

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan: Targeted Survey Results

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INTRODUCTION

As part of a larger community engagement initiative for the [San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#) (Specific Plan)¹ InterEthnica conducted an intercept survey. Over weekdays and weekends, InterEthnica visited public areas and businesses on San Pablo Avenue, inviting pedestrians to complete the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan survey. Berkeley residents, students, business owners, and others shared their diverse thoughts and perspectives on the current and future states of San Pablo Avenue. The objective of the survey was to gather public input on the current status and future development of San Pablo Avenue, focusing on transportation, safety, business development, housing, and public space enhancements, while also collecting demographic data to ensure diverse community representation.

A total of 222 surveys were conducted via InterEthnica's fielding of passersby at and near the following locations: Berkeley Bowl West; REI; Corner of University Avenue and San Pablo Avenue; Cafe Leila; Mi Tierra; Cafe Chiave; East Bay Nursery. The full survey schedule can be found in Appendix C.

This summary documents the results for each question and includes an analysis of any written responses to open-ended questions. The executive summary remarks on the key, salient points gleaned from the results, with subsequent sections providing an analysis of the survey's key questions. A written description of the survey's methodology can be found in Appendix A, followed by the results of the survey's demographic in Appendix B. Finally, Appendix C documents the surveying schedule.

¹ The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan project will outline programs and policies to encourage and support diverse housing, commercial activities, and public amenities. The City of Berkeley in partnership with prime consultant [Community Design + Architecture](#) is working to adapt the plan to be inclusive of community and stakeholder input.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey findings yield valuable insights into the transportation preferences, reasons for visiting, and general perceptions of San Pablo Avenue from visitors. Notably, over 80% of respondents do not experience challenges getting to the corridor. The results show that over half of the responses noted the use of private cars to reach San Pablo Avenue, while other respondents relied on a mix of walking, public transportation, and various forms of micro-mobility.

Roughly half of the respondents live nearby, contributing to a strong local presence, while others frequent the area for work or business purposes. The data reveals a range of activities, with shopping in markets and retail (38%) and work-related visits (16%) being the most common, followed by outdoor activities and services. This diversity is further reflected in the respondents' wide range of ages and income levels, indicating San Pablo Avenue's broad appeal. 34% of respondents visit daily and 33% weekly, primarily for work or essential errands. Most visitors stay for durations of 1-3 hours.

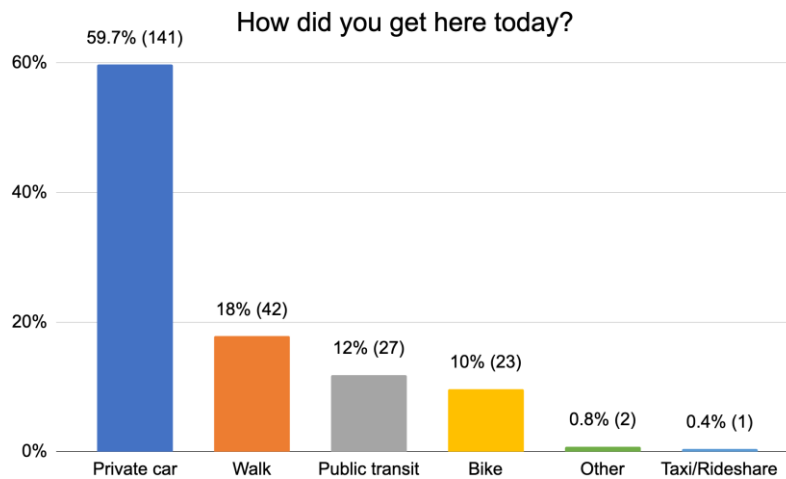
Safety concerns were expressed more predominantly during the evening (11%) and nighttime (16%) hours. The public's preference leans towards more parking facilities, particularly on-street parking, and amenities that enhance outdoor experiences, such as benches and farmers' markets.

When respondents were asked about their business and housing preferences, 68% of respondents showed an inclination towards introducing new businesses, especially in retail and dining, emphasizing maintaining the unique character of San Pablo Avenue. Respondents expressed a preference for more affordable housing, while opinions on homeownership and rental options are more divided.

The survey's findings could be key in guiding future strategies for San Pablo Avenue. There's a supported need to enhance transportation infrastructure, focusing on parking and traffic management while catering to pedestrians and micro-mobility users. Based on the survey results, developing community spaces and commercial establishments that reflect the area's character could further bolster its appeal. Improving safety, particularly during nighttime hours, and prioritizing affordable housing would also support respondents' view of San Pablo Avenue.

