

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

What is the Specific Plan?

A Plan that articulates a vision for the future of San Pablo Ave...

... by defining **community-based and context-sensitive regulation and policies** within the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan Area.

... by identifying improvements and innovative programs that provide **more and better opportunities for living, working and community life** along San Pablo Ave.

Why are we doing it now?

2023 - 2031 Housing Element

Program 27 identifies the San Pablo Specific Plan as an action to increase housing in commercial and transit corridors.

20%

Of identified **Housing Element opportunity sites** are in the Specific Plan Area.

The Housing Element together paired with the current developments indicate more growth to come. The Specific Plan will inform the Community Vision of growth.

City Council

2015 City Council Referral identified need for a Plan to shape growth along San Pablo Ave.

Regional Policies

The San Pablo Ave Corridor is a designated Priority Development Area which can help Berkeley compete for regional and state funding to help achieve the community's vision for the future.

Alameda CTC Multimodal Corridor Plan

Alameda CTC is leading the right-of-way design for San Pablo Avenue. The Project will create Safety Enhancements and Parallel Bike Improvements in Berkeley.
For more information: alamedactc.org

Specific Plan Boundary and Study Area




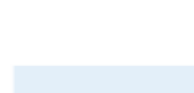
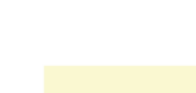



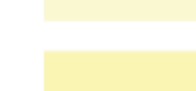


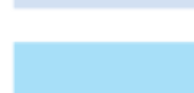



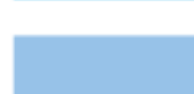









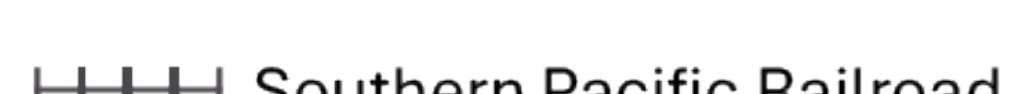
Specific Plan Boundary

Most of the parcels within the Boundary are part of existing West Berkeley Commercial district (C-W).

Study Area

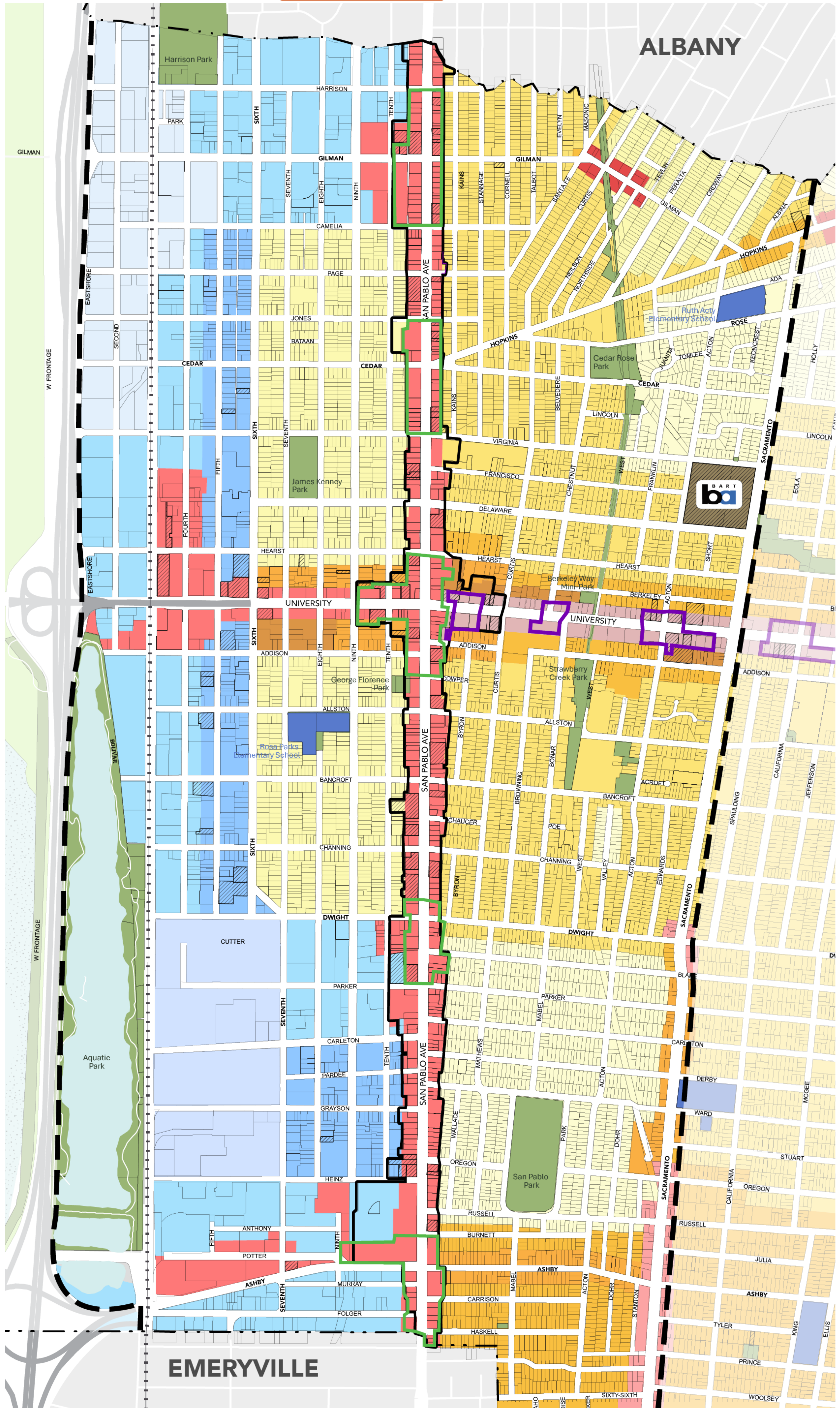
Adjacent neighborhoods with strong relationship to San Pablo Ave area, and part of community engagement process.

Legend

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
|  C-W Zoning Node Boundary |  C-U Zoning Node Boundary | | |
| Zoning Class | | | |
|  C-N |  M |  R-1 |  R-4 |
|  C-AC |  MM |  R-1A |  R-BMU |
|  C-SA |  MULI |  R-2 |  SP |
|  C-U |  MUR |  R-2A |  Parks |
|  C-W |  Schools |  R-3 |  U |
|  Housing Opportunity Sites |  City of Berkeley Boundary | | |
|  Proposed Specific Plan Area |  Southern Pacific Railroad | | |

Where do you live?

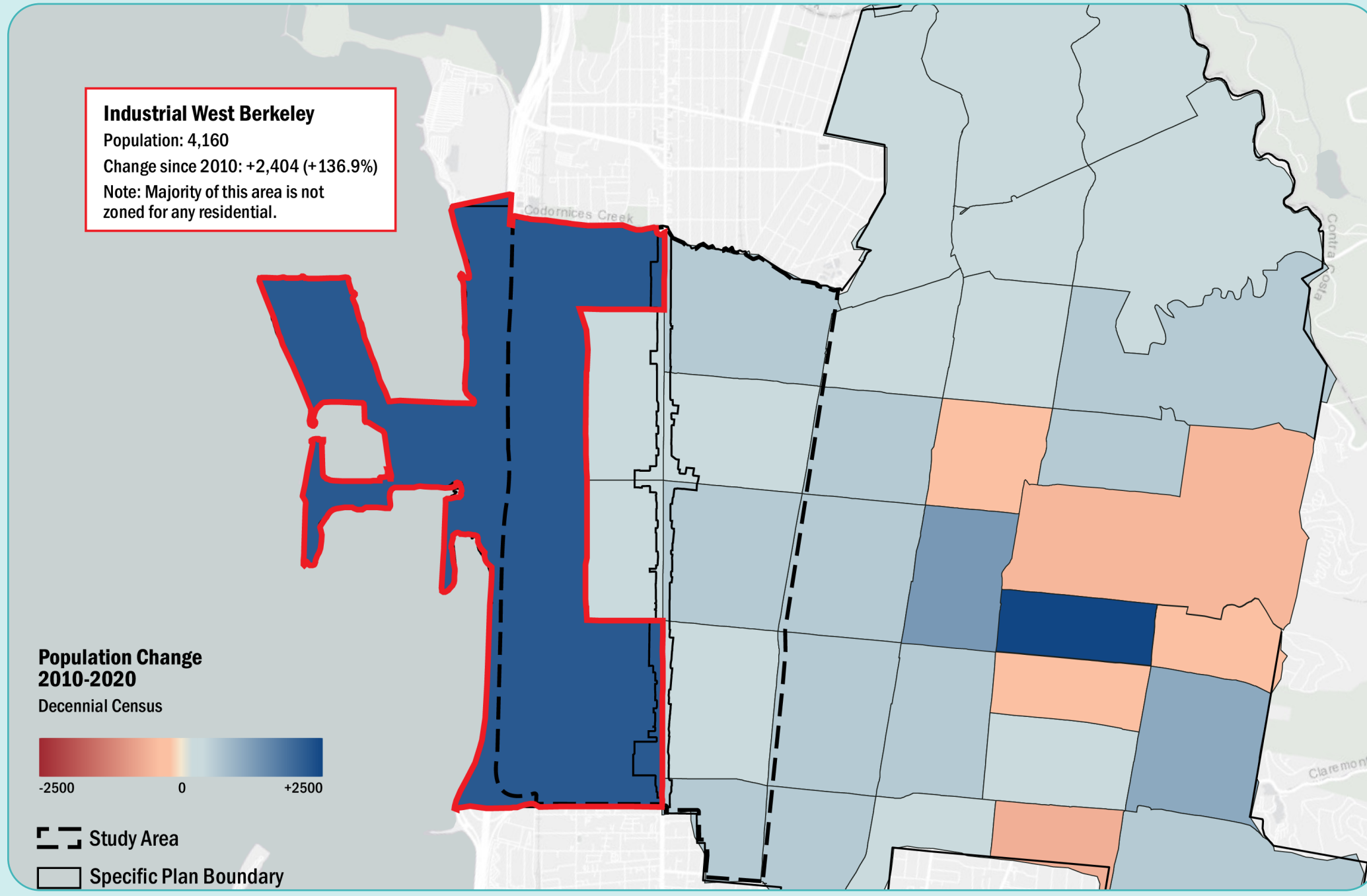
Place a dot on the map.



