

ATTACHMENT 3

SAN PABLO AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN DESIGN STANDARDS DOCUMENT



San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Design Standards Document

- Final Draft -

Plan Acknowledgments

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Please note: Photographs of buildings in this document do not imply full compliance with the standards herein.

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Introduction

Purpose and Applicability

The vision of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is to support diverse housing options, strengthen new and existing businesses, enhance public amenities, and improve connections between the Specific Plan Area and surrounding neighborhoods and destinations.

To work towards that vision, the Specific Plan establishes community-based, context-sensitive regulations and policies.

The intent of the San Pablo Avenue Design Standards (Design Standards Document) is to work in coordination with the policies of the Specific Plan to implement its vision. The Design Standards Document provides a clear set of objective standards while allowing flexibility and creativity in design. In addition to the standards contained in the *Zoning Ordinance*, projects must comply with the Design Standards Document.

The Design Standards Document apply within the Specific Plan Area shown in Figure 1. The area is generally comprised of parcels fronting San Pablo Avenue within the city limits, as well as some adjacent parcels in areas that have the potential to support new mixed-use development.

The Design Standards Document applies to new construction and alterations to existing buildings, with the exception of automotive uses on automotive sites.

Projects subject to the Design Standards Document are exempt from Design Review.

Revisions

The Planning Director may make minor clarification, corrections or technical changes to the text, figures and photos of the Design Standards Document.

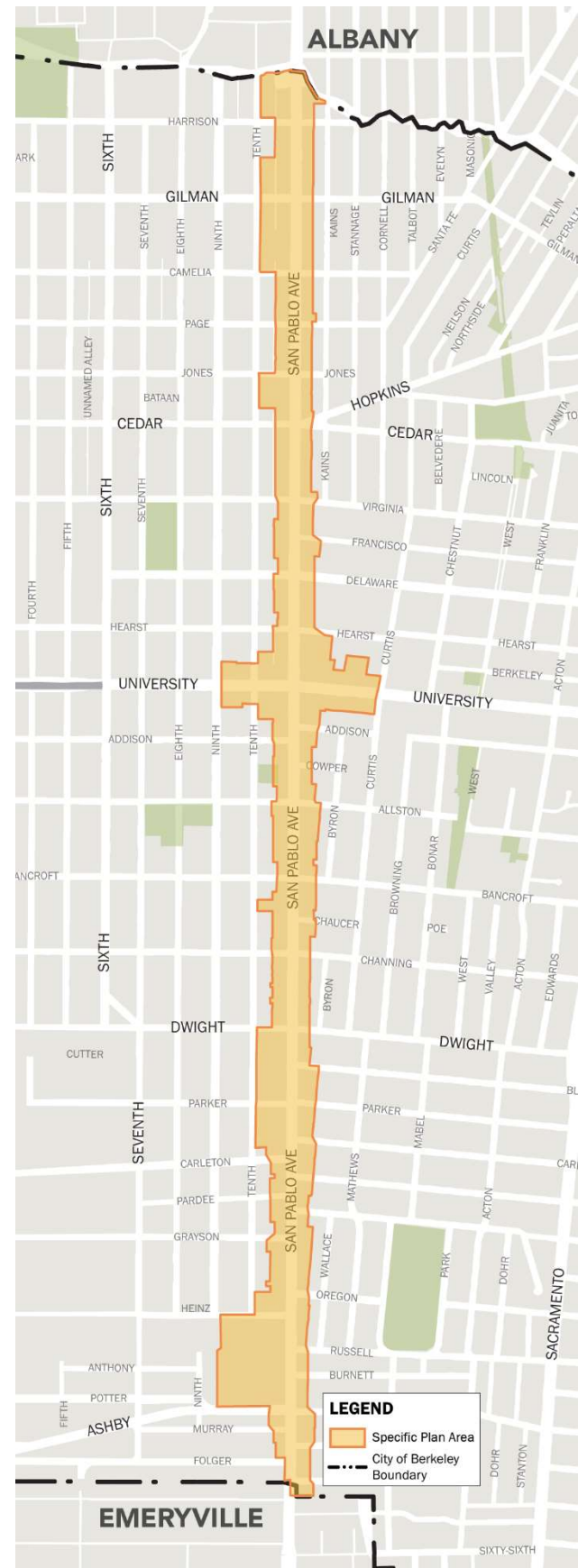


Figure 1. Map of Specific Plan Area
Data from City of Berkeley, Alameda CTC, 2025

