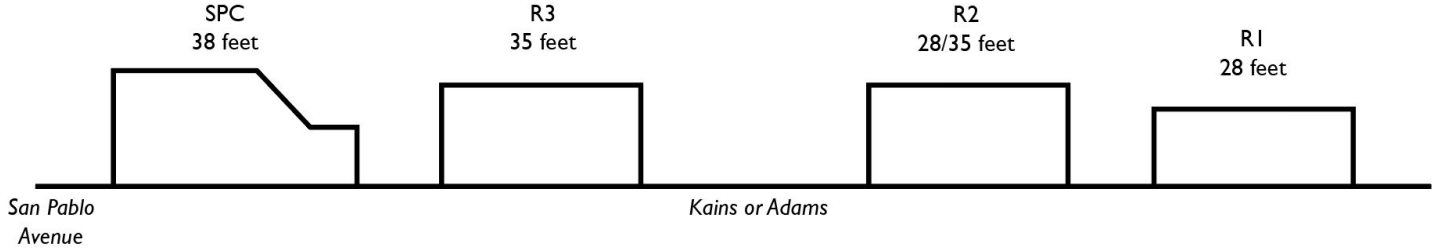
Does not "pencil"

Does not "pencil"

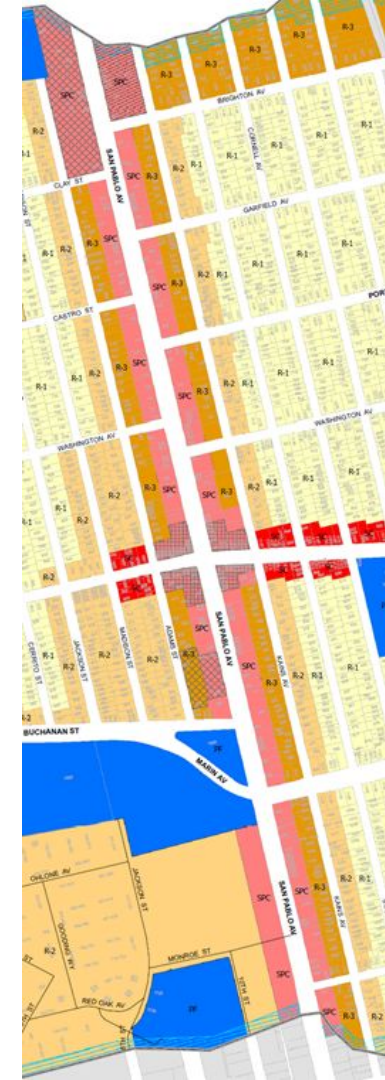
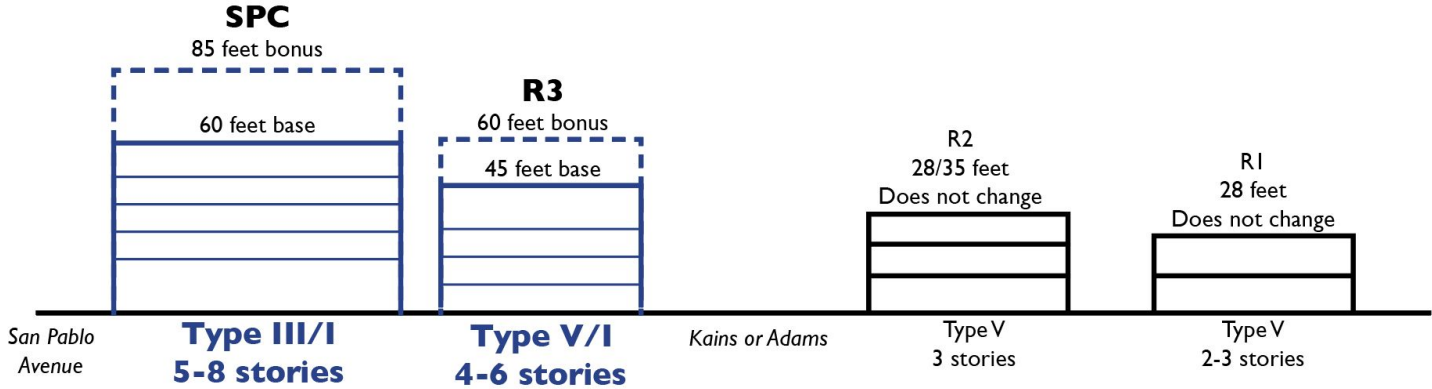
Type V over Type I