Demographics & Housing Affordability

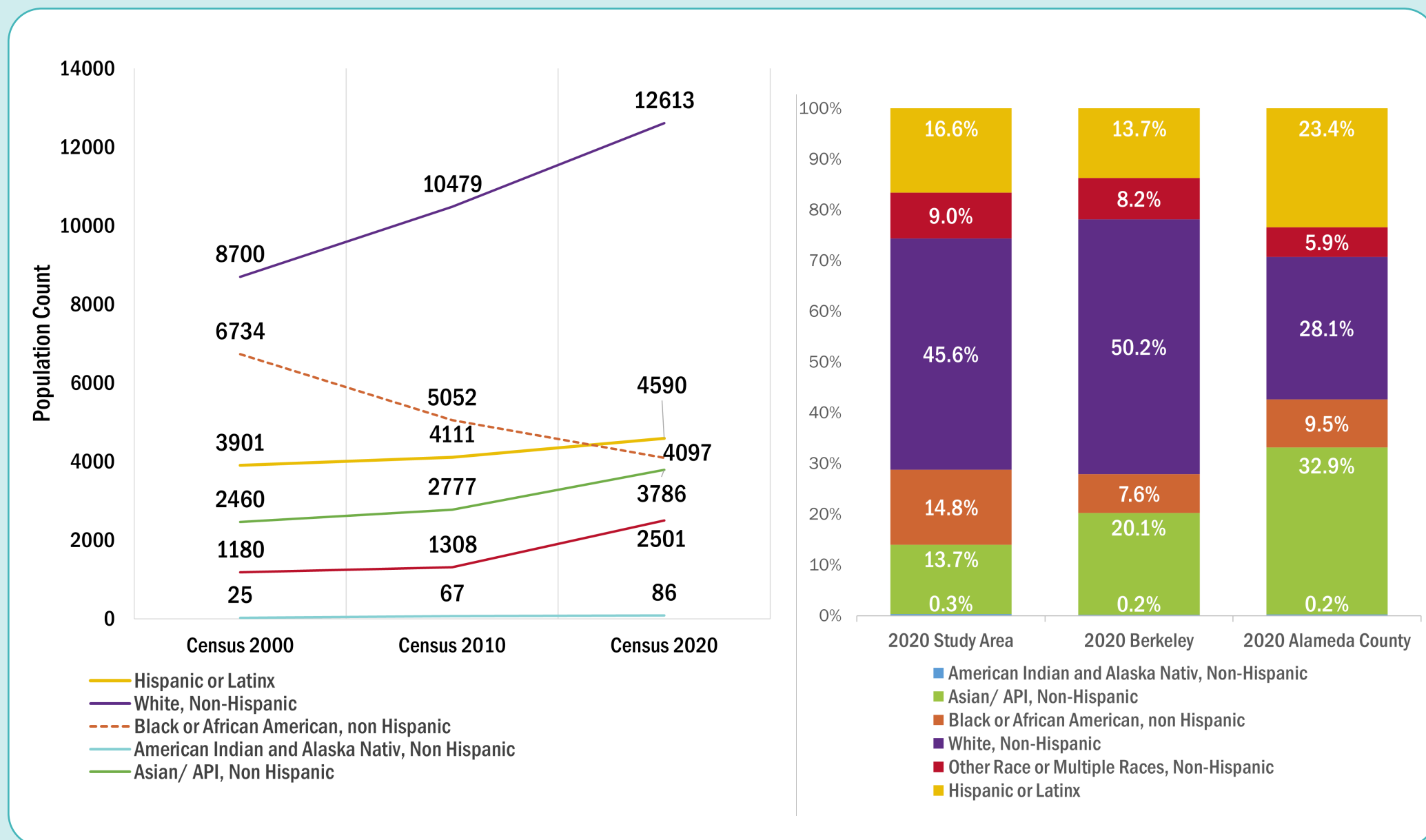
Demographics

Berkeley's population grew by 9% from 2010 to 2020, to 122,580 people. In contrast, the Study Area grew by 16% in that time, to a population of 26,360 people, 22% of Berkeley's total population.



Population Change from 2010 to 2020. Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010, 2020, Table P1.

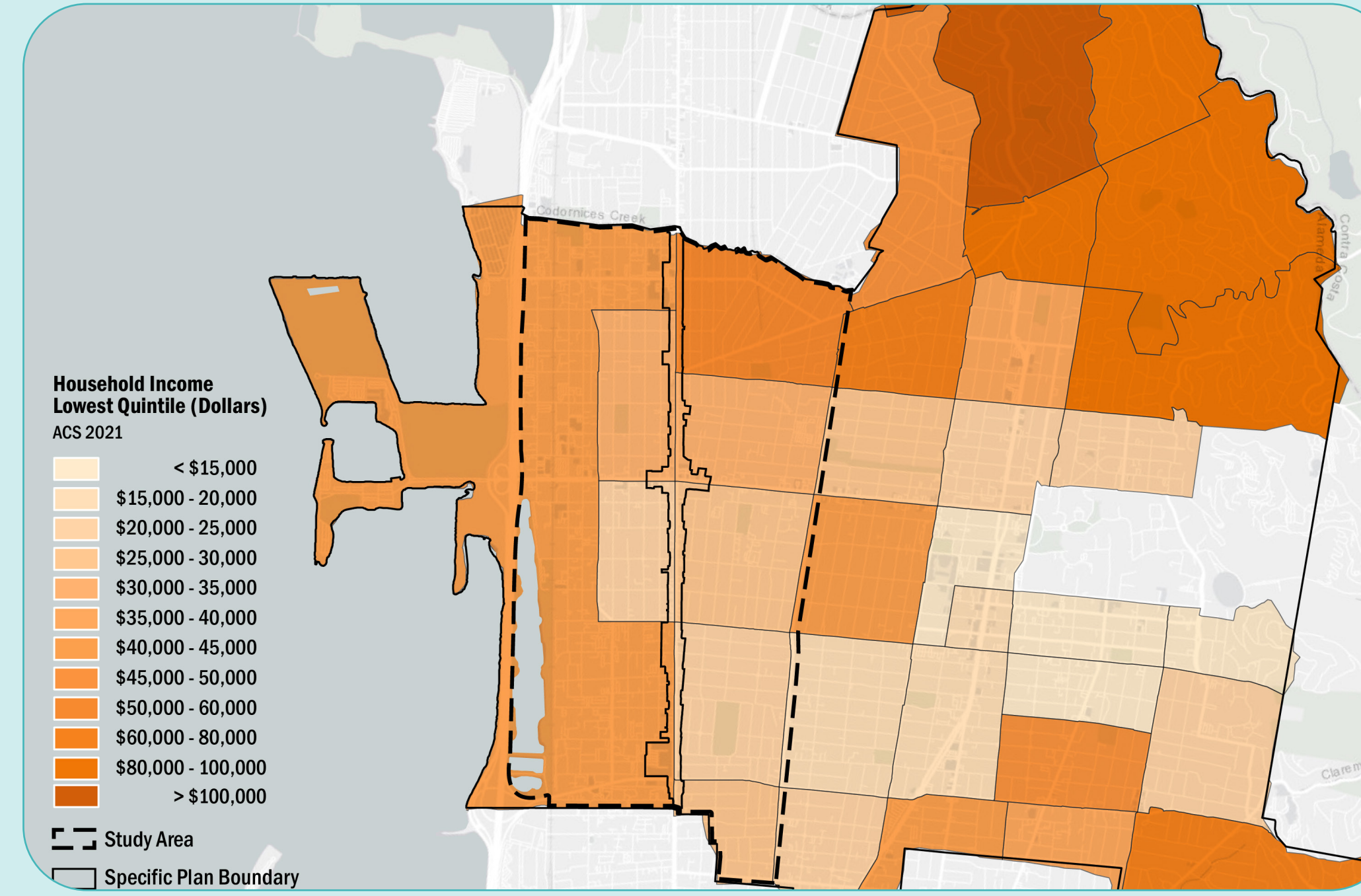
Over the past 20 years, Blacks/African Americans were the only racial group to decline in the Study Area. However, the Study Area continues to have higher percentage of Black/African American population compared to Berkeley or Alameda County.



Left: Population Shift by Race and Ethnicity in Study Boundary. Right: Comparison of Racial Composition. Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010, Table P7, 2020, Table P1.

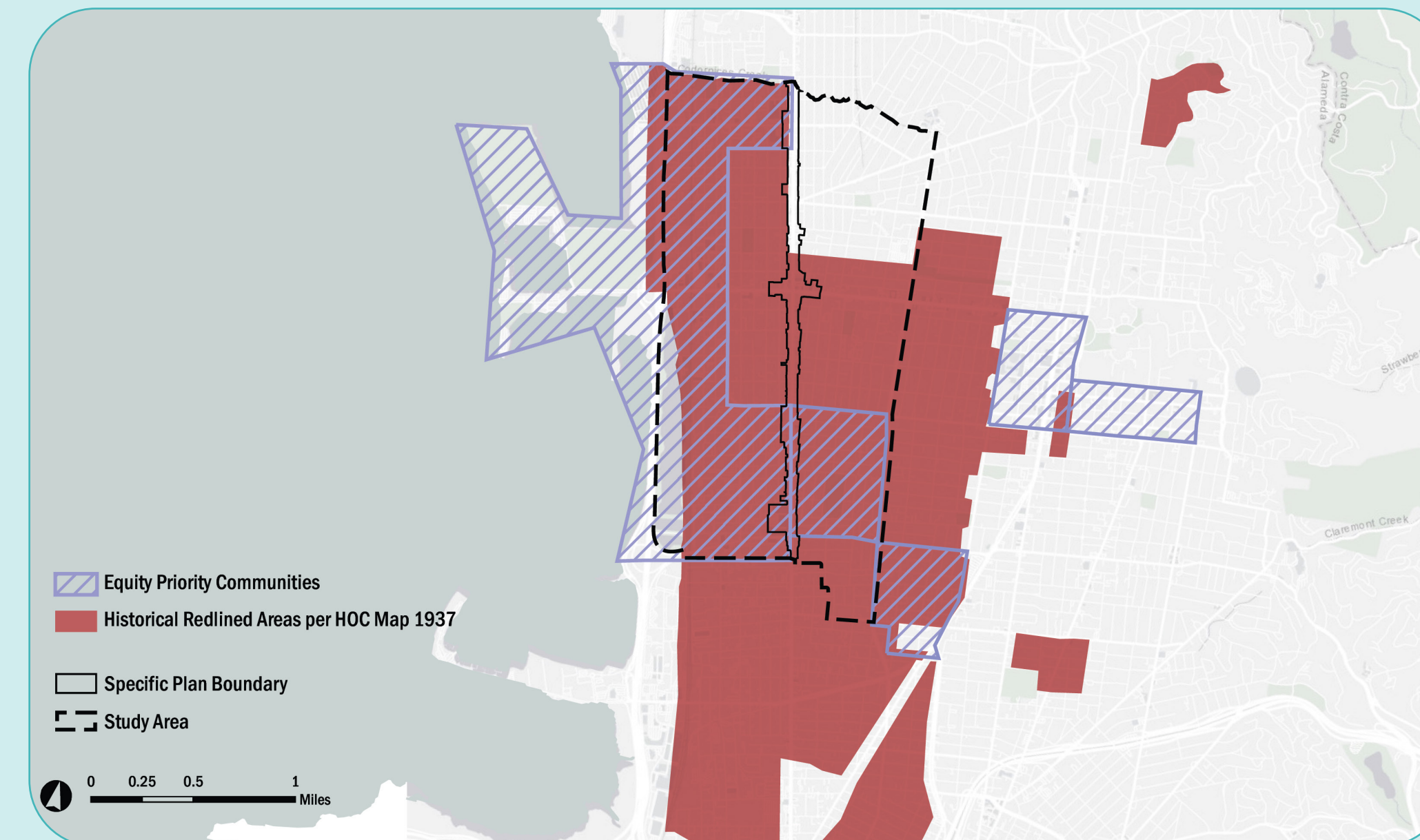
Household and Housing Characteristics

Roughly half of the Study Area households earn less than 80% of Area Median Income (\$93,871) and a third earn less than 50% of Area Median Income. These households would likely be eligible for affordable housing.



