



San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Public Review Draft: February 2022



Land Acknowledgement

The City of Albany recognizes that we occupy the land originally protected by the **Confederated Villages of Lisjan**. We acknowledge the genocide that took place on these lands and must make strides to repay the moral debt that is owed to this indigenous people, specifically the Ohlone Tribe. We thank them for their contributions which have transformed our community, and will continue to bring forth growth and unity. The City of Albany commits to sustaining ongoing relationships with the Tribe and together build a better future for all that now make this their home.

Plan Acknowledgments



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

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- Purpose and Overview
- Plan Boundaries
- Planning Context
- Relationship to Other Adopted Policies & Plans
- Statutory Requirements
- Community Outreach
- Plan Organization and Structure

Purpose and Overview

This Specific Plan facilitates the transformation of San Pablo Avenue from an auto-oriented commercial corridor to a place that also supports residential mixed-use development and safe convenient facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. It modifies development standards to facilitate new housing and establishes new policies to support vibrant active places for gathering and commerce. Through housing choices, opportunities for rental and ownership housing, and affordable housing development, the plan supports racial equity and economic diversity in Albany. These changes aim to attract residents and commercial uses that can support a diverse range of households and income levels.

For the past 30 years, the City has worked to transform San Pablo Avenue into a more pedestrian-oriented retail boulevard. This culminated most recently in the 2016 General Plan, which reconsidered the role of San Pablo Avenue in the city and envisioned a more attractive, pedestrian-oriented corridor that supported mixed use development. Despite this foundational planning work, little has changed on San Pablo Avenue.



A sampling of the varied character of San Pablo Avenue.

The City of Albany received a Senate Bill (SB) 2 grant from the State Department of Housing & Community Development in 2019 and a Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant in 2021 to streamline housing approvals and accelerate housing production, including for affordable housing. The City used these grants to prepare this Specific Plan. In this way, the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan is first and foremost intended to support the development of housing on the corridor. Other important initiatives, such as commercial development, public open spaces, and mobility improvements are addressed secondarily through parallel work efforts.

This plan amends design and development standards, and policies that address development of multi-family housing on San Pablo Avenue to implement the goals of the General

Plan and Housing Element. The Specific Plan includes Design Guidelines applicable to development on the corridor and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan that implement the Specific Plan initiatives described herein.

This Specific Plan fulfills the following purposes:

- **Vision:** Expresses the vision for public improvements and private development through the 2040 planning horizon.
- **Implementation:** Articulates the steps to support this vision through private development, improvements to the public realm, and community participation; provides more certainty to the development community; and guides City staff, decision-makers, and community members during individual project review.
- **Zoning Amendments:** Modifies zoning standards in the SPC and R-3 districts to align development standards, overlay districts, use requirements, and design standards with current prototypical building types; and to establish objective standards for what is required of individual development projects to support livability, sustainability, and affordability.

This Specific Plan's vision will be implemented by both the City, future developers and property owners, and community members who live, shop, and gather in its spaces. The Plan has a 20-year time horizon--5 years beyond the current General Plan horizon. It is a long-term plan expected to unfold incrementally, as catalyst projects are constructed, new residents arrive, and private properties turn over.

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.



View of San Pablo Avenue at Solano Avenue looking north. (November 2021)



The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan focuses on the potential development of SPC-zoned parcels in the City of Albany, with more modest changes to the R-3-zoned parcels within the planning area. (June 2020)



View of Adams Street and Kains Avenue, parallel streets to San Pablo Avenue. (June 2020)

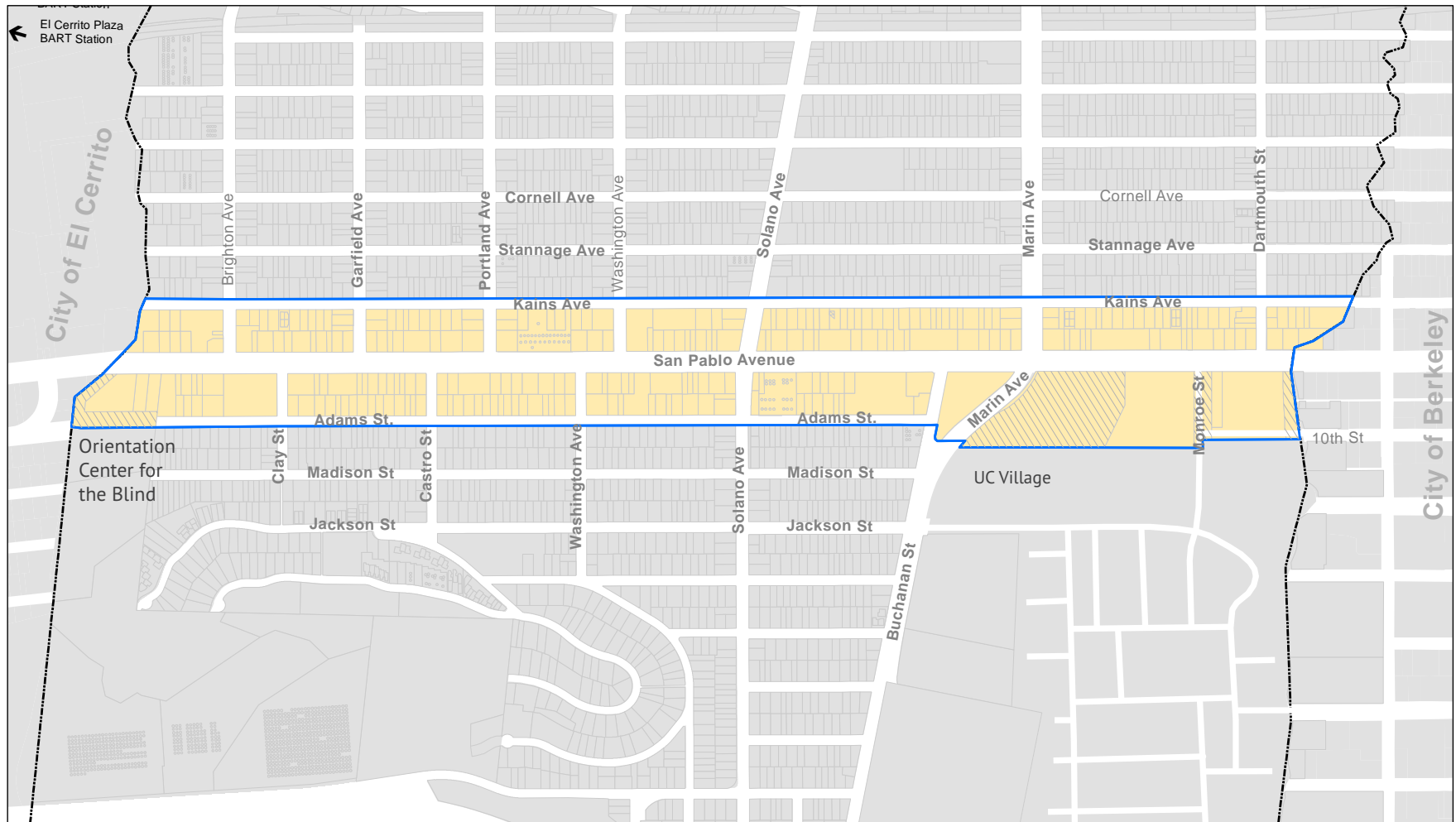
Plan Boundaries

Figure 1-1 identifies the Specific Plan planning area. The planning area generally extends the length of San Pablo Avenue, between the northern and southern city limits, and from Kains Avenue to the east and Adams Street to the west.

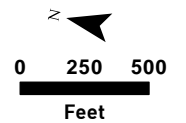
The boundary jogs at Marin Avenue to include City Hall and the fire station. It then extends through the large University of California parcel to capture the SPC-zoned parcels along the San Pablo Avenue frontage. The Gill Tract and farm are included geographically as a result, although no development is anticipated. In fact, the parcel and the State-owned parcel (Center for the Blind), at the northern end of the planning area, are exempt from local land use regulations.

The proposed planning area totals 81 acres, inclusive of public rights-of-way.

FIGURE 1-1: PLANNING AREA



- SPA Plan Boundary
- City Limits
- State Owned (local land use regulations do not apply)



Planning Context

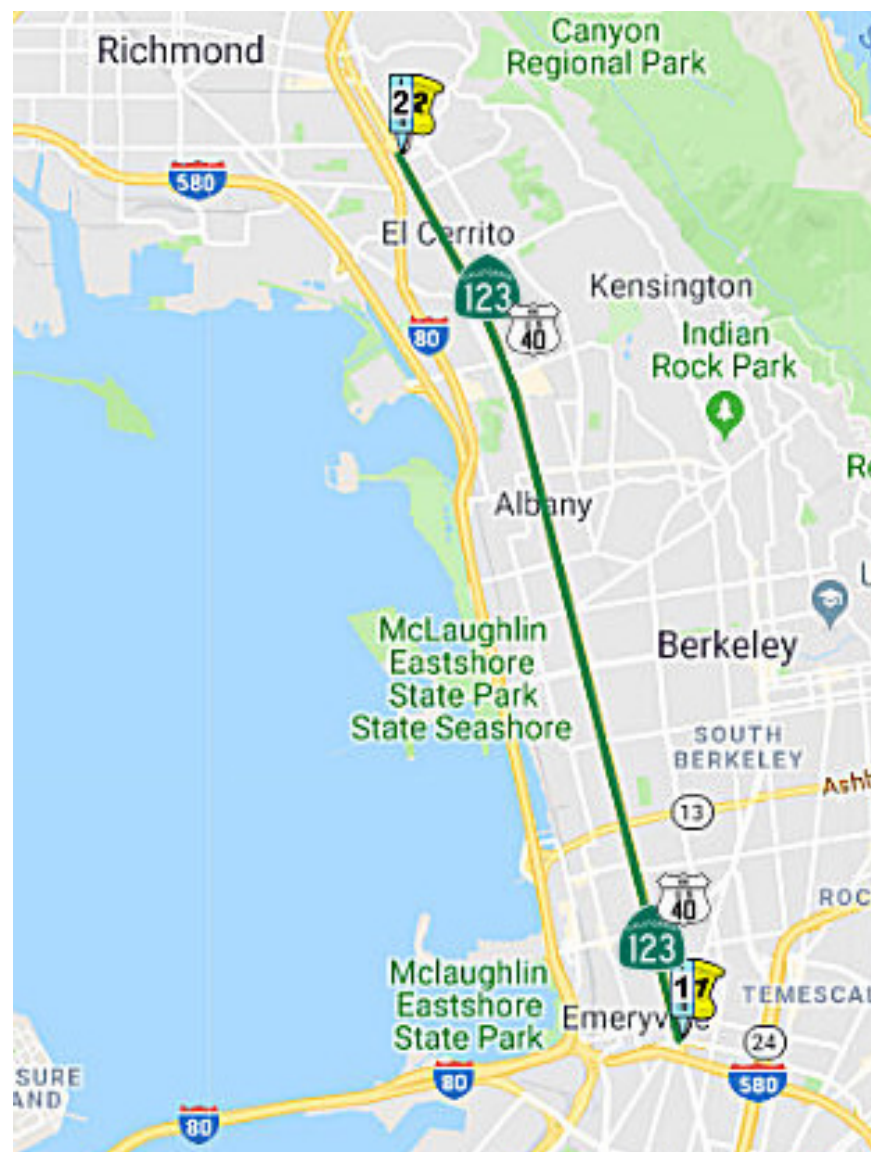
This Specific Plan establishes a detailed vision for San Pablo Avenue that builds on the City's 2016 General Plan. At the same time, the implementation strategy for this Specific Plan respond to changes in State law that necessitate a new way of conducting local planning, including in terms of the preparation of objective standards.

State Law and Objective Standards

State law relies more and more on projects' compliance with objective standards to streamline housing projects. Currently, the City has objective standards in the form of development standards (e.g., height, setbacks, floor area ratio), but few objective design standards (e.g., requirements for articulation and facade design). This Specific Plan, and its related implementing standards, aims to strengthen the City's objective standards, identify the City's design and development priorities for San Pablo Avenue, and ensure applicants' compliance with these priorities on housing development projects. Furthermore, this project helps the City to comply with State legislation that allows projects meeting objective standards to undergo a streamlined approval process.

State Density Bonus Law

State Law has played a key role in facilitating development on San Pablo Avenue in Albany and adjacent cities. State Density Bonus Law (Government Code section 65915) gives developers the right to build additional dwelling units in exchange for building affordable or



San Pablo Avenue is State Route 123, where Caltrans has jurisdiction within the street right-of-way, including the parking lane, bicycle facilities, bus lanes, vehicle lanes, striping, and traffic signals.

senior housing. Projects can receive waivers to modify development standards (e.g., height, setbacks) and reduce parking requirements in order to accommodate affordable units. Although taller heights and densities than what this Specific Plan allows are possible under State Density Bonus law, buildings are unlikely to exceed much beyond 6-8 stories, given the change in construction type above those levels. Still, the City may continue to see State Density Bonus applications in the Specific Plan area. Although project sponsors may not need additional density bonuses, they may seek out waivers or concessions, such as setbacks or ground-floor retail requirements, respectively.

Zoning History on San Pablo Avenue

San Pablo Ave. has undergone a number of zoning changes over the past 50+ years, as the City aimed to fulfill various policy goals. Prior to construction of Interstate 80 in the 1950s, San Pablo Avenue was the major north-south highway through the central East Bay. This encouraged the pattern of region-serving, auto-oriented land uses that still exists today along much of the corridor. The 1961 zoning ordinance allowed a maximum building height of 75 feet along the corridor, anticipating a higher density future for the avenue. In the 1978 zoning code update, the height limit was reduced to 45 feet in an effort to scale back potential development. The 38-foot height that precedes this Specific Plan further reduced potential development. This Specific Plan represents a rethinking about height and density on the corridor, in a way that allows for transitions to existing lower density uses, while providing opportunities for greater racial and economic equity and diversity.

Albany General Plan

Adopted in 2016, the Albany General Plan envisions a transformation of San Pablo Avenue as a retail and residential mixed-use destination. The recent General Plan update reconsidered the role of San Pablo Avenue in the city, envisioning “a transformation of this corridor from auto-oriented commercial uses to more attractive, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development.” Policies support this evolution of San Pablo Avenue, while employing height transitions, noise reductions, and other design considerations to buffer effects on lower density residential homes to the east and west of the corridor.

Albany Housing Element

A major shift in the State’s expectations for housing in Albany occurred during the preparation of this Specific Plan. The State and regional government had an expectation that the City would accommodate 335 units during the 2014-2022 5th cycle Housing Element. (This unit number is known at the Regional Housing Needs Assessment or RHNA). This unit count nearly tripled to 1,114 units during the 2023-2031 6th cycle Housing Element. The City expects to accommodate the majority of this new housing on San Pablo Avenue. This Specific Plan identifies zoning changes necessary to meet the RHNA requirement and facilitate certification of the 2023-2031 Housing Element by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

San Pablo Avenue is State Route 123 from Oakland to Richmond, including within Albany. Caltrans has jurisdiction within the street right-of-way, including the parking lane, bicycle facilities, bus lanes, vehicle lanes, striping, and traffic

signals. The City has sidewalk maintenance responsibilities, including light standards, bus shelters, and street trees, although Caltrans maintains a list of preferred street tree species and location standards.

Relationship to Other Adopted Policies & Plans

This Specific Plan builds upon past efforts that focused on mobility and streetscape issues that were addressed in the past. An Urban Design Concept Plan was prepared in 1989, followed by Design Guidelines in 1993. A San Pablo Avenue Vision Plan was adopted in 1998, followed by a Streetscape Plan in 2001. Capital improvement projects that have followed these plans have improved the street's appearance. This Specific Plan builds on and replaces these previous plans to confirm the plan vision and identify implementation tools for future development.

Transportation plans and improvements that support the housing and mixed use development anticipated in this Specific Plan are described in Chapter 4. Specifically, a Complete Streets Plan was adopted for San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street in 2013, and a regional-level Corridor Plan by the Alameda County Transportation Commission was underway as of 2022.

Additionally, this Specific Plan involves two other local and regional plans.

2019 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

The 2019 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) was adopted by the Albany City Council in December of 2019. The CAAP will guide the City towards its emissions reduction goals: 70% GHG reductions by 2035, and net zero emissions by 2045. The CAAP identified on-road transportation as the greatest source of carbon emissions in the City of Albany. To that end, this Specific Plan encourages a reduction in transportation demand in Albany through focused increases in density along the busiest transit corridor in the City, with targeted development nodes throughout that increase active transportation opportunities for residents across Albany to access the Avenue. The CAAP also addresses decarbonization of the building sector by reducing reliance on natural gas, and promotes climate adaptive landscaping, responsible materials management, and efficient use of clean energy.

ABAG/MTC Priority Development Area

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)/Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has identified the San Pablo Avenue corridor a Priority Development Area (PDA). This designation highlights transit-oriented locations, with high densities and diverse uses, that will be the focus of the region's growth. Locally-designated PDAs are the focus of ABAG's Sustainable Communities Strategy, a plan to curb greenhouse gases through land use and transportation planning, required by Senate Bill 375. The designation, in combination with this Specific Plan, improves the City's eligibility for future funding for relevant public projects on the corridor.

Statutory Requirements

The specific plan is authorized by California Government Code sections 65450 through 65457. This law authorizes adoption of a specific plan for the implementation of an area covered by the General Plan. This Specific Plan implements the vision within the General Plan and the zoning ordinance district purposes that are applicable to the planning area. A key statutory element of a specific plan is preparation of an infrastructure plan, including water, sewer, solid waste, and energy to support plan development. A specific plan also allows for statutory exemptions under the California Environmental Quality Act, for individual projects that are consistent with the Specific Plan in order to streamline environmental review.

The following excerpts identify the content requirements for specific plans defined in Government Code Section 65451.

California Government Code sections 65453 and 65454 provide further direction for adoption and revisions to the specific plan as follows.

Government Code Section 65451

- (a) A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:
- (1) The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.
 - (2) The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.
 - (3) Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
 - (4) A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs (1), (2), and (3).
- (b) The specific plan shall include a statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan.

Government Code Section 65453

- (a) A specific plan shall be prepared, adopted, and amended in the same manner as a general plan, except that a specific plan may be adopted by resolution or by ordinance and may be amended as often as deemed necessary by the legislative body.
- (b) A specific plan may be repealed in the same manner as it is required to be amended.

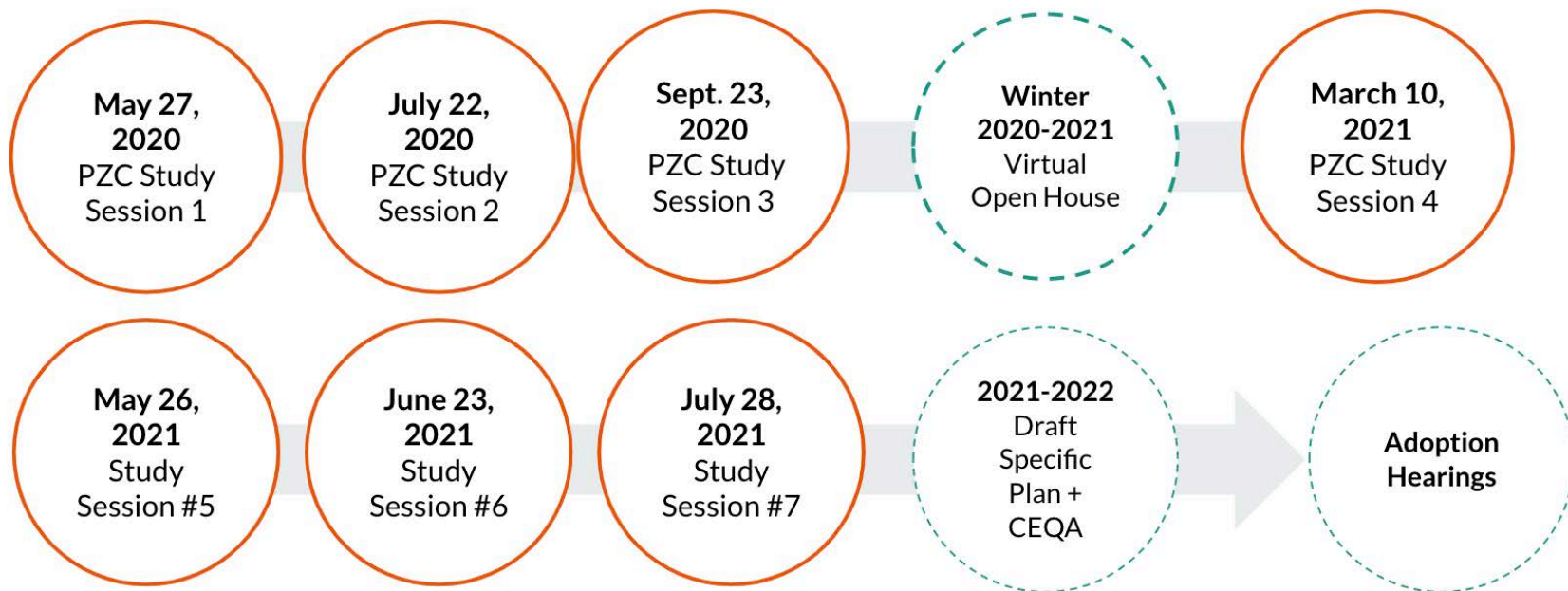
Government Code Section 65454

No specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan.

Community Outreach

Community members participated in development of the plan through a series of meetings with the Planning & Zoning Commission and in an Open House. All meetings were conducted virtually as a means to provide socially-distanced public outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic and related shelter-in-place orders.

Seven Planning and Zoning Commission Study Sessions were held to cover the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. During Planning & Zoning Commission meetings, Commissioners and members of the public explored issues related to housing and commercial development, market economics, density and building height, transitions to lower density residential zones, placemaking through designated “nodes,” and multifamily and mixed-use building design.



Let's envision an inclusive future for housing on San Pablo Avenue in Albany



About this plan for San Pablo Avenue

The City of Albany has received a Senate Bill (SB) 2 grant from the State Department of Housing & Community Development to streamline housing approvals and accelerate housing production, including for affordable housing.

A virtual open house ran from November 2020 through January 2021, using the Neighborland platform as a means to provide socially-distanced public outreach.