Type I, II, III over Type I

**EXISTING ZONING**



**POTENTIAL ZONING**



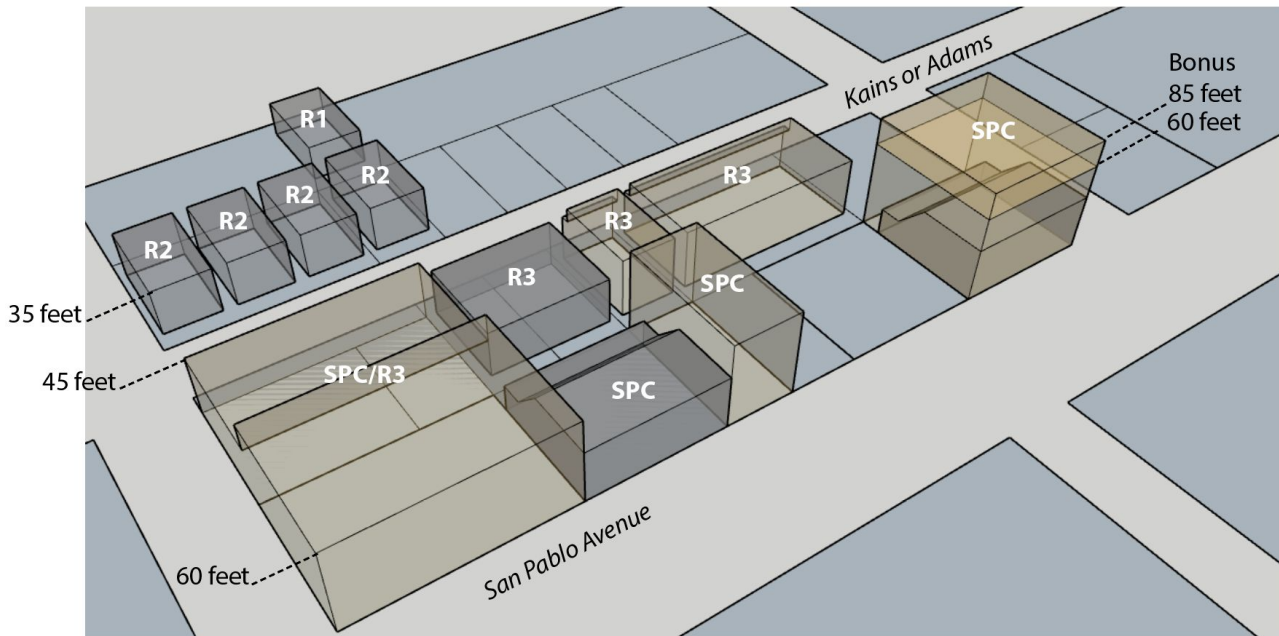


**Modify Height Limit?**

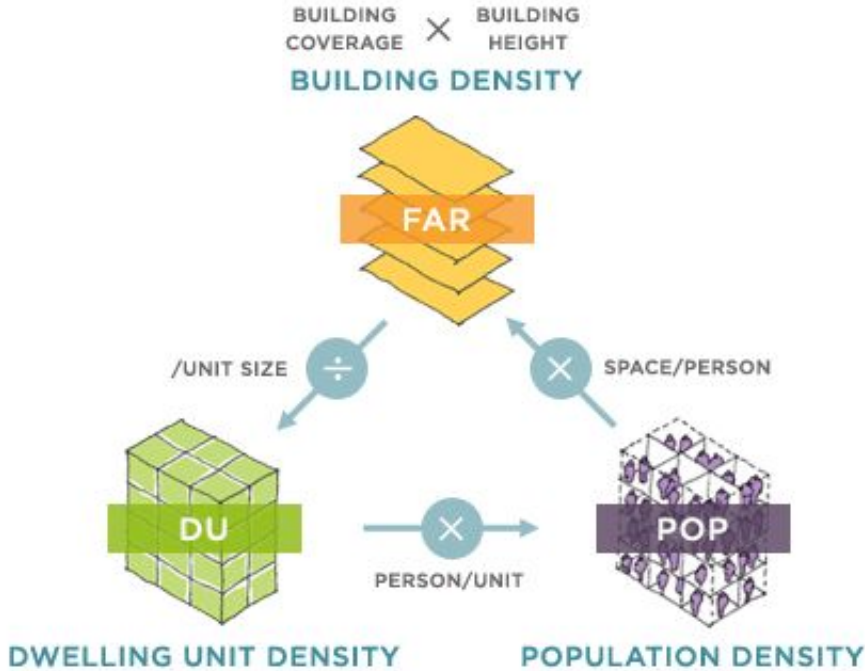
**Rezone nodes to SPC?**

**Setbacks?**

**Transitions? to SFH on Kains/ Adams**

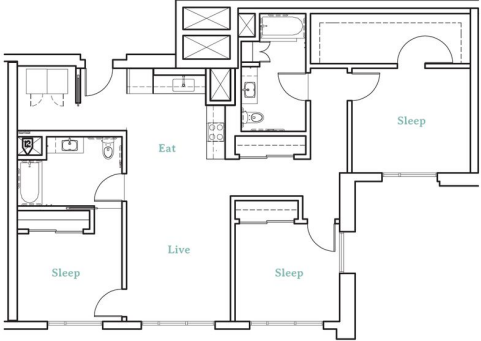


The dimensional size of the lot matters. Feasibility is generally based on the 60 foot parking bay, 30 foot column grid.

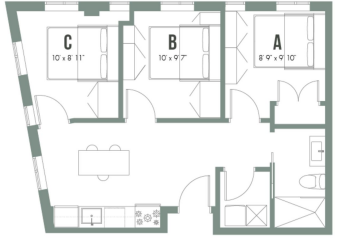


MIT's Density Atlas

Residential density values vary based on the number of units and do not reflect the unit size or number of bedrooms in each unit



3 BR Unit: ~1000 sf

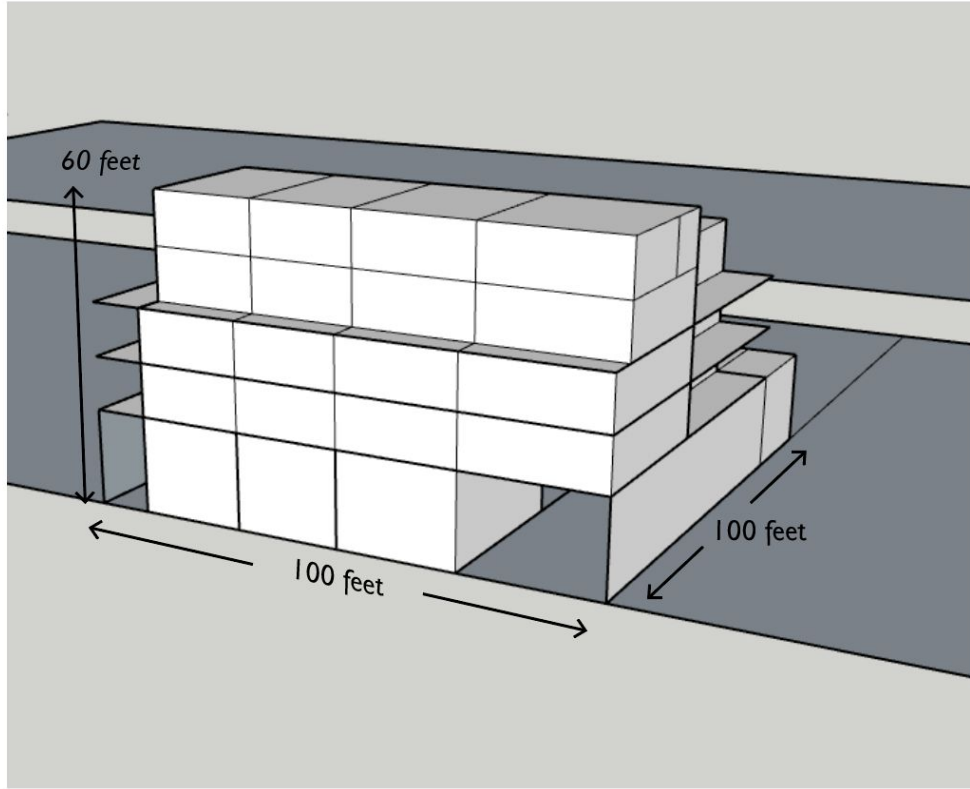


3 BR Co-living Unit: 650 sf

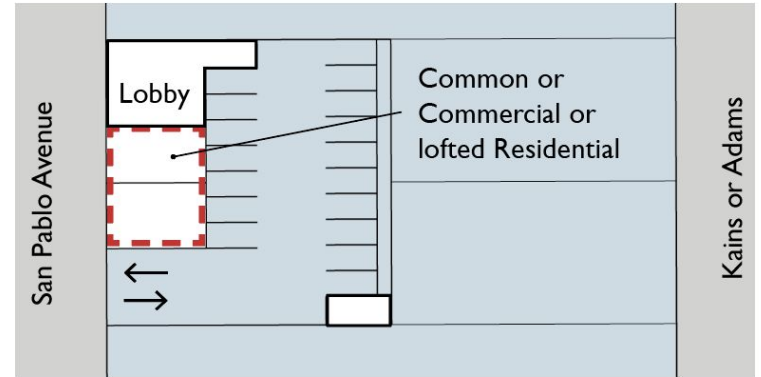
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# Site Capacity Tests: Half Block - SPC

## POTENTIAL HOUSING CAPACITY WITH MODIFIED SPC ZONING STANDARDS - HALF BLOCK



Building Height: 50 feet, 4 stories  
Unit Count: 24 units (average 800 sf/unit)  
Affordable: 4 units  
Density: 105 du/ac  
FAR 2.75 FAR