Guiding Principles

The design standards were developed based on the Specific Plan’s vision of San Pablo Avenue as a mixed-use district that is integrated with the neighborhoods and employment areas that surround it, and that continues to serve Berkeley’s broad range of community members and support citywide and regional needs. To achieve that vision, the Specific Plan provides several guiding principles that underpin the design standards in this document:



Increase the Diversity and Supply of Housing

- ★ Revise Housing Development Regulations
- ★ Encourage Engaging Buildings and Site Frontages



Increase Business Activity to Support a Thriving Community

- ★ Reduce Vacancy of Ground Floor Space
- ★ Create Identifiable Commercial Areas with Stronger Business Presence



Enhance Interaction Between Public and Private Spaces

- ★ Increase Public Open Space and Community Gathering Spaces



Enhance Local and Citywide Access

- ★ Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Access

How to Use the Standards

The standards in this document are regulatory and compliance is mandatory. These standards are required in addition to the development standards in the *Zoning Ordinance* (BMC Title 23). This document refers to any related regulations in the *Zoning Ordinance*, such as development standards.

Document Structure

The Design Standards Document are organized into five sections:

1. **Introduction.** Describes the purpose and applicability of the Design Standards Document, the guiding principles, and the administrative process to revise them.
2. **Site Design.** Provides standards for the arrangement of activities on the site, primarily in relation to the adjacent public space.
3. **Building Design.** Provides architectural standards, including façade modulation and articulation, windows, colors and materials, roofs, and parking garages.
4. **Pedestrian-Level Design.** Provides standards primarily at the ground-floor that relate to the building’s interaction with sidewalks, adjacent buildings, and open space.
5. **Glossary.** Defines technical terms not otherwise included in the *Zoning Ordinance* (BMC Title 23).

Standard Structure

Each standard is assigned a specific number and is organized into the following format:

- **Number and Title.** Topic area
- **Purpose Statement.** Ties standard to the guiding principles of the Specific Plan.
- **Applicability.** Describes project types that must comply with the standard.
- **Standard.** Describes the design requirement.
- **Specific Plan Policy Reference.** Connects the standard to the overall Specific Plan policy direction.
- **Recommendations.** Some standards include optional design recommendations.

Exceptions to the Standards

A project applicant may request an exception to any design standard. The request must be made in writing as part of a Zoning Project Application for a proposed project. The application for an exception must contain a detailed description of the design standard that is requested to be waived; how the physical constraints or other unique situations of the project site make it infeasible to comply with the design standard; how the proposed project meets the design standard at issue to the extent feasible; and how the request meets each exception requirement.

The Design Review Committee shall consider the request and information submitted by the applicant and make a recommendation to the decision-maker (Zoning

Adjustments Board or City Council) regarding certain findings to approve or deny the request. The decision-maker may only grant an exception if **all** the following findings are made:

1. There is a physical constraint or unique situation that:
 - a. Is not created by the project applicant or property owner; and
 - b. Is not caused by financial or economic constraints.
2. Approving the exception will not create a safety hazard in which the subject property is located.
3. The proposed project meets the intent of the design standard to the extent physically feasible.



Design Standards

There are three types of Design Standards described below: Site Design, Building Design, and Pedestrian-Level Design.

1. Site Design

1.1 Pedestrian Access

1.1.1 Pedestrian Access: Through-Lots

Purpose Statement: To ensure pedestrian comfort, security, and safety within new development.

Applicability: This standard applies to any new development located on a site with street frontages on opposite sides of a block.

Standard: Building entries shall be located on both frontages of the site.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

Recommendations:

Projects that contain multiple buildings should provide a mid-block passage (see Standard 3.3.4 Mid-Block Passage) to serve as a form of pedestrian access between multiple buildings on the same site.

1.1.2 Pedestrian Access: Multiple Buildings

Purpose Statement: To ensure pedestrian comfort, security, and safety.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development site that contains multiple buildings.

Standards:

- A. **Internal Connections.** Provide a system of pedestrian walkways that connects all buildings on a site to all of the following: (1) each building on the site; (2) on-site bicycle parking areas; (3) on-site automobile parking areas; (4) on-site open space areas; (5) pedestrian amenities; and (6) the publicly accessible pedestrian circulation network outside of the development site. See example Figure 2.
- B. **Illumination.** Provide pedestrian-oriented lighting along onsite pathways at minimum intervals of every 40 feet.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

1.1.3 On-Site Walkways

Purpose Statement: To ensure pedestrian comfort, security, and safety within new development.

Applicability: Any walkway that crosses private publicly accessible streets, parking areas, loading areas, or other vehicular routes within a development site. See example Figure 3.