A Virtual Open House known as the Winter 2021 Community Forum was held through an online platform called Neighborland over a two-month period between November 2020 and January 2021. The Open House provided a forum for the community to discuss the Specific Plan policy options and their priorities for the planning area. Notification of the Open House was sent through postcards, flyers, emails, Nextdoor posts, through eNews, on social media, and through the City Website. The emails and social media posts were sent multiple times, and the ending date of the survey was extended to give people a chance to respond.

A total of 462 participants viewed the site for an average of 5 minutes at a time. There was over 80 hours of engagement online with 72 unique individuals providing feedback. Office Hours accompanied the Open House for those who wished to meet in a “live” format.

Approximately 90% of those who contributed to the survey lived in Albany or had a business in Albany and 40% lived within two blocks of the corridor.

Keep San Pablo Avenue the way it is now:

More housing will bring crime	More housing will impact schools	More housing, more parking problems	Traffic on side streets will be terrible	No High Rises	Tall building reduce natural light
Village by the Bay	This is a town keep it that way	We need to preserve the character of the community	San Pablo is a congested freeway	Why put housing on SPA, it's noisy and dirty	Tall buildings block scenic views

The analyzed data generally divided into two sentiments: “Keep San Pablo the way it is now” and “San Pablo Avenue needs to evolve.” Those who want to keep it the way it is now worry about additional housing and what that will bring. Those who want it to evolve see an opportunity for improvement, a way to address the housing crisis, and also desire more services within walking distance.

The survey asked about the heart, heights, daylight plane, retail, and parking:

- The heart of San Pablo Avenue was identified at Solano Avenue, but there was another potential center at Buchanan. Many who commented that there is no center there now.
- Many of the responses talked about the appropriateness of San Pablo for housing. Some are concerned about the traffic on the streets next to new development. Others asked where else in Albany would this be best? The majority of participants said that housing makes more sense in the Plan Area because it is already an urban, transit oriented, underutilized area.

San Pablo Avenue needs to evolve

San Pablo Avenue could be so much better	A city must be allowed to evolve to suit the needs of those who live in it	Albany should do its part of the housing crisis	Tall houses have been built next to short houses in cities all over the world	SPA is currently gap-toothed, it would be better with a mix of mid-rise housing	Let's bring this in line with neighboring communities
FAR and density restrictions constrain the ability to build housing	Density makes sense for underutilized areas	Denser development will allow for a more vibrant streetscape	Higher density means more lively foot traffic	This is an urban area, it makes more sense than sprawl	Density makes sense near transit

- The desire to preserve access to light, air, and provide privacy was brought up by multiple participants. The comment “Do shadows supercede the severe housing shortage?” speaks to the opposite sentiment.
- The majority of respondents would like to maintain the option for commercial on San Pablo Avenue, however 39% were also ok with non-commercial uses, like residential entryways at the ground floor given the existing challenging retail market.
- When asked about reducing the parking requirement, 1/3 did not support reduced parking requirements while 2/3rd were ok with it. Bike parking was well supported and will be considered for the Specific Plan.
- Many further comments were about how affordable housing could be built citywide, how to make housing more affordable in general, and ways to manage the impacts to adjacent neighborhoods. There was also desire expressed for public art, connections to trails, creeks, gardens, parks, and the outdoors, and better transit and pedestrian environments.

Plan Organization and Structure

The Plan is organized into four chapters following this introduction.

- Chapter 2: Land Use
- Chapter 3: Urban Design and Design Guidelines
- Chapter 4: Transportation and Infrastructure
- Chapter 5: Implementation
- Appendices

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

1. **Guiding Principles:** Statements of intent that provide the general objectives for each topic and chapter. They identify overarching objectives for this Specific Plan which encompass land use, urban design, mobility, public spaces, and infrastructure.
2. **Implementing Policies:** Specific implementation strategies, zoning amendments, and other action-oriented programs to support the guiding principles and plan vision, and facilitate implementation. These policies will be implemented by the City staff and decision-makers, other public agencies, and/or private property owners, as appropriate. The Urban Design chapter specifies Design Guidelines in lieu of policies.

Zoning modifications and design standards will be adopted concurrently with the Specific Plan and codified in the Zoning Ordinance and a separate Design Standards document, respectively. Standards and guidelines, as of 2022, are summarized in Appendix A for easy reference. However, the Zoning Ordinance should be consulted for the most up-to-date requirements.



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

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE

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

Overview

This chapter establishes a framework for land use and development in the Planning Area. Policies and recommended zoning changes support the development of mixed use buildings fronting San Pablo Avenue, with ground-floor commercial development and upper story residential units. New residential population and new mixed-use development supports walking and gathering, enhancing the vibrancy and sustainability of the Planning Area. The land use framework seeks to balance the need for development standards that allow for financially feasible development, with building designs that are contextually appropriate and transition to adjacent residential districts and uses. The framework encourages housing at a range of income levels and for a range of household types to support economic, racial, and household-type diversity in the Planning Area and the City as a whole.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles establish the intent for the land use framework and implementing policies:

- 1. Housing Equity and Diversity.** Facilitate housing for a range of income levels and housing types in order to improve socioeconomic and racial equity and inclusion.
- 2. Varied Commercial Uses.** Support local- and regional-serving retail and commercial uses accessible to all modes.
- 3. Neighborhood Retail Pattern.** Concentrate small-format retail, service, and restaurant development into nodes with a fine-grain pattern of development that supports vibrancy and synergy between commercial uses.
- 4. Alternative Modes.** Develop a mix of uses and an expanded residential population that support transit use, biking, and walking.
- 5. Sustainability.** Improve livability and community vibrancy, conserve resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency, stormwater management practices, land use and transportation policies that support mixed use walkable development.
- 6. Context and Transitions.** Modify development standards to facilitate feasible residential and mixed-use development, while ensuring height and bulk transitions to abutting residential districts.



Existing commercial uses within the planning area include (top to bottom) retail, office, and auto-related uses. The area includes 490,000 square feet of commercial development.

Existing Conditions

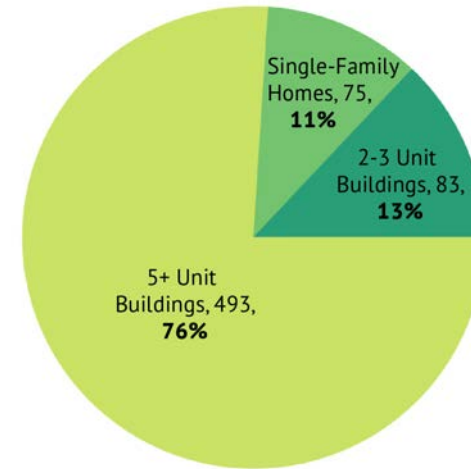
Existing Uses

The Planning Area contains a broad mix of residential and commercial development. The majority of housing units are multi-family, as shown in Chart 2-1. Retail uses and restaurants on the corridor represent over half of the commercial floor area on the corridor, as shown in Chart 2-2. The remaining commercial area is split between auto-related uses (repair, sales, car wash, gas stations), and office uses. In 2020, the Planning Area included approximately 654 housing units and 490,000 square feet of commercial development, in addition to surface parking lots and areas devoted to public uses.



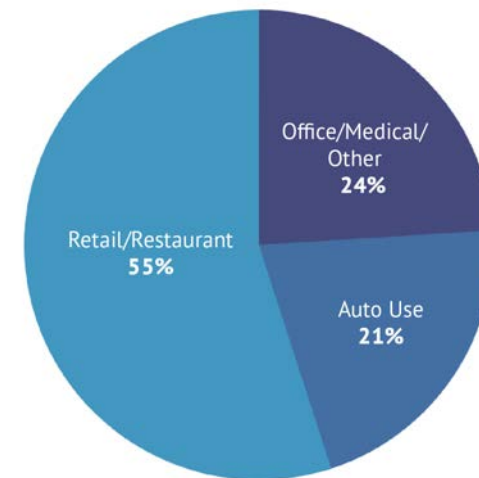
Existing housing within the planning area includes multi-family and single-family, often adjacent to each other. The area include 654 housing units.

FIGURE 2-1: HOUSING UNITS, BY TYPE, WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA



Source: Alameda County Assessor, 2020.

FIGURE 2-2: COMMERCIAL USES, BY TYPE, WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA



Source: Alameda County Assessor, 2020.



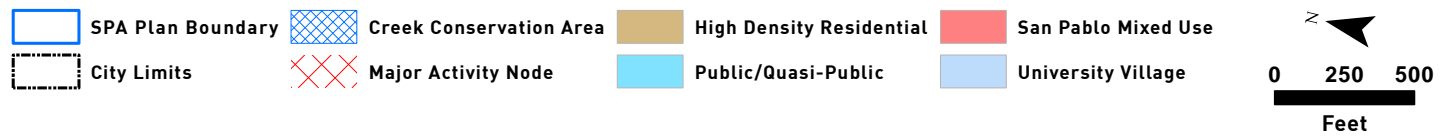
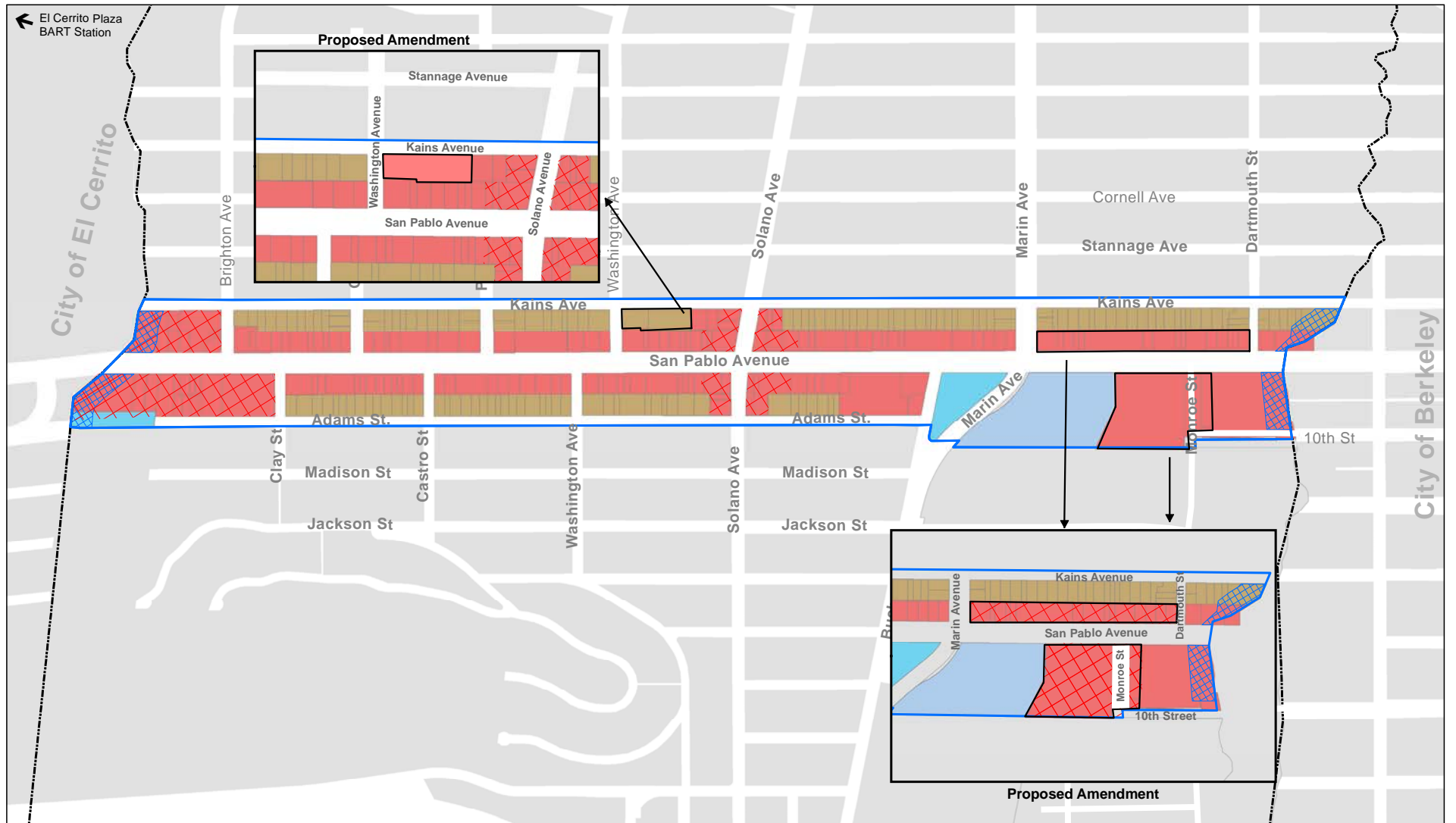
Mixed-Use buildings built under existing development standards for the San Pablo Mixed Use land use designation and San Pablo Commercial zoning designation. Upper image of mixed use at San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue, bottom image of mid-block on San Pablo Avenue between Portland Avenue and Washington Avenue.

Existing/Proposed Land Use Designations

Land use is regulated by designations in the General Plan and district standards in the Zoning Ordinance, as shown in Figures 2-1 and 2-2, respectively. With the exception of City Hall and UC Village, the San Pablo Mixed Use and High Density Residential General Plan land use designation correspond to the San Pablo Commercial and High-Density Residential Zoning Districts, respectively.

The Specific Plan does not propose another layer of land use designations. This is because the General Plan land use designations and Zoning district purposes already convey the intended direction of the plan efforts. The framework does propose zoning map amendments from R-3 to the SPC on the parcels fronting Kains Avenue south of Washington Avenue, and the corresponding General Plan map amendments from High Density Residential to San Pablo Mixed Use (see inset maps on Figures 2-1 and 2- 2). This is to allow for additional development opportunities on parking lots, including the parcel occupied by Mechanics Bank, on a block that is adjacent to Solano Avenue and already occupied by 2- and 3-story homes and apartments.

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



Existing/Proposed Zoning Districts

Existing zoning regulations treat the retail environment in the corridor the same way, by requiring ground-floor commercial development for all new projects throughout the district. Upper stories may be residential or commercial. As a result, retail is spread out on San Pablo Avenue. There is little sense of hierarchy, order, or clustering that would enable customers to visit multiple businesses on a single trip, the way that customers park and walk to multiple locations on Solano Avenue.

The Planning Area is composed of two zoning districts: the San Pablo Commercial District (SPC) and the Residential High Density District (R-3). The existing district purposes are shown in the text box. These purposes convey the Specific Plan vision herein and are not proposed for amendment. However the specific development standards in the districts do match these purpose statements. Existing density and intensity standards generally restrict conforming projects to three stories, which does not achieve high density development.

Existing Zoning District Purposes (AMC 20.12.060)

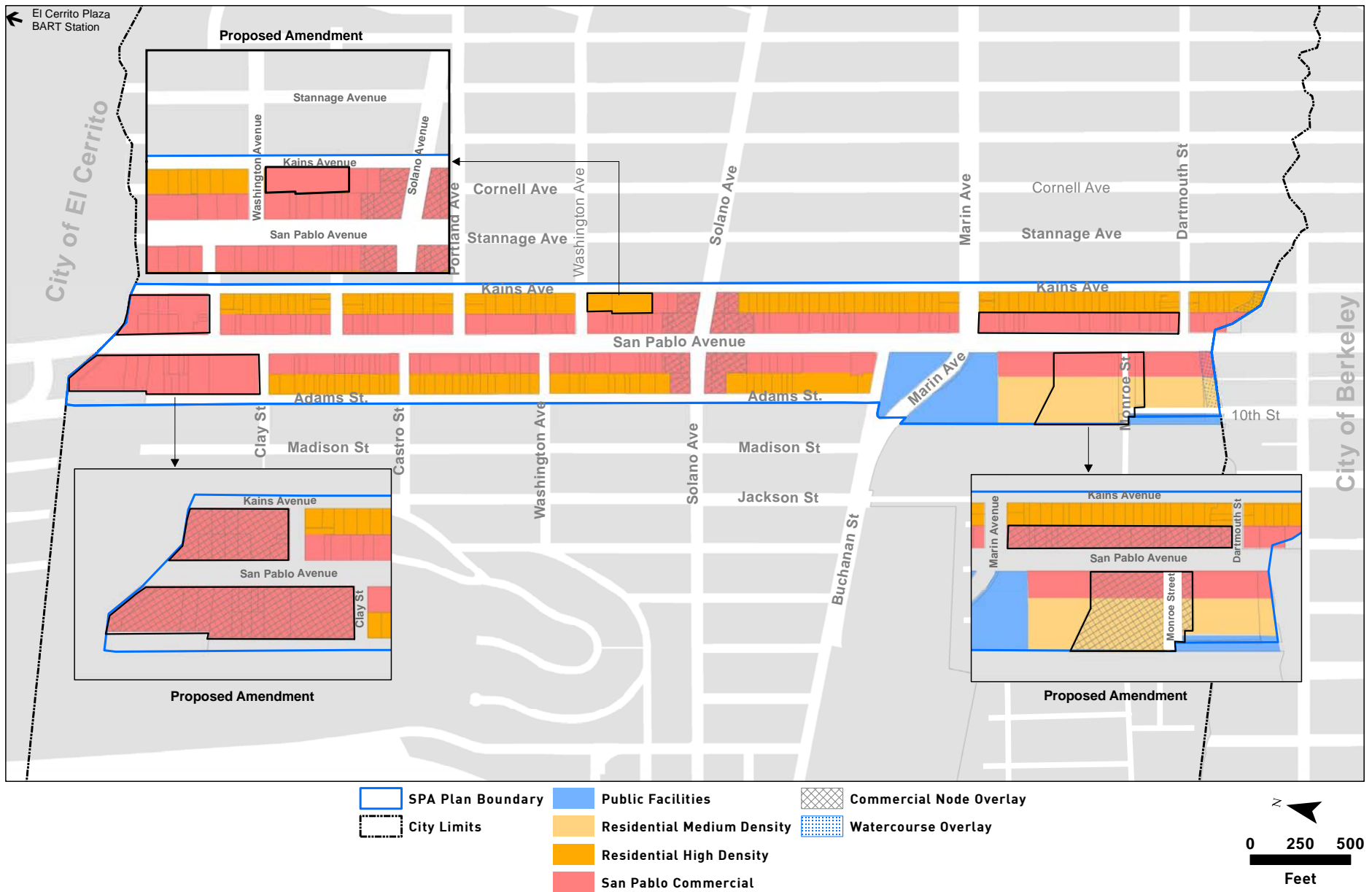
San Pablo Commercial District (SPC): Accommodates commercial and retail businesses serving a Citywide or larger market in a boulevard environment, subject to specific standards. The district encourages the redevelopment of underutilized parcels into pedestrian-oriented retail, office, and high density residential development, which are preferably in mixed-use settings.

Residential High Density District (R-3): Provides opportunities for high-density residential development characterized by a mix of housing types, including townhouses, duplexes, apartments and condominiums, subject to appropriate standards.



Townhomes on Kains built within the High Density Residential land use designation and Residential High Density (R-3) Zoning District.

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



Housing Development

Housing Types

Albany has a range of residents at different stages of life, from families with young children who come for Albany’s great schools and community, to graduate students living in UC Village, to singles and seniors. More multifamily housing choices can make the City more inclusive to all racial and economic groups. The plan accommodates these generational changes and shifting demographics by allowing a range of housing types: including co-living models and studios that accommodate both younger and older individuals, and family-friendly units with larger bedroom counts.

Use Requirements

The Plan modifies land use requirements by prohibiting commercial uses above the ground-floor on Housing Element opportunity sites. It also expands opportunities for residential-only projects fronting San Pablo Avenue, by allowing these project types on sites built with 100% affordable units. Residential-only projects would also be feasible on the Kains and Adams Street frontages, as well as other side streets in the Plan Area.



Older 4-story Apartment Building on Kains



Mixed-Use Apartments on San Pablo Avenue



Senior Housing on San Pablo Avenue

Affordable Housing

The land use policies and Chapter 5 implementation programs support developing an in-lieu fee option to satisfy the City's inclusionary housing requirement within the Plan Area.

The City currently has an inclusionary housing ordinance (AMC Section 20.40.040) that requires projects with at least five dwelling units to provide 15% of the units at below-market rates. Projects with five to ten units must provide one low-income unit (or pay a fee in-lieu); projects with ten or more units must provide half of the required units to low-income households and half to very low-income households.

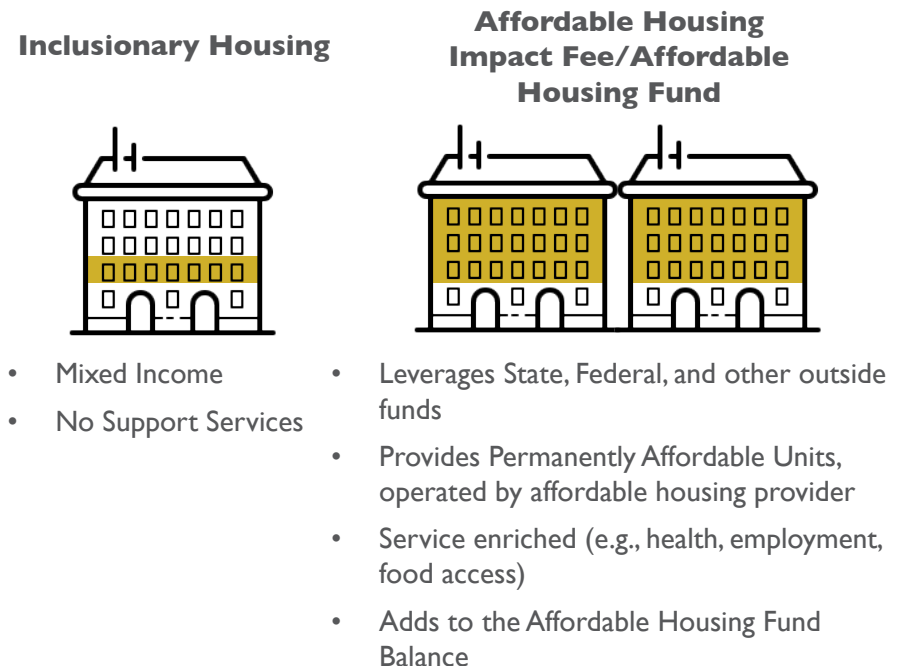
This Plan offers height and density bonuses along the northern portion of the corridor (the "node" north of Brighton) in exchange for providing 20% of units at below-market rates.