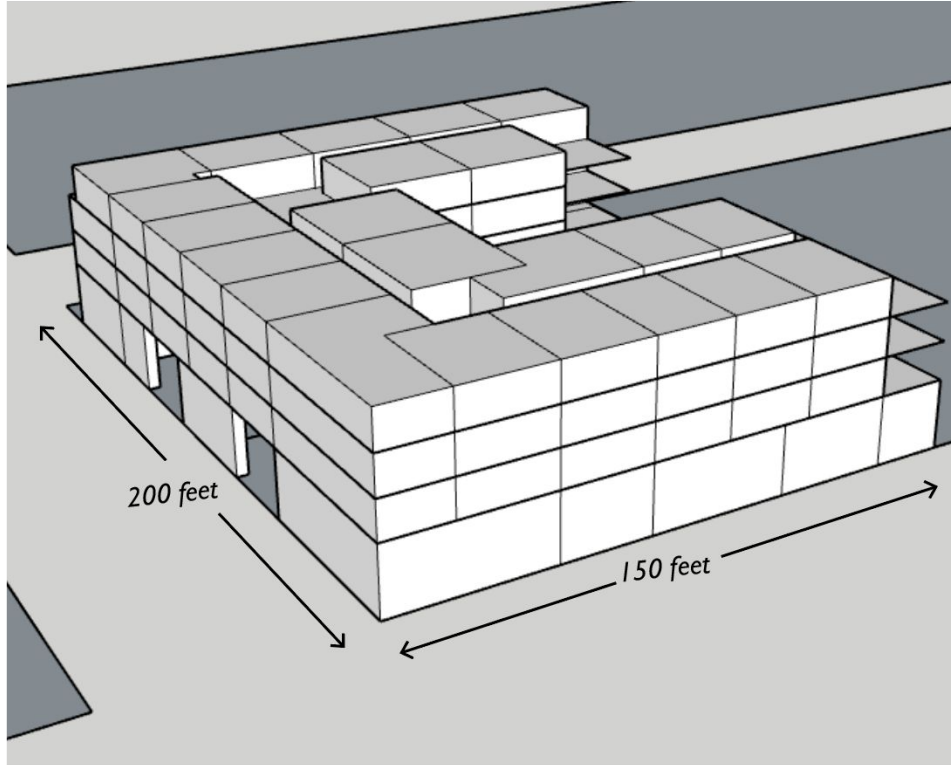


Parking Required: 24 spaces  
Parking Provided: 16 at grade, 8 lifts

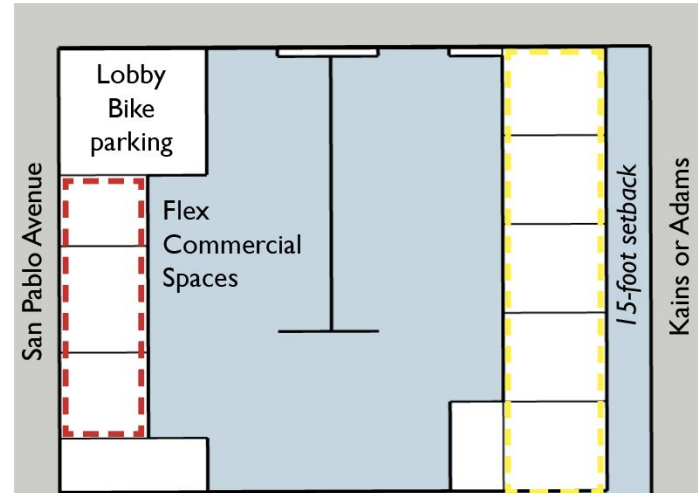
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# Site Capacity Tests: Whole Block - SPC

## POTENTIAL HOUSING CAPACITY WITH MODIFIED SPC ZONING STANDARDS

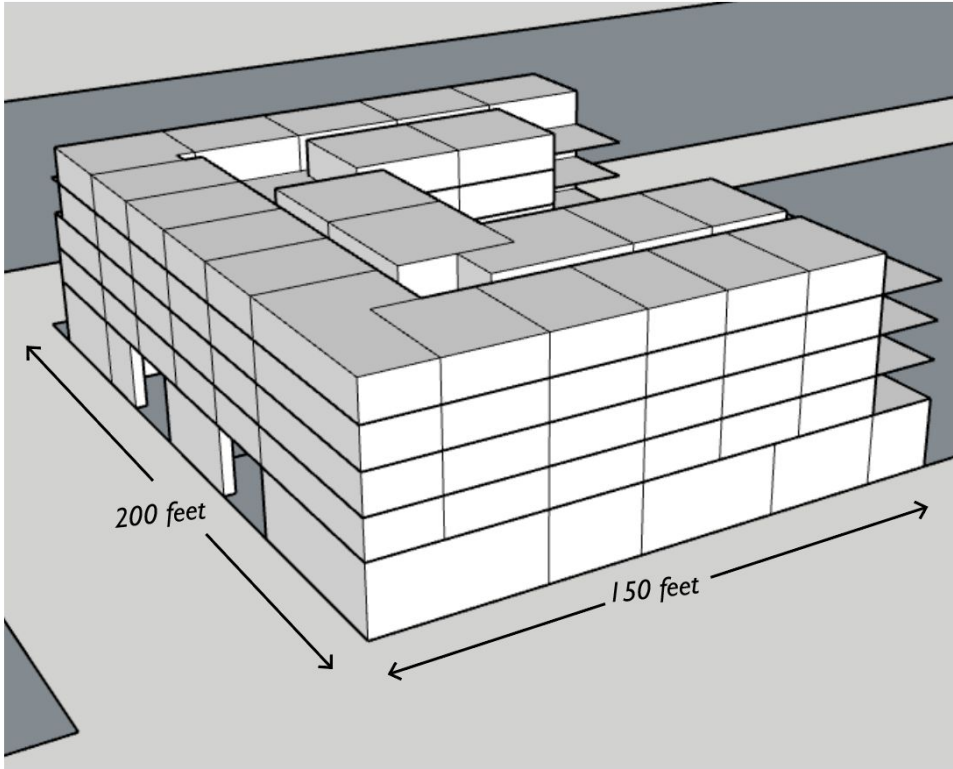


Building Height: 50 feet, 4 stories  
Unit Count: 71 units (average 800 sf/unit)  
Affordable: 11 units  
Density: 103 du/ac  
FAR 2.6 FAR

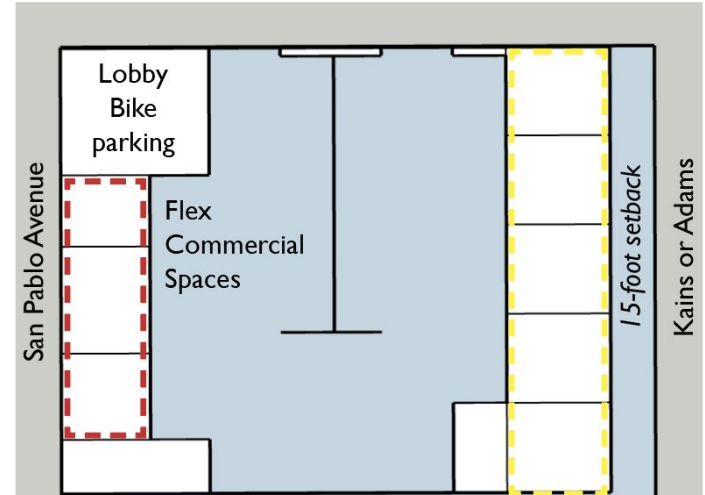


Parking Required: 77 spaces  
Parking Provided: 59 at grade, 18 lifts

## POTENTIAL HOUSING CAPACITY WITH MODIFIED SPC ZONING STANDARDS

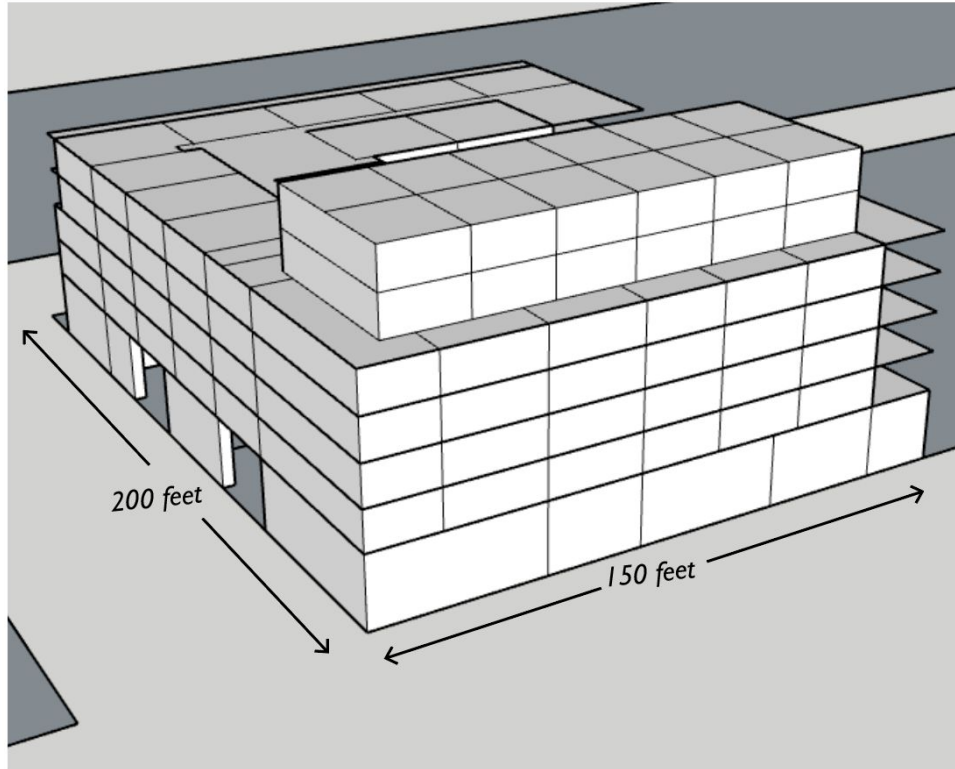


Building Height: 60 feet, 5 stories  
Unit Count: 93 units (average 800 sf/unit)  
Affordable: 14 units  
Density: 135 du/ac  
FAR 4.2 FAR