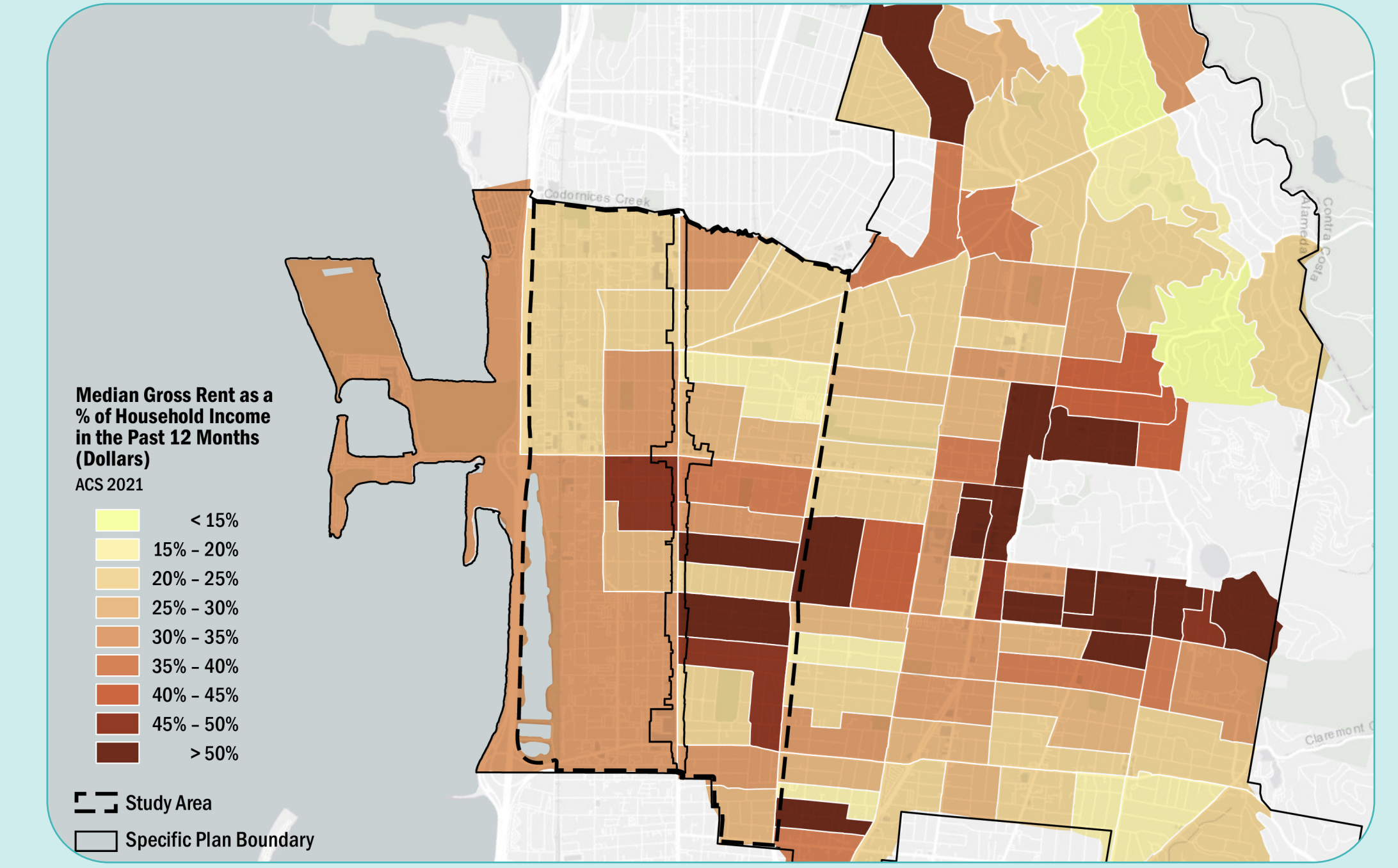
Household Income for Lowest Quintile. Source: United States Census Bureau, ACS, 2021, Table B19080.

As a result of historic discrimination, the Study Area is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Equity Priority Communities. The EPC designation helps provide funding and assistance to census tracts that have a significant concentration of under served populations.



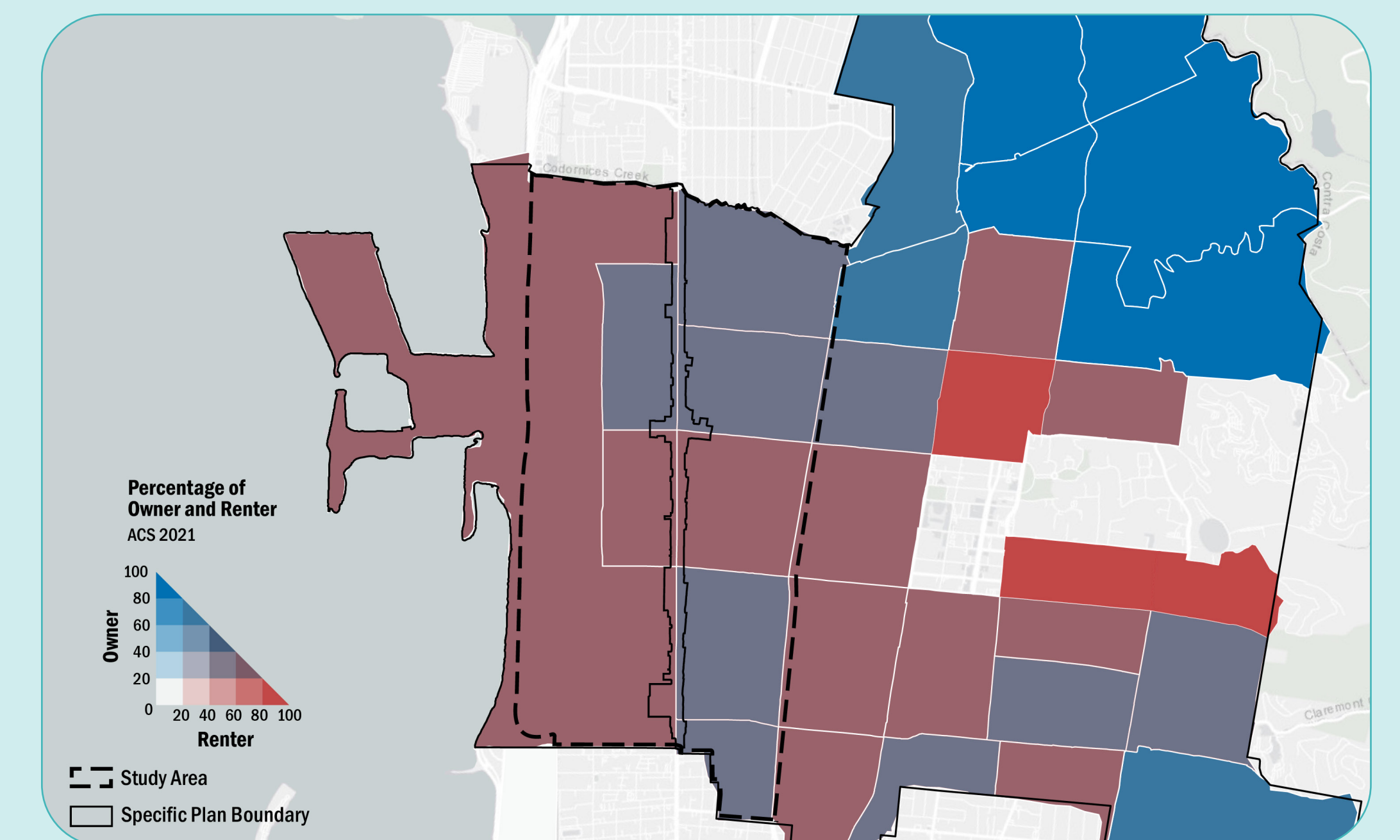
Equity Priority Communities and Historical Redlined Areas. Source: Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, Mapping Redlining, 2023. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Equity Priority Communities, 2021.

In the Study Area, more than half of tenants are **cost-burdened, meaning they spend >30%** of their gross household income on rent and utilities.



Household Income for Lowest Quintile. Source: United States Census Bureau, ACS, 2021, Table B19080.

Between 2010-2020, the number of housing units in Berkeley increased by 6%. New housing was primarily developed along major corridors, like San Pablo, University, Shattuck, Telegraph and Dwight Way.



Mix of Households that Own or Rent in Berkeley. Source: United States Census Bureau, United States Census Bureau, ACS, 2021, Table DP04.

What types of housing are most needed along San Pablo Ave?

Place a dot along the scale below. Add sticky notes with other suggestions of housing types.