There are benefits and drawbacks to each method of affordable housing implementation: on-site vs. fees collected in lieu. However, the differences are significant. Inclusionary housing requirements allow for more integration of low-income households in a particular project. On-site affordable housing units can contribute to incremental economic equity and diversity within a specific project or block. However, the residents of inclusionary below-market rate units are not provided the services that are provided in non-profit mission driven projects. This can be especially important for Very-Low and Extremely Income households, who may have needs beyond housing (e.g., employment assistance, access to food and health care). In addition, in-lieu fees can generate

far more units than will be produced through inclusionary housing requirements, since affordable housing developers can leverage City funds to obtain State and federal financing. As new development proceeds, the City's affordable housing fund would continue to grow and could be used to acquire sites or assist affordable housing developers to finance 100% affordable housing projects within and beyond the Plan Area.

FIGURE 2-3 INCLUSIONARY VS. IN-LIEU AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPARISON

The graphic below illustrates how in-lieu fees can be leveraged to provide service-enriched affordable housing.



Commercial Development

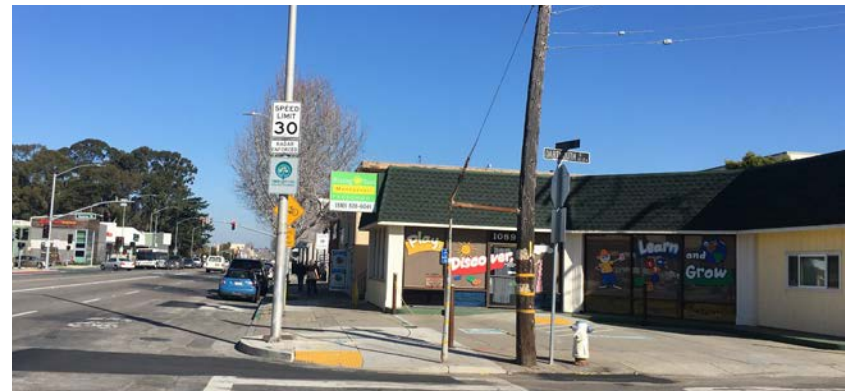
Historically, San Pablo Avenue has been a commercial corridor. The focus of the Specific Plan is on housing, but commercial use requirements have a substantial impact on residential project feasibility, the character of the corridor, and economic development. The desire for commercial development, from both vibrancy and tax revenue perspectives, must be weighed against housing goals and the competition for ground-floor space. This section explores the future of commercial retail development and its implications for vibrancy and the mixed use development typology.

Commercial Development Outlook

Retail uses are shifting from traditional retail sales (e.g., boutiques) to services, fitness, experiences, and showrooms. Food-service uses are expanding takeout and delivery services to include shared kitchens and “ghost” kitchens that provide cost-effective food preparation spaces. More interior space and exterior loading space is needed to support delivery services as a result. Although flexibility in use requirements and space requirements can allow spaces to respond to market needs over time. The City does not anticipate a significant demand for office commercial space in the future within the Plan Area.



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

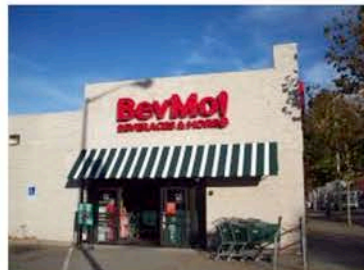


The southern border of Albany at Dartmouth Street presents opportunities for a gateway feature to signify entry into Albany.

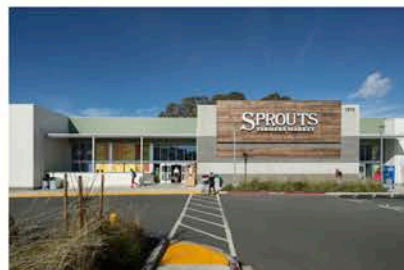
FIGURE 2-4 TYPICAL BUSINESS TYPOLOGIES, BY SIZE



SMALL
0 - 3,000 sq. ft.
Cafes, retail, small restaurant



MEDIUM
8,000 - 15,000 sq. ft.
Pet Food Express, Trader Joe's



LARGE
15,000 - 30,000 sq. ft.
Grocery Store, Office Max, Ross



EXTRA LARGE
50,000 - 150,000 sq. ft.
Target, Costco, Home Depot

Source: Christine Firstenberg, *Retail Real Estate Resources* (2020)

Shift to Smaller Commercial Spaces/ Support for Large Footprint Spaces

Most new development on the corridor will replace underutilized one-story commercial spaces, some of which are larger footprint spaces greater than 5,000 square feet. Typically, new mixed use developments only propose a small amount of retail, 1,000 to 2,000 square feet, to accommodate a café, for example. This is based on the premise of maximizing the area devoted to the more profitable residential units, and not to the more costly commercial spaces. If an existing 10,000-square foot retail space is demolished for redevelopment, the new ground-floor retail space is unlikely to come back at that square footage, and almost never in an effective configuration (e.g., with sufficient depths greater than 50 feet, without columns).

The Plan aims to avoid the loss of large footprint retail spaces by requiring replacement retail on the largest parcels in the Plan Area.

Focus on Corners and Nodes

Retail tenants tend to want to be on corners, where they can maximize exposure and vehicle access. Retailers located on all four corners of an intersection create synergy, which increases foot traffic. Retail tenants typically shy away from mid-block properties, and therefore these locations do not command the same commercial rents. Policies support a fine-grain retail pattern of stores at the node locations, including the Solano Avenue/San Pablo Avenue intersection.

Challenges of Vertical Mixed Use

The General Plan envisions San Pablo Avenue with ground-floor commercial uses and residential units on upper stories. However, there are financial and physical challenges to this building typology.

First, increasing building heights and allowing higher density residential uses may increase land values. This may motivate a property owner to sell an existing commercial site to a multifamily residential developer, potentially reducing the commercial inventory.

Second, some residential developers find it challenging to design mixed use buildings. Often, they are not experienced with the physical needs and preferences of retailers. Different occupancy types require different space depths, exiting, parking, loading, refuse, and other space requirements, making circulation and access challenging. Typically, a mixed-use developer will make the commercial ground floor space as small as possible to allow for a more efficient layout of residential units on upper levels. This maximizes residential rents, while often leaving the retail space unrentable for a majority of retail tenants.

Third, residential developers prefer not to develop mixed-use buildings for economic reasons. Retail rents are low on San Pablo Avenue and do not cover the cost of construction at this time. They may also require separate financing. If given a choice, residential developers will choose not to develop ground-floor commercial.

Policies in this chapter aim to address these challenges, but this balance will likely be a tension in plan implementation.

FIGURE 2-5: TYPES OF EXISTING BUSINESSES ON SAN PABLO AVENUE



Auto Serving - Large



Auto Serving - Small



Pad Restaurants



Shopping Centers



Two Story Office Building



Single Story Neighborhood Retail



Single Story Retail



Typical Older One Story Building

Source: Christine Firstenberg, Retail Real Estate Resources (2020)

Zoning Standards

“Right-Sizing” Standards

The Plan revises zoning standards to align with market conditions and the revitalization of the corridor envisioned by the General Plan. These changes include:

- Increasing building heights from 38 feet to 65 feet (85 feet in the northern node and on SPC-zoned through-lots);
- Removing residential density requirements to reduce the incentive toward larger (more expensive) units;
- Increasing floor area ratio (FAR) limits to allow for the higher density development envisioned in the General Plan; and
- Eliminating the daylight plane requirement in favor of an upper story setback requirement to make development projects feasible at the new heights proposed.

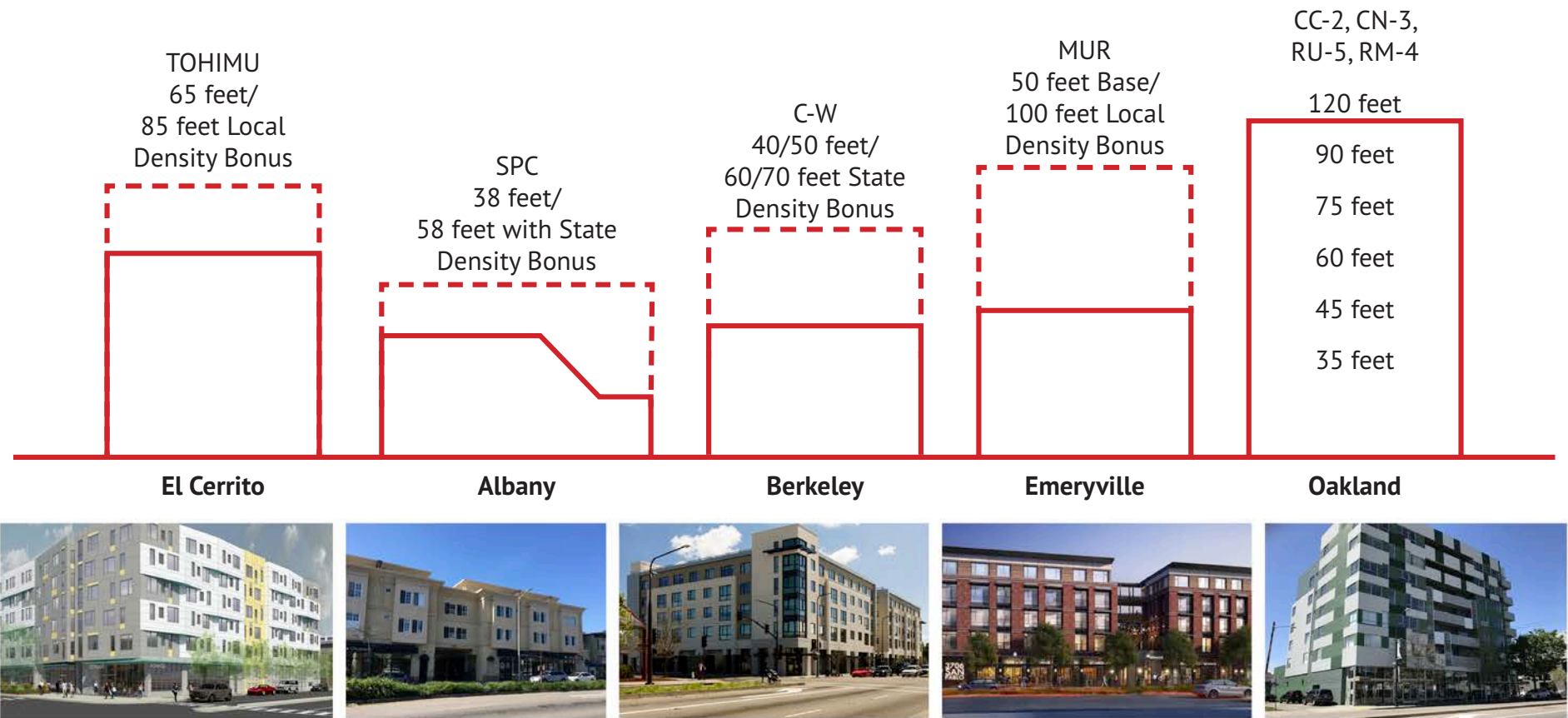


At the time of this Specific Plan’s preparation, market conditions and community interest support 5-6 story residential mixed use buildings on the San Pablo corridor.

Top: “Cerrito Vista” 10963 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito.

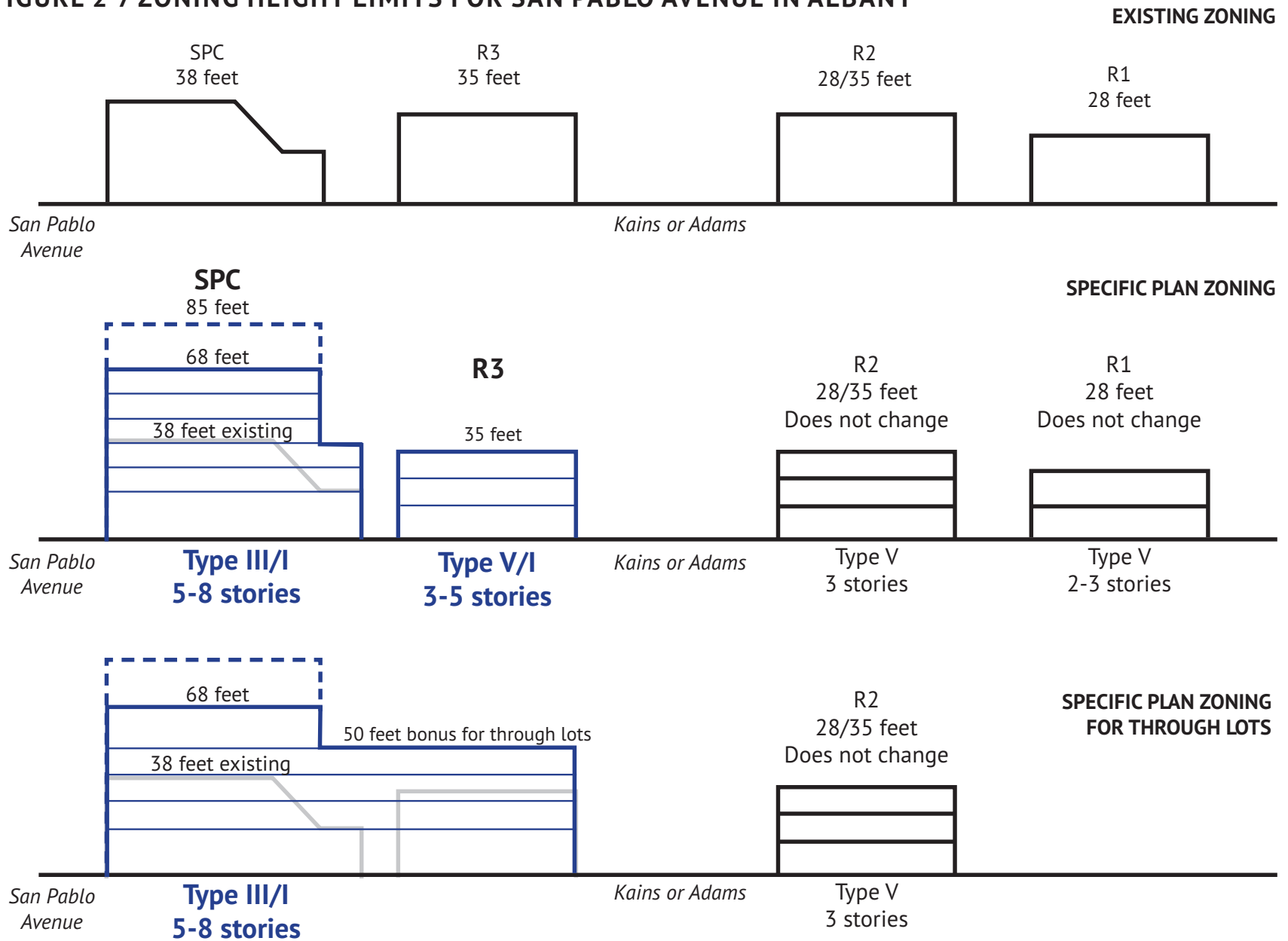
Bottom: “Credence” 10300 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

FIGURE 2-6 TYPICAL ZONING HEIGHT LIMITS FOR SAN PABLO AVENUE, BY CITY (2020, PRIOR TO SPECIFIC PLAN APPROVAL)



Source: Urban Field Studio, 2020.

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



A “node” is a concept, which is described qualitatively in the Albany General Plan and expanded on in this Specific Plan. An “overlay district” is a zoning tool. This Specific Plan modifies overlay districts to establish development and design standards that can assist with placemaking in the nodes.

Major Activity Nodes (General Plan Designation)

This is an ‘overlay’ designation that is used to identify areas within the San Pablo and Solano Avenue business districts that are appropriate for uses that generate higher volumes of pedestrian activity. Zoning regulations for activity nodes may permit additional building height, or may require or incentivize ground floor uses which create active street life and foot traffic. The nodes areas are also priority areas for future capital investment in transit, streetscape improvements, public art, and other public realm improvements. They are particularly important to defining Albany’s “sense of place.”

Placemaking refers to the design of public spaces that strengthen the connection between people and the places they share. Placemaking promotes better urban design, creative patterns of use, and the identities that define the “sense of place”. Placemaking is applied to shared public spaces such as plazas, streets, and public buildings.

Nodes and Overlay Districts

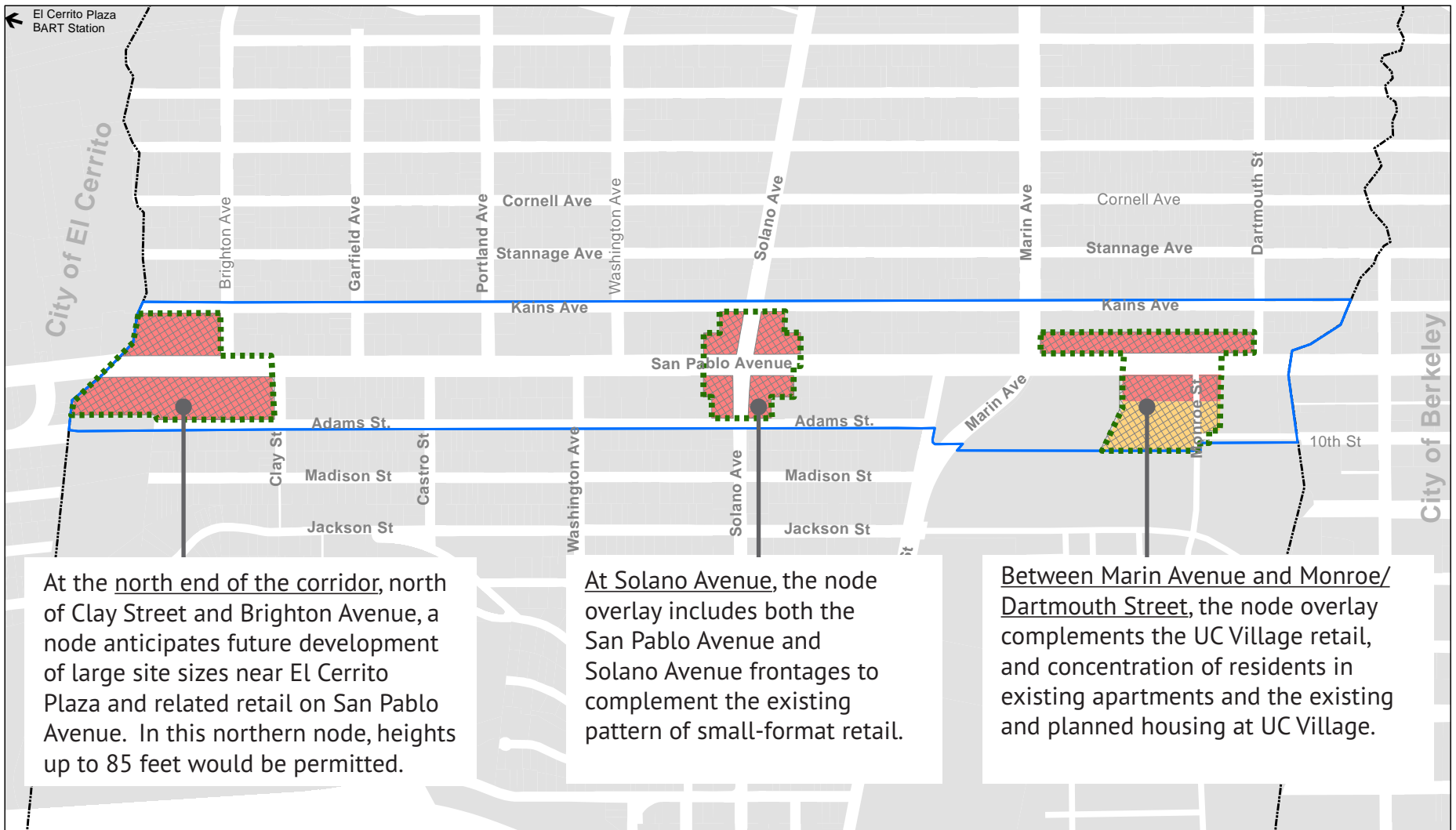
A node is the focus point in a neighborhood for activity and gathering that establishes a sense of place. Developing nodes in the Plan Area can create a stronger identity and focus for community activity and economic vibrancy. The General Plan identifies Major Activity Nodes on San Pablo Avenue and the Zoning Ordinance defines overlay districts intended to implement them, but neither document codifies enforceable standards.








It is at the nodes that there is an opportunity for placemaking. This Specific Plan aims to pair node designations with specific standards to encourage retail, restaurants, and gathering in public spaces as the heart of the community. The placemaking intent is to reinforce the identity of the node and the corridor as a whole and to provide new places for social well-being.

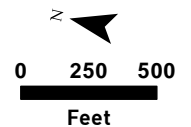
This chapter describes development and use standards specific to the nodes, while Chapter 3 identifies design guidelines and placemaking ideas.

Two nodes are already identified in the General Plan land use map - the Solano Avenue node and the northern node. This Specific Plan modifies the General Plan to add a third node at UC Village, highlighting the change in use and activity since the General Plan was adopted and the retail and residential uses have expanded there. These nodes are illustrated in Figure 2-8.

FIGURE 2-8: COMMERCIAL NODES



-  Proposed Nodes
-  SPA Plan Boundary
-  City Limits
-  Commercial Node Overlay
-  Residential Medium Density
-  Residential High Density
-  San Pablo Commercial





Northern Node

The northern node is at the Albany border near El Cerrito Plaza also includes Cerrito Creek, but does not yet evoke any sense of a gateway. Redevelopment of the site next to the creek could create a connection to El Cerrito at the Adams Street dead-end, support a gateway feature, and make the creek more visible and a natural feature for community members in the area to enjoy.



Solano and San Pablo Avenue Node

The General Plan has identified the central node for San Pablo Avenue at Solano Avenue. This significant node has the potential to make a stronger impression for the area. This node can also help emphasize the gateway to Solano Avenue to the east.



Southern/UC Village Node

The southern node of San Pablo Avenue is near the UC Village retail and Lower Cordonices Creek. Future improvements that complements the retail at UC Village would help to improve the identity of the area. The edge of the node also includes the Buchanan/Marin and San Pablo Avenue intersection where future development could provide landmarks to make it a stronger gateway. In a future phase, the node enhancements could also include a decorative seat wall, small plaza, or feature at the Gill Tract corner if UC pursues future landscaping improvements or other projects.

In the future, the City could consider extending the third node to include the Marin/Buchanan intersection with San Pablo Avenue. The intersection is a significant east-west gateway that has the potential to transform into a more significant urban center. For example, redeveloping one of the gas stations and repositioning City Hall as mixed-use civic and residential complex would generate new uses and population. Enhancing the corner at the UC-owned Gill Tract with a small plaza or art feature could enable an more iconic entry into Albany and the corridor.