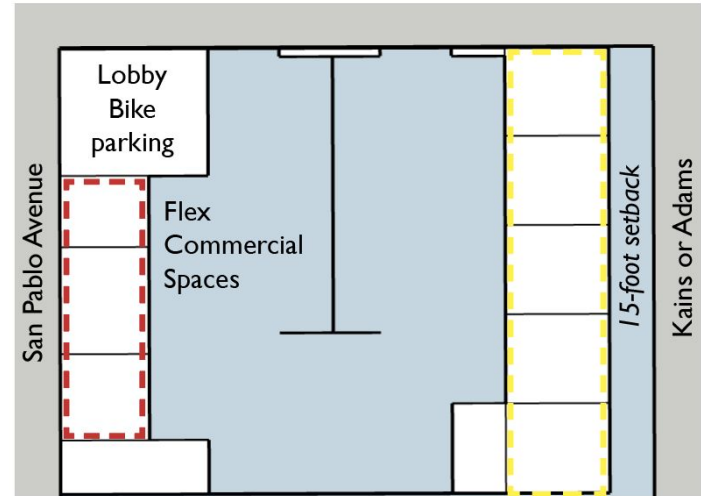


Parking Required: 99 spaces  
Parking Provided: 59 at grade, 40 lifts

## POTENTIAL HOUSING CAPACITY WITH MODIFIED SPC ZONING STANDARDS



Building Height: 80 feet, 7 stories  
Unit Count: 105 units (ave. 800 sf/unit)  
Affordable: 16 units  
Density: 152 du/ac  
FAR 4.7 FAR



Parking Required: 111 spaces  
Parking Provided: 59 at grade, 52 lifts



# Effects of State Density Bonus Law (Height)

	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
<b>"Base Project"</b>			
Building Height	4 stories	5 stories	7 stories
Residential Density	103	135	152
# of Units	71	93	105
Residential Parking	71	93	105
<b>"State Density Bonus Project"</b>			
Building Height	5 stories (possible partial 6th story)	6-7 stories	8-9 stories
Residential Density (Max. 35% Bonus)	140	184	207
Unit Yield	97	126	142
Residential Parking	97	111	111

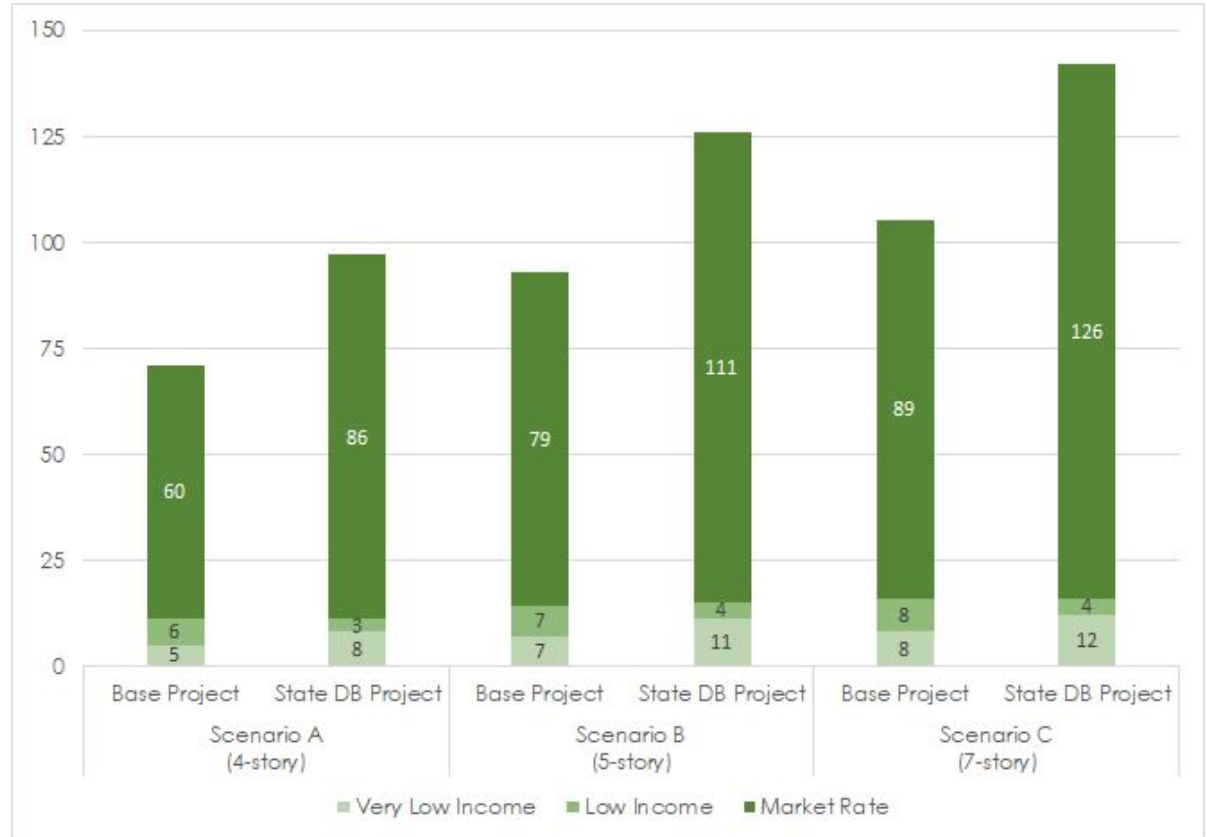
9 stories likely infeasible due to change in Fire code/construction type

Likely need for parking concession to avoid parking underground

# Effects of State Density Bonus Law (BMR Units)

Allows more market rate units, but not more affordable units

Generates more Very Low income units, but fewer Low income units



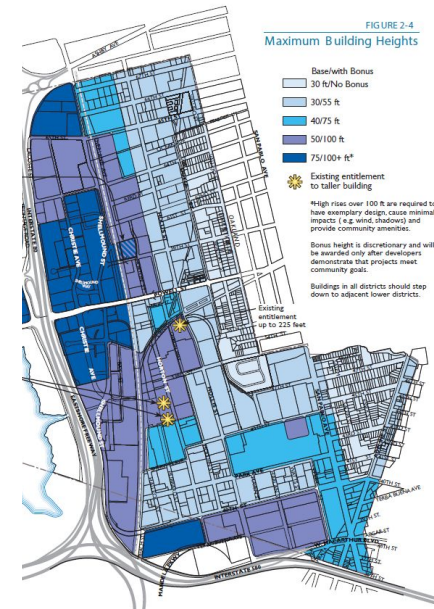
# Proposed Changes to State Density Bonus Law

	Current Density Bonus Law	SB 1085	AB 2345
Very Low Income (VLI)	35% bonus for 11% VLI units	40% bonus for 11% VLI units	50% bonus for 15% VLI units
Low Income (LI)	35% bonus for 20% LI units	No change	50% bonus for 24% LI units
Moderate Income (MI)	35% bonus for 44% MI units (for-sale only)	35% bonus for 20% MI units (rental and for-sale)*	50% bonus for 44% MI units (for-sale only)

\*Applies only when rent for the unit is 30 percent below the market rate for the city, county, or city and county in which the housing development is located.