Not at all important

Extremely important

Affordable Housing (rental)

Condominium (owned)

Group Living¹

Artist Housing

Senior Housing

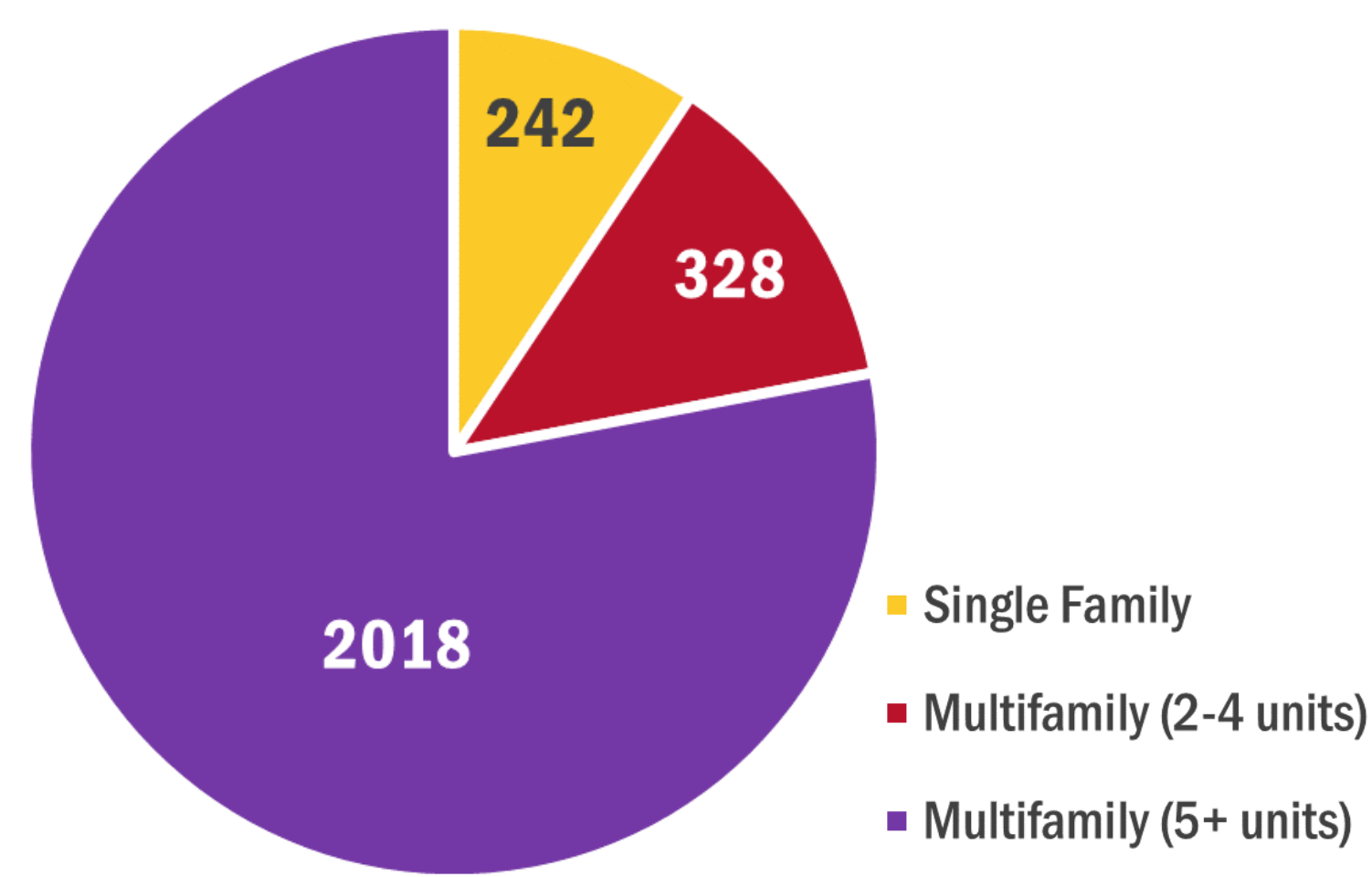
Place other suggestions here

¹ Group Living can take many forms, such as student housing, multi-generational housing, or other community specific groups.

Projected Housing Development

Current Housing Units

As of 2020, there were 2,588 existing housing units in the Specific Plan Area.



Mixed-income housing on the corner of San Pablo Ave and Ashby Ave
Source: Higby, 2023

The Housing Element

The Housing Element presents the City's 8-year plan to meet the housing needs of our community including a sites inventory to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation established by the State.

The Housing Element was recently revised and adopted in early 2023 following an 18-month public outreach and planning process.

Learn more about the Housing Element at the City's website here:



The City's Housing Element

is one of nine elements in the City's General Plan.

The General Plan

is a comprehensive and long-range statement of priorities and values developed to guide public decision-making.

All land-use decisions must be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan.

51 Opportunity sites

were identified by the Housing Element within the Specific Plan Area.

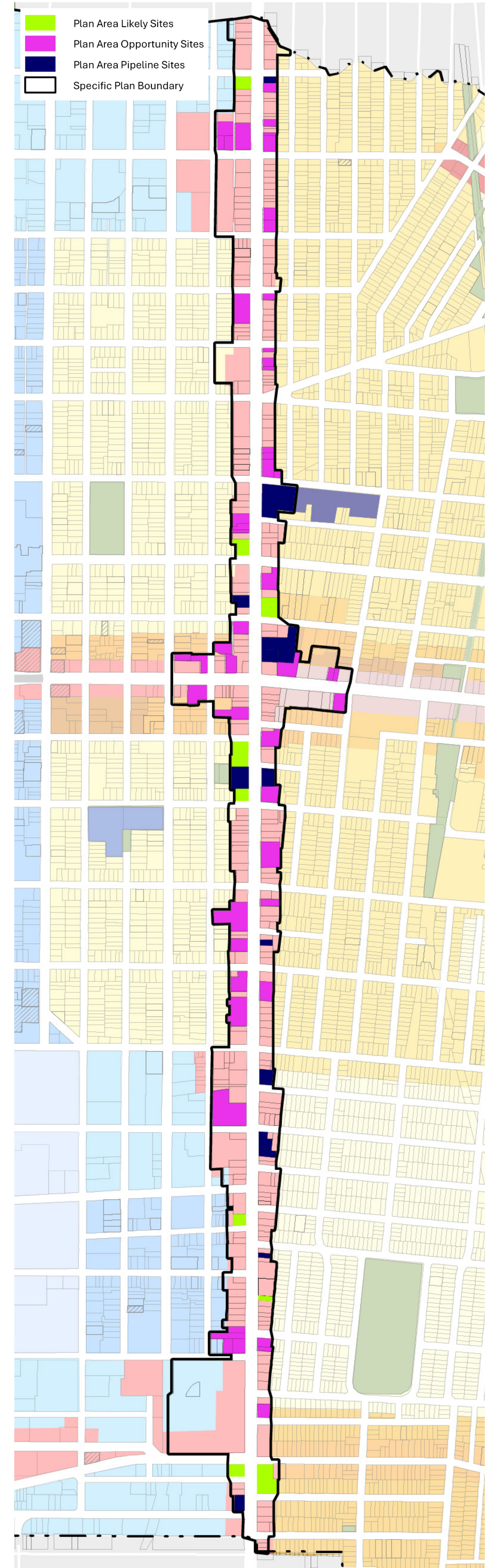
Opportunity sites include:

- Vacant or underutilized sites with near-term potential for residential or mixed-use development.
- Some sites used in the 5th cycle Housing Element but remain available for development.

Policy Highlight

Berkeley Affordable Housing Preference Policy

In July 2023, Berkeley adopted a policy to provide preference for current residents and descendants of residents of the city's historically redlined areas. Households with ties to the area receive priority in leasing new City funded or regulated affordable units. Because much of the Study Area is within the historically redlined area in Berkeley, many former and current residents may qualify for this preference.



Plan Area Housing Element Update Housing Sites Inventory

Source: City of Berkeley, "Housing Element Update 2023-2031", 02.17.23



Affordable Housing "Margaret Breland Homes" on San Pablo Ave.
Source: Phillips Win Architecture 2023

Potential Housing Production

| | Total Units | 100% Affordable | Onsite Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Approved as of fall 2023 | 589 | 63 | 52 | 19.7% |
| Under Review as of fall 2023 | 2000 | 100 | 200 | 15% |
| Housing Element Opportunity Sites based on current zoning and density bonus | 2000-3000 | 100-170 | 200-300 | ~15% |
| Total All Sites | 4,500-5,500 | 350-450 | 500-600 | 15-16% |

Commercial Activity & Displacement Risk

Local Businesses are more vulnerable to displacement or closure

90%

Of Brick and Mortar businesses are locally owned.

21% are woman owned

41% are people of color owned

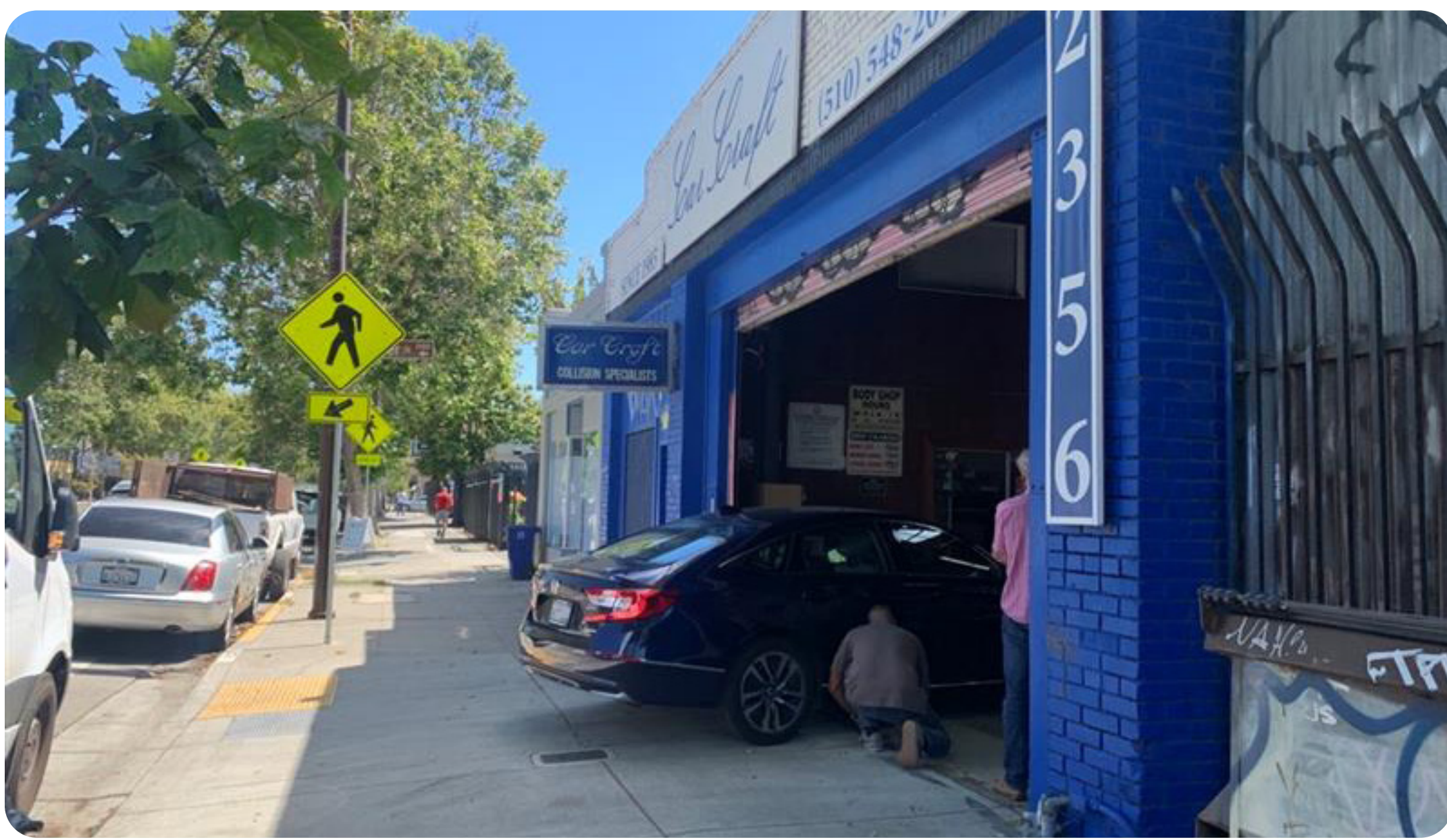
Commercial Vacancy Rate on San Pablo Ave

| | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 2017 | 5.5% | |
| 2022 | 10.8% | +5.3% |

The ground floor vacancy rate on San Pablo Ave doubled since 2017.