This Specific Plan proposes to consolidate the overlay districts that have been created on San Pablo Avenue by expanding the existing Commercial Node Overlay District to encompass all three major activity nodes identified above. It then identifies development standards that can provide incentives for retail development, placemaking, and community gathering.

Opportunity Sites

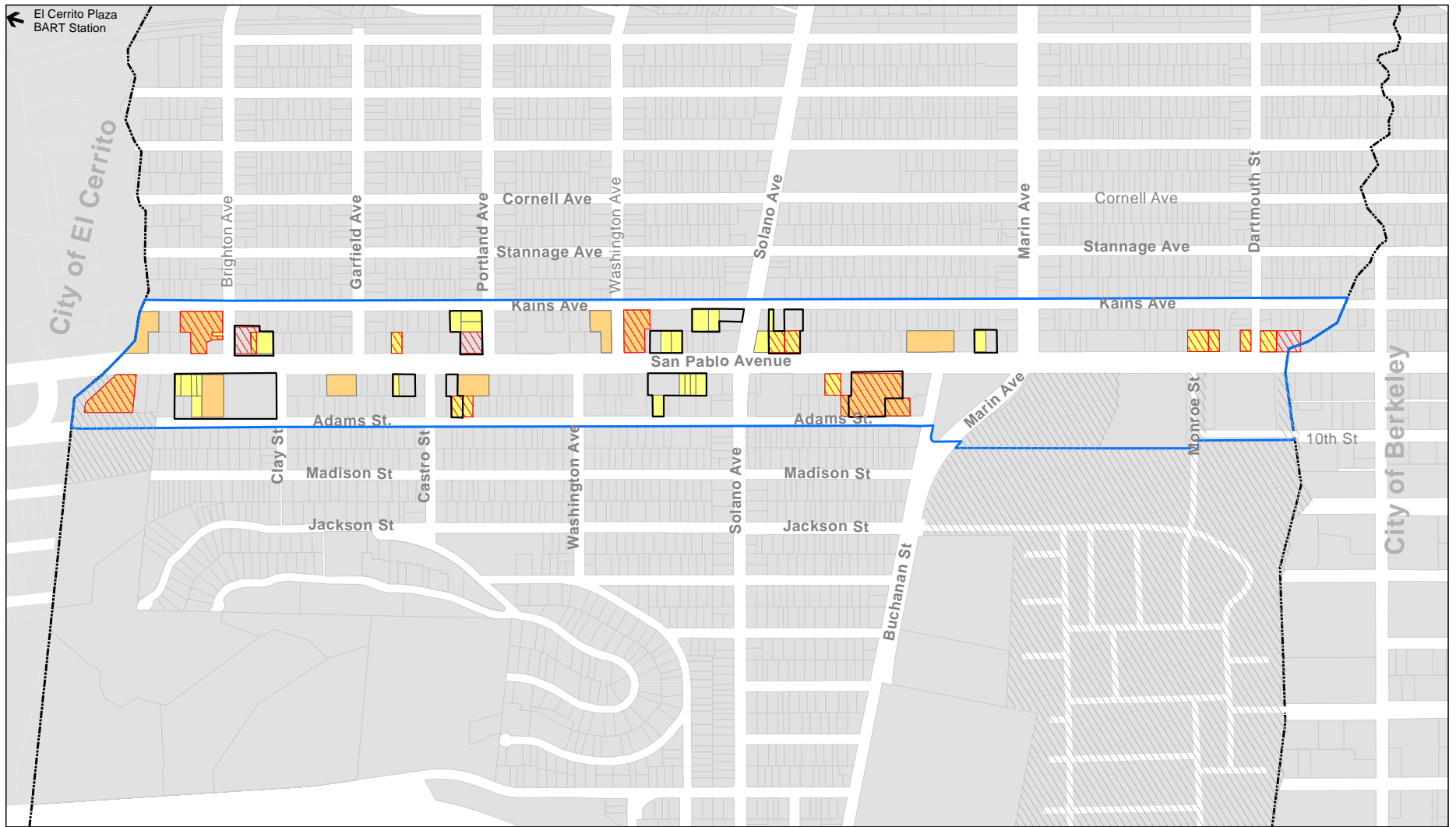
The most substantial redevelopment opportunities in the Plan Area are located within the SPC zoning district where the SPC zone extends through to Kains Avenue or Adams Street, or where ownership extends in a through-lot to these parallel streets, with zoning split between SPC and R-3. These sites tend to be larger and allow for more efficient site planning, circulation, and access. Proposed zoning changes focus within these areas, and at their transition points to residential districts.

On the other hand, many of the Plan Area's typical 5,000-square foot lots are unlikely to redevelop in the short-term. They do not produce enough unit yield to support the risk and cost of doing a development project. At present, rent levels and for-sale prices are not high enough to create an incentive for development on these small parcels. The corridor contains many long-time property owners who appear to earn sufficient income from existing uses, billboards, and leasing surface parking lots. Implementation programs provide a variety of incentives and penalties (i.e., amortization of billboards) but redevelopment will require motivated property owners.

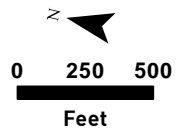
Figure 2-9 illustrates potential opportunity sites where parcels are more likely to redevelop based on size and value.¹ This map illustrates 56 opportunity sites, which total 12.5 acres.

¹ Opportunity sites include parcels designated as vacant or parking lots or sites where assessed building value is less than assessed land value, according to Alameda County 2020 parcel data; and housing opportunity sites in the 2015-2023 Housing Element. Existing single-family homes and parcels less than 10,000 sq. ft. are excluded.

FIGURE 2-9: POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY SITES



- | | |
|---|---|
|  Opportunity Site (Contiguous Ownership) |  Opportunity: Vacant, Parking Lot, or Underutilized Site |
|  Opportunity: 2015-2023 Housing Element Site |  Less than 10,000 sf |
| |  10,000 sf or greater |



Potential Buildout

The Specific Plan estimates development potential that could result from the Plan in order to identify necessary service, transportation and infrastructure improvements to support the new development.

The total buildout reported in Table 2-1 assumes that 65% of the opportunity sites would buildout over the plan horizon of 2040. Notably, this map is only intended as an illustrative example of which sites could redevelop. Property owners of opportunity sites may or may not be interested in redevelopment now or in the future depending on their tenants' lease terms and other business interests. Additionally, sites that are not shown on this map could still redevelop. The plan has a 20-year time horizon which relates to the long-term nature of the plan, which is expected to unfold incrementally.

As shown in Table 2-1, this buildout scenario estimates 1,160 new housing units and 45,000 new square feet of commercial development accommodated over the time horizon of the plan. This would generate approximately 2,680 new residents based on current household size.² The actual number of units and commercial floor area produced could be more or less depending on property owner interest.

² Population based on 2.437 persons per household (California Department of Finance Estimates, 2020) and adjusting for a typical 5% vacancy rate.

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.)	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.



Image of San Pablo Avenue at night. Photograph by Doug Donaldson

General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will be identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

Implementing Policies

Land Use Framework

LU-1: Nodes. Establish three “nodes” to support placemaking. In these locations, ground-floor commercial is required and iconic architectural features and public art is encouraged (see additional policies in Chapter 3). Amend the Major Activity Nodes in the General Plan and General Plan Land Use Map, and the Zoning Ordinance overlay districts and Zoning Map to facilitate this node vision.

1. At the north end of the corridor, north of Clay Street and Brighton Avenue to take advantage of large site sizes, the proximity to El Cerrito Plaza and related retail on San Pablo Avenue. In this northern node, taller building heights and higher densities are permitted.
2. At Solano Avenue (both the San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue frontages) to complement the existing pattern of small-format retail.
3. Between Marin Avenue and Dartmouth Street (east side) and at UC Village retail, to support the burgeoning retail area and the large concentration of residents in apartments and at UC Village (existing and planned units).

LU-2: Overlays. Revise zoning overlay districts in the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to streamline and clarify zoning standards and provide incentives for development at the nodes:

1. Remove the Residential-Commercial Transition Overlay District (RCT) from the Zoning Ordinance and replace it with the height transition requirements and use requirements described in the policies in this chapter.
2. Remove the Planned Residential/Commercial Overlay District from the Zoning Ordinance and replace it with policies in this chapter to facilitate development on large parcels, while reducing apparent massing, breaking up large blocks, and expanding pedestrian connections.
3. Expand the Commercial Node Overlay District to include all Major Activity Nodes identified in the General Plan, as modified herein, and create incentives for housing and retail development that supports placemaking.

General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will be identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

LU-3: General Plan Amendments. Amend the General Plan and General Plan Land Use Map to incorporate the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and support higher-density mixed use development on the corridor:

1. Expand the San Pablo Mixed Use land use designation on Kains Avenue between Solano Avenue and Portland (Figure 2-1).
2. Add the UC Village node as a Major Activity Node and expand the Major Activity Node at Solano Avenue.

LU-4: Gateway Project. Facilitate a gateway project at San Pablo/Marin/Buchanan intersection:

1. As a long-term strategy, consider repositioning Albany City Hall to develop a new mixed use building in cooperation with a developer; rebuild City Hall as a multi-story building; and close Buchanan Street north of City Hall, utilizing the land over the right-of-way for development and/or City use
2. Work with property owners of the gas stations to consider redevelopment of one site as a mixed-use residential project.
3. Work with the University of California to integrate a plaza into the Gill Tract at the corner of San Pablo, to facilitate community gathering.

LU-5: Affordable Housing In-Lieu Fees. To provide the City with opportunities to facilitate various types of affordable housing, consider whether to locate inclusionary housing units on-site or to pay a fee in-lieu. Prepare an updated study to determine the appropriate inclusionary housing in-lieu fee for for-sale and/or rental projects citywide. This amount would specify the fee payment that is already permitted by the Zoning Ordinance.

Use Regulations

LU-6: Allowed Uses. Revise use regulations in the SPC zone of the Zoning Ordinance to support ground-floor commercial uses, active ground floor designs, a diverse range of household types, and prioritize housing and residential mixed-use development:

1. Prohibit new commercial development above the ground-floor on sites identified as housing opportunity sites in the Housing Element.
2. Add live/work and shared housing as allowed uses.
3. Remove new single-family and two-family housing as allowed uses.
4. Require active ground-floor design, regardless of use. (See standards in Chapter 3)
5. Require ground-floor commercial uses on the San

General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will be identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

Pablo and Solano Avenue frontages at the three commercial nodes.

6. Except within commercial nodes, projects with 100% below-market rate units (except for the manager's unit and up to 120% of AMI), allow common area residential uses on the San Pablo Avenue frontage.

LU-7: Food-Related Uses. Support the evolution of food-related businesses from start-up ventures through established restaurants and stores. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to expand allowed uses in the SPC zone to:

1. Allow "ghost kitchens" (defined as food businesses that prepare food in a commercial kitchen space and deliver it right to consumers through food delivery apps), but continue to require window transparency standards to maintain visual interest.
2. Respond to evolving public health requirements for food businesses by encouraging a range of formats and flexibility in tenant spaces and leasing arrangements. This includes, but is not limited to food halls with outdoor dining, prepared food and produce boxes, and ghost kitchens to facilitate pick-up and delivery.

LU-8: Large Footprint Commercial. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require new projects on large lots to provide larger footprint commercial ground-floor spaces to accommodate a range of business types on the corridor, including uses with larger footprint news and minimal structural columns. New residential mixed-use projects on lots that total 20,000 square feet or greater, shall provide ground-floor commercial spaces of at least 8,000 square feet and at least 50-foot retail depths.

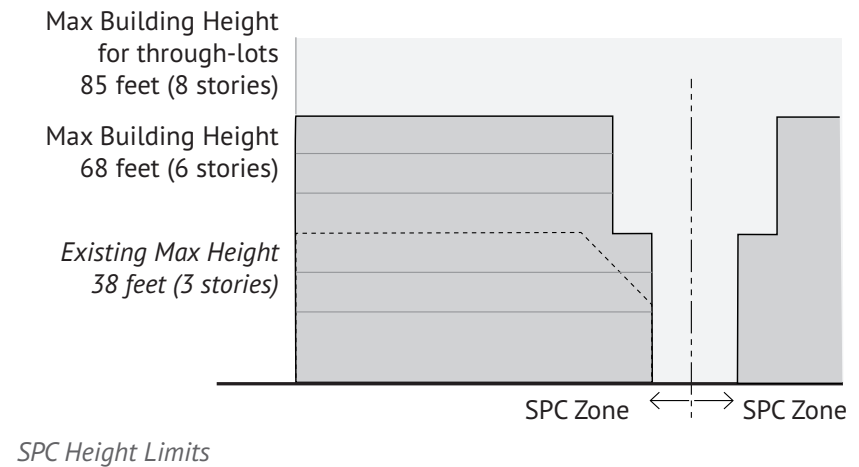
LU-9: Amortize Billboards. Work with the City Attorney to evaluate the potential of policies to require removal of existing billboards over time.

General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will be identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

Development Standards

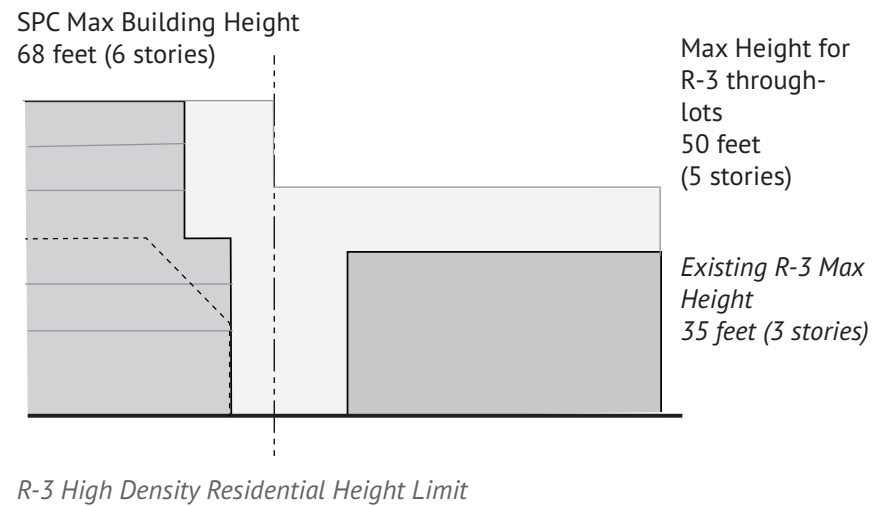
LU-10: Density & Height Modifications. Modify SPC and R-3 zoning district standards in the Zoning Ordinance to support higher-density context-appropriate development:

1. **SPC Height:** Allow an additional 30-40 feet (3-4 stories) in building height in the SPC district. Increase potential heights from 38 feet (3 stories) to 68 feet (6 stories) along the corridor. Except, allow up to 85 feet (8 stories) on SPC-zoned through-lots and in the northern node at Brighton Avenue/the City border if community benefit thresholds are met (see Policy LU-11).
2. **SPC FAR:** Allow additional floor area ratio (FAR) in the SPC zone, increasing density from 2.25 FAR for residential mixed-use development to 4.0. Allow up to 4.5 FAR on SPC-zoned through-lots and in the northern node at Brighton Avenue/the City border if community benefit thresholds are met (see Policy LU-11).



General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

3. R-3 High Density Residential Height & FAR (Through-Lots): Provide an incentive for lot consolidation for contiguously-owned through-lots (i.e., that extend from San Pablo Avenue to Kains Avenue or Adams Street):
 - a) Allow an additional 15 feet in building height in the R-3 district component of the project, increasing potential heights from 35 feet (3 stories) to 50 feet (5 stories).
 - b) Allow an increase in density from 1.5 FAR to 2.0 in the R-3 district.



4. Residential Density (Minimum Only): Eliminate maximum residential density requirements in the SPC and R-3 zones, but maintain minimum densities for new construction of 30 du/ac and 20 du/ac, respectively (ADUs may count toward calculating residential densities). For the purposes of determining residential capacity yield for the Housing Element or other regulatory requirements, the City may use a combination of FAR and average unit size (based on unit sizes in recent projects in Albany and neighboring cities), or similar proxy.

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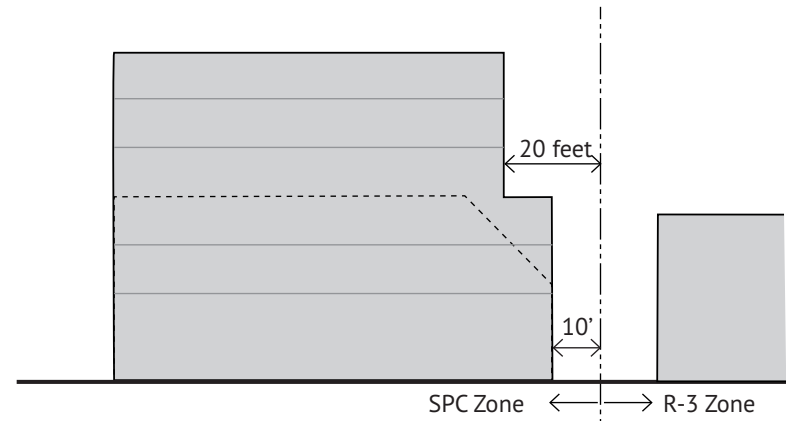
5. Setback as Height Transition: Eliminate the daylight plane requirements in the SPC and R-3 High Density Residential zones. To provide transitions to residential districts, establish a height transition requirement based on setbacks and height:

a) On SPC-zoned sites abutting R-3 High Density Residential zones or other residential zones:

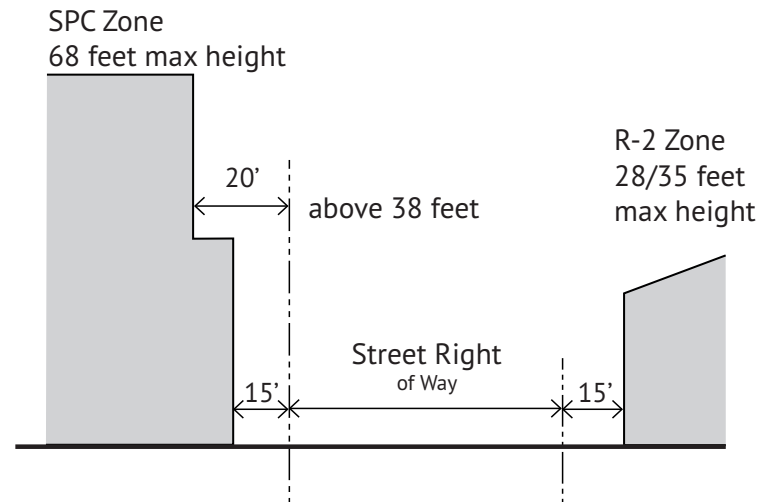
i) At the rear yard, require a rear yard minimum of 10 feet. Above the third story and no greater than 38 feet above grade (i.e., similar to maximum height in the R-3 district), require a minimum 20-foot stepback from the property line.

ii) At the side yard (or rear yard if building fronts on side street perpendicular to San Pablo Avenue), require an interior side yard minimum of 5 feet.

b) On SPC-zoned across the street from R-3, R-2, or other residential zones, continue to require a 15-foot setback. Replace the front yard daylight plane with a minimum 20-foot stepback from the property line, above 38 feet in height.



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



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

General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will be identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

6. Usable Open Space: Allow reductions in the usable open space requirement in the SPC and R-3 zones to improve development viability, match the provision of open space to the needs of residents:
 - a) Reduce requirement from 200 square feet per unit to 100 square feet per unit, whether provided as private open space or common open space.
 - b) Allow on-site publicly-accessible open space to satisfy up to 50% of the open space requirement, except within the Solano Avenue node, where it may satisfy up to 100%.



LU-11: Required Amenities. Require additional community amenities to support equity, livability, sustainability and placemaking.

1. All new development projects are required to:
 - a) Increase the below-market rate unit requirement from 15% to 20%, split between low and very-low income units (or fee in-lieu for ownership), or
 - b) Provide one amenity from List A or
 - c) Provide two amenities from List B.
2. Require projects in the northern node that exceed 68 feet and/or 4.0 FAR to:
 - a) Increase the below-market rate unit requirement from 15% to 20%, split between low and very-low income units (or fee in-lieu for ownership), and
 - b) Provide one amenity from List A or two amenities from List B.

Note: Amenity list may be updated from time to time by resolution of the Planning & Zoning Commission and/or City Council.

General Plan and Zoning Amendments are detailed as policies for transparency purposes in this Public Review Draft. Policies will be simplified and specific amendments will be identified as redlines to the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan prior to Specific Plan adoption.

Community Benefit List A (“Big Ticket” Items)

- a) Publicly-accessible open space (e.g., plazas) equal to at least 1,500 square feet of 10% of the lot area, whichever is greater.
- b) Mid-block pedestrian connection on through-lots that extend from San Pablo Avenue to Adams or Kains
- c) Design and construction of site-appropriate bicycle, transit and pedestrian facilities in the adjacent public right-of-way (e.g., bus shelter, on-street bike facility, planned crosswalk)

Community Benefit List B

- a) On-site public art (may not be satisfied with an in-lieu fee), consistent with the City’s Art in Public Places Ordinance.
- b) Family-Friendly Housing, with at least 20% of units designed with 3+ bedrooms.
- c) All electric construction
- d) Installation of on-site photovoltaic or solar hot-water panels, equivalent to powering at least 15% of building load.
- e) EV-ready charging for all off-street project parking spaces
- f) Ground-floor commercial retail space with minimum depth of 50 feet for at least 50% of the width and at least 14 feet clear height inside the space.





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.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN GUIDELINES

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

Overview

This Specific Plan supports transformation of the existing commercial corridor to enable an active, walkable, and attractive urban environment. 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. This chapter outlines design guidelines that express the City's priorities for site and building design and establish the intent for 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 San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines largely addressed auto-oriented commercial uses and did not address mixed-use or multi-family housing that is anticipated for San Pablo Avenue. Relevant guidelines from the 1989 document have been incorporated into these design guidelines. In an effort to provide consistency with established practice, the design guidelines in this chapter build upon the City of Albany's award-winning Residential Design Guidelines, adopted in 2018, which focused on single-family residential design.

Applicability

Design guidelines apply to new development projects going through the City’s design review process. This chapter 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. These objective design standards are required for projects with residential units pursuing streamlined review under State law.

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.