# Option: Local Density Bonus Program

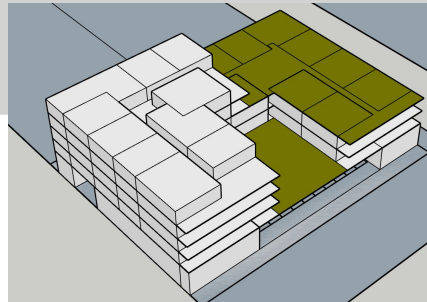
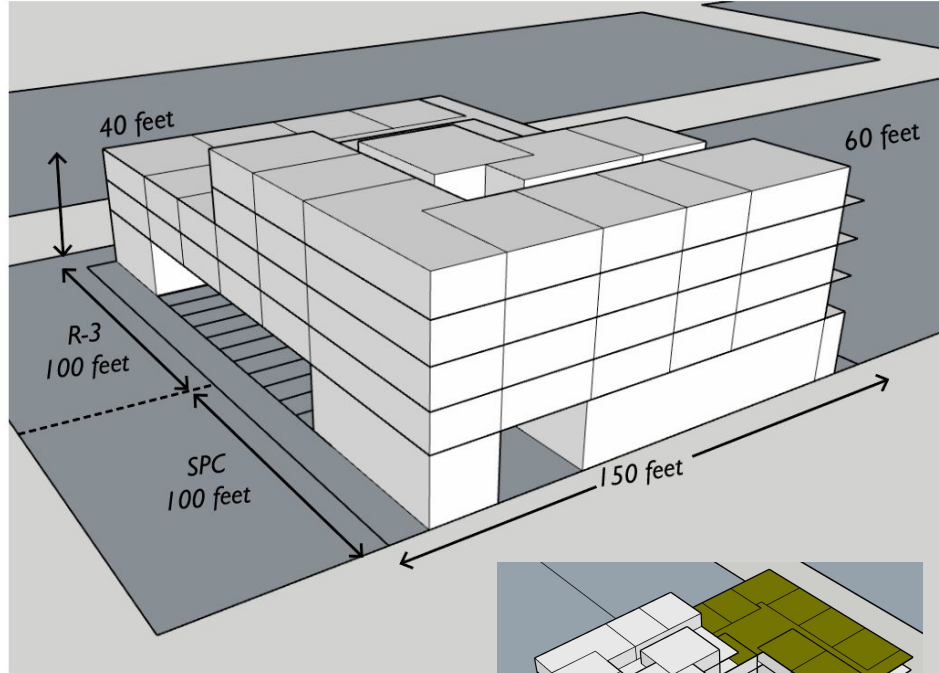
- Leverage any increase in height/density (and property values) to encourage community benefits
- Alternative to State Density Bonus Law gives City more control over benefits and exceptions
- Example:
  - 50% density increase from 63 du/ac to 95 du/ac (vs. max 35% under SDBL)
  - in exchange for desired amenities: affordable housing (above 15% requirement or fee in-lieu), significant bike facility, publicly accessible open space, paseos, etc.
  - Identify menu of waivers/exceptions: maximum height, modifications to setback, parking, etc.



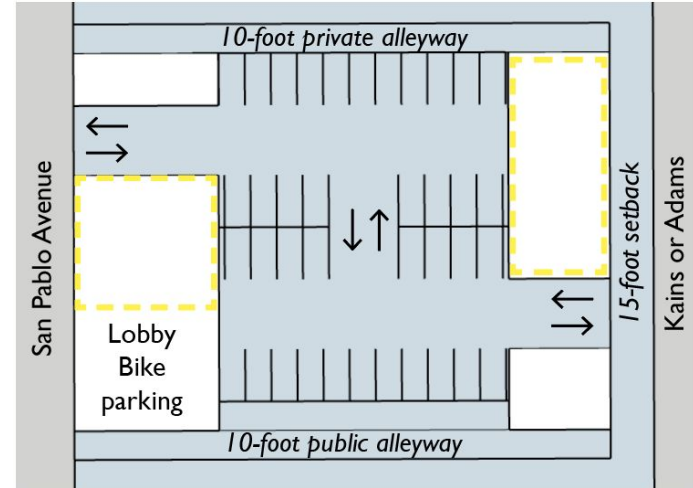
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# Site Capacity Tests: Split Block - SPC/R-3

## POTENTIAL HOUSING CAPACITY WITH MODIFIED R-3 ZONING STANDARDS - HALF BLOCK



Building Height: 60 feet and 5 stories for SPC  
40 feet and 3 stories for R-3  
Unit Count: 63 units (ave. 800 sf/unit)  
Affordable: 10 units  
Density: 92 du/ac  
FAR 2.4 FAR



Parking Required: 63 spaces  
Parking Provided: 38 at grade, 25 lifts

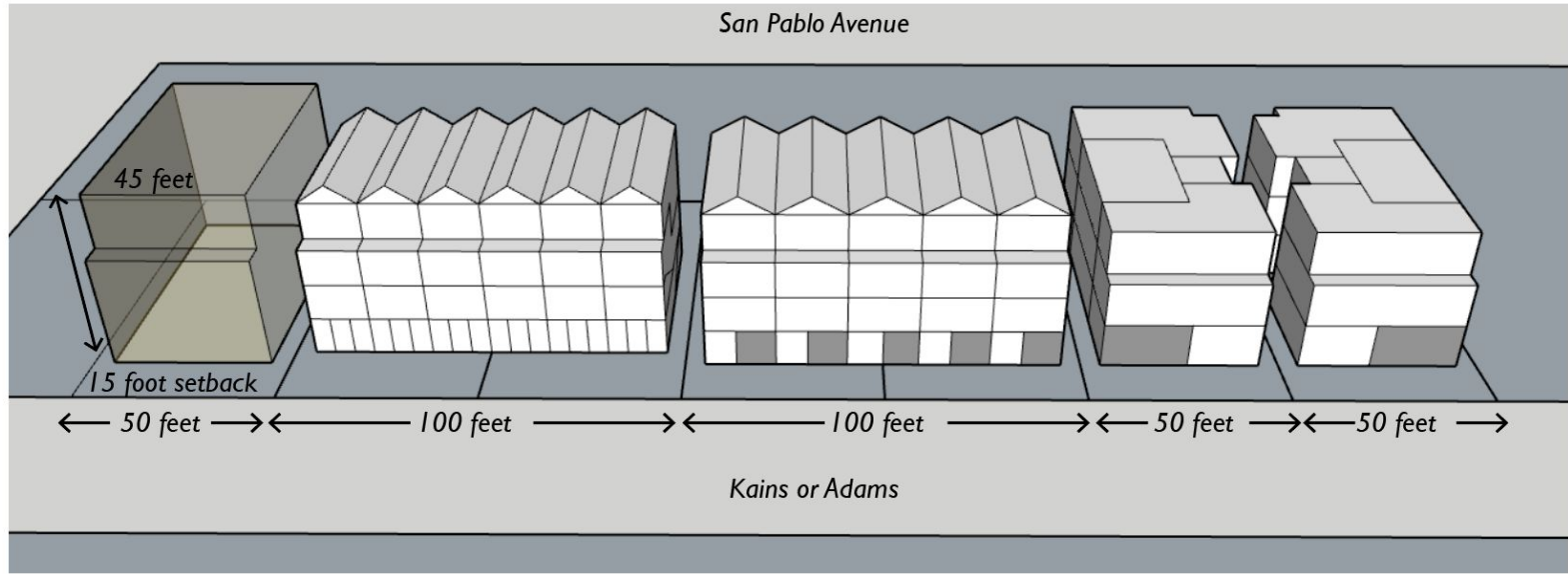
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# Site Capacity Tests: Half Block - R-3





## POTENTIAL HOUSING CAPACITY WITH MODIFIED R-3 ZONING - HALF BLOCK



### Modified Building Standards

Height Limit: 45 feet  
(existing is 35 feet)  
Front setback: 15 feet  
Back setback: 10 feet  
Side setback: 5 feet

### Townhouses No Parking Minimum

4 stories/45 feet  
12 units (15 feet wide)  
52 du/ac  
0 car parking spaces  
48 bike parking spaces  
(4 per unit)