GETTING TO SAN PABLO

When asked about their modes of travel to and from San Pablo Avenue, more than half of respondents used private cars to get to San Pablo Avenue (141), 42 respondents walked, 27 took public transportation, 25 respondents had pedaled, wheeled, or scootered, and one respondent used a taxi or rideshare service. Three of those who arrived in private cars mentioned that they carpooled, while the rest had driven themselves to San Pablo Avenue.²



Although most respondents, 82.9% (184 respondents), reportedly faced no difficulties getting to San Pablo Avenue, 17.1% (38 respondents) did cite traffic and congestion as their challenge. Among other issues noted were pedestrian danger, disruption from construction, parking challenges, and transit delays that prevent a smooth trip to San Pablo Avenue.

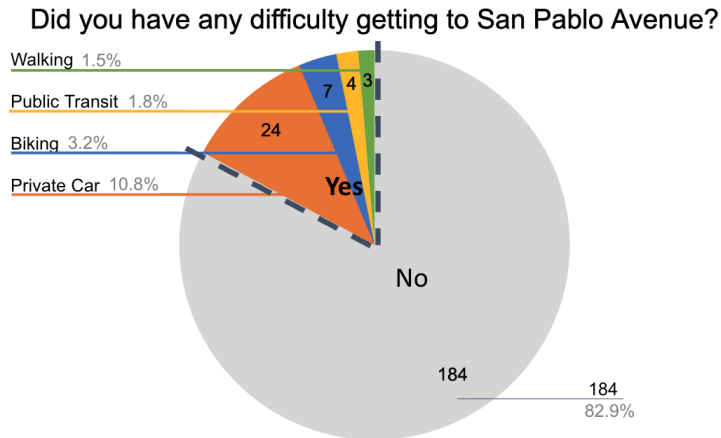
Of those 38 respondents who cited difficulty getting to San Pablo Avenue, 34 were willing to specify their challenges, including:

- 19 respondents experienced traffic due to reduced car lanes.
- Five respondents who had walked or biked to the area said they felt unsafe crossing intersections and around traffic.
- Four respondents cited “construction” as their central challenge.
- Three drivers also noted difficulties finding a place to park their vehicles.
- Other comments include reports of vehicles double-parked in the street, blocking the lanes, delays with their bus on the day they were surveyed, and difficulties with carpooling or ride-sharing to get to San Pablo Avenue.

² This survey question was multiple select, allowing respondents to mark all modes of transportation they used in order to get to San Pablo Avenue. This enabled the total percentage to exceed 100%.

Internal

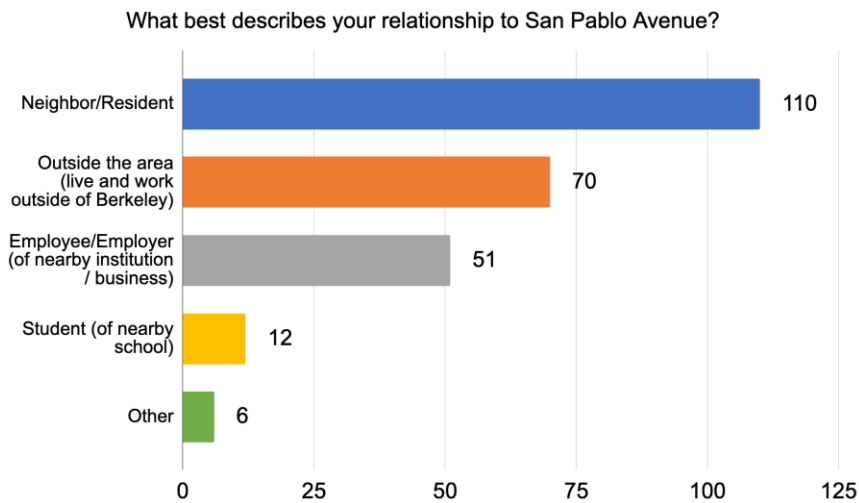
Below are the numbers of respondents who expressed challenges getting to San Pablo Avenue, broken down by mode of transportation:



The results of this question infer that most people do not experience difficulties getting to San Pablo Avenue. However, difficulty getting to San Pablo Ave was experienced disproportionately: 7 of 23 (30%) of those who biked cited difficulty, compared to 24 of 141 (17%) of those who took private car, 4 of 27 (14%) of those who took public transit, and 3 of 42 (7%) of those who walked. Those who use alternative modes of transit noted no specific or unique features to change along the corridor but cited typical roadway-related challenges.