Brick and Mortar storefront at the corner of San Pablo Ave and Delaware St



Auto repair shop fronting San Pablo Ave



Vacant brick and mortar storefront south of the intersection San Pablo Ave and University Ave



Which businesses or other uses do you visit the most along San Pablo Ave?

Place a dot on the map or write a sticky note with the name of the business.

Sticky Notes

Are there businesses or types of uses that you are concerned about losing from the corridor as it transitions to a denser and more mixed use place?

Place a sticky note below.

Sticky Notes

Locally-Owned, Brick-and-Mortar Business Mix

Source: Street Level Advisors and Gordon Consulting, 2023.

Land Use Policies

Zoning

Properties fronting on SPA are predominantly zoned West Berkeley Commercial (C-W). Along University Avenue the majority of properties are zone for C-W and University Commercial (C-U).

Residential, Commercial, Mixed-use, and Live-work are permitted in C-W and C-U with applicable permits and subject to development Standards.

Key California Laws that Support Housing

- Housing Accountability Act – No net loss of housing capacity
- Senate Bill (SB) 330 - Streamlining
- SB 35 - Ministerial Approvals for affordable housing projects
- Density Bonus Law – waive or reduce development standards

Permit Review Process

Two types of review processes: Ministerial and Discretionary Review

Ministerial review is a process involving little to no personal judgment by the zoning officer or Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB). The zoning officer or ZAB ensure the proposed development meets all “Objective zoning standards” and “objective design review standards”.

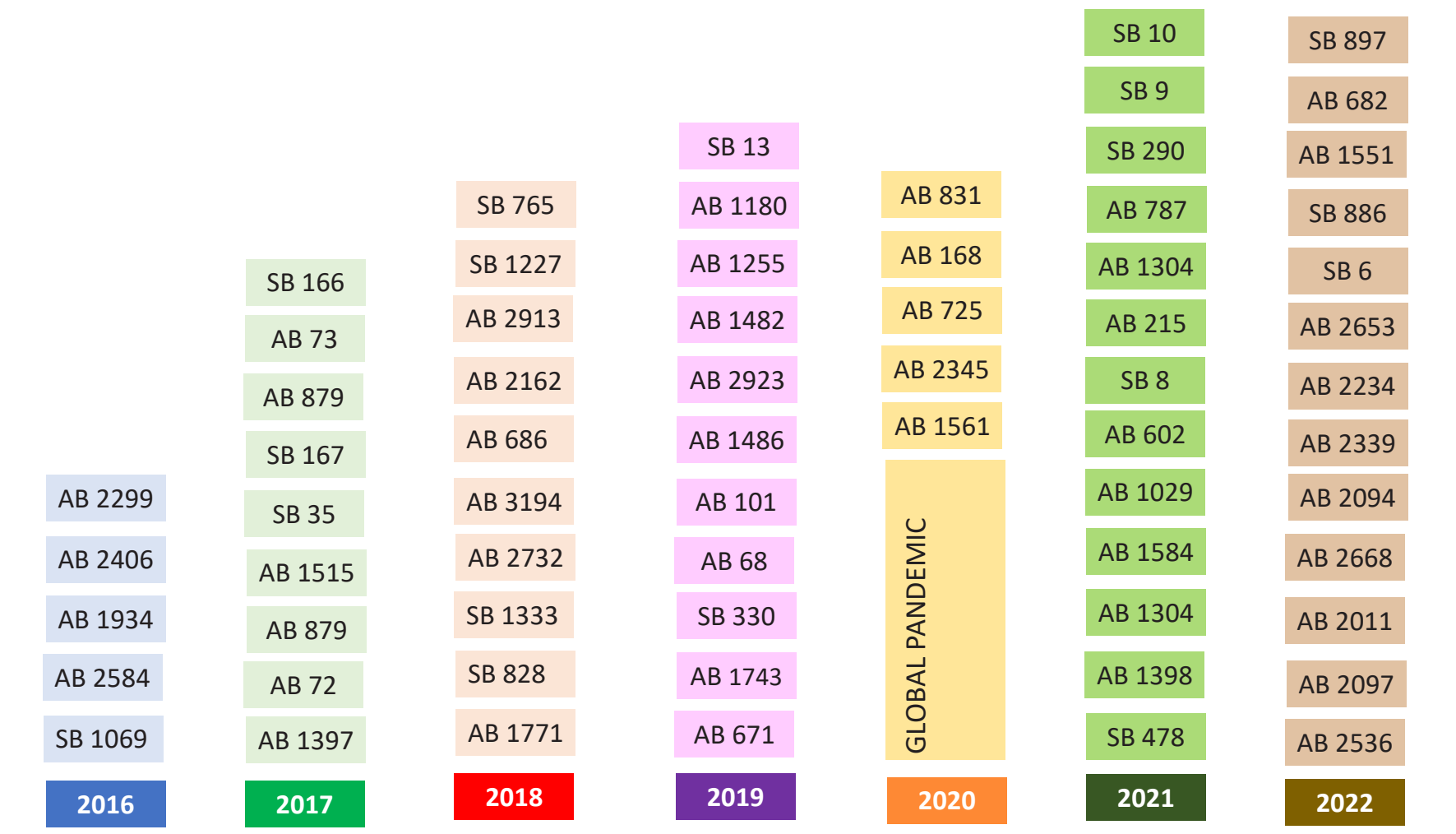
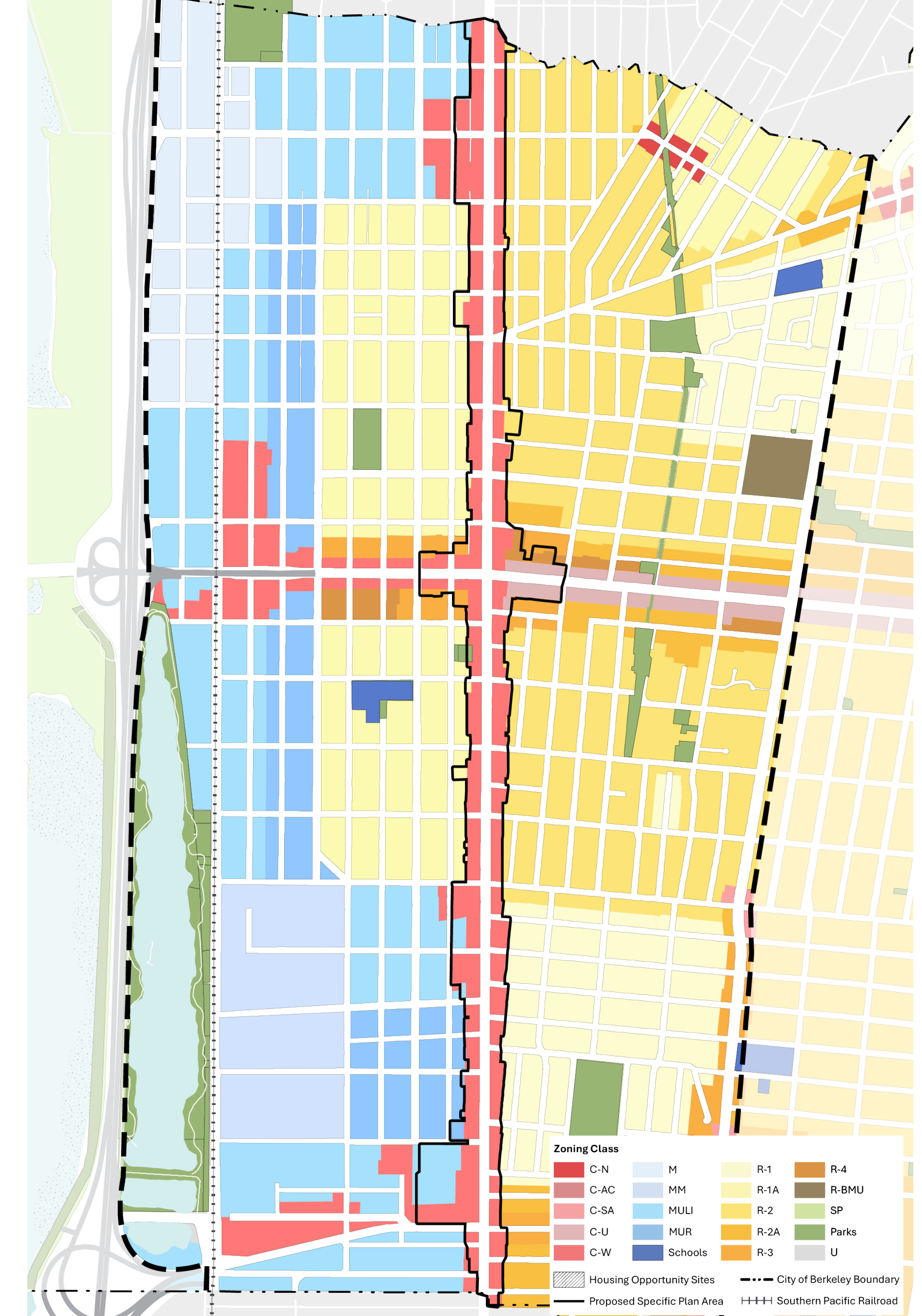
Discretionary review is a process for development that is subject to public notice to neighbors, and in some cases, a public hearing.

Many recent State legislation laws have established and expanded eligibility for ministerial and streamlined review including: changes to review timeline and requirements, applicability of the CEQA, and limits to City’s discretion.