### Townhouses with Parking

4 stories/ 45 feet  
10 units (18 feet wide)  
44 du/ac  
10 parking spaces

### 6-plex Apartments

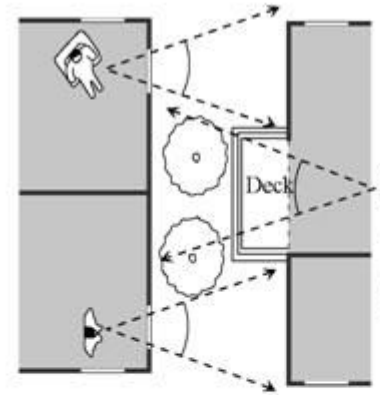
3 stories/36 feet  
12 units  
52 du/ac  
12 parking spaces



# Height Transitions

# Concerns: Bulk, Shadows and Privacy

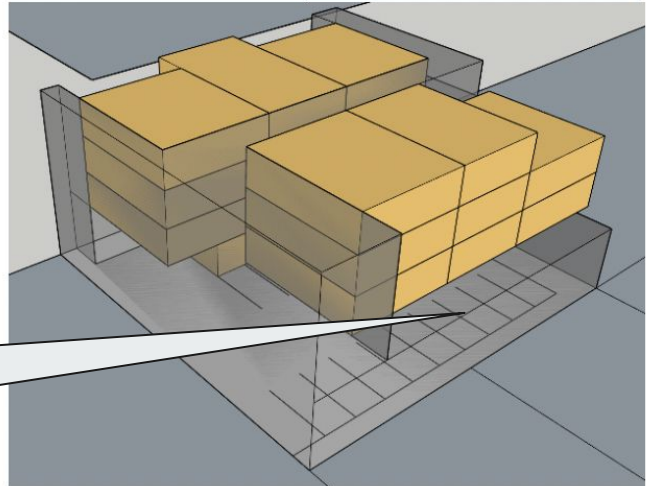
- Code does not regulate shading nor require shadow studies.
- Height transition methods can reduce shading impacts, but in the urban context there may be additional shading impacts
- New standards can reduce potential privacy impacts due to adjacencies:
  - staggering window placement across property lines
  - installing fencing and landscape screening
  - installing opaque windows in bathrooms



## Setbacks between SPC/R3

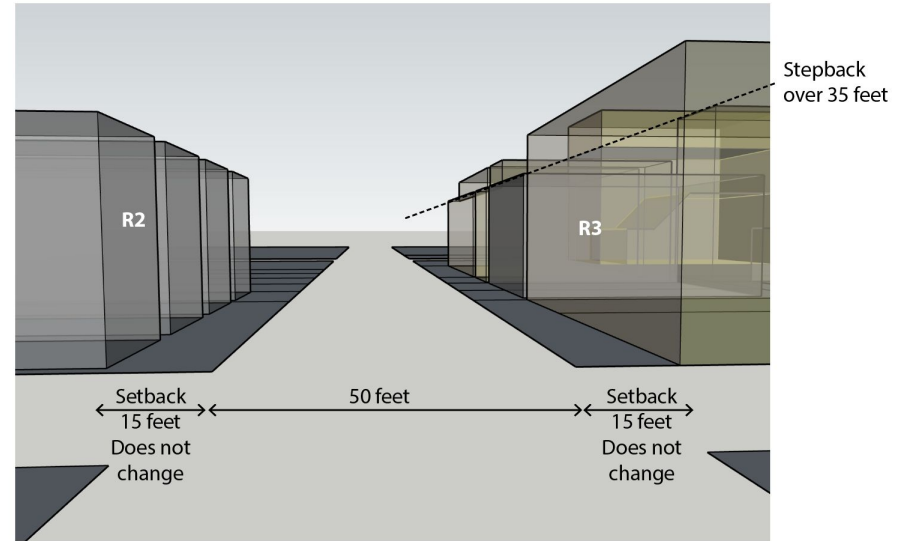
- Rear yard can provide relief for R-3 zoned parcels, especially lower density homes
- Requiring a setback may inhibit the viability of a site development
- Setback could be contextual based on actual height of adjacent home and/or distance to structure

One option is to allow the parking podium to extend to the rear property line, but require a rear setback above



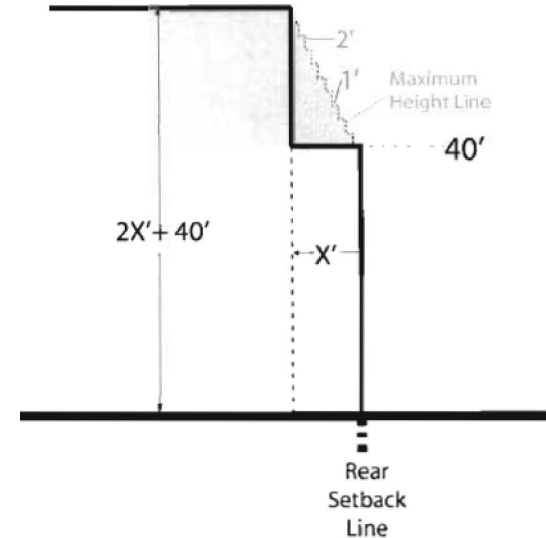
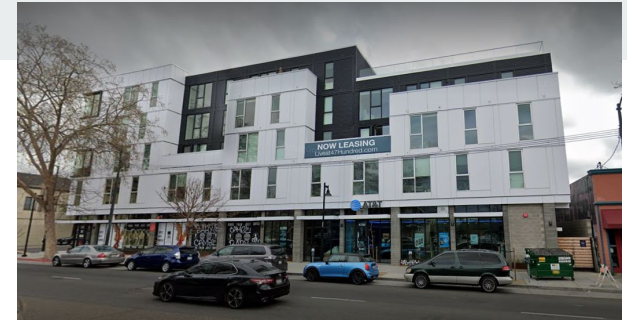
# Setbacks on Kains/Adams

- If taller heights are proposed in the R-3 district, a setback at the Kains Avenue and Adams Street frontages could also be considered.
- Streets are fairly narrow, so creating additional space can improve light and air access
- Tradeoff is potential unit yield



# Stepbacks for Upper Floors

- Break down building mass with stepbacks
- Could allow for a streetwall of 3 or 4 stories; then a stepback of 5 feet or more to create relief at ground floor
- Can also be located on the top-most floor to reduce the apparent height at the top of the building, while creating usable open space
- Tradeoff is potential unit yield



Oakland: Illustration for Table 17.19.03

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# Housing Typology Transitions

Townhomes on Kains Avenue or Adams Street that abut a higher density apartment project could create a transition between uses and densities

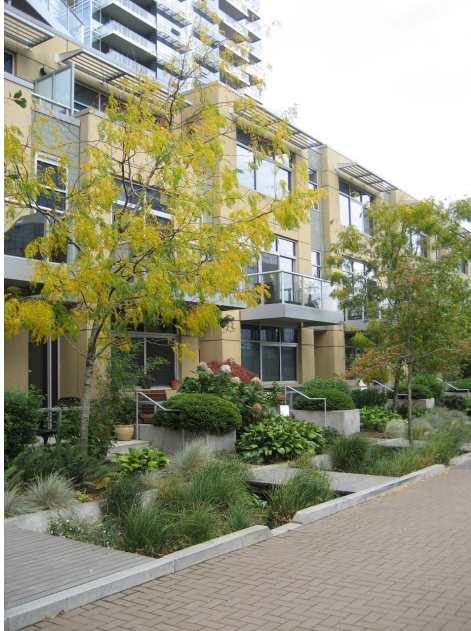


Lining with townhomes. This example steps down behind taller podium apartments. (Parker in Berkeley)