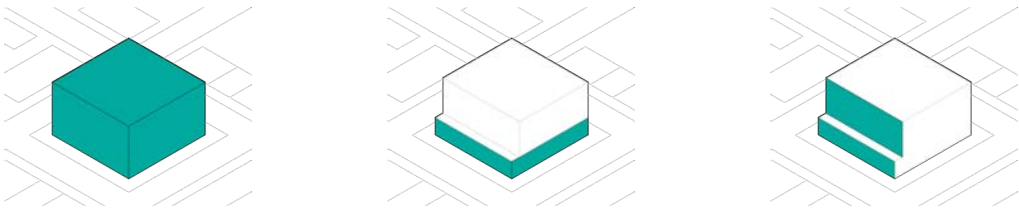
Design guidelines and standards address the sidewalk area, but do not address street design and streetscape improvements beyond the curb. These components are under Caltrans’ jurisdiction and are subject to other planning and implementation efforts described in Chapter 4.

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

Nodes

As outlined in Chapter 2, there are three nodes within the Planning Area (see Figure 3-1) that provide opportunities for distinctive features and activity that make them stand out amongst other parts of the corridor. Nodes are envisioned as focal points along San Pablo Avenue that define the identity of Albany and make it memorable. Nodes are part of the Gateways defined in the General Plan that define the City of Albany and should be designed to create a first impression and lasting image of a community. If designed and programmed well, nodes can be an anchor and regional draw for visitors outside of the City of Albany.

Currently, San Pablo Avenue is characterized by a mix of building styles, signage types, setbacks, and off-street parking. As San Pablo Avenue transforms, new development can better define the street, emphasizing nodes and improving the pedestrian experience. As stated in the General Plan's definition for major activity nodes, "The node areas are also priority areas for future capital investment in transit, streetscape improvements, public art, and other public realm improvements. They are particularly important to defining Albany's sense of place."

Nodes should contrast with the typical frontage on San Pablo Avenue, either because they are taller, bigger, or designed to attract activity and attention. Features that emphasize nodes may be landmarks, public art, unique signage, a special building design, or cluster of buildings, a commercial establishment, or a place for events and gatherings in a public space. There will still be neighborhood-serving establishments between the nodes. The two blocks or so around each node can establish a walkable distance that provides complementary and synergistic retail, services, and attractions.

FIGURE 3-1: THREE NODES



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 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.

*For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.*

Design Guidelines

Site Design

BLOCK DESIGN

SD-1: Mid-Block Connections. Encourage mid-block paseos/passages to reduce large block sizes on through-lots (including consolidated parcels under the same ownership). Figure 3-2 illustrates potential locations where mid-block connections are provided:

- 1. Provide a minimum 10-foot wide building-to-building easement for pedestrian public access that connects San Pablo Avenue with the parallel public right-of-way.**
- 2. Design passageways with end-to-end visibility from connecting public spaces.**
- 3. Make passageways accessible to people with disabilities.**
- 4. Preserve public access during daylight hours.**
5. Align the passageway with existing streets or passageways to complete the street grid.
6. A passageway may have built space above or below the pedestrian surface.

SD-2: Shared/Publicly Accessible Open Spaces on San Pablo Avenue. Encourage shared, publicly accessible open spaces that encourage gathering and other active uses throughout the day and night for properties that front along San Pablo Avenue. Encourage the incorporation of publicly accessible spaces, such as plazas and pocket parks, into new and existing commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use developments to encourage social interaction. Spaces should be appropriately scaled, programmed, and designed to allow for social activity where provided:

- 1. Publicly Accessible Open Space shall have a minimum dimension of 20 feet in either direction.**
- 2. 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.**
3. Small plazas are encouraged where the building and storefront entryways are set back.

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

FIGURE 3-2: POTENTIAL LOCATIONS OF MID-BLOCK PASSAGES



*For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.*

SD-3: Nodes. The attraction of nodes is defined by a unique activity or feature that stands out amongst the other parts of San Pablo Avenue. The following regulations apply to projects within nodes:

- 1. Projects on parcels that are 10,000 sf or greater are required to have on-site public art as part of new development and may not pay a fee in-lieu.**
2. Public Art can be 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.
- 3. Projects must provide the following node enhancements:**
 - a) Benches or seat walls within the frontage zone or amenity zone of the sidewalk facing San Pablo Avenue.
 - b) Enhanced landscaping along the frontage zone either integrated as part of the design of the ground floor or by using planters.
- 4. Projects must provided one of the following node enhancements:**
 - a) Street-facing, public accessible open space for gathering with at least one building entrance facing it. Preferably, there is more than one entrance on to the open space and that it is located adjacent to active uses.

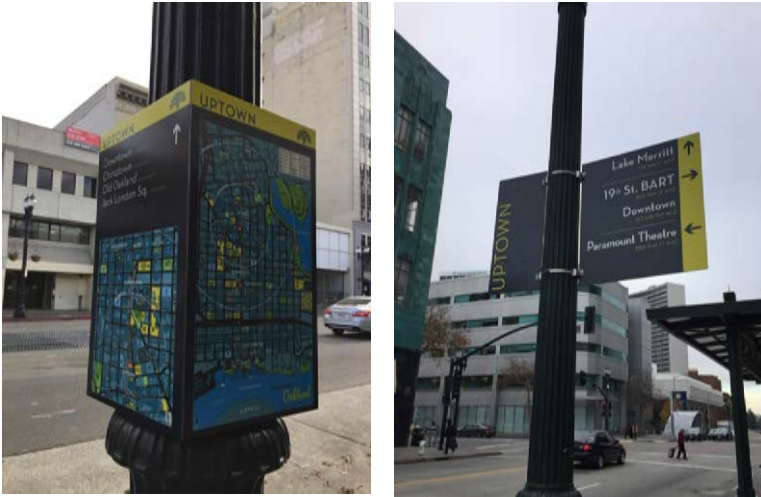
- b) Public art in the form of a mural or integrated into the building facade.
- c) Tall building features and building massing that frames and defines the node, differentiates the feature from the rest of the building, and serves as a landmark for the area.

SD-4: San Pablo Avenue District Identity and Features.

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.

1. The following elements are encouraged along the primary frontage to add district identity to San Pablo Avenue:
 - a) Building elements using architectural features intrinsic to the building structure, such as balconies, terraces, bay windows, and towers.
 - b) Premium materials or architectural details that embellish the design of the building frontage.
 - c) Landscape planters and low walls not exceeding 30 inches from the height of the sidewalk.
 - d) Public Art
 - e) Signage

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.



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



Cluttered private parking signage help keep people away.

SD-5: Wayfinding and Directional Signage. Wayfinding signage shall be provided for the district to highlight opportunities for public transit, walking, and cycling. The district wayfinding signage shall provide a cohesive and legible physical and virtual navigation system.

1. Design public wayfinding and informational signage to be visible and scaled for pedestrians.
2. **Provide wayfinding signage at the pedestrian level that is oriented to people walking on the sidewalk, using blade signs.**
3. **Provide wayfinding signage accessible to people of all ages and ability levels, especially within a block of bus stops.**
4. Emphasize destinations as well as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes, and the location of vehicle and bike parking facilities with directional signs or maps.
5. Minimize the number of warning signs for parking, towing, and trespassing to avoid clutter.

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

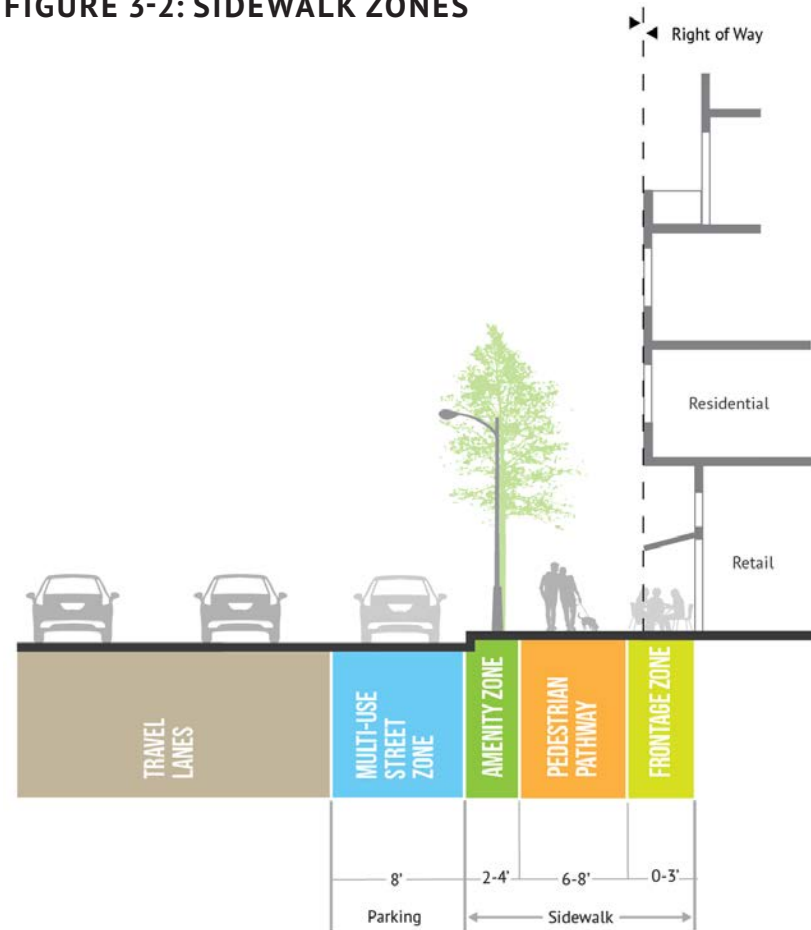
SIDEWALK DESIGN

SD-6: Building Orientation. Primary building frontages for all buildings along San Pablo Avenue shall face the public sidewalk on San Pablo Avenue.

SD-7: Building Build-to-Zone. Buildings shall build to a minimum of 60% of the edge of the frontage zone along San Pablo Avenue excluding areas for mid-block connections and publicly accessible open space.

SD-8: San Pablo Avenue Sidewalk Zones. San Pablo Avenue sidewalks are composed of four zones: 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. **The minimum sidewalk width on San Pablo Avenue shall be 12 feet, with specific zone standards defined in the policies below.**

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.

*For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.*

SD-9: 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 or bicycle on-street parking is located, but may also include loading, parklets, extensions of the sidewalk for bus loading, landscaping, and other pedestrian bicycle amenities.

1. **Loading. Accommodate curbside drop-offs for carshare vehicles and delivery vehicles on projects with at least 20 dwelling units.**
2. **Parklets may front streets perpendicular to San Pablo Avenue. Parklets on perpendicular streets such as Solano Avenue are permitted.**



SD-10: 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.

1. **Street furniture may not obstruct the pedestrian pathway on sidewalks and may not extend into the Multi-Use Zone.**
2. **Street trees shall be planted following Caltrans requirements for spacing and species to maintain sightlines for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Generally, a 10-foot separation is required from driveways and above-ground utilities.**
3. **Where new or replacement trees are proposed, a minimum of one 24-inch box size or greater tree shall be planted per 25 linear feet of landscape area.**
4. **Utility boxes shall be placed below grade, or away from the primary frontage.**
5. **Bikes shall be parked parallel to the street to avoid obstructing the pedestrian pathway.**
6. On-Street Bike Parking is encouraged near building entrances (see short term bicycle requirements in the Zoning Ordinance).
7. Permanent seating is encouraged in the Amenity Zone.

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

Not Desired: Above Ground Utilities



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.

SD-11: 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.

SD-12: 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.

1. **The building may be designed to open directly on to the frontage zone where there is ground floor retail or restaurant uses.**
2. **A minimum of 5% of the linear building frontage must include landscaped areas or planters. Landscaping must be clear of the pedestrian pathway.**
3. **Fences must be no taller than 42 inches and be at least 40% transparent.**
4. **Landscape planters and low walls shall not exceed 30 inches in height from the sidewalk grade.**



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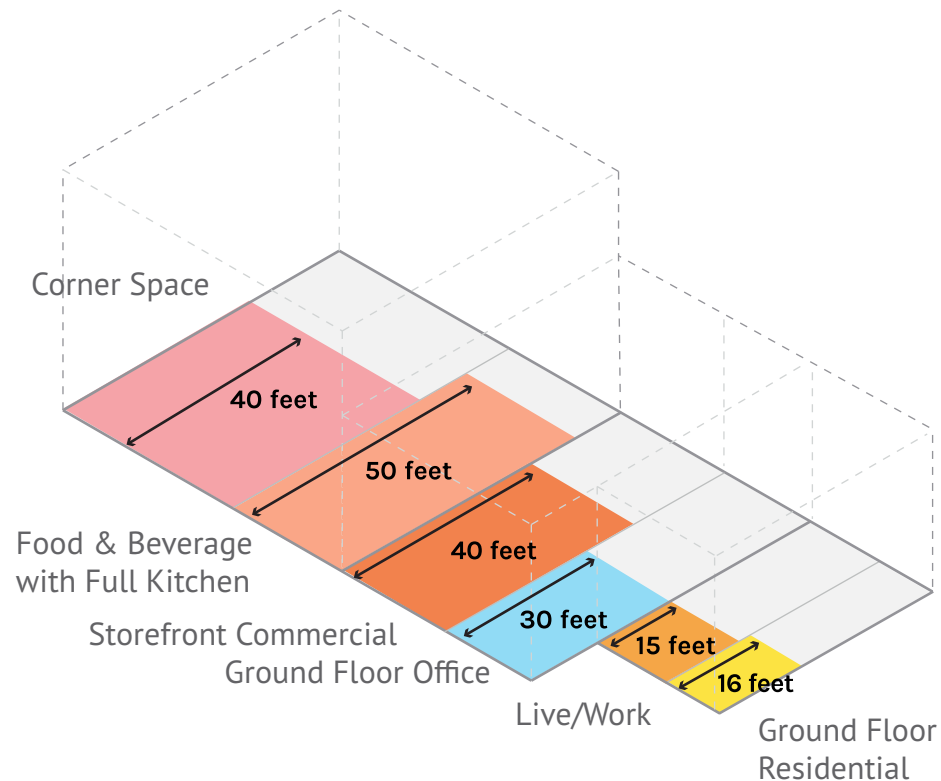
5. Outdoor dining is encouraged in the frontage zone.
6. **All associated private movable fixtures, furnishings, and equipment must be clear of the pedestrian pathway and at least 10-feet of any driveway, and do not impede bus stops and loading zones.**
7. **Private movable fixtures, furnishings, and 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.**
8. **Outdoor lighting fixtures must be oriented in a manner to direct the light away from adjacent parcels.**
9. Public art is encouraged in the Frontage Zone.

SD-13: Active Frontages. Active frontages are building frontages with active uses where there is a visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor. Active uses generate pedestrian visits over an extended period of the day.

1. **Active frontages are required for a minimum of 50% of each building facade facing a San Pablo Avenue.**
2. Active Frontage Types include:
 - a) Storefront Commercial, for example shops and cafes.
 - b) Ground Floor Office
 - c) Live/Work
 - d) Ground Floor Residential Units with individual unit entries
 - e) Ground Floor Residential Accessory spaces, for example indoor community rooms and gyms.

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

FIGURE 3-3: MINIMUM DEPTH OF ACTIVE USES



SD-14: Minimum Depth of Active Uses. Active frontage uses shall have a minimum interior depth of gross building area by use type (see Figure 3-3).

1. **Storefront Commercial: 40 feet minimum depth for a minimum of 50% of the frontage, with 20 feet minimum depth**
2. **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.**
3. **Ground Floor Office: 30 feet minimum depth**
4. **Live/Work: 15 feet minimum depth for a minimum width of 15 feet or 50% of the unit frontage, whichever is greater**
5. **Ground Floor Residential Units: 16 feet minimum depth**
6. **Ground Floor Residential Accessory Spaces: 20 feet minimum depth**
7. **Corner space: 40 feet minimum depth on all frontages**

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

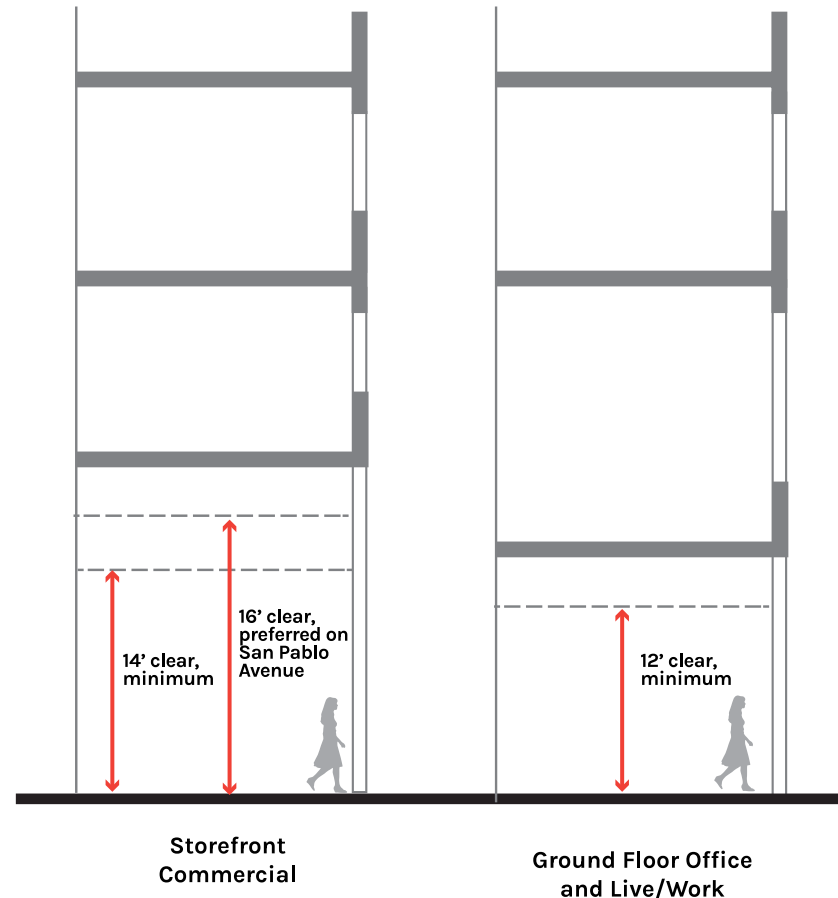
SD-15: Minimum Finished Floor Heights of Active Uses. Active uses shall have a finished floor height above grade at the back of the sidewalk within the following ranges by use type.

1. **Primary Building Entries: minimum 0 feet, maximum 3 feet**
2. **Storefront commercial and Live/Work Entries: minimum 0 feet, maximum 1 foot**
3. **Absolute maximum height (when cross slope applies): 2 feet above or below grade**

SD-16: Floor to Floor Heights of Active Uses. Active uses shall have the following minimum floor-to-floor heights by use type.

1. **Storefront Commercial: 14 feet clear minimum, with a preference for ground floor spaces to be 16 feet clear on San Pablo Avenue.**
2. **Ground Floor Office and Live/Work: 12 feet clear minimum**
3. **Projects with 100% below-market rate units (except for the manager's unit and up to 120% of AMI) are exempt.**

FIGURE 3-4: FLOOR-TO-FLOOR HEIGHTS OF ACTIVE USES



*For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.*

ACCESS

SD-17: Individual Entrances. For individual residential entrances, doorways shall face the street and provide a transition zone.

1. The transition zone should be distinctive from the adjacent sidewalk
2. Landscaping that defines the edge of the zone is encouraged.
3. Fencing the entranceway is discouraged

SD-18: Bike Access. Bike rooms should have a direct entrance from San Pablo Avenue. Sliding doors with sensors are recommended for easy access to bicycle rooms.

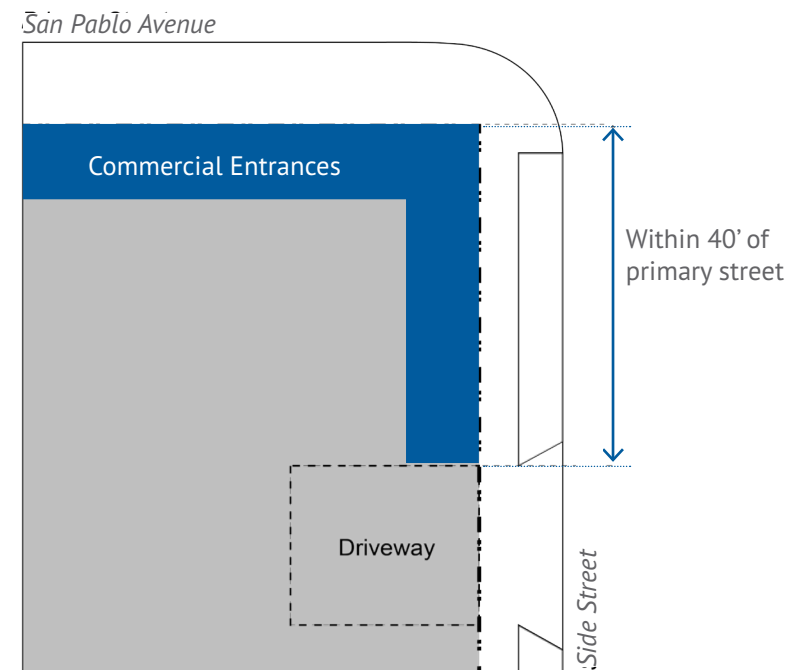
SD-19: Primary Frontage on San Pablo and Parallel Streets. Street Frontage is important on San Pablo Avenue and the parallel streets Kains and Adams. The design of buildings shall orient and design entrances to treat the two streets as primary frontages.

1. **The main building entries must orient to the street.**
2. Design entrances to be clearly identifiable and inviting, located to encourage pedestrian interaction.

SD-20: San Pablo Avenue Frontage. For properties with frontage on San Pablo Avenue, the main pedestrian frontage and facade of the building shall be oriented to San Pablo Avenue.