Typical Permits Required

| Housing Type | C-W | C-U |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Duplex | UP | UP |
| Multi-Family | UP | UP |
| Mixed-Use Projects | ZC/AUP/UP | UP |
| Live-Work | AUP/UP | ZC |
| Group Living Accommodation | UP | UP |

ZC = Zoning Certificate, AUP = Administrative Use Permit, UP = Use Permit, NP = Not Permitted



Example of increase in approved housing-related legislation between 2016-2022

California Housing Legislation Highlights

as of October 12, 2023

Blue = Signed into law

UTILITIES & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

SB 777 Requires public water utilities to provide emergency response if temp below 32F or above 98F.

AB 68 Factor in cost to build water pipes, schools, transit, etc.

SB 201 Requires utility districts to process applications faster.

SB 410 Plan for faster electricity connections & more grid capacity.

AB 1072 Water efficiency assistance for low-income residents.

AB 1505 Funding for earthquake retrofits for multi-story apartments.

AB 1541 Faster approvals for housing in city of Chico.

ENFORCEMENT OF HOUSING LAWS

AB 1485 Expands Attorney General's ability to enforce housing laws.

AB 1633 Bans cities from delaying housing by not issuing CEQA exemptions.

FASTER APPROVALS

SB 239 Limits filing of CEQA lawsuits.

AB 356 Extends the rule that aesthetic impacts aren't considered significant.

SB 423 Faster approvals in cities & counties that haven't built enough.

SB 459 Faster approvals for projects with up to 10 homes.

SB 736 States water & septic up building permit process.

SB 794 Resolves CEQA appeals for most big projects in 1 year, also discloses who is funding CEQA appeal lawsuits.

AB 978 Requires posting a \$500,000 bond to file a CEQA appeal lawsuit against housing.

AB 1114 Bans rejecting building permits for housing that complies with the building code. Only San Francisco does this.

AB 1532 Expands office to housing conversions.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

AB 323 Gives individuals priority before nonprofits for buying affordable ownership units in a mixed-income development.

AB 572 Limits HOA fee increases to 5%/year for affordable ownership units.

AB 717 Increase planning education for first-time homeowners.

AB 919 Gives tenants & nonprofits time to make an offer when building is sold.

AB 1043 Rules to protect homeowners from shady foreclosure consultants.

AB 1508 Sets goal to increase first-time homeownership.

HOMELESSNESS

SB 7 Requires cities identify places for homeless people to live in their general plan housing element.

SB 31 Bans being homeless within 1,000 feet of a park, school, daycare, or library.

SB 91 Extends law that streamlines conversions of motels to housing.

SB 221 \$5000 tax credit for people renting to a nonprofit using it to house domestic violence survivors.

SB 773 Allows more low-income households to qualify for CALWORKS Homeless Assistance housing subsidies.

AB 920 Bans towing or hoisting of vehicles due to unpaid parking tickets.

AB 1085 CA to ask Federal govt to allow Medi-Cal to cover paying for housing.

AB 1215 Grants to provide pet housing & services at shelters.

AB 1285 Prioritizes homeless people when assigning spots in affordable housing.

AB 1411 Grants for rent subsidies for homeless, evicted, unemployed, and other populations at high risk of homelessness.

RE-ENTRY HOUSING FOR PEOPLE RELEASED FROM PRISON

AB 428 Creates CA Dept. of Re-Entry, with individualized re-entry plans.

SB 460 Ban the box. Applicants can't ask about criminal record. Can still background check, but must give chance to explain before rejecting.

AB 745 Creates Re-Entry Housing and Workforce Development Program.

UPZONING

SB 294 More floor area allowed for land zoned for 11+ apartments.

AB 440 Can base density bonus on general plan density if it's higher than zoning density.

AB 637 Density bonus must meet local discretionary housing rules.

SB 713 Density bonus law overrides any local law it conflicts with.

AB 821 Can use general plan density if it's higher than zoning.

AB 835 Increase max height for apartment buildings with 1-stair.

AB 1287 Additional density bonus if moderate income or additional very low income units added.

PARKING

SB 529 Funds shared electric vehicles for affordable housing.

SB 712 Landlords required to allow bike/scooter parking.

AB 894 Allow shared parking (such as residential/commercial) to count towards parking requirements.

AB 1308 No added parking required for house additions or remodels.

AB 1317 Requires that parking be unbundled from apartment leases in 16+ unit buildings in 10 counties.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

AB 671 Community land trusts can build and sell ADU, Junior ADU & house to three separate households.

AB 976 Extends law that allows ADU even if house is rented.

AB 1033 Allows cities to allow anyone to buy an ADU separate from the house.

AB 1332 Cities & counties to set up system to pre-approve ADU plans.

AB 1461 Allows new ADUs to share electric & gas meter with house.

STUDENT & SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HOUSING

SB 276 Makes it easier for student housing to be approved.

AB 358 Speeds up plan check for community college student housing.

AB 1307 Noise from residents aren't a CEQA impact.

AB 1630 Allows student housing on all land within 1,000 feet of a college, no density limit, raises height limit to 40 feet if it was lower.

AB 1700 Population growth & noise from new homes aren't a CEQA impact.

BALLOT MEASURES

ACA 1 Lowers the pass threshold from 2/3 to 55% for local measures for housing or infrastructure funding.

ACA 10 Creates right to housing in CA constitution.

SB 854 \$2.5 billion affordable housing bond.

AB 1657 Affordable housing bond (amount TBD).

PUBLIC LAND

SB 240 Streamlined approvals for housing for formerly incarcerated individuals on public land.

AB 480 Prioritizes affordable housing development when public lands are sold or leased.

AB 510 Require cities & county to create affordable housing land trusts, exempt all projects on such land from CEQA.

AB 983 Makes it easier for a city to sell or lease surplus land in a downtown revitalization plan area.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STREAMLINING

SB 4 Faster approvals for low income housing on land owned by colleges or religious organizations.

SB 406 CEQA exemption for local agencies to spend money on low & moderate income housing.

SB 439 Allows easier dismissal of lawsuits against affordable housing.

SB 469 Removes local barriers to building affordable housing for projects receiving tax credit funding.

AB 785 Extends LA affordable housing CEQA exemption.

AB 1449 Affordable housing CEQA exemption.

AB 1490 Adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings for low income housing, streamlined approvals and fee exemptions.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: PROPERTY TAX

AB 84 Property tax exemptions for land owned by nonprofit but not yet built on, as well as units where tenant income has increased.

AB 430 Expands tax exemption for community land trusts.

SB 588 Removes cap on amount of assessed value that can be exempt from property tax.

AB 926 Tax reduction for businesses that provide housing for low, moderate income, and homeless employees.

AB 1492 Allows a partial tax exemption for mixed income buildings owned by a nonprofit, proportional to the number of affordable units in the building.

FUNDING

SB 20 Allows multiple cities to create a regional housing fund to build affordable housing.

AB 397

SB 341 Allows affordable housing developers to access competitive state funding even if the local city is NIMBY and is out of compliance with state law.

AB 346 More flexible funding allocation for LHTE.

SB 482 Operating reserves for supportive housing.

AB 515 Allow prepayment of loans for housing under the state housing bond program.

AB 519 Consolidated funding application.

AB 520

AB 901 Allows creation of Affordable Housing Financing Districts that use taxes from that district for housing.

AB 930 Allows creation of RISE districts that use taxes from that district for housing & infrastructure.

AB 1053 Expands state loan program to cover construction loans, in addition to regular loans.

AB 1319 Expands what BAHFA, the Bay Area Housing Finance Agency, can do, also exempts its projects from CEQA.

PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SB 225 Fund for preserving affordability in buildings where it is.

SB 593 Replacing housing demolished by San Francisco Redevelopment as well as preserving affordability in housing built by Redevelopment.

SOCIAL HOUSING

AB 309 Creates framework for social housing owners.

SB 555 Sets goal to build low & moderate income homes.

AB 584 Jobs, small loans, rentals (priority to low and moderate income housing).

SENIOR HOUSING

SB 17 Promotes affordable housing funds for senior housing.

SB 37 Subsidies for seniors & adults with disabilities.

AB 839 Expands financing program for assisted living.

VETERANS

AB 531 \$6.38 billion bond for veterans housing & others who are homeless.

SB 871

AB 1014 Expands property tax exemption for veterans.

AB 1386 More options for veterans moving into income-restricted affordable housing.

FARMWORKER HOUSING

SB 547 District ag associations can build & run affordable housing.

AB 1439 Increase priority for farmworker housing for housing funding.

TRIBAL HOUSING

SB 18 Funding for Native American Tribes to build housing.

AB 371 Tribes give more flexibility on use of housing funding.

Contact the Governor at gov.ca.gov/contact

Land Use Policies

What ground floor uses would you most like to see along San Pablo Ave in addition to typical retail, commercial, and service businesses?

Place a dot along the scale below. If there are specific locations or places you would like to see a new use, place a sticky-note on the map.

← Not at all important

→ Extremely important

Community Gathering Space

Entertainment

Night Life

Art Studios

Galleries

Pop-Up Small Business Space

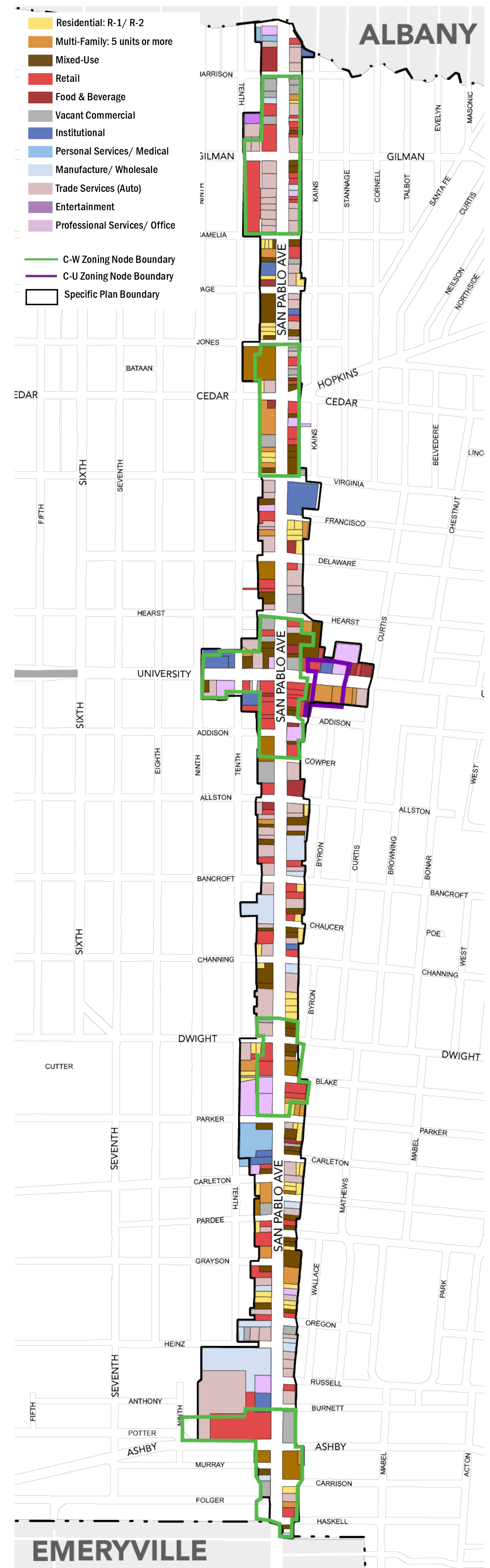
Recreational Space

Outdoor Community Space

Other important ground floor use:

If there is a use we haven't listed, write a sticky-note and place it below.