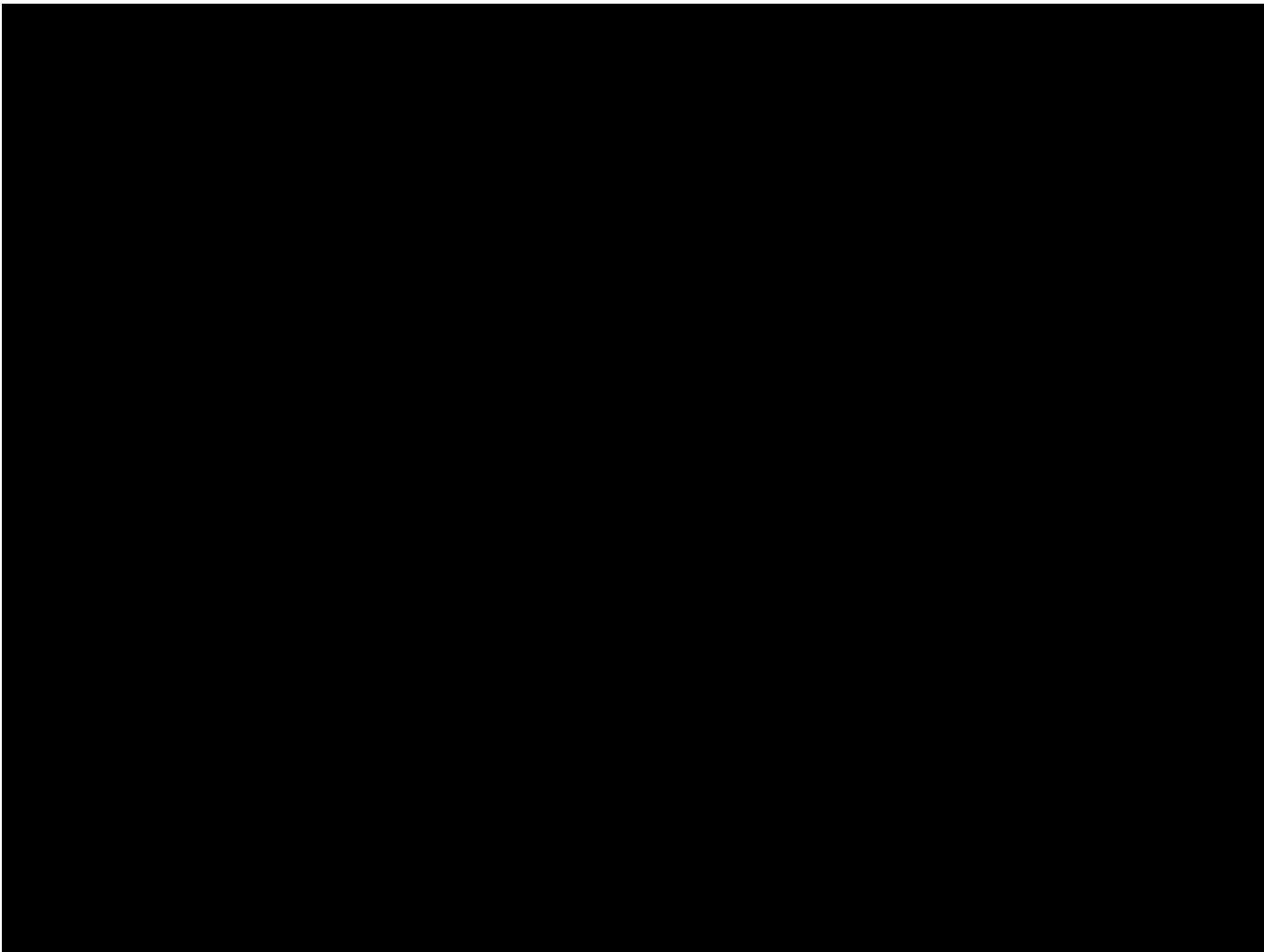
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# Ground Floor Access

Providing ground-floor unit access can help match the lower density pattern and character of the R-2 zone just beyond the San Pablo Avenue corridor

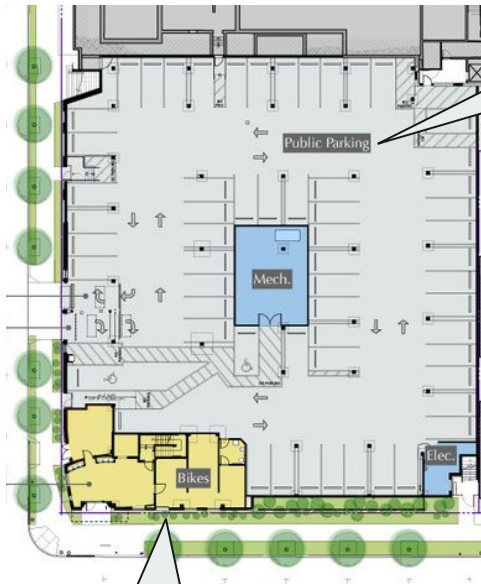






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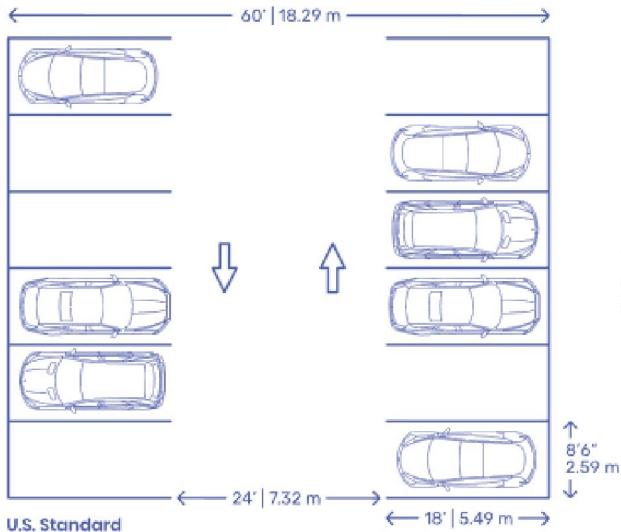
# Spatial Impact of Parking: Vehicles and Bicycles



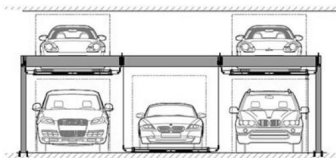
Vehicle parking has a major impact on site planning and residential density due to the size of cars and need for drive aisles and back-up spaces

The space requirements for even robust bike parking facilities are minor in comparison

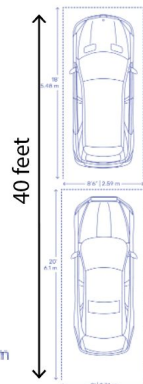
**Parking Garage Layout**



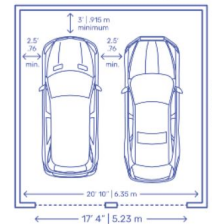
**Parking Lifts**



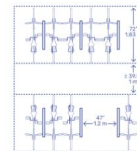
**Tandem Parking**  
10 feet



**Two-Car Garage**



**Stand for 12 Bikes**



**Cargo Bike (3'x8')**



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# Bike Parking Standards

AMC 20.28.030:

- Mixed-Use/Commercial: 1 rack space/1,500 sq. ft. of commercial floor area
- Multifamily Housing: 1 protected space/residential unit
  - Protected spaces are defined as “Individually enclosed and secure space for a bicycle. This includes bicycle lockers, electronic lockers, and interior bicycle parking.”
- Code does not regulate long-tail bikes
- Code does not regulate space dimensions