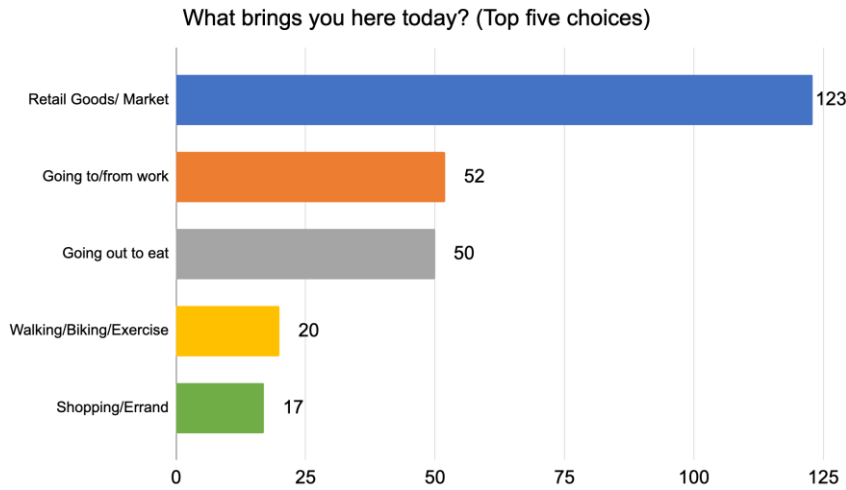
WHY PEOPLE VISIT SAN PABLO AVE

According to the survey results, 110 respondents live nearby, 70 responses came from outside the area, and 51 of the respondents work or own businesses on San Pablo Avenue. Those who answered “other” elaborated on their relationship to San Pablo in their responses, noting various activities, such as yoga, shopping, and volunteering at Rosa Parks. Of those who came from outside the area, six indicated that they lived in Oakland.



These results demonstrate that San Pablo Avenue is a regional corridor with a mix of respondents living inside and visiting from outside the area.

Internal



On the days they took the survey, 123 respondents regarded shopping in markets and in retail, 52 responses highlighted going to and from work or taking a break from their workday³, and 37 responses concerned walking, biking, and exercising. Respondents also mentioned the following:

- Shopping (19)
- Seeking a service (13)
- Maintaining their cars and homes (9)
- Attending an event (2)
- Just passing through (5)

Other outliers not listed on the survey included:

- Medical appointments (2)
- Recreational activities (2)
- Visiting friends (4)
- Volunteering (1)
- School (2)
- Unspecified (1)

“meeting a friend for coffee”

“park with my son”

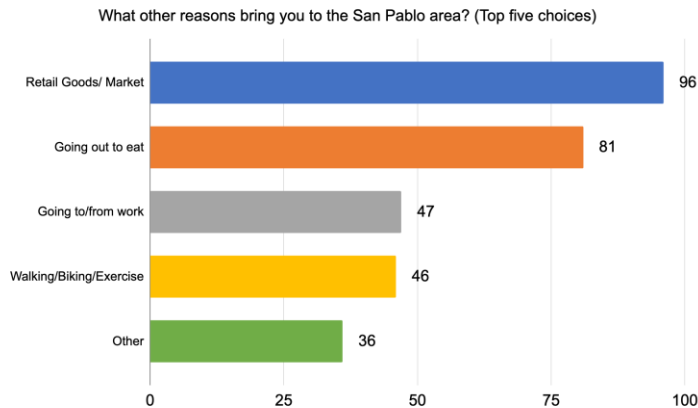
³ InterEthnica conducted survey outreach at businesses where staff expressed curiosity and enthusiasm for the survey.

TABLE 1. Specified Answers to "What brings you here today?"

Cafes and Restaurants	Markets and Food Vendors	Retail and Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café • Café Chiave • Café Leila • Café Colucci • Lavender Bakery • Burma Superstar Oakland • Babette • Memorial lunch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkeley Bowl/Berkeley Bowl West • Acme Bread • East Bay Nursery • Grocery • Liquor store • Mi Tierra • San Pablo Nursery • Tokyo Fish Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pot store • Orchard Hardware • Eco Store • Earth Company • REI • Walgreens

These results provide insights into the various reasons respondents visited San Pablo Avenue. The majority of responses reflected markets and retail. A substantial portion of respondents also work there. Lastly, many responses mentioned traveling to or from a park or exercising on San Pablo Avenue.