1. **Commercial entrances are limited to San Pablo Avenue, except within 40 feet of the corner on a side street.**

FIGURE 3-5: COMMERCIAL ENTRANCES ON SAN PABLO AVENUE



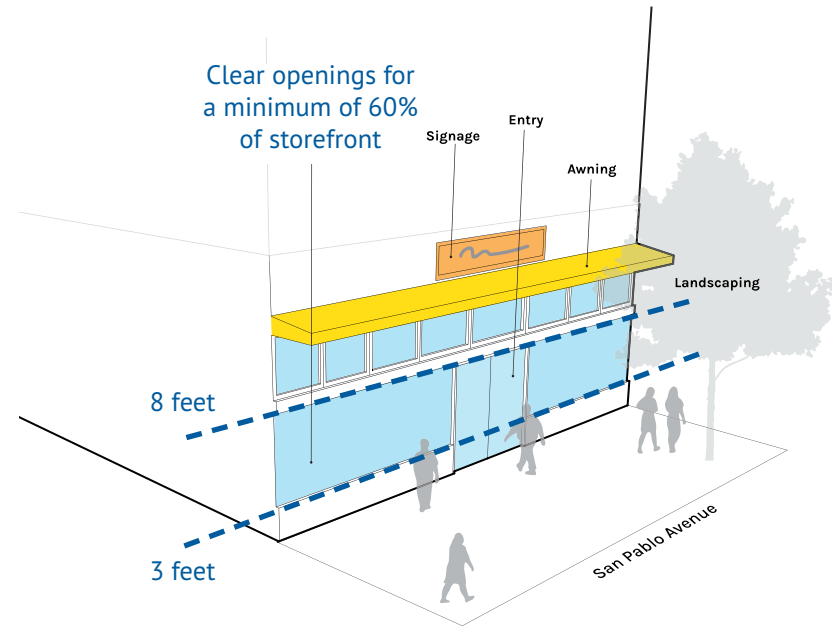
Commercial entrances are limited to San Pablo Avenue and within 40 feet of the corner on a side street.

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

2. Mixed-use building street frontage on San Pablo shall have multiple pedestrian entrances to access businesses or residences in the building.

- a) At least one publicly-accessible street-level entrance shall be provided for every 40 feet along San Pablo Avenue.
- b) An entrance to upper level residential units shall be provided on San Pablo Avenue to activate the street, with the exception of a lobby on a side street to accommodate the full frontage for commercial retail. Lobby entrances need to be placed on either side of ground floor commercial to allow for the most continuous retail possible.
- c) 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.
- d) Design to the human scale by detailing the facade at the pedestrian level through the use of awnings, storefront window systems, signage, base wall treatments, building lighting, and landscaping.

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.

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SD-21: Curb Cuts. Minimize curb cuts on San Pablo Avenue to maintain clear safe pedestrian circulation and reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.

1. 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.
2. **Each development project site shall be limited to one curb cut per frontage. Project sponsors should coordinate with CalTrans earlier in the planning process in order to obtain an encroachment permit for a required curb cut.**
3. **Driveways along San Pablo Avenue are required to be a right-in, right-out configuration, unless controlled with a traffic signal.**

SD-22: Vehicular Entrances. Separate vehicular access from pedestrian and bicycle circulation to avoid pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts with vehicles at driveways along San Pablo Avenue.

1. Avoid locating parking entrances in the middle of a lot; locate entrances to the side of a continuous row of ground floor retail.
2. **No more than 30% of the San Pablo Avenue frontage shall be devoted to garage openings, service/loading entries.**
 - a) This limitation does not apply to frontages on side streets and alleys.



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.

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The main garage entrance is located to the side street so that it is not prioritized on the main frontage. The landscaping and architectural treatment of the garage minimizes its appearance as a parking facility.

3. 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.
4. Structured parking entrances shall be no wider than 18 feet maximum width.
5. 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-23: Service Areas. Minimize the visibility of service areas and avoid potential conflicts between service/refuse pick-up and pedestrians/transit vehicles.

1. 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.
2. Locate services for loading, delivery, trash and infrastructure inside the building structure to the rear of buildings, or in a screened enclosure.
 - a) Screening shall be equal to or higher than the height of the equipment to be screened.
 - b) Screening shall be made of a primary exterior

Desired: Hidden Utilities



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

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finish material used on other portions of the building.

3. Refuse collection areas shall be located as far as possible from the residential portion of mixed-use buildings and open space areas.
4. Refuse collection areas shall not be located within required front yard or street side yard, parking spaces, required landscaped areas, or open space areas.
5. Refuse and recycling containers shall not be stored in a place visible from a public street nor conflict with circulation or parking on site.
6. Avoid designing a condition where parked vehicles and refuse collection vehicles conflict.

SD-24: Utilities. Utilities should be located out of the sidewalk area and should not obstruct the Pedestrian Pathway. Any above-ground utilities and equipment shall be integrated into building and landscape design to minimize the impact on the pedestrian experience.

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. Ground-level utilities shall be located inside buildings, closets, or underground unless prohibited by the utility provider.
4. Where not feasible, utilities shall be screened with structures, architectural screens or landscaping, such as 5-gallon minimum shrubs, except on sides where access is required.
 - a) Screening shall be equal to or higher than the height of the equipment to be screened.
 - b) Screening shall be made of a primary exterior finish material used on other portions of the building.
 - c) If screening is designed as landscaping, the planting must form an opaque barrier when planted.
5. Backflow preventers should be located within landscaped setbacks to minimize visual impact.
6. Allocate vertical space for venting and underground grease interceptors located for easy maintenance, at the conceptual development stage, to support food related uses.
7. Project sponsors should coordinate with PG&E early in the planning process to identify locations for any required on- or off-site infrastructure.

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SD-25: Screening of Rooftop Equipment. Rooftop elements including roof access, mechanical equipment, and other utility features on the rooftop shall be located to minimize visual impact by meeting the following requirements. Solar panels, wind generators, and green roof features, and other features less than two feet in height are exempt from these requirements.

- 1. Rooftop mechanical equipment installed on buildings shall be stepped back from the top of the parapet or roof edge.**
- 2. Equipment that is greater in height than the parapet wall shall be screened to a height equal to the height of the equipment.**



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

PARKING

Parking requirements for bicycles and vehicles are contained within the zoning code and are addressed in Chapter 4 policies. The design guidelines address parking design and placement.

SD-26: 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.

- 1. There must be at least one pathway to bicycle parking that does not cross vehicular parking or drive aisles.**
- 2. Design individual units to accommodate in-unit bicycle parking in the foyer.**
- 3. Locate short-term bicycle parking near street edges in the public realm.**
4. Locate long-term shared bicycle parking near building entrances in safe, pleasant, and convenient places.
5. Integrate bicycle amenities, such as repair stations, vending machines, water fountains, electrical outlets, into bicycle rooms.

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SD-27: 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.

SD-28: Parking Garage Design.

- 1. Street level frontage of parking structures must include active uses on San Pablo Avenue to screen the parking structure and activate the street edge. All active uses must be a minimum depth of 20 feet with the exception of residential units that must provide a minimum depth of 16 feet.**
- 2. No more than 50 percent of a building's street-facing facade can have a visible parking garage.**
 - a) The design of the building frontage should not prioritize the vehicular entrance to the parking garage.
 - b) Use public art, landscaping, and the form of the building to minimize the visual impact of parking facilities.
- 3. All portions of visible parking structure 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.**
- 4. Garages shall incorporate features to add interest to the building facade and avoid blank unadorned walls.**
 - a) Any part of the parking garage that is visible to



This parking garage is at the back of the site, wrapped by residential uses, except at this back edge of the property. The design uses landscaping to screen the visible portions of the parking structure.

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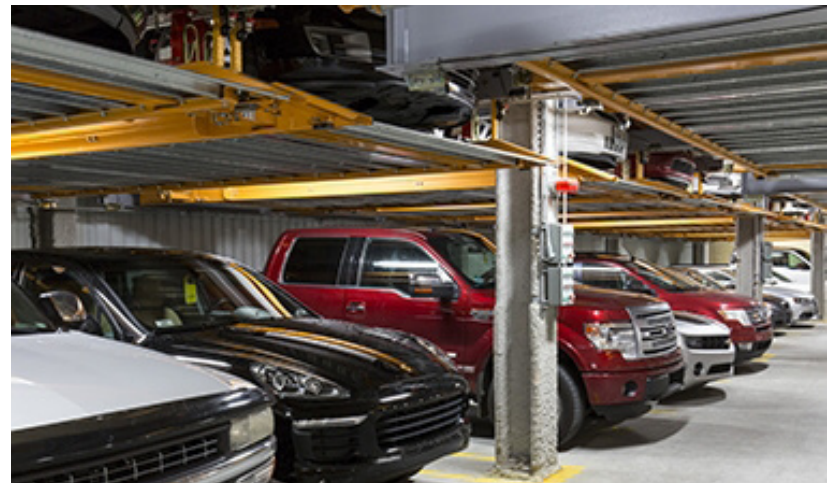
- a public street must use screening in the form of decorative grates and landscaping.
- b) Upper floors of parking garages that are visible to a public street must screen the view of cars and parking structure lighting.
- 5. Commercial parking may be separated from residential parking with a gate located internally.
- 6. Parking lifts may be used to increase the efficiency of space dedicated to parking.

SD-29: Parking Lifts. Parking lifts may only be used for residential parking and may not be used for commercial parking, except employees.

SD-30: Adaptable/Convertible Parking Structures. 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.



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.



An example of parking lifts. (Watry Design)

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Multi-family and Mixed-Use Building Design

BUILDING MASSING AND FORM

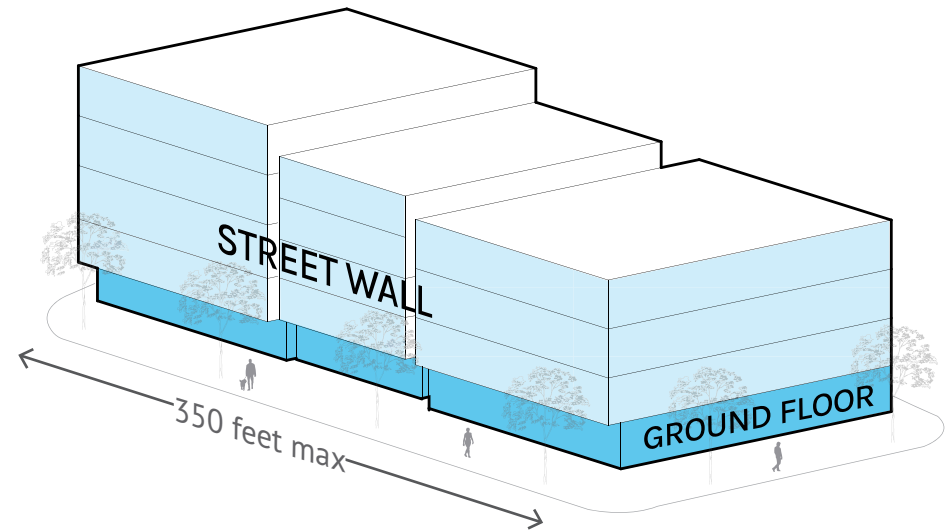
BD-1: Distinctive Innovative Architecture. Buildings are encouraged to have their own identity and use contemporary methods to define the character of the district. Design creativity and variation in built form and architectural expression through variation in building massing, form, and articulation to generate visual interest.

BD-2: 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.

- 1. Maximum Building Length. Building shall not exceed 350 feet in length.**

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

FIGURE 3-6: SAN PABLO AVENUE STREET WALL



Buildings shall not exceed 350 feet in length and building facades facing San Pablo Avenue shall maintain a streetwall of three stories above the ground floor at the front property line before step backs are allowed.

For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.

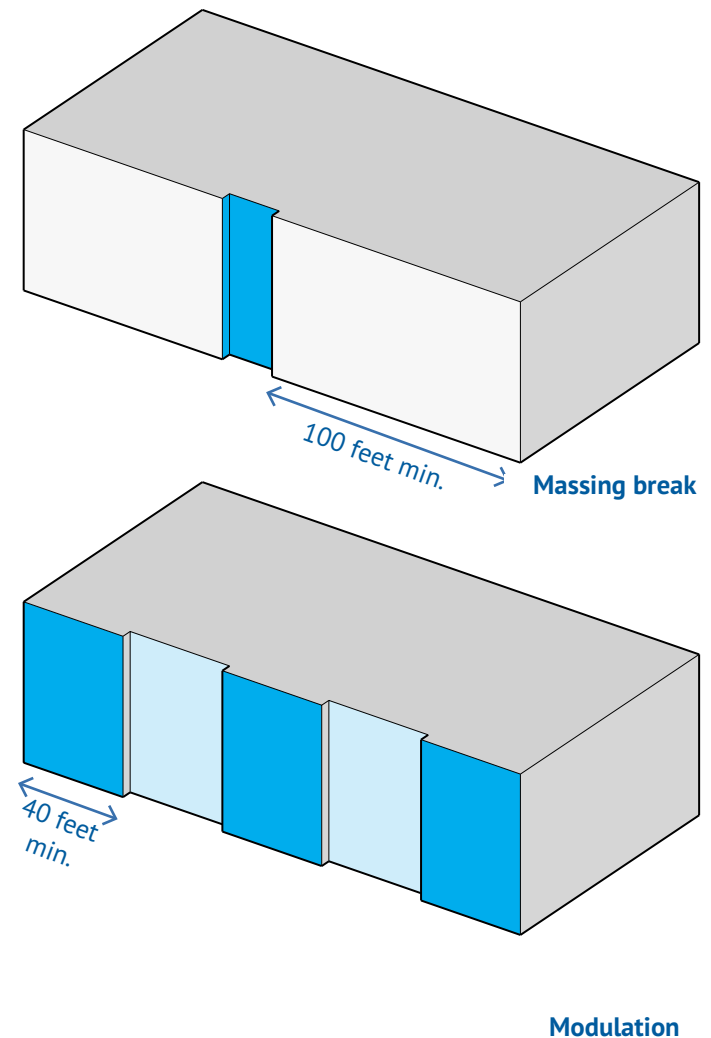
BD-4: Facade Modulation with Massing Breaks. For facades that face San Pablo Avenue.

1. Buildings over three stories tall shall have major massing breaks every 100 feet along San Pablo Avenue facing facades through the use of varying setbacks, roofline building entries and recesses, courtyards or structural bays.
 - a) The massing break shall be a minimum of 2 feet deep.
 - b) The massing break shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide and maximum of 25 feet wide.
 - c) The break shall extend from the finished ground floor through the full height of the building including breaking the roof plane.

BD-5: Facade Modulation with Facade Planes.

1. A change in plane is required at a minimum of every 40 feet along San Pablo Avenue.
2. A change in plane is the recess or projection between adjacent facade planes. The recess or projection shall have a minimum depth of 6 inches to indicate a change.

FIGURE 3-7: FACADE MODULATION



*For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.*

BD-6: Facade Composition. Avoid long, flat, rectangular, regular patterns. 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.

1. Organize the overall facade composition to be varied. Each facade must have at least two distinct facades in its composition to be considered varied. The variations could include 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 facade. Define the separation between building and building parts in projections or recesses by including horizontal shifts or changes in floor plates that project or recess a minimum depth of 12 inches for at least 20 percent of the primary facade
 - i) Projected or recessed entryways, windows, bays, canopies, awnings, balconies, stepbacks, and other features that create interest and change the effects of light and shadow may be added to further modulate the building facade.



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

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- c) **Roofline 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.
 - i) Differentiate buildings taller than three stories by embellishing the roof line to create interest when viewed along San Pablo Avenue.

BD-7: Pedestrian Entrances. Design to clearly differentiate the main entrance to the building with a change in plane, differentiation in building height, use of color, setback, or projection.

BD-8: 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-9: 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.



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 roofline 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)

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BD-10: Facade Details

- 1. Window Variation. Provide at least two changes in size, proportions, pattern, depth or projection.**
- 2. Material variation. Provide at least three changes for material type, material size, texture and pattern, or color in addition to glazing and railings. Colors should be used to bring out contrast between walls, windows, and trim. Use of color is encouraged to make the area vibrant.**
 - a) Any one material must comprise at least 20% of the building frontage, excluding windows and railings.
 - b) Low quality materials such as T1-11 siding, foam trim (EIFS), spray on stucco, vinyl and flat grill windows are prohibited.
 - c) Plywood, vinyl, plastic and plastic laminate, and fiberglass are prohibited siding materials.
 - d) Focus high-quality and human-scale materials on the ground floor.
 - e) Do not create visually busy facades with decorative elements that do not relate to the building's form, structure, use, or scale.
- 3. Location of high quality materials: Add**
- 4. Vents. The visibility of vents shall be painted to match the color of the adjacent surface.**



Example of painted vents, gutters, and downspouts.

- 5. Galvanized metal gutters, downspouts, flashing, and electrical conduits shall be painted 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.**

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STREETS OFF SAN PABLO AVENUE

BD-11: Parallel and Side Streets to San Pablo Avenue.

1. Parallel and side streets should incorporate individual entries to units, front entry treatment, landscaping, and/or minimized vehicular entry.
2. **Where there are individual unit entrances, entrances may not be spaced more than 30 feet apart.**
3. Residential lobbies, or shared entrances to multifamily buildings, may be located on San Pablo Avenue, side streets, and Kains and Adams.

BD-12: 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.

1. **For through lots, San Pablo Avenue will remain the primary commercial face of the building.**
2. **A second entry for residential is required for through-lots.**

RESIDENTIAL UNIT ENTRIES

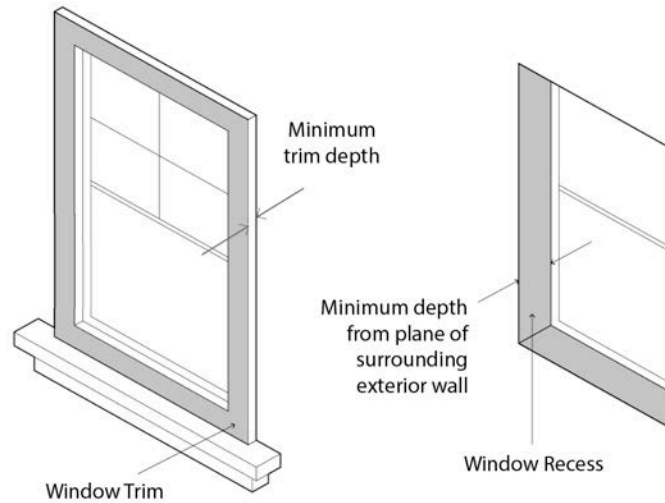
BD-13: Residential Unit Entry Transition Zone. Provide a transition zone between the public pathway and the front entry for individual units that includes landscaping and features that help to define a semi-private and open area.

BD-14: Individual Residential Entries. Individual Residential Entries may utilize a stoop, porch, or patio.

1. **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.**
2. **Porches shall have a minimum dimension of 6 feet. The maximum porch floor height from the back of sidewalk grade shall be 5 feet.**
3. **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**
 - a) Planting that does not exceed 42 inches in height.
 - b) 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.

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FIGURE 3-8: WINDOW RELIEF



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

WINDOWS

BD-15: Window Relief. Facades or portions of facades using a curtain wall are exempt from these standards.

1. **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.**
2. 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.

BD-16: 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.**

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BD-17: Operable Windows. If a dwelling unit has windows on multiple building frontages, operable windows shall be provided on at least one building frontage.

BD-18: Acoustic Design. Design residential units along the first four floors of the streetwall facing San Pablo Avenue to include windows, walls, and treatments that reduce the sound of traffic to exceed the standards for the acoustics in Title 24.

BD-19: Security Bars. Bars and security gates over windows and doors along San Pablo Avenue are prohibited.

BD-20: 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:

1. Light-colored blinds or curtains;
2. Opaque glass, translucent glass, or opaque or translucent window film;
3. Paned glass with mullions on the exterior of the glass;
4. Glass covered with permanent patterns, which may be etched, fritted, stenciled, silk-screened, applied to the glass on films or decals, or similar method;
5. 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

6. Other glazing treatments that provide an equivalent level of bird safety and approved by the Planning Director as part of building plan review.

BD-21: 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:

1. Layering and recessing glazed surfaces
2. Angled or faceted glazing that minimizes reflectivity and transparency
3. Louvers, overhangs and/or awnings
4. Glass block
5. Decorative grills that allow birds to perceive the grills, together with the glass behind them, as solid
6. Glass embedded with photovoltaic cells; and
7. Placement of landscaping in such a way as to minimize bird collisions.

BD-22: 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.

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ADJACENCIES

BD-23: Adjacency with existing Residential. In addition to required side yard setbacks, design to minimize the transition between existing buildings and taller new buildings.

1. **Landscape the setback between new buildings and the property line.**
2. The use of opaque glazing, a fence, or architectural screen to obscure second floor windows that directly face existing windows is encouraged.
3. The placement of bedroom windows along the side yard so that views are not aligned with existing windows is encouraged.

BD-24: 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 is encouraged to provide additional transition between existing smaller neighboring buildings and buildings that are taller than two stories.

BD-25: Parapets for Rooftop Open Spaces. Provide parapets, design features, and landscaping to screen activity from neighbors and conceal upper level open spaces.

BD-26: Privacy for Windows. Avoid aligning bedroom windows directly opposite from existing windows

BD-27: Common Spaces Privacy. Design units around common spaces so that views into bedroom windows are screened or obscured by locating away from common spaces.

1. Bedroom windows located within 5 feet of a pathway or common open space must have landscaped visual barriers like tall bushes or trees.
2. 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.



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.

*For Administrative draft review, design guidelines and standards are listed below. Prior to public review and approval, standards will be pulled out into a separately regulatory document. Objective design standards are **bolded**.*

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.



Well-design shared spaces, including mail rooms, open spaces, and lobbies provide attractive places for gathering and connection.

BD-28: Shared Spaces. The following requirements apply to shared residential amenity spaces in multi-family residential buildings with at least 20 dwelling units.

1. **Required: lobby and mail room**
2. **At least two of the following list of amenity options must be provided:**
 - a) Drop off/delivery zone near front entrance
 - b) Package delivery room
 - c) Tenant Storage rooms
 - d) Lounges/meeting rooms
 - e) Shared laundry room
 - f) Pet relief area
 - g) Gym (recreational facilities)
 - h) Pool
3. **At least one of the following list of open space options must be provided**
 - a) Courtyard
 - b) Outdoor dining/BBQ areas
 - c) Playground
 - d) Community garden
 - e) Plaza

BD-29: Common Shared Space Requirements.

1. Common shared spaces shall be accessible to all residents for at least 12 consecutive hours of the day.
2. Common shared spaces shall be accessible from the lobby with wayfinding signage and adjacent to common spaces, or hallways.
3. Design common shared spaces to be visible from the adjacent units for natural surveillance.

BD-30: Shared Open Space Requirements

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

BD-31: 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.