# Vehicle Parking Standards

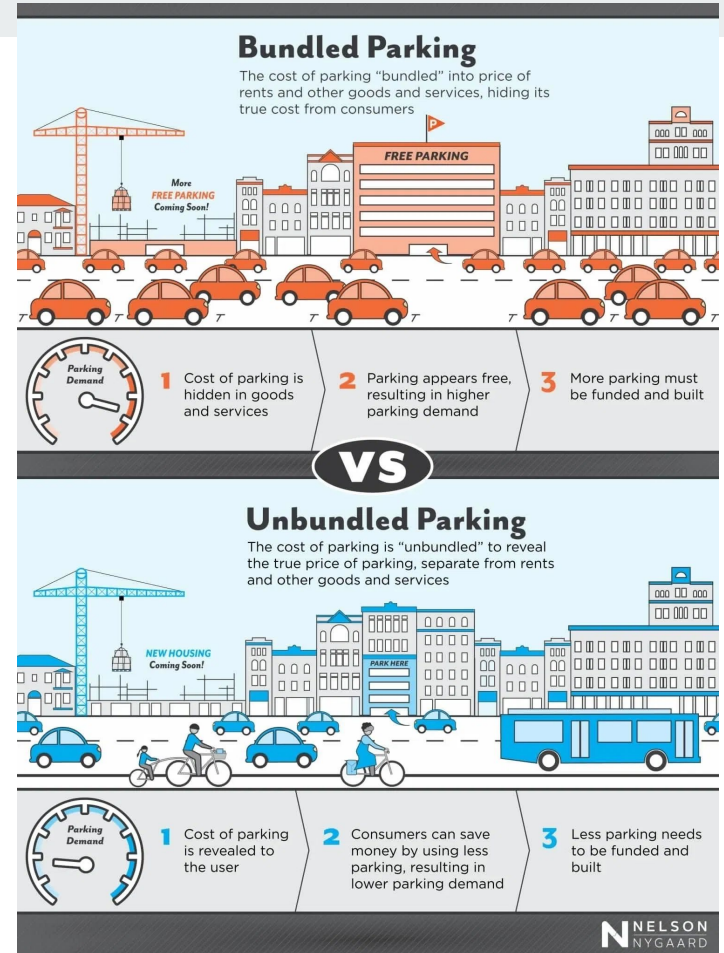
- Multifamily Housing: 1 space/unit
- Commercial: varies by use, ranging from 1/100 sq. ft. to 1/1,000 sq. ft., except:
  - The first 2,000 sq. ft. of commercial use is typically exempt
- Exceptions:
  - Reduction with CUP approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission\*
  - Reductions for affordable housing\*
  - Reductions for residential mixed use\*
  - For every 10 bike spaces, PZ may waive 1 off-street parking space
  - Shared parking between 2+ uses, up to 25% reduction

\*with consideration for on-site car-share, unbundled parking, private bicycle share program, and/or TDM

# Unbundled Parking

AMC 20.28.020:

- Unbundled parking may be incorporated as part of a multi-family or residential mixed-use development.
- Unbundled parking is a parking strategy in which parking spaces are rented or sold separately, rather than automatically included with the rent or purchase price of a residential or commercial unit.
- Tenant or owners may purchase only as much parking as they need and are given the opportunity to save cost and space by utilizing fewer parking stalls.



# On-Street Parking Demand

1. February 2013 - Buchanan and San Pablo Complete Streets Report (Nelson/Nygaard)
2. May 2015 - Parking Management Plan (CDM Smith)
3. September & October 2017 - San Pablo Ave. Corridor Project (ACTC)

Studies found that parking peaked after 5pm

Highest demand was variable: at City Hall, near Solano Avenue, mid-corridor

Figure 3-21 Peak Hour Parking Occupancy of San Pablo (5:00 PM)



# ACTC (2017) Weekday PM Peak



**Legend:**

- BART Station
- BART Lines Above Ground
- Capital Corridor Stations
- Capital Corridor Line
- Freeways
- Water
- Parks/Open Space



San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project

Figure 6-1.2  
On-Street Parking Occupancy – Weekday PM Peak Period (4:00 – 7:00 PM)





# Off-Street Parking Demand (Berkeley)

Project: Fourth & U  
Location: 2020 Fourth St. Berkeley  
Proximity to Major Transit: 1 block from Amtrak & Transbay buses; 1.3 miles from BART  
# of Units: 171  
# of Parking Spaces: 205 (1.2 sp/unit)  
**% Parking Occupancy: 57%**  
**Actual Demand: 0.7 sp/unit**



Project: New Californian  
Location: 1988 MLK Way, Berkeley  
Proximity to Major Transit: 0.4 miles from BART  
# of Units: 148  
# of Parking Spaces: 155 (1.05 sp/unit)  
**% Parking Occupancy: 50%**  
**Actual Demand: 0.5 sp/unit**



Source: Transform Green Trip Parking Database. Accessed July 10, 2020.

<http://database.greentrip.org/>

# Vehicle Parking Standards to Consider

## 1. Modify Standards.

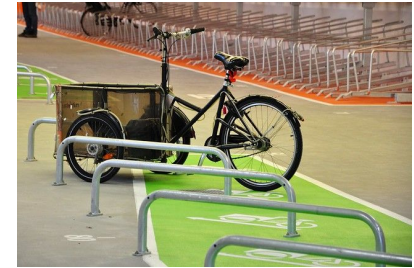
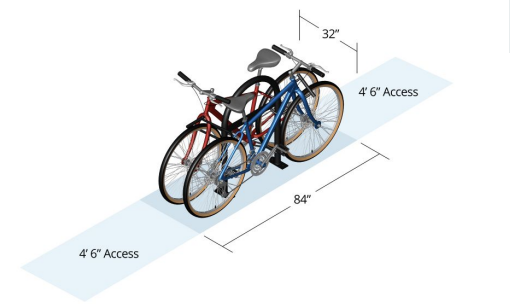
- Transform subjective parking reduction waivers to objective standards
  - transportation demand management (TDM) measures
  - e.g., monthly Clipper Card to all tenants, additional bike parking x% above requirement, reduces required number of spaces by x
- Adjust minimum parking standards
- Identify maximum parking standard

- ## 2. Mechanical Lifts.
- Allow mechanical lifts for residential (frequent) users, but not for ADA spaces nor for visitors, customers, and other infrequent users



# Bike Standards to Consider

1. **Space Dimensions:** Reference national standards in the Zoning Ordinance
2. **Alternate Methods to Accommodate Bikes:** Design units to accommodate wall hooks (i.e., wider entries)
3. **Long-Tail Bikes.** Consider requiring that a portion of bike parking accommodate long-tail bikes



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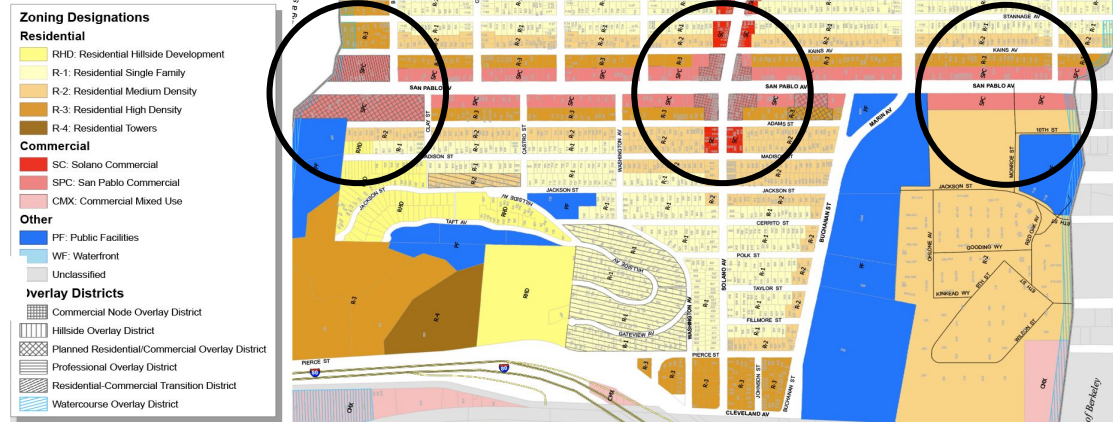
# Next Steps, Polling & Discussion



# Next Steps

September PZ Meeting:

- Land Use: residential and ground-floor commercial requirements
- Nodes: where is more density/height appropriate?
- Planning area boundaries: especially at UC Village





# Public Comments

1. Provide connections to Codornices Creek, Cerrito Creek, and Albany Hill, and treat creeks at gateway entry features
2. Provide shading impact studies for backyards on Kains Avenue and Adams Street
3. Daylight plane as setback requirement, on-street parking at-capacity, and desire to maintain small town ambience

# Polling



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# Questions for Commissioners

1. What heights are appropriate in the SPC and R-3 zones, recognizing that height limits may change at different locations in the corridor?
2. How should the plan express height transitions?
3. Should the City continue to have standards regulating residential density? Floor area ratio?
4. Should San Pablo Avenue have different requirements for bike parking and vehicle parking from the standards adopted in 2017?