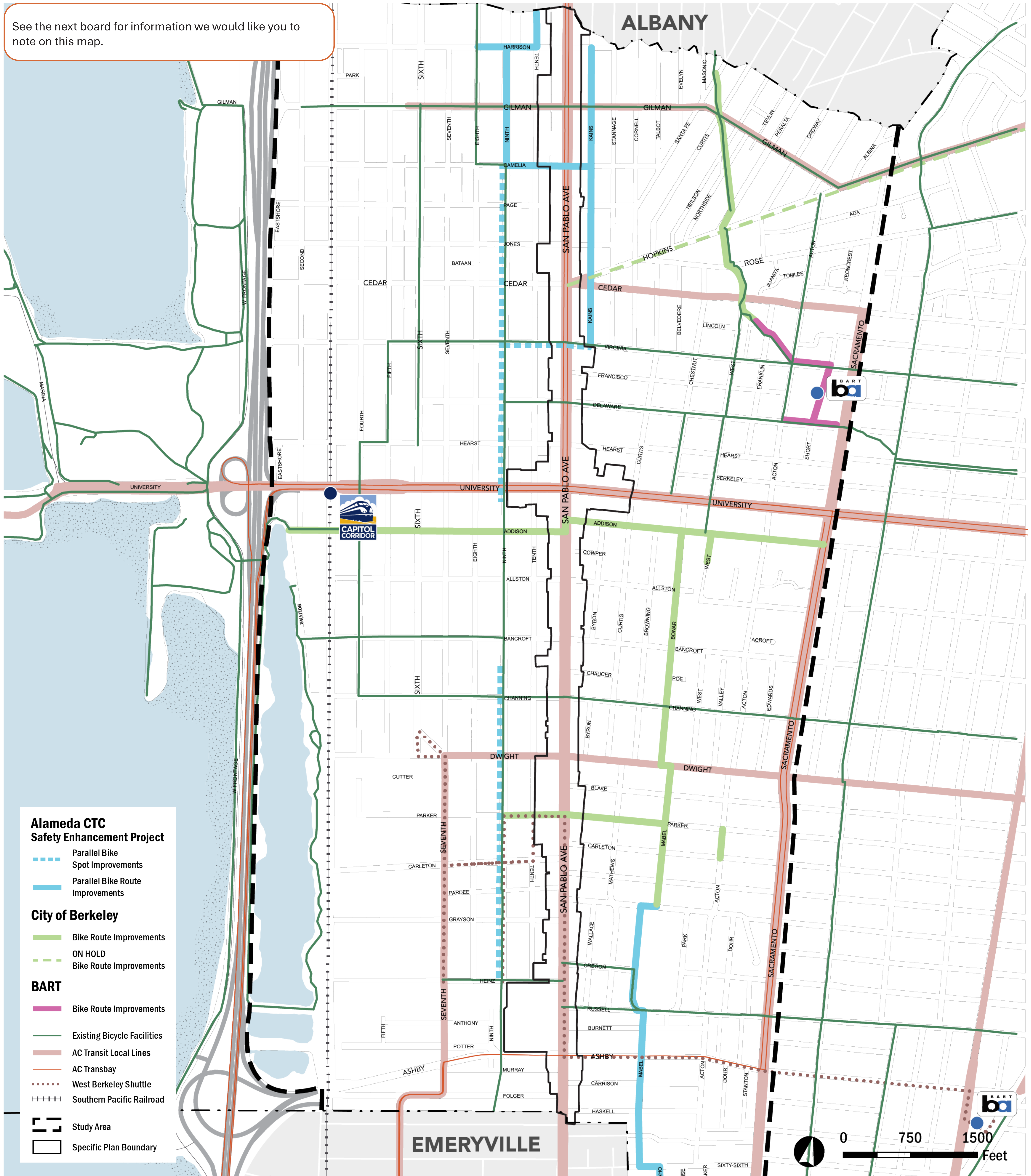
Sticky Notes



Ground Floor Use Map based on Land Use Codes
 Source: City of Berkeley, 2023. Alameda County Assessor's Office Parcel Data, 2023. CD+A, 2023.

Mobility

See the next board for information we would like you to note on this map.



Mobility

Transit First Policy Implementation Plan

- Identifies San Pablo Avenue as a **Primary Transit Route** and a corridor for future study of transit infrastructure needs based on the AC Transit Major Corridors Study (2016).
- Alameda CTC's San Pablo Corridor Projects: Lead project for current and future transit improvements along the corridor.
- Aligns with Berkeley's Climate Action Plan: Prioritize transit over single-occupant vehicles and reduce emission.



Vision Zero Action Plan

- Goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries in Berkeley by 2028.
- The plan prioritizes infrastructure within an Equity Priority Area, which includes much of the Study Area.
- Identifies San Pablo Avenue as a High-Injury Street, the streets in Berkeley with the most severe injury or fatality collisions between 2008 and 2018.
- 190 collisions resulting in injury or death happened on San Pablo Avenue between 2017 and 2021, 7% of the total such collisions in Berkeley.

Do you feel unsafe while traveling along San Pablo Ave using any of the following modes, and if so, where specifically?

1. **Choose** which of the modes makes you feel unsafe. Place a dot next to the mode on the right.
2. **Take dots** with the corresponding color from the table and **place it on the map**. You can also use additional sticky notes for more explanation.

Car

Bus/
Public Transport

Bicycle/ E-Scooter, and
other wheels

Walking

How do you travel to and from San Pablo Avenue?

Place a dot on every box that applies to you.

| Type of Transportation | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|--|-------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Car | | | | |
| Bus/ Public Transit | | | | |
| Bicycle/ E-Scooter, and other wheels | | | | |
| Walking | | | | |

Are there certain times of the day when you feel less safe?

Place a dot on the box that applies to you.

Daytime

Nighttime

Public Realm Assessment

Streetscape Conditions

Landscape

Street trees and landscaped median define the character of San Pablo Ave.



Sidewalk

The width of the street and the space needed for vehicles and the median constrain the public space of the sidewalk to a typical 13-foot-width along San Pablo Avenue.



Lighting

Existing lighting along the street primarily illuminates the roadway and intersections. Nighttime sidewalk lighting levels tend to be low between intersections, unless storefront uses, buildings, or pedestrian lights at bus stops illuminate the sidewalk.



Street Furniture

Street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles are almost exclusively at bus stops. There are some businesses that provide street side outdoor "café" seating.



Building and Site Frontages

Brick and Mortar Frontages

Many, but not all, brick-and-mortar frontages along the street have articulation, building form, and materials that create a visual relationship between storefront and sidewalk.



Art Along the Street

Painted storefronts with murals provide visual interest when the building does not allow for windows and can represent the culture and values of the local community.



New Mixed-Use Developments

While many of the new retail spaces remain vacant, some have contributed to the landscape character of the street by setting back the ground level of the building to provide additional sidewalk and space of landscape.



Vacancy

Vacant, abandoned, or poor maintained storefronts can create an environment that feels inactive and unsafe.



Activity and use of underused spaces

Some underutilized locations are used by food trucks with their patrons and outdoor seating activating the street.



Semi-Public Spaces

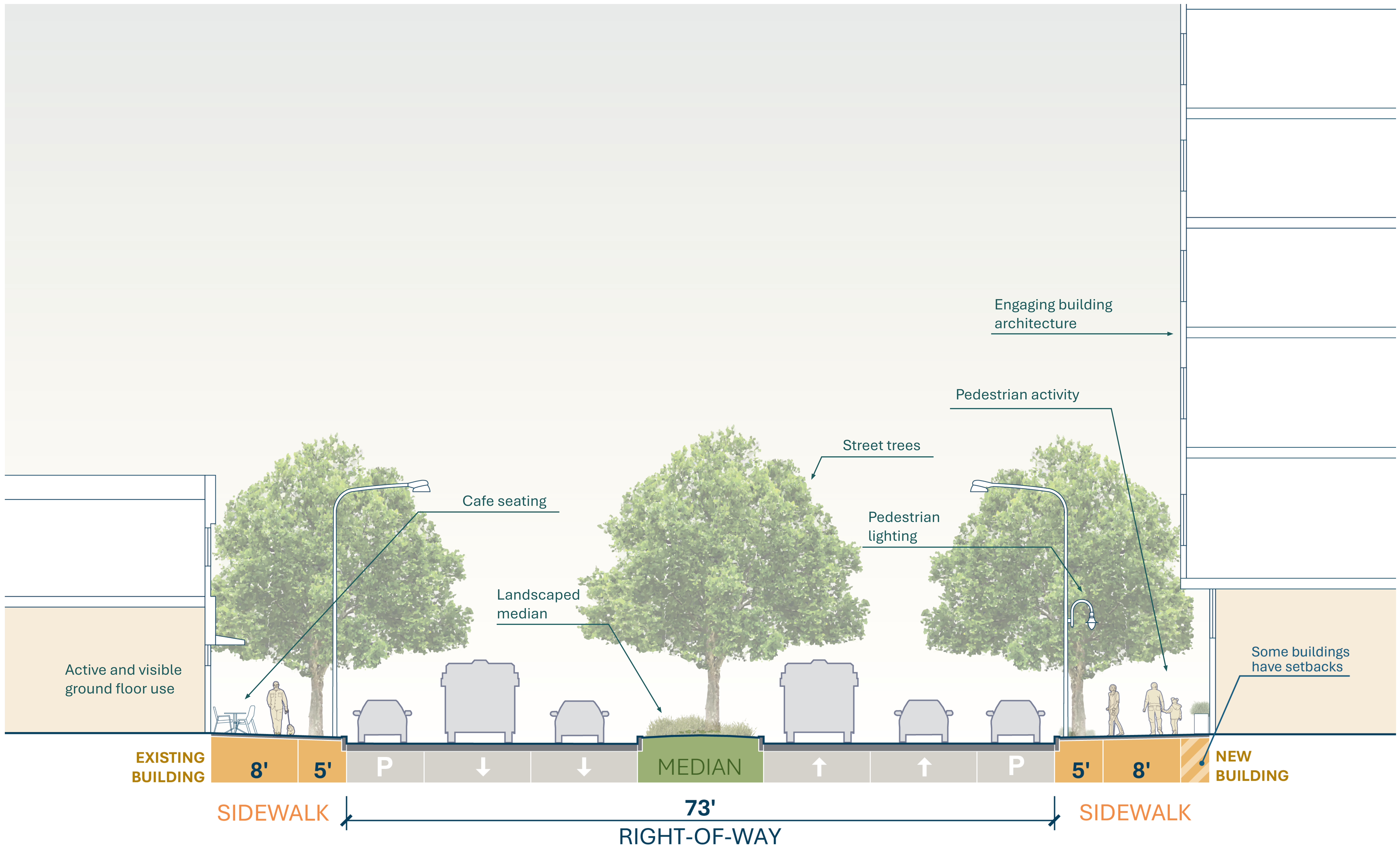
There are no public parks or plazas along San Pablo Avenue, but outdoor dining areas and cafe seating do provide semi-public spaces and life along the street.