Ninety-six of the responses indicate that people usually come to San Pablo Avenue for retail goods and markets, 81 note they go out to eat, and 47 mentioned they commute to and from work. Another 46 responses cited walking, biking, and exercising on the corridor. Thirty-two responses were for travel to and from an open space or park, 23 for auto maintenance, and 22 for retail or commercial service. Ten responses relate to people walking their dogs, 9 for home improvement, and eight for a cultural event or performance.



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Commented [2R1]: Up until now the report uses "respondents" even in multi-select questions. Now the report is saying responses. My highlight was to stay consistent throughout the entire report. If using respondents and responses – respondents should correspond to a 1 to 1 answer while responses should reflect multiselect. I suggest just using respondents throughout since the majority of the report is written as such.

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When asked to specify their answers, respondents provided their favorite places on San Pablo Avenue in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2. Specified Answers to "What other reasons brings you to San Pablo Area?"

Retail Goods/ Market	Retail Service / Commercial	Going out to eat	Cultural Event/Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berkeley Bowl/Berkeley Bowl West East Bay Nursery grocery/shopping Acme Bread Rainbow Grocery Mi Tierra 7-11 Whole Foods Kermit Lynch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REI Kaiser Hair salon Lhasa Karnak Herb Company Mazamitla Clinic Eco Store Ecology Center candle store post office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaumenkitzel La Marcha Cafe Leila Gourmet Ghetto States Coffee Blue Willow Teaspot Cafe Belmo Paradise Park Cafe Cafe Chiave Anchalee Thai Cuisine Japanese Colombian Arizmendi pizza place Restaurants, bakeries, cafes McDonalds Rainbow Donuts Mexican restaurant Bua Thai Pho Luca Mi Patio Ranchito Babette Bartavelle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UC Theater Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center Kala Art Institute

36 respondents (16%) indicated that they typically come to San Pablo Avenue for reasons not included in the survey. Similar to what brought them there on the day of the survey, respondents cited medical appointments (5), visiting friends and family (6), and going to and from school (2). Respondents also said that they were there for public transportation (2) and because they lived in the area. Less than 1% of respondents skipped the question (19).

35% of respondents (78) said they usually come to San Pablo Avenue to exercise or to go to a park, compared to the 15% who were doing so on the day of the survey (34).

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Furthermore, 36% of respondents (81) were going out to eat on the day they were surveyed, compared to the 26% of respondents (50) who said they generally come to San Pablo to eat.

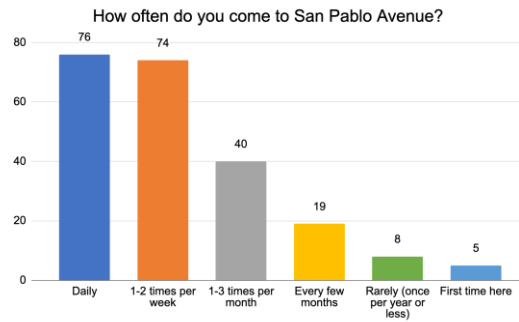
VISIT FREQUENCY & TIMING

One-third, or 34% of respondents (76), visit the area daily, and 33% (74) visit 1-2 times a week. 18% visit 1-3 times a month (40). Less than 1% of respondents visit every few months (19), a few times a year (8), and were visiting for the first time (5).

Results show that 68% of respondents are daily and weekly visitors.

The majority, 71% of responses answered that they visit San Pablo Avenue during the mornings (45%, 100) and afternoons (47%, 104). In comparison, 22% of responses come to the area in the evenings (49), and 15% at night (33). 51% of responses spend time on San Pablo Avenue during the week (161), slightly more than the 68% of responses who visit on the weekends⁴ (151).

Survey results indicate that people spend significantly more time on San Pablo Avenue during the day, as opposed to evenings and nighttime.