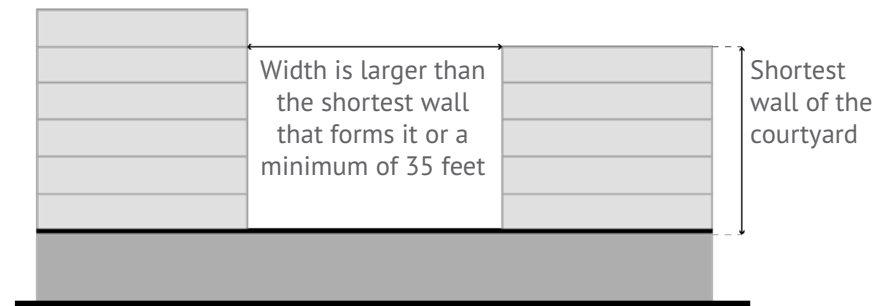
1. Shared open spaces are preferably sited with a southern exposure in a way that maximizes sunlight exposure during midday and afternoon. Ideally there are units facing the space to activate the space.

2. Shared open spaces may be covered but not fully enclosed. The floor to ceiling height of partially covered, shared open space shall have a minimum dimension of 8.5 feet.

BD-32: 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 30 feet, whichever is greater.

1. Use massing to enhance access to daylight and ventilation of interior spaces and frame on-site open spaces.
2. 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.

FIGURE 3-9: ENCLOSED COURTYARDS





San Pablo Avenue at the University Village Shopping Area, looking north.

CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE & MOBILITY

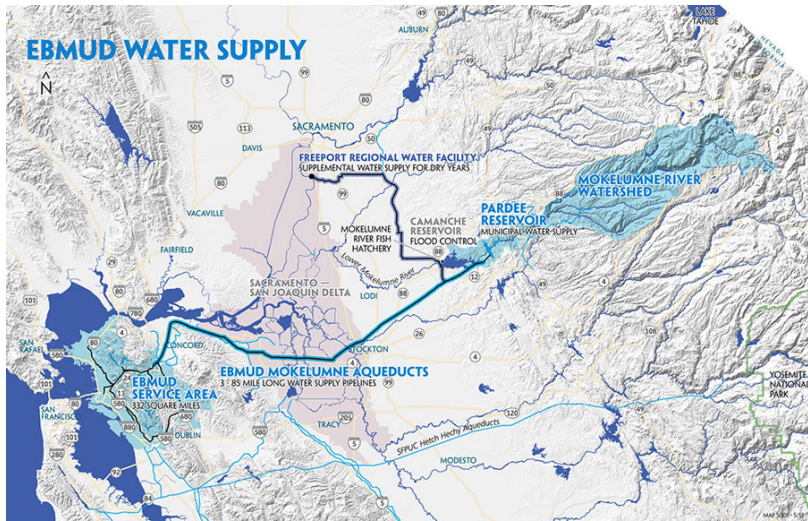
- Overview
- Water
- Sanitary Sewer
- Stormwater
- Electric, Gas, and Communications
- Waste and Recycling
- Public Safety
- Streets & Transportation
- Guiding Principles
- Implementing Policies

Overview

This chapter describes transportation and infrastructure systems, and analyzes changes in demand for these services that could be generated by new development. It identifies improvements required to serve new development or that can otherwise help support this Specific Plan's vision for revitalization. New policies and policies from existing adopted plans are included to provide direction for capital improvements and 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



adequacy of the water supply has been susceptible to the effects of climate change. Circumstances such as drought, emergency shortages, or the prior holder’s water rights either upstream or downstream may affect the amount that can be distributed.

EBMUD has generally proposed programs for water recycling and conservation. This includes the East Bayshore Recycled Water Project, which requires a separate plumbing system but can supply reclaimed water for non-potable uses, such as toilet flushing and irrigation. Recently, EBMUD partnered with the City of Albany to install recycled water lines on Buchanan Street from Pierce Street to San Pablo Avenue.

The water system within the Planning Area includes pipelines located on either side of San Pablo Avenue. The western pipeline is 8 inches and the eastern pipeline varies in size from 4 to 8 inches. Adams Street also contains 6- to 8-inch

lines, while Kains Avenue contains 4- to 6-inch lines. The 4-inch sections of pipeline on San Pablo Avenue and Kains Avenue will likely require upsizing to accommodate higher density multifamily housing with sufficient flows to serve fire hydrants. Typically, a new project would be responsible for upsizing the line between the two nearest intersections when the existing infrastructure cannot meet the demands of the new project. Based on the age and material of these particular 4-inch pipes, EBMUD is planning for replacement and upsizing. Future project sponsors are encouraged to meet with EBMUD staff early in the project development process to review requirements. Specific Plan policies support these upgrades.

California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen) includes plumbing fixture maximum flow rate requirements that are intended to reduce water consumption for all residential and commercial buildings. These requirements include low flow fixture requirements for shower heads, lavatory and kitchen faucets, water closets and urinals. The City has gone a step further to amend the Green Building Code, requiring extra low flow kitchen faucets (1.5 gpm), 30% permeable paving, and and a 12% reduction in water use for commercial buildings. The City’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance likewise calls for efficient irrigation systems for landscaping. As a result, new multifamily development tends to be substantially more water-efficient than older existing development on a per capita basis.

Sanitary Sewer

The City of Albany operates sewer pipeline that collects and conveys wastewater to EBMUD for processing and treatment. Treated wastewater is ultimately released to San Francisco Bay and the separated treated waste solids are beneficially reused to amend soils, use as feedstock for compost, or cover landfills. Wet weather contributes excess flows from storm drains and groundwater where water may enter the sewer system through broken pipes. This poses a concern for EBMUD's infrastructure capacity. When the North Interceptor trunk sewer exceeds capacity, flows may be diverted to EBMUD's wet weather facility at Point Isabel in Richmond for storage and/or discharge. The City has been working with EBMUD to rehabilitate and replace vulnerable segments of pipeline to reduce infiltration and inflows during storms.

Within the Planning Area, the sewer collection system consists of portions owned by either the City of Albany or the City of Berkeley. There are Berkeley dedicated trunk sewers that flow westerly along Washington Avenue and Portland Avenue before weaving through the San Pablo Avenue corridor in a northerly direction, ultimately connecting to a jointly-owned 42-inch sewer main at the northern end of Adams Street. The Berkeley-owned sewer lines cannot be connected to within the City of Albany. Adams Street and San Pablo Avenue have continuous lengths of existing sanitary sewer infrastructure, whereas Kains Avenue has five (5) locations where the sanitary sewer mains stop short of the street intersection.

EBMUD is anticipated to have adequate dry weather capacity to accept wastewater flows from the planned buildout of this Specific Plan. Wet weather flows may also be accommodated with implementation of ongoing local and regional programs to reduce infiltration and inflow during wet weather events. The infrastructure analysis completed for this Specific Plan did not identify any required sanitary sewer improvements, beyond localized frontage improvements for new developments.

Stormwater

The City of Albany stormwater system collects rainfall runoff from the local watershed and ultimately discharges to the San Francisco Bay. Albany also has natural creeks that flow through the Planning Area. The City of Albany is one of many municipalities that is mandated by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Regional Permit (MRP) to implement provisions intended to protect natural waterways and manage stormwater runoff resulting from urbanization.

Provision C.3 of the MRP requires permittees to place conditions on development projects to incorporate site design measures, source controls, treatment measures and flow duration controls (on larger projects). Due to the Alameda County C.3 Stormwater requirements, any project creating or replacing over 10,000 square feet of impervious surface will be required to incorporate stormwater management measures. Low-impact design (LID) measures to increase stormwater runoff quality include, but are not limited to, pervious paving bioretention areas, green roofs and flow-through planters. These measures can also improve water quality entering the creeks and the Bay.

The vast majority of the Planning Area is currently impervious surface. By incorporating these C.3 and LID measures on required projects, the imperviousness of the San Pablo Avenue corridor will likely decrease, resulting in a reduction in the amount of stormwater runoff. For this reason, upsizing the existing storm drainage infrastructure is not anticipated to be necessary to accommodate this Specific Plan. However,



there may be new localized infrastructure, pipe upsizing, or relocation needed depending on the needs of each future individual development. This is a typical requirement along the frontage of new projects. There may be main locations identified as needing repair or replacement by the City in the future as identified in the Watershed Management Plan update.

Electric, Gas, and Communications

Natural gas and electrical service for the City of Albany is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). There is also telecom (cable and internet) service throughout the Planning Area. Electrical systems within the Planning Area have mainly been undergrounded, as a result of the Marin Utility Undergrounding District and implementation of the Marin Bikeway Phase III project, which involved digging up the street. Most overhead electrical lines are located within the cross streets and on Kains Avenue and Adams Street. It is expected that PG&E will accommodate the electrical and gas demands of the Specific Plan. A new service application submitted to PG&E will be required to trigger a review of added electrical and natural gas demand for each new individual development. Likewise existing telecom infrastructure and providers are expected to be able to accommodate development that may be generated by the Specific Plan.

East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) is a local public agency tasked with supplying clean electricity at low rates to customers in Alameda County. EBCE procures electricity and provides local renewable resources, while PG&E continues to administer natural gas service as well as energy transmission, distribution, repair, customer service, and billing for EBCE customers. Through partnerships with EBCE and other regional bodies, the City aims to transition to all-electric commercial and residential spaces.

Waste and Recycling

The City of Albany's waste, recycling, and organics streams are hauled and processed by Waste Management of Alameda County (WMAC) through an exclusive franchise agreement. Existing hauling services and waste processing facilities in the County should be able to accommodate waste generated by new development and increased population density as a result of the Specific Plan. The City also partners with StopWaste, the Alameda County Waste Management Authority, to enforce state and local waste reduction ordinances such as the Organics Reduction and Recycling Ordinance, and increase access to proper materials management education and outreach.

Public Safety

Taller buildings present operational challenges for fire fighters and other emergency responders. Emergency access to future taller buildings would be improved with an aerial ladder that extends to 100 feet or more, allowing direct access to the higher levels of buildings. An update to the City's development impact fee program can include a fee on new development that contributes to the cost of new fire department apparatus.

Regardless of the apparatus, new construction in the Specific Plan area will comply with California Building and Fire Codes, which specify requirements such as fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler systems, fire protection water supplies, apparatus access to buildings, firefighter roof access, emergency exit ways for occupants, and elevators sized to accommodate ambulance gurneys.

Streets & Transportation

The availability of reliable and safe multimodal transportation, including walking, biking, and transit facilities, is essential to support the development and success of higher density housing and mixed use development, and to reduce the reliance on driving. The transportation analysis evaluating this Specific Plan did not identify any specific facilities or improvements required to meet Specific Plan needs. Rather, this Specific Plan supports implementation of the City's adopted plans and the County's ongoing efforts for multimodal improvements on the corridor.

Additionally, this chapter discusses changes in vehicle and bicycle parking requirements, and transit incentives, to encourage a variety of alternative modes and reduce development costs. Also, as described in previous chapters, new guidelines and standards support reducing block lengths, through new cut-through paths, to increase pedestrian connections to housing and services.



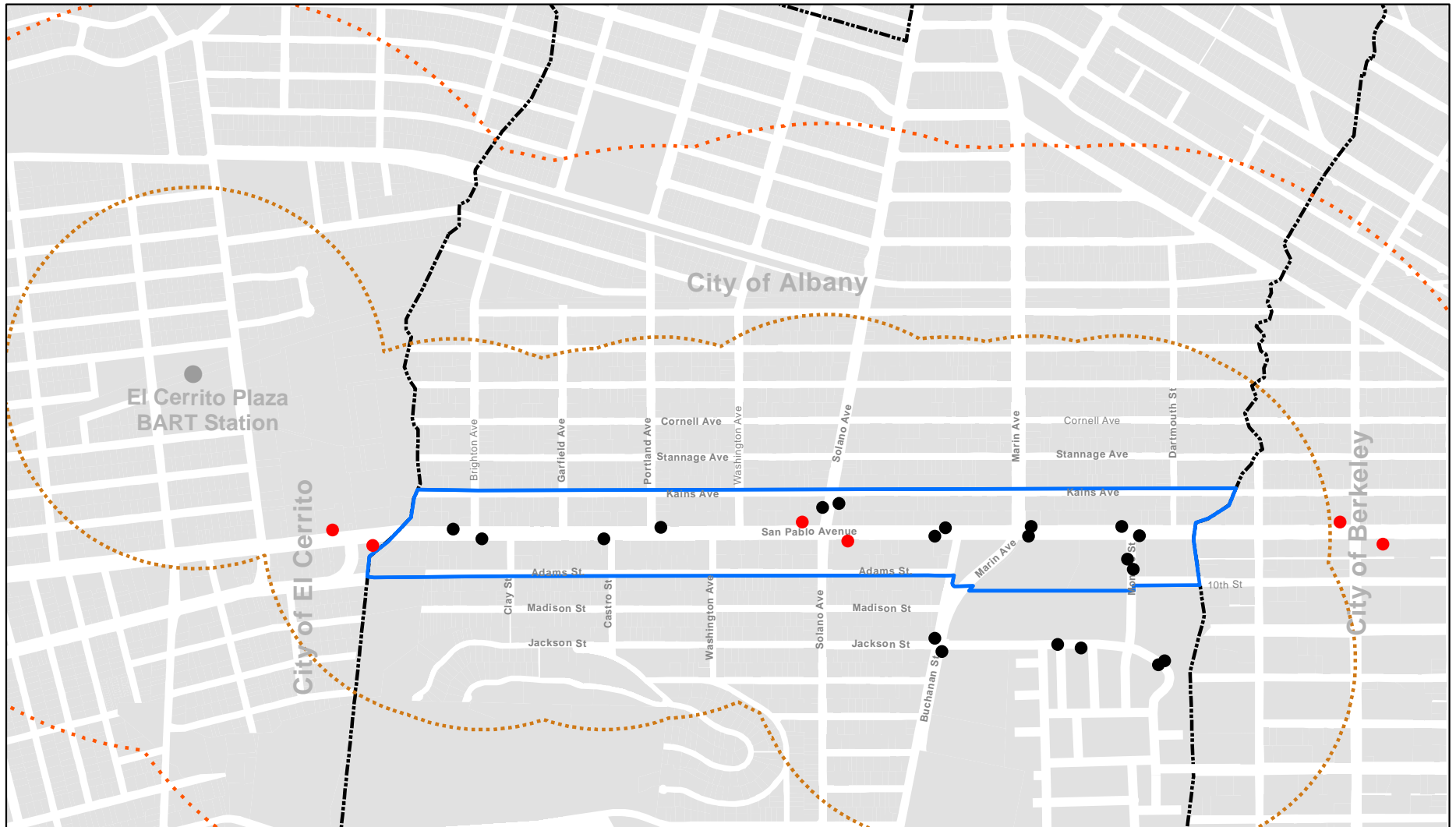
Complete Streets Plan, 2013

San Pablo and Buchanan Complete Streets Report

In 2013, Albany prepared a Complete Streets conceptual plan for San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street to expand multimodal access. Out of the conceptual planning, the City developed a project that focused on pedestrian and bicycle crossing safety improvements. In 2018 and 2019, the City prepared construction plans, specifications, and estimates to construct the following improvements:

- Crosswalk Improvements Across San Pablo Avenue: Crosswalk enhancements at each intersection between Washington Avenue and Brighton Avenue and improvements to the bicycle boulevard crossing at Washington Avenue. As of this writing in 2022, funding has been programmed to complete the intersection improvements north of Washington Avenue.
- Bicycle Facilities on Low Speed Streets: Bicycle routes on the parallel streets of Kains Avenue and Adams Street. Construction documents have been developed

FIGURE 4-1: TRANSIT STOPS



● AC Transit Local Stops	■ SPA Plan Boundary	○ 1/4-Mile
● AC Transit Rapid Bus 72R Stops	⋯ City Limits	○ 1/2-Mile
● BART Stations		

Radius from BART and SPA Bus Stops:

0 500 1,000
Feet

N

SAN PABLO AVE NEAR-TERM BUS/BIKE PROJECT : BIKE NETWORK IN ALBANY



Bicycle Network Designation

- Existing/In-Development Bikeway
- Near-Term Parallel Route
- Parallel Route to be Implemented/Upgraded by Near-Term Bus/Bike Project

Intersection Improvements

- To be Implemented/Upgraded by Near-Term Bus/Bike Project
- In-Development by Other Projects along Near-Term Parallel Route

San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project

Source: ACTC Corridor Project Status, October 26, 2021

after an extensive planning process. The possibility of bicycle and transit facilities on San Pablo Avenue is part of ongoing corridor-wide efforts, as described below.

- Bike and Pedestrian Improvements at UC Village: Additional City efforts at the conceptual stage for San Pablo Avenue include bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements at the Marin Avenue/San Pablo Avenue intersection; connecting the existing cycletrack on San Pablo Avenue between Dartmouth and north of Monroe to the Buchanan Bikeway; and bicycle crossing improvements at the Dartmouth HAWK signal. The City is also working with UC on conceptual plans for bicycle facilities along Jackson Street to connect to the Adams Street route to the north and the 9th Street route to the south in Berkeley.

Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project

ACTC's San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project is a multi-jurisdiction effort to develop a long-term vision and near-term improvements for San Pablo Avenue that will allow it to function better and more safely for people who walk, bike, drive and take transit.

Phase 1, which concluded in 2020, identified and refined potential long-term concepts for the corridor through extensive outreach and technical analysis. Due to the complex and constrained nature of the corridor, no single long-term vision emerged at the end of Phase 1 and multiple project alternatives are still being considered for the long-

term improvement of the corridor. In response to strong desire from Alameda CTC, cities, AC Transit and communities to advance a project that begins to address needs in corridor – in particular improvements to make buses more reliable and improve safety for people walking and bicycling. Phase 2 will further develop multiple project alternatives for bus and cycling facilities on San Pablo Avenue while advancing several near-term improvement projects that will improve safety and evaluate the effectiveness of different treatments.

- Transit Reliability: AC Transit completed designs for the deployment of GPS-enabled transit signal priority as part of their San Pablo Avenue Rapid Corridors Upgrade project. This project will reduce bus delay and provide more-convenient and reliable bus service along San Pablo Avenue.
- Dedicated Transit Facilities: ACTC is also studying the feasibility of dedicated bus lanes through Albany and throughout the corridor. As part of the near-term improvements, ACTC is developing plans for in-lane boarding platforms at the San Pablo Avenue/Solano Avenue Rapid stops.
- Bicycle Facilities: The City will be installing a pilot two-way shared-lane bicycle facility along Kains Ave and Adams St. At present, ACTC is developing near-term improvements on routes parallel to San Pablo Avenue. ACTC is still studying the potential for dedicated bicycle facilities on San Pablo Avenue in Albany and throughout the regional corridor. On the one hand, these side streets have strong advantages as bicycle facilities generally, and bicycle routes specifically.

Bicyclists can utilize the entire roadway, as a shared facility, and they can more easily make left- and right-hand turns. Traffic volumes and speeds are also much lower on these parallel facilities. The downside is that destinations and transit connections are more typically found on San Pablo Avenue.

Albany Active Transportation Plan

The Active Transportation Plan combines the City's previous bicycle and pedestrian master plans to establish a vision for improvements citywide. The Complete Streets Plan and the Corridor Plan described above represent the most up-to-date programs and projects for the Specific Plan Planning Area. However, the Active Transportation Plan provides useful context and analysis for this Specific Plan.

It identifies one of the greatest challenges for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles, on San Pablo Avenue, which is the lack of visibility of a pedestrian crossing multiple lanes of fast-moving vehicle traffic at unsignalized intersections. Despite having the right-of-way, pedestrians have to wait for a gap in traffic and proceed with caution before entering the intersection. Additionally, this Specific Plan implements updates to the San Pablo Design Guidelines in accordance with the following action:

Active Transportation Plan Action 3.4-A: Update the San Pablo Design Guidelines and San Pablo Streetscape Master Plan to reflect the City's desire to create a walking-, bicycling- and transit-oriented environment.

Parking

Vehicle parking is a major driver in site planning and achieving the maximum density attainable. As part of the Specific Plan planning process, City staff and consultants tested changes in parking standards to understand their effects on potential development yield. In general, the City's 1 space per unit requirement generally allows for feasible development types, especially when assuming the use of parking stackers. However, reduced parking requirements would allow for more flexibility in site configuration at the ground-level, potentially improving site circulation, and reducing development costs. This Specific Plan supports these other modes by adding bicycle parking requirements and transit incentives, and allowing the conversion of parking areas in the future, if they are no longer needed.



Electrical Vehicle charging in parking garage

Electric Vehicle Charging

California has an objective that all new cars and passenger trucks sold in California must be zero emission vehicles by 2035 (Executive Order N-79-20). Albany is leading the way, with substantially higher rates of electric vehicle adoption compared to the Bay Area-wide average, according to DMV records and the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. This Specific Plan provides incentives for projects that provide electric vehicle charging as described in Chapter 2. Additionally, this Plan requires a portion of bike parking be available for electric bicycles with built-in charging ports.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles, which are rooted in General Plan policies, establish the intent for the infrastructure and mobility policies:

- 1. Grow Infrastructure with Development Needs.** Provide water, sewer, storm drain, street, energy, and telecommunication facilities that are safe, reliable, well-maintained, efficient, sustainable, and responsive to current and projected needs. (General Plan Goal CSF-6)
- 2. Ensure Public Safety.** Meet increase in police and fire service demand as a result of new development (General Plan Policy CSF-2.1).
- 3. Travel Choices.** Provide the opportunity to safely and conveniently travel using a variety of travel modes, including walking, bicycling, and public transportation as well as driving. (General Plan Goal T-3)
- 4. Pedestrian & Bicyclist Safety.** Improve the safety of all modes of travel, taking particular care to reduce the rate of injury accidents for bicycles and pedestrians. (General Plan Goal T-4)

Implementing Policies

Infrastructure

INF-1: Water. Encourage and coordinate with EBMUD to move forward with planning efforts to replace and upsize aging 4-inch water lines on the eastern side of San Pablo Avenue and along Kains Avenue, as appropriate.

INF-2: Sewer. The City will continue to coordinate with EBMUD on the safe treatment and disposal of Albany’s wastewater.

INF-3: On-Site Stormwater Management. Individual projects should use stormwater management as a key part of initial site planning. The City shall require C.3 stormwater forms and plans for stormwater management at plan intake, to the extent feasible and consistent with State law requirements for project submittal.

INF-4: Green Stormwater Infrastructure. The City shall explore opportunities for green stormwater infrastructure, such as swales, planters, and other storm drain improvements to expand capacity and improve stormwater management on San Pablo Avenue.

INF-5: Climate-Adaptive Landscaping. As envisioned in the City’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, promote use of climate-adaptive plants in existing and new landscapes to reduce water use. Project sponsors shall continue to meet Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance requirements.