Community Life

What are the elements you like about San Pablo's Public Realm today?

Place a sticky note and add your ideas below.



What are your suggestions to improve the Public Realm?

Place a sticky note and add your ideas below.

Ideas for public art

Sticky Notes

Ideas for active street frontages

Sticky Notes

Ideas for building facades (articulation)

Sticky Notes

Other Ideas

Sticky Notes

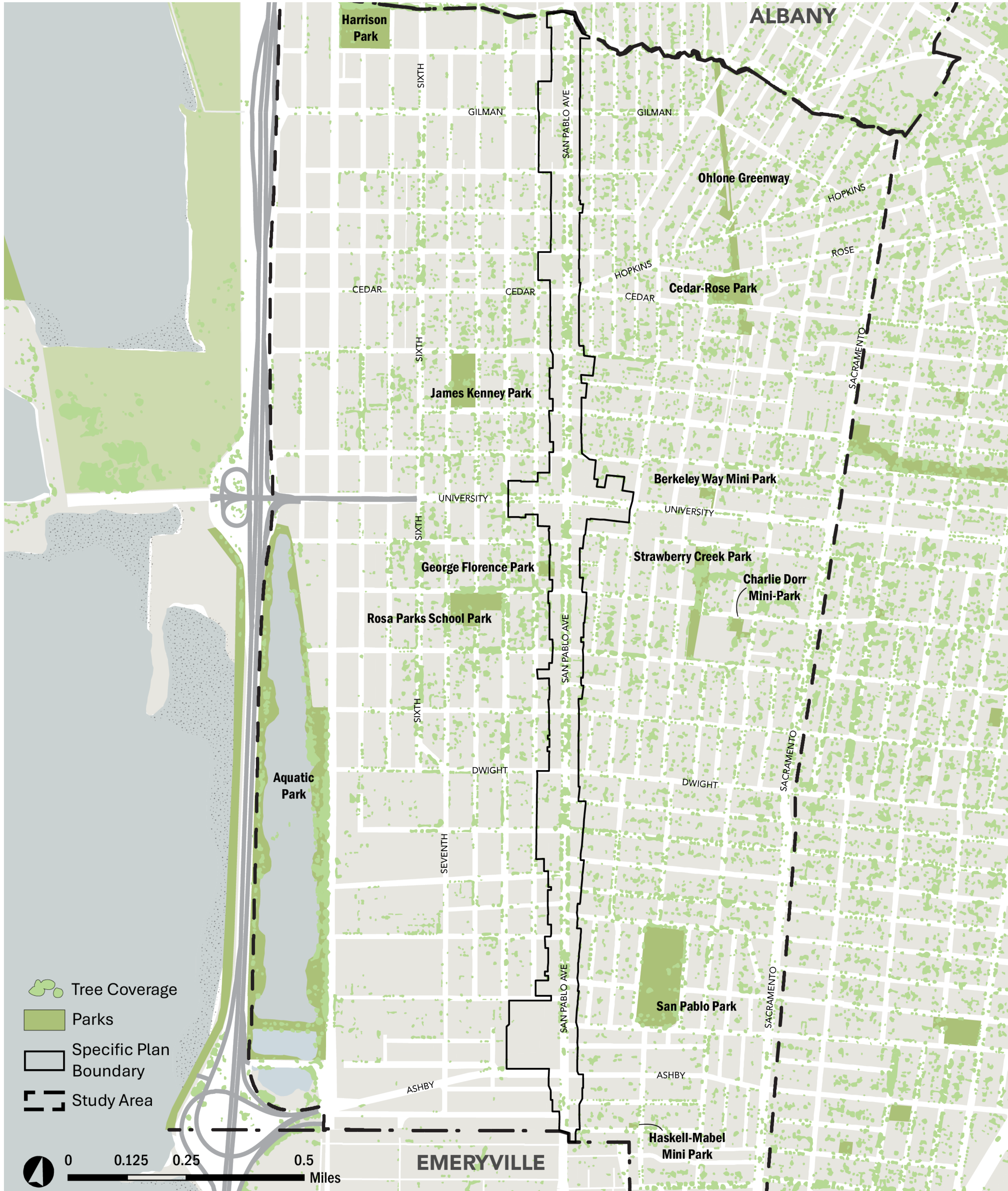
Public Open Space

Which Public Spaces do you use the most?

Place a dot on the map.

What types of activities do you do in the Public Spaces?

Place a sticky note below.



Sticky Notes

What Public Space improvements or activities would make San Pablo Ave more inviting?

Place a dot and add sticky notes with additional ideas.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|------------------|
| Places to sit with friends | | | Active recreation: Nearby running or biking trails. | | Community Events |
| | Farmer's market/ Night market | | | Art/ Performance Events | |

Future Vision of San Pablo Ave

Which of these aspects is most important to you in the future of San Pablo Ave?

Place a dot on your top 3. Add sticky notes with additional ideas below

Affordable Housing

Cultural Hub
(Community-based venue for art, performance & gatherings)

Accessible Transit

Improved Walkability

Benches and Seating

Preserve and Increase Landscape

Access to running and biking trails

Open Space

More Lighting at Night

Engaging and Active Building Frontages

Community Events
(Farmers' Markets, Night Markets, Parking Lot Concerts, etc.)

Add your own ideas with sticky notes.

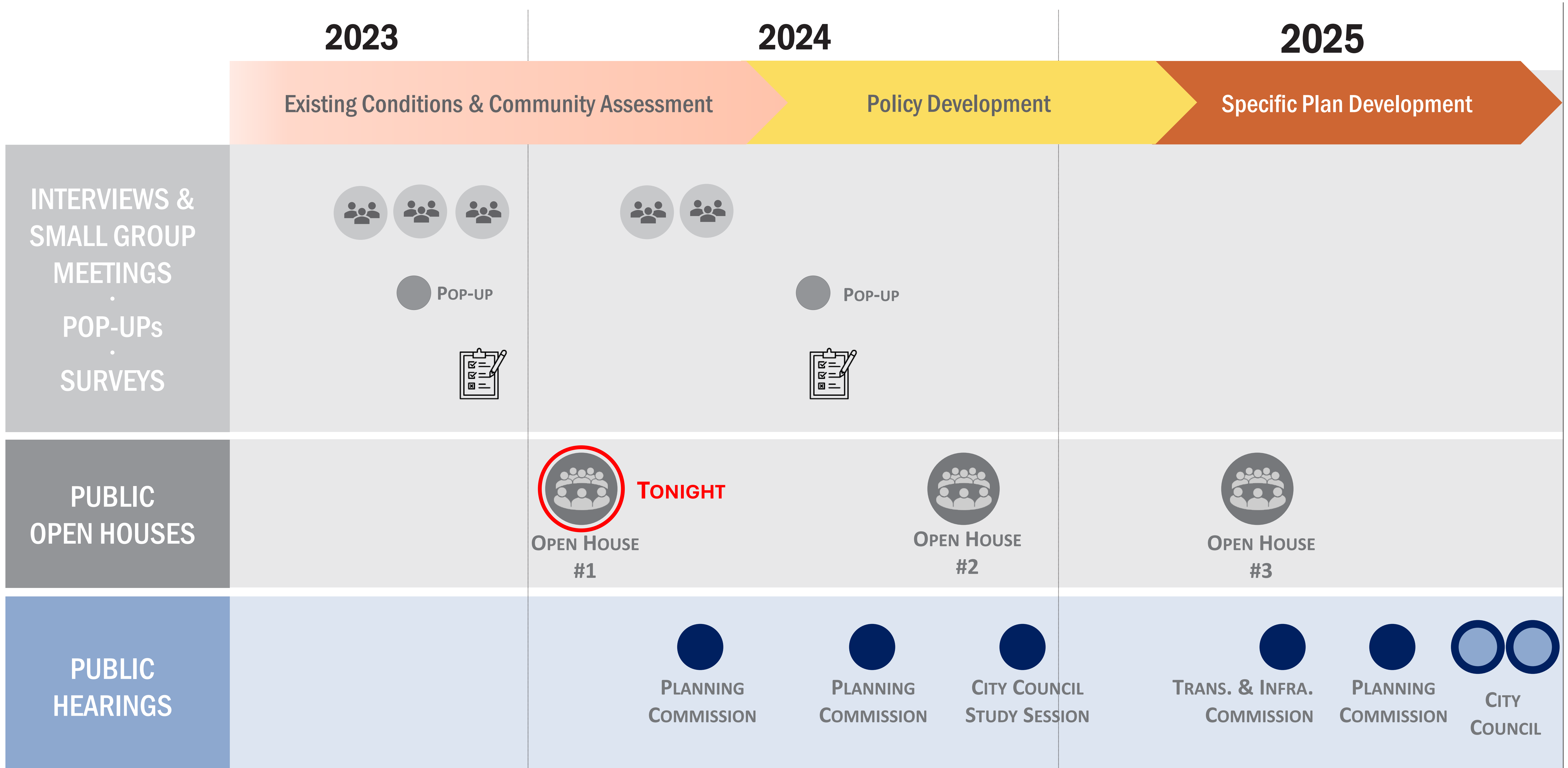
What is your future vision for San Pablo Avenue?

Place a sticky note with your vision here and/or add a dot to visions you support.

Sticky Notes

Next Steps

Project Schedule



Thank you, for participating at today's Public Open House!

Forgot to tell us something?

No problem!

Use the QR code to leave any suggestions, comments or questions.



Stay in touch!

And participate in future Engagement Events.

Visit the Project Website and subscribe to our newsletter.

For general ideas and feedback, email us:

SanPabloPlan@Berkeleyca.gov