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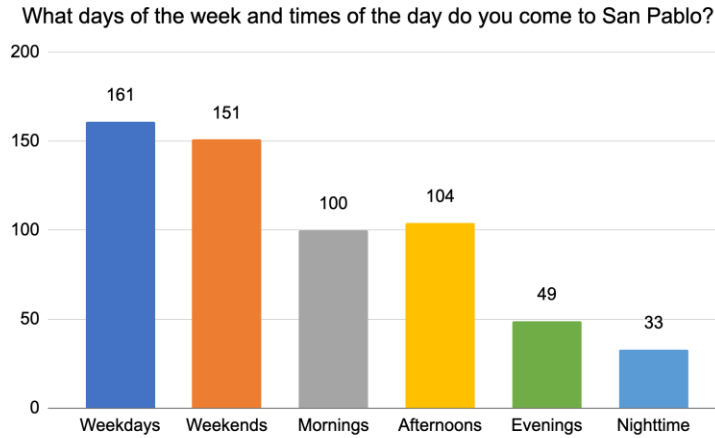
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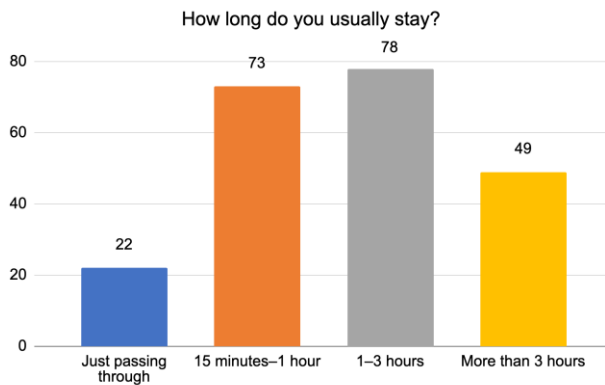
Commented [MA9R8]: The survey did not define the timeframe for "morning," "afternoon," etc.

⁴ This survey question was multiple select, allowing respondents to mark when and how often they visit San Pablo Avenue. This enabled the total percentage to exceed 100%.

Internal



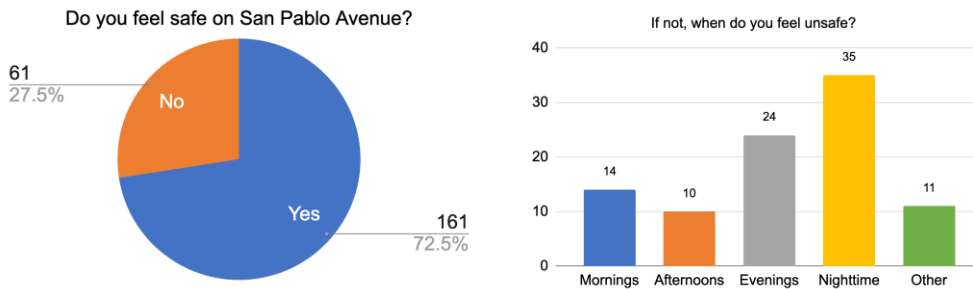
35% of respondents (78) remain in the area for 1-3 hours. 33% of respondents (73) also stop by the area for 15-60 minutes. 22% stay in the area for more than 3 hours (49). 10% of respondents "just passthrough" San Pablo Avenue (22). 35% of respondents (78) remain in the area for 1-3 hours. 33% of respondents (73) also stop by the area for 15-60 minutes. 22% stay in the area for more than 3 hours (49). 10% of respondents "just passthrough" San Pablo Avenue (22).



SAFETY

When asked about safety, 28% of respondents (61) do not always feel safe on San Pablo Avenue. Of those who feel unsafe, 37% (35) feel unsafe during the nighttime, 26% (24) during the evening, 15% (14) during the morning, 12% (11) marked “other”, and 11% (10) in the afternoon. 16% of respondents (35) clarified that they do not feel safe at night, while 11% also said they don't feel safe in the evening.

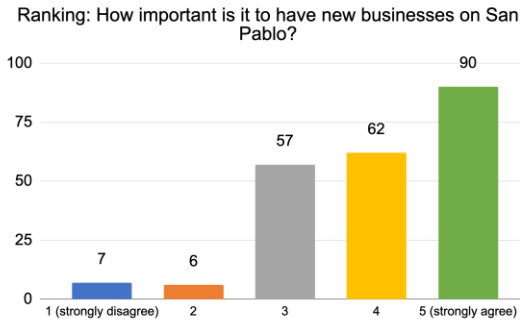
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These results make evident that evenings and nighttime spur the most safety concerns. Respondents voluntarily informed surveyors what contributes to feeling unsafe. They noted that San Pablo Avenue is not a safe corridor for walking or biking (5), cited traffic and reckless driving (2), asked for a stronger police presence (1), or were unsure what their safety concerns were (3).

PREFERENCES: BUSINESS & HOUSING

Respondents agree that new businesses along San Pablo Avenue are important. 41% of respondents believed new businesses are extremely important (90), 28% thought they are considerably important (62), 26% expressed a neutral stance (57), and 6% did not support new businesses (13).



Respondents specified what types of new businesses they would like to see⁵.