INF-6: Storm Drain Access. The City shall work with private property owners who have City storm drain facilities on their properties to obtain utility access easements. To facilitate redevelopment of these sites, the City will need to work with these property owners to either reroute storm drains, identify “no build” areas, or otherwise allow access.

INF-7: Electric, Gas, and Communications. New development projects shall underground existing overhead utility lines along a parcel’s street frontage, consistent with current City standards. Transformers and other electric utilities required for future development projects should be located in vaults underground or inside structures, if necessary.

INF-8: All-Electric Construction. As envisioned in the City’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, pursue regulations to require all-electric buildings for new construction and major renovations of existing buildings.

INF-9: Public Safety. Continue to require Fire and Police Department review of major development projects to ensure that they meet code requirements and emergency response needs (Policy CSF-2.10). Update capital facilities fee to include a fee on new development that contributes to the cost of new fire department apparatus.

Streets & Transportation

MOB-1: Vehicle Parking Standards. Within the Planning Area, revise vehicular parking and loading standards to allow flexibility in parking configuration and respond to changes in parking demand over time:

1. **Residential Parking Reductions:** Allow for reduction in required residential vehicle parking spaces:
 - a) Bike Parking (Required + Any Additional). AMC 20.28.030.C.3 (footnote 1) states that for every ten (10) bicycle spaces provided on site, the Planning and Zoning Commission may waive one (1) required off-street parking space. Bicycle spaces adjacent and accessible to electric outlets to accommodate electric bicycles count as two (2) spaces for the purposes of this reduction. Allow this exchange and reduction by up to 20%, by right (i.e., Commission approval is not required).
 - b) Transit Passes. Reduce parking requirement by 20%, by right, if monthly Clipper Card/AC Transit EZ Pass is provided (1 per unit) for the life of the project.
 - c) Other (Discretionary Approval). Additionally, applicants would continue to have options to reduce parking through AMC 20.28.030.A.4: The Planning and Zoning Commission may by Conditional Use Permit, reduce the residential parking requirement through consideration of on-site car-share service, unbundled parking, private bicycle share program, a Transportation Demand

Management Plan (TDM) or a combination thereof.

- d) These reductions are cumulative, but shall not exceed 50% reduction without Planning & Zoning Commission approval.

2. **Unbundling:** Require unbundled parking for rental housing.
3. **Parking Stackers:** Mechanical lifts may be used to satisfy a portion of the required residential parking and commercial parking, for regular use by employees. Lifts shall not be permitted for customer parking. Lift design must allow for removal of any single vehicle without necessitating the temporary removal of any other vehicle.
4. **Conversion of Unneeded Parking:** Parking spaces may be allowed to convert to housing, shared amenity space, personal storage, or other uses in the future if they are no longer needed. This modification shall be based on a post-occupancy study following review and approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

MOB-2: Commercial Parking Standards. Within the SPC Zone, revise commercial vehicle parking standards to create blended rates similar to the SC district parking regulations.



View on San Pablo Avenue in Albany, looking south.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

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

Overview

This chapter serves two key purposes to facilitate implementation of this Specific Plan. First, it guides developers and property owners on the process and requirements for entitling and building development projects in accordance with the plan. This includes expectations for the zoning approval and building permit process, CEQA review, and development fees. Second, it provides guidance to City staff, community members and decision-makers about how to review individual development applications, implement City programs and policies, and 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.

Zoning Permits & Design Review

During the entitlement phase, project sponsors submit applications for review by City staff to determine whether the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, Specific Plan, and other associated regulatory requirements including the Zoning Ordinance. Planning fees are required during this initial submittal.

Uses that are permitted by right in a zoning district or where only a minor conditional use permit is required may only require review by City staff to ensure compliance with adopted regulations. On the other hand, major conditional use permits require review by the Planning Commission. Most projects, including new residential and mixed-use projects, require design review by the Planning Commission, even if the underlying use is permitted by right. Projects proposed under State Density Bonus Law require a recommendation by the Planning Commission, but final approval by the City Council. Specifics are further outlined in the Zoning Ordinance.

Building Permits

Following zoning approval, project sponsors submit detailed building permit applications, which are reviewed by several departments including Building, Planning, Engineering, and Fire prior to approval and permit issuance. Building permit fees and development impact fees are required with this submittal.

TABLE 5-1: SITES SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65962.5 (CORTESE LIST)

SITE/LOCATION	SUMMARY OF CONTAMINANTS AND CLEAN-UP STATUS
Plaza Car Wash - 400 San Pablo Ave.	Documentation of petrochemicals including diesel, gasoline, tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene related to underground storage tanks, extraction wells, and dry cleaner operation. Monitoring and sampling is underway to determine whether the contaminant plume is decreasing and stable, and to support a path toward case closure. Status = Open - Verification Monitoring
Albany Hill Mini Mart - 800 San Pablo Ave.	Soil and groundwater beneath the site have been contaminated by fuel hydrocarbons that leaked from the underground storage tank system. A plume of contaminated groundwater containing dissolved fuel hydrocarbons and the fuel oxygenate MTBE has migrated from the service station more than 100 feet to the north. Groundwater contamination also extends off-site to the south and west. Based on the site conditions, the off-site groundwater contamination does not exceed levels that would pose a potential health risk for indoor air intrusion to residences or commercial buildings. Status =Open - Verification Monitoring
Formerly Exxon - 990 San Pablo Ave.	Concentrations of diesel, gasoline, and benzene have been detected in the groundwater at this former gas station site. Since 2008, groundwater monitoring wells have been installed at the site and additional soil bores have been drilled to define the extent of groundwater, soil, soil vapor contamination at the site and vicinity. Soil Vapor Extraction (SVE) wells were installed for the purpose of remediating the site. The SVE system has been in continuous operation since February 2018. Initial assessments in 2021 report that the petroleum hydrocarbon concentrations in soil vapor and groundwater have decreased and stabilized. Open - Assessment & Interim Remedial Action

Source: State Water Resources Control Board, Geotracker. <<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>> Accessed November 16, 2021.

Development Fees

Development impact fees are an essential part of the City's revenue generation to cover the costs of capital projects. They are also a factor in the financial feasibility of development projects. In general, the City assesses residential projects on a per unit basis, scaling up fees based on the size of the units (which allows for some economies of scale for multifamily projects). Additionally, planning and zoning fees may be reduced for affordable housing units. In 2022, fees totaled approximately \$XXX per multifamily unit. A comprehensive update to development impact fees began in 2022.

Hazardous Materials Mitigation

Several sites in the Planning Area are listed as open cases on hazardous materials databases compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List), as shown in Table 5-1. If redevelopment takes place on these sites, it will need to follow specific regulations, summarized below and subject to compliance with State regulations. Subsurface contamination can add to the cost of development and environmental review. To streamline CEQA analysis and project review, require a soil and groundwater management plan for open Cortese list sites (see Policy IMP-1C).

Environmental (CEQA) Review

This Specific Plan is accompanied by an Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which evaluates whether the Specific Plan proposes any changes to the approved General Plan that would result in any new or substantially more adverse significant effects or require any new mitigation measures not identified in the General Plan EIR. The General Plan assumed 475 multifamily housing units in the Planning Area and 440 jobs (approximately 165,000 sq. ft. of non-residential building area). By comparison, this Specific Plan accommodates more housing units but fewer jobs and less commercial floor area: approximately 1,160 units and 45,000 net new square feet as part of mixed-use development. This shift in land use equates to a loss of 239,000 square feet of commercial area compared to the General Plan, which includes both physical commercial space lost due to new housing as well as commercial space planned for in the General Plan and General Plan EIR.

As a result, individual projects that are consistent with this Specific Plan qualify for a statutory exemption under CEQA. From the project sponsor's standpoint, once consistency is determined, no additional CEQA review is required.

The City, as lead agency, must determine whether any of the circumstances in Public Resources Code Section 21166 are present and require further environmental review. Namely, have there been substantial changes proposed in an individual project or implementation program resulting from this Specific Plan or to the circumstances under which the project or program is being undertaken that will require

major revisions to the General Plan EIR. Or, if new information that was not known and could not have been known at the time the General Plan EIR was certified becomes available, then the exemption may not apply unless a supplemental EIR is certified.

Phasing

The Planning Area is anticipated to redevelop gradually over an approximate 20-year timeframe, given the site constraints and market conditions, including high land and construction costs. As a result, a detailed phasing plan has not been developed. Residential demand is likely to continue to be high in the near term, but will be subject to feasibility of market conditions, in particular the high costs of construction.

City Responsibilities for Implementation

Many of the policies in this Specific Plan rely on investment by the private sector to build housing and related improvements to the public realm. However, the City is responsible for setting up the planning, infrastructure, and incentive framework for facilitating these private investments. Table 5-2 summarizes policies from the preceding chapters that require City initiative. Additionally, the implementation plan recommends periodic monitoring and evaluation of the success of the Specific Plan to identify plan modifications or additional programs.

Considerations for Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Is the vision of the Specific Plan generally being met?
- Are the guiding principles of the Land Use, Urban Design, and Infrastructure/Mobility chapters generally being met?
- How many units and commercial square footage is being created? (Annually? Every 5 years?)
- Have the implementation steps in Table 5-2 been initiated or completed?

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
Revised Development Standards (Chapter 2 Policies)	x		Planning Division	Adopt simultaneously with Specific Plan
Add Objective Design Standards (Chapter 3 Policies)	x		Planning Division	Adopt simultaneously with Specific Plan
Affordable Housing Fee Study (Policy LU-5)	x		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	x		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)	x	x	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)	x	x	Public Works	Encourage prioritization of upgrades to 4-inch water lines
Coordinate with ACTC on Evolving Corridor Plans (Policy MOB-7)	x	x	Transportation Division	Advocate City's position on location for bicycle facilities and other improvements
On-Street Parking Monitoring and Evaluation (Chapter 2 Policies)		x	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		x	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)

Implementing Policies

The following policies shall be added as conditions of approval to projects within the Planning Area to reduce potential impacts during construction. These conditions of approval may be amended from time to time, by resolution.

IMP-1: Conditions of Approval. Augment standard conditions of approval for projects in the Planning Area as follows in order to clarify requirements for applicants and streamline the development process on sites which contain specific potential hazards. To demonstrate compliance with State laws requiring objective standards, knowable at the time of application, standard conditions of approval should be adopted by resolution. Conditions of approval, which may be amended from time to time by resolution, are as follows:

1. Construction GHG Emissions. To achieve State goals for greenhouse gas emissions reduction, projects are encouraged to incorporate the following best management practices, from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, to reduce GHG emissions during construction: use of alternative fueled (e.g., biodiesel or electric) construction vehicles/equipment, use of local building materials, and recycle or reuse at least 50 percent of construction waste or demolition materials.
2. Construction Noise. The City shall not permit pile driving within the Planning Area. Alternative methods shall be employed if proposed structures require deep

footings, including but not limited to helical piles, rammed aggregate pier system, press-in piling, or screw cast-in-place piles.

3. Soil and Groundwater Management Plan. A Soil and Groundwater Management Plan (SGMP) shall be submitted to the City for all non-residential projects, and residential or mixed-use projects with five or more dwelling units that are (1) located on a site identified as open on the Cortese list; and (2) propose any excavations deeper than 5 feet below grade. The SGMP shall be site specific and include the following:
 - a) Identification of pollutants, disposal methods, guidance on managing odors during excavation, and permits required to comply with all applicable local, state and regional requirements.
 - b) Notification to the City of any hazardous materials found in soils and groundwater during development.
 - c) The name and phone number of the individual responsible for implementing the SGMP. Contact information for the person responding to community questions or concerns shall be posted at the project site during construction.

MOB-3: Bike Parking Standards. Within the Planning Area, revise bike parking standards to encourage convenient bike access and accommodate households that prefer travel by bicycle:

1. **Long-Tail Bikes:** Require at least 10% of the required bike parking spaces to accommodate long-tail bikes (e.g., cargo bikes, bikes with trailers), when at least 20 protected bike parking spaces are required.
2. **Electric Bikes:** Require at least 10% of spaces to have electrical sockets accessible to the spaces, when at least 20 protected bike parking spaces are required. Each electrical socket must be accessible to horizontal bicycle parking spaces, including a portion of long-tail bikes.

MOB-4: Loading. Encourage loading spaces in front of new residential and mixed-use development. Allow short-term parking for deliveries, shared vehicles, and Transportation Network Company (TNC), such as Uber and Lyft, in on-street loading spaces, including on San Pablo Avenue.

MOB-5: Adams Street North Terminus. The City will continue to pursue opportunities for connecting Adams Street cycling facilities with Carlson Boulevard to the north. Such improvements could be implemented in coordination with a future development project, should the Sutter East Bay Medical Center property redevelop.

MOB-6: Cycletrack Network. New construction projects on UC Village and Gil Tract properties undertaken by UC Berkeley should be responsible for closing the gap in the

San Pablo Avenue cycletrack from Village Creek to Marin Avenue by extending the cycletrack on the west side of San Pablo Avenue.

MOB-7: ACTC Coordination. The City will continue to coordinate with ACTC on the Corridor Plan to balance this Specific Plan's mobility and land use policies with evolving plans for on-street bicycle and transit infrastructure.

APPENDIX

- A. Summary of Key Zoning Standards (To Come)
- B. Zoning Ordinance Modifications (Redlines) (To Come)
- C. General Plan Modifications (Redlines) (To Come)
- D. Relevant General Plan Goals and Policies
- E. Financing Strategies

D. Relevant General Plan Policies

The following General Plan policies establish the basis for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. This Specific Plan provides detailed policies and zoning amendments to achieve these objectives.

Policy LU-1.1: New Housing Opportunities

Create opportunities to meet the housing needs of current and future Albany residents by zoning land for a variety of housing types, particularly on underutilized commercial properties.

Policy LU-1.3: Business Districts

Maintain and enhance San Pablo and Solano Avenues as Albany's principal commercial streets. Encourage a vibrant mix of ground floor retail and service uses that meet the needs of Albany residents, enhance the local tax base, provide job opportunities, and provide a safe, walkable environment.

Policy LU-1.8: Transit-Oriented Development

Encourage land use patterns that support transit use, including additional mixed use (commercial and higher-density residential) development along the San Pablo and Solano Avenue corridors.

Policy LU-1.9: Income Diversity

Recognize economic and income diversity as one of Albany's greatest strengths. Ensure that future land use decisions contribute to this diversity by creating housing and employment opportunities for persons of all incomes and backgrounds.

Policy LU-2.2: Mixed Density Areas

In areas designated for high and medium density residential uses, ensure that new development is designed to minimize sharp contrasts in height, prevent the loss of sunlight and privacy for adjacent homes, and provide buffering and screening from nearby lower density uses.

Policy LU-2.3: Design Guidelines

Maintain residential design guidelines and design review procedures that promote the compatibility of residential alterations and additions with existing homes and that strive to reduce impacts on neighboring properties. The guidelines should be used to encourage high-quality, visually distinctive architecture, and the use of durable, attractive construction materials.

Policy LU-2.8: Kains Avenue and Adams Street

Maintain Kains Avenue and Adams Street as predominantly residential streets. Land use regulations should limit the encroachment of commercial uses onto parcels that are currently developed with housing. Residential uses along these streets and in adjacent areas should be protected from the potential adverse impacts of commercial uses through special setback requirements. The use of these two streets for primary access to non-residential uses shall be discouraged or prohibited as appropriate.

Policy LU-3.1: Mixed Use Development

Encourage mixed use development combining residential uses above ground floor commercial uses along the San Pablo and Solano Avenue corridors. The City's zoning regulations should continue to provide floor area ratio (FAR) incentives for projects that include multi-family residential uses on the upper stories. State density bonus provisions for affordable housing may be used to allow floor area bonuses above and beyond those provided by the City of Albany, up to a maximum FAR of 3.0 for parcels on San Pablo Avenue and 2.0 for parcels on Solano Avenue.

Policy LU-3.2: San Pablo Avenue

Continue to foster the transformation of San Pablo Avenue from an auto-oriented commercial strip to a pedestrian- and transit-oriented retail boulevard. San Pablo Avenue should be a source of community pride, with distinctive buildings, an attractive streetscape, and a diverse mix of uses.

Policy LU-3.3: Solano Avenue

Enhance the pattern of tightly clustered retail storefronts, active ground floor uses, and specialty shopping, dining, and personal services along the Solano Avenue corridor. Any future infill development on Solano Avenue should maintain and enhance this pattern.

Policy LU-3.4: Solano/San Pablo

Enhance the intersection of Solano and San Pablo Avenues as the "center" of Albany and a major activity node. Land use regulations and design guidelines should reinforce the identity of this area as a hub of pedestrian traffic, distinctive architecture, and active ground floor uses.

Policy LU-3.8: Buffering

Require buffering of residential uses, particularly along Kains Avenue, Adams Street, and the perpendicular side streets that intersect Solano Avenue, from the potentially adverse impacts created by nearby commercial activities. This should include special setback and daylight plane regulations to be applied where commercial zones abut lower density zones. It may also include special use, design, and noise standards.

Policy LU-3.12: Lot Consolidation

Support the consolidation of underutilized parcels on the Solano and San Pablo corridors to create sites that are more viable for future mixed use development, including on-site parking. Development on larger sites should be designed to respect the fine-grained character of nearby properties, and should be articulated into multiple smaller storefronts rather than long, unbroken facades.

Policy LU-3.15: Northern Gateway

Ensure that any future development on the Albany Bowl site, and surrounding sites along San Pablo Avenue north of Clay Street, reflects the importance of this area and its function as a northern gateway to the City.

Action LU-3.B: Major Activity Nodes

Develop land use and design regulations that reinforce key areas along San Pablo and Solano Avenues as major activity nodes, particularly around the intersection of these two streets.

Subsequent planning studies should identify the desired character, activities, and development standards at the San Pablo-Solano node, the Northern Gateway node, and other nodes that may be identified in the future. The purpose of a node is to intensify pedestrian-oriented retail, commercial and mixed use activities at key locations. The City will work with property owners and neighbors in these areas to explore incentives, facilitate lot consolidation, and create more viable development opportunities.

Action LU-3.D: San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines

Update the San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines. In addition to providing direction on building scale, commercial facades, landscaping, and public improvements, the guidelines should consider the segmentation of the corridor into “districts” which are different in their function and character. If such districts are identified, zoning code amendments should be considered to reinforce the desired character.

E. Financing Strategies

This section explores financing options that may be initiated by the City, or the developer or property owner to facilitate affordable housing, capital improvements and/or maintenance.

Public Financing and Example Grant Programs

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

The five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) provides a road map for upcoming capital improvements in the City and helps define upcoming project funding needs. While the CIP includes the upcoming five fiscal years, the most specific part of the plan is focused on the first two years. The CIP is a planning tool for the Albany City Council to set goals, make policy choices, and award budget to actionable projects.

MTC PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA FUNDING

ABAG/MTC issues “calls for projects” for State and federal funding opportunities. As a Priority Development Area (PDA), the Planning Area is well-positioned as an applicant for grants. Grants may range from priority transportation projects to housing programs. Recently, MTC has issued grant allocations for planning projects initiated under the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program. Additionally, the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a recurring program that funds capital projects including bicycle facilities.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM (AHSC)

AHSC is a State-initiated climate investment program that integrates housing development with transportation improvements to facilitate walking, biking and transit use, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. AHSC provides funding for affordable housing developments (new construction or renovation) and transportation infrastructure together. Applications may be filed by the City, affordable housing developers, or jointly. For example, in the 5th round of funding in 2020, the City of Berkeley and two non-profit housing developers together received \$42 million to build 150 below-market rate housing units and construct a range of transportation improvements including sidewalks, pedestrian signals, intersection improvements, bus stop improvements, and bike facilities. The AHSC is administered by the Strategic Growth Council and implemented by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. It is funded by Cap and Trade revenues and is therefore expected to be an ongoing source of funds.

CITY IMPACT FEES

Development impact fees are one-time charges imposed as a condition of development approval to pay for capital facilities and infrastructure needed to serve new development. In 2022, the City was in the process of updating its Capital Facilities fee to establish the nexus between a new per square foot fee and the impact of new development. As of January 2022, the following impact fees were being assessed:

- Capital Facilities fee (i.e., civic buildings, police, fire, corp yard, parks)
- Sewer connection fee
- Storm drain impact fee
- Art in Public Places fee
- School impact fee

Developers of all future projects within the Specific Plan area will be required to pay these impact fees at the time building permits are issued. These fees support facilities and services provided by the City to meet demands of existing and new development. Fees collected by the city may also be utilized to offset design, financing, and construction costs of improvements within the planning area. Developers should check the master fee schedule for the latest fees and rates.

AREA DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES

Area development impact fees may be enacted by the City through adoption of an ordinance. Such fees do not require a public vote to be enacted, but they do require public hearings. Area development impact fees must be directly related to the benefits received. They do not create a lien against property, but must be paid in full as a condition of approval. The principal use of these fees is for encumbering properties that would not otherwise enter into an assessment district or Mello-Roos Community Facilities District. Fees are established so that these properties pay their fair share at the time they are ready to be developed. Area development impact fees might be used, for example, in situations in which the number of owners of small developable parcels was so large that property owners would have difficulty organizing an assessment district or a community facilities district.

Proceeds may be used to reimburse property owners who pay up-front costs for facilities benefiting other properties. Benefiting properties may be given the option to finance the fees by entering into an assessment district or Mello-Roos Community Facilities District.

DEDICATIONS AND EXACTIONS

Under the Subdivision Map Act, developers may be required to dedicate land or make cash payments for public facilities required or affected by their project (e.g., road right-of-way fronting individual properties). Dedications are typically made for road and utility rights-of-way, park sites, and land for other public facilities. Cash contributions are made for other public facilities that are directly required by their projects (e.g., payments for a traffic signal).

Property Owner Financing

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

State law provides procedures to levy assessments against benefiting properties and issue tax-exempt bonds to finance public facilities and infrastructure improvements. The City Council may initiate assessment districts, also known as improvement districts, subject to approval by the property owners in the district. Assessments are distributed in proportion to the benefits received by each property as determined by engineering analysis, and form a lien against property. Special assessments are fixed dollar amounts and may be prepaid, although they are typically paid back with interest over time by the assessed property owner.

PROPERTY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

With this tool, businesses located within a defined business improvement district are required to pay an additional tax in order to fund projects, improvements, or programming within the district's boundaries. Common improvements funded by business improvement districts are capital improvements, streetscape enhancements, ongoing maintenance, and other beautification and improvement projects.