- 55% of responses would like to see new retail businesses (121)
- 51% hope for new restaurants (114)
- 34% want to see more entertainment and recreation (75)
- 29% would like new services (64)
- 18% hope for retail banks and financial services (40)
- 17% would like new medical offices (38)
- 14% called for professional offices (30)
- 12% would like home improvement businesses (27)
- 10% want new places for vehicle repairs and services (24)

More responses marked retail, restaurants, entertainment and recreation, and services, compared to banks, offices, and services for vehicles and homes. Other ideas not included on the survey included grocery stores, including supermarkets and ethnic markets (3), public transit and parking (3), drugstores/pharmacies (1), and mom-and-pop shops (2).

Respondents also spoke to the desire to preserve San Pablo Avenue's unique character and diversity while revitalizing and energizing the area. *"I ask that we don't perpetuate the myth that retail and consumer spending will be what improves quality of life,"* one respondent declared on her way to Mi Tierra. *"I actually don't care as long as store fronts are filled, and there's activity at all hours"* another respondent wrote when asked what kinds of new businesses they would like to see in the area.

"I ask that we don't perpetuate the myth that retail and consumer spending will be what improves quality of life"

"I actually don't care as long as store fronts are filled, and there's activity at all hours"

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⁵ This survey question was multiple select, allowing respondents to mark all new businesses they would like to see on San Pablo Avenue. This enabled the total percentage to exceed 100%.

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Overall, respondents would like to see a mix of businesses that balance culture and community, such as cafes and clubs, and grocery stores. This would more thoroughly meet the needs of those who visit the area and encourage more foot traffic overall.

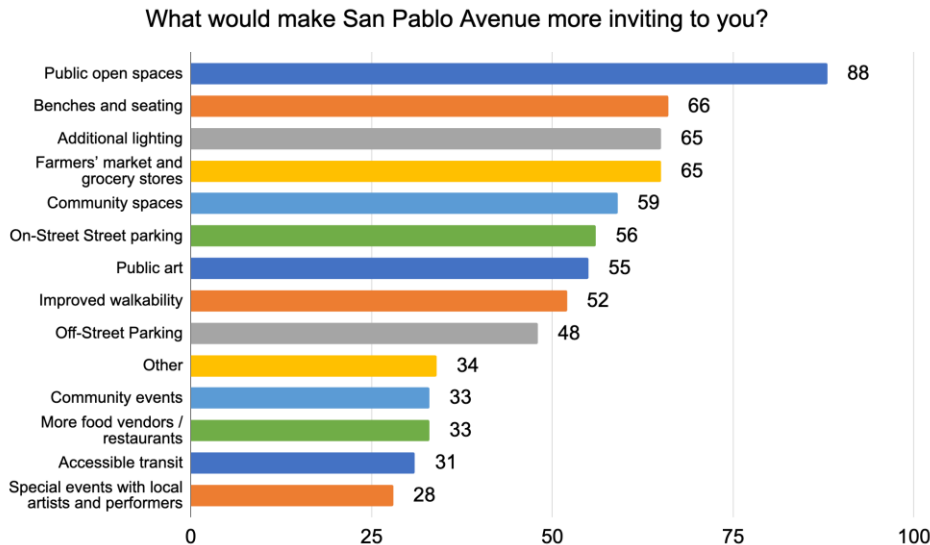
When given the opportunity to detail what would make San Pablo Avenue more inviting⁶, 40% of responses called for public open spaces (88), 30% for benches and seating (66), and 29% each for additional lighting and farmers markets (65). 27% of responses asked for community spaces (59), 25% on-street parking (56), 25% public art (55), 23% improved walkability (52), and 22% off-street parking. Other topics were as follows:

- 15% of responses mentioned community events (33)
- 15% of responses called for more food vendors and restaurants (33)
- 14% vouched for accessible transit (31)
- 13% are drawn to the idea of special events with local artists and performers (28)

Respondents' miscellaneous comments posed mixed opinions on parking, with some wanting more affordable parking, and others strongly opposing additional parking. Additionally, respondents favored multiple-choice options centered around the outdoors, such as farmers markets, benches, and public open spaces.

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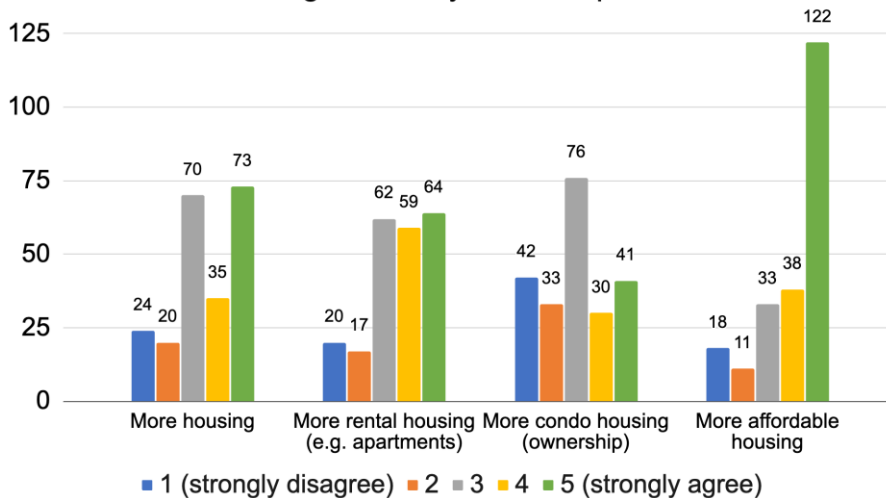
⁶ This survey question was multiple select, allowing respondents to mark all items they feel would make San Pablo Avenue more inviting. This enabled the total percentage to exceed 100%.

Within the “other: please specify” category, respondents asked for enhanced scenery and safety. They asked for less traffic and congestion (7), cleanliness, public art, and trees (4), street banners and signs (2), more security (2), and improved biking infrastructure (8).

Respondents would like to preserve existing food vendors and see new restaurants. One respondent would like more mom-and-pop shops, and two said that they like San Pablo Avenue the way it is currently. Respondents did not particularly express interest in community events and special events.

Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, how much they disagree or agree with more housing, more rental housing (e.g. apartments), more condo housing (ownership), and more affordable housing along San Pablo. Of the responses, 55% (122) were strongly in favor of more affordable housing, and 33% (73) strongly supported an increase in housing overall. A neutral stance on more housing overall was held by 32% (70). Regarding new housing ownership, 19% (42) were strongly opposed, whereas 19% were strongly in favor (41). In terms of new rental housing, 55% (123) supported an increase, with 29% strongly in favor of more rental housing (64), while 16% (37) opposed an increase, with 9% (20) strongly opposed and 28% (62) neutral.

Ranking: A side by side comparison



The survey results imply that respondents have mixed opinions about housing ownership, but support housing overall, particularly affordable housing and rental housing.

Internal

CONCLUSION

The majority of respondents reported that they get to San Pablo Avenue by car, with notable concerns about traffic. The survey highlighted varied reasons for visiting the area, including shopping, work, and recreation. The survey also revealed that most people on San Pablo Avenue visit every day, with many others visiting every week. Finally, safety concerns were reported to arise in the evenings and at nighttime. Given these survey responses, future engagement may seek public clarification on preferred transit infrastructure, ways to make businesses more accessible, specific safety measures, and housing features, as well as collect public feedback on development plans and policies regarding the San Pablo Specific Plan.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Methodology

Survey Questionnaire Development and Administration: The survey questionnaire was a joint effort between the Specific Plan team and consultants, refined through several feedback rounds to meet the City of Berkeley's specific requirements. Conducted by InterEthnica, the survey was designed to be completed in under 10 minutes. Participants were incentivized with \$10 gift card stipends, which all but two respondents accepted and received.

Fieldwork Approach: Conducted by InterEthnica's staff with certificates of proficiency in research, including an onsite cultural anthropologist, a total of 222 in-person interviews were carried out at a variety of locations along San Pablo Avenue. These locations, chosen by the project team, were selected to represent a broad spectrum of users, with interviews conducted on weekdays and weekends from November 2 - 12, 2023.

Surveyor Engagement and Protocol: InterEthnica requested and received an authorization letter and press contact information from the City for the surveyors to utilize. Bilingual staff administered surveys with the capabilities to conduct surveys in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and French⁷. The surveys, conducted verbally, were recorded on paper, and subsequently uploaded to an online data portal for further cleaning and analysis.

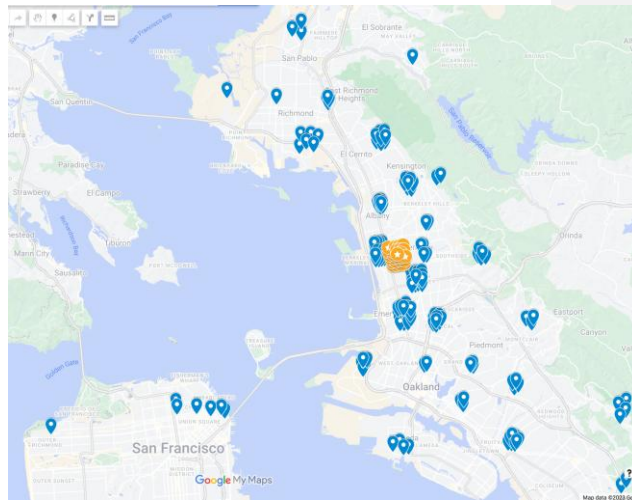
Data Processing: After data entry into the online portal, InterEthnica performed a random spot check of surveys to ensure the data entered was done accurately. InterEthnica analysts then coded the open-ended responses for analysis. Responses categorized under the "other" option in survey questions were reviewed and, if applicable, reclassified under existing multiple-choice options. "Other" response totals were then re-tallied, and all open-ended responses were thematically coded to enrich the report's insights.

⁷ Survey outreach staff were bilingual and trilingual. There was no specific inclination about the languages required for survey outreach on San Pablo Avenue.

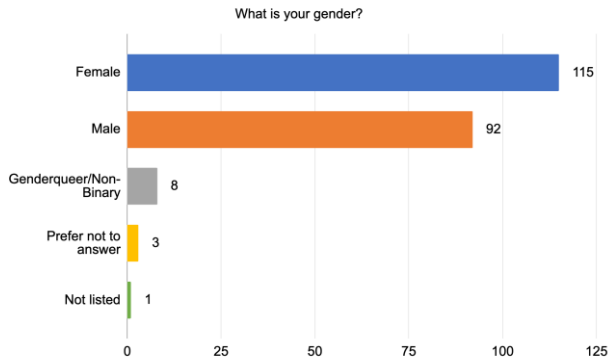
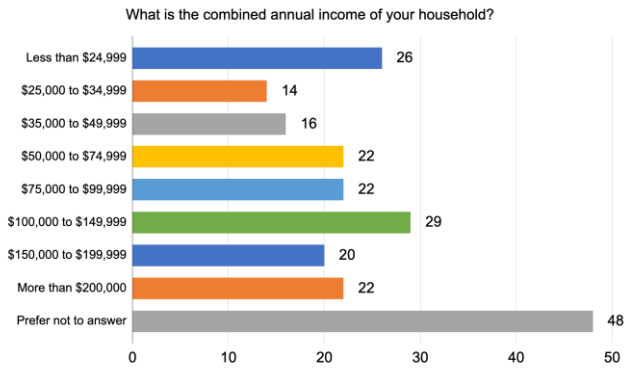
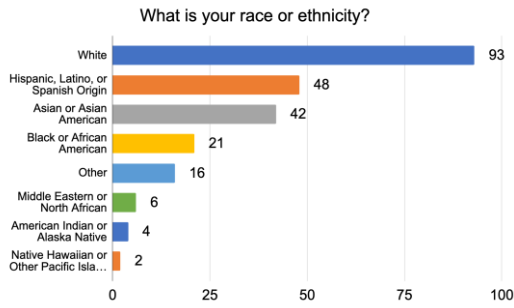
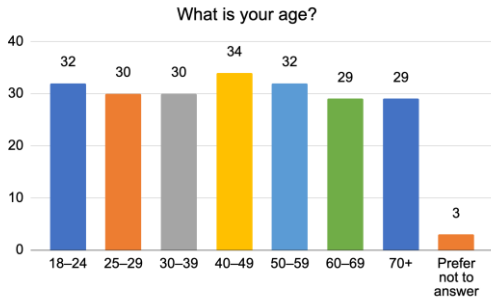
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Appendix B: Demographics

Geographic Reach: This map shows the zip codes represented in the area. Other respondents came from outside the area from places like Newark, Pinole, Rodeo, San Leandro, Santa Clara, San Jose, and Sacramento.



Internal



Internal

Appendix C: Surveying Schedule

DATE	TIMES	LOCATION
11/2/2023	10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Mi Tierra
11/2/2023	10:30 am - 12:00 pm	University Ave & San Pablo Ave
11/2/2023	12:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Mi Tierra
11/2/2023	12:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Along San Pablo Ave between University Ave and Delaware Street & at Cafe Leila
11/5/2023	10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Mi Tierra San Pablo Ave & Addison
11/5/2023	12:00 pm - 3:30 pm	REI/ Walgreens/ Chipotle Area
11/7/2023	10:30 am - 1:00 pm	Cafe Chiave, Ecocenter, San Pablo Ave between Dwight and Parker St
11/7/2023	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm	East Bay Nursery
11/12/2023	10:30 am - 2:30 pm	Berkeley Bowl West