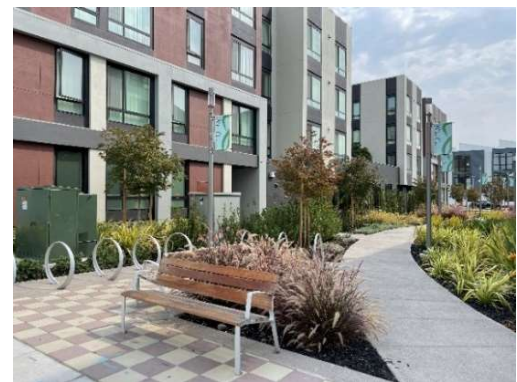


Figure 2. Pedestrian Access Paths
Between Buildings within the Lot . Photo
by AWP

Standard: Walkways shall be clearly identifiable through the use of at least one or more of the following:

1. Grade change (raised); or
2. Change in at least one of the following: paving material, color, striping, or bollards.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

1.2 Parking and Vehicular Access

Purpose Statement: To support walking and sustain a diverse, active and safe public realm.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development.

Standards:

- A. **Parking Access Hierarchy.** Parking and service area access shall be located from the following list, in order of preference:
 1. From an alley;
 2. In the absence of an existing or proposed alley, access shall be from a driveway shared with a property abutting the development site;
 3. In the absence of a shared driveway, access shall be from a side-street; or
 4. In the absence of a side-street, access shall be from a curb cut/driveway along the primary street frontage.
- B. **Parking Location.**
 1. Parking areas shall be located behind, within, or underneath buildings, with the exception of curb-side pickup/drop-off areas and ADA-compliant spaces.
 2. On sites with more than one street frontage, parking areas located along the primary street frontage are prohibited.
 3. No more than 30 feet of the linear primary street frontage along San Pablo Avenue, Gilman Street, Cedar Street, Hopkins Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, or Ashby Avenue shall be devoted to parking garages (see Figure 4) and openings, service, and loading entries.
- C. **Service Entries.** Service entries shall be located on the non-primary street frontage (unless all frontages are primary).

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

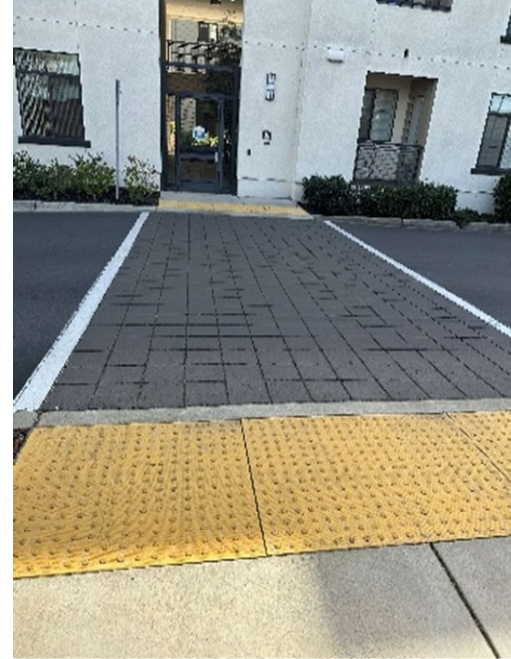


Figure 3. Elevated Walkway Crossing
Photo by AWP



Figure 4. Parking Garage Entry
Photo by AWP

2. Building Design

2.1 Façade Modulation and Articulation

2.1.1 All Buildings

Purpose Statement: Create cohesive and well-crafted building façades with human-scaled details and variations on façades that support a comfortable, engaging pedestrian experience. Balance predictability with creative flexibility to support high-quality and context-sensitive architecture within the Specific Plan Area.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development.

Standards:

- A. **Blank Walls.** Along publicly accessible streets, sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, and open space areas, blank walls exceeding the following lengths are prohibited:
 1. **Storefront Ground Floor Frontage Type.** 20 feet in length.
 2. **Active, Residential, and Live-Work Ground Floor Frontage Types.** 30 feet in length.
- B. **Façade Treatments.**
 1. **All Façades.** All façades of a building on each block face shall be designed and detailed in a similar manner, except for interior courtyards and interior side façades of interior lots at the zero-lot line.
 2. **Interior Side Façades.** Interior side façades located at the zero-lot line shall be enhanced with either public art or landscaping.
 3. **Juliet Balconies.** If provided, Juliet balconies shall have a minimum depth of 12 inches and length of 3 feet. See Figure 6.
- C. **Façade Articulation.** All façades shall include at least **two** of the following façade articulation strategies:
 1. **Recesses.** Vertical and horizontal recesses, such as: (1) a pattern of recessed grouping of windows; (2) recessed panels; or (3) entryways. See example Figure 5.
 2. **Projections.** Vertical and horizontal projections, such as: (1) projecting entries; (2) bay windows; (3) shading and weather protection devices (for windows); or (4) decorative architectural details. If provided, shading and weather protection projections shall be a minimum of 2 feet in depth. Unless otherwise noted, architectural projections shall be a minimum of 4 inches in depth.
 3. **Datum Lines.** Horizontal lines that continue the full length of the building, such as cornices, with minimum height of 8 inches and minimum projection depth of 6 inches.
 4. **Screening Devices.** Screening devices such as lattices, louvers, shading devices, perforated metal screens, or similar strategies.
 5. **Ornamentation.** Ornamentation shall either vary and contrast in color or material from the wall surface or be constructed of high-quality materials (e.g., brick, stone, ceramic, metal, wood, tile, or fiber-cement board). Ornamentation may include the following: (1) cornices; (2) inlays; (3) reliefs; (4) decorative tile; or (5) window trim. Built-up stucco trim or molding (“plant-ons”) are prohibited.



Figure 5. Building Façade with Modulation
Photo by AWP



Figure 6. Building Façade with Balconies and Ornamentation
Photo by AWP

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

2.1.2 Tall Buildings

Purpose Statement: Create cohesive and well-proportioned building façades with human-scaled details and variations on tall façades to reduce perceived building mass and potential wall-effect of a tall and wide façade, given the increased area and height of the façades. This supports a comfortable, engaging pedestrian experience.

Applicability: In addition to the standards in Section 2.1.1- All Buildings, these standards are applicable to any new development that is a minimum 4 stories in height.

Standards:

- A. **Vertical Rhythm.** Building façades facing publicly accessible streets, pathways, and/or private open space shall:
 1. Express a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the size and scale of a residential unit and/or individual rooms (see Figure 7); or
 2. Provide a change in plane through a combination of recesses and projections.
- B. **Façade Articulation.** Tall building façades shall include at least **three** of the following façade articulation strategies:
 1. **Recesses.** Vertical and horizontal recesses, such as: (1) a pattern of recessed grouping of windows; (2) recessed panels; or (3) entryways.
 2. **Projections.** Vertical and horizontal projections, such as: (1) projecting entries; (2) bay windows; (3) shading and weather protection devices (for windows); or (4) decorative architectural details. If provided, shading and weather protection projections shall be a minimum of 2 feet in depth. Unless otherwise noted, architectural projections shall be a minimum of 4 inches in depth.
 3. **Datum Lines.** Horizontal lines that continue the full length of the building, such as cornices, with minimum height of 8 inches and minimum projection depth of 6 inches.
 4. **Screening Devices.** Screening devices that serve to create a barrier or partition within the building façade design (e.g., lattices, louvers, shading devices, or perforated metal screens).
 5. **Ornamentation.** Ornamentation shall either vary and contrast in color or material from the wall surface or be constructed of high-quality materials (e.g., brick, stone, ceramic, metal, wood, tile, or fiber-cement board). Ornamentation may include the following: (1) cornices; (2) inlays; (3) reliefs; (4) decorative tile; or (5) window trim. Built-up stucco trim or molding (“plant-ons”) are prohibited.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*



Figure 7. Building Façade with Articulation and Vertical Rhythm
Photo by CD+A

2.1.3 Corner Buildings

Purpose Statement: Emphasize corner locations as prominent building elements, which require enhanced articulation to strengthen intersection identity and visibility.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development that is both: (1) a minimum 4 stories in height; and (2) located at the corner of any of the following public streets: San Pablo Avenue and Dwight Way, Cedar Street, Ashby Avenue, University Avenue, or Gilman Street.

Standard: The corner of the building shall include at least one of the following features:

1. A different material application and/or fenestration pattern from the rest of the façade (see Figure 8); or
2. Height variation of at least 4 feet greater or less than the abutting primary façade; or
3. A rounded corner, chamfered corner, tower or cupola.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

2.1.4 Through-Lot Buildings

Purpose Statement: To ensure that new development supports walking and sustains a diverse, active and safe public realm.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development that is all of the following: (1) 4 stories in height or taller; (2) located on a lot that exceeds 170 linear feet of site frontage along either San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue; and (3) has a frontage on opposite sides of a block.

Standard: Buildings exceeding 350 feet in length or width are prohibited.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

2.2 Windows

Purpose Statement: Encourage high-quality design that provides visual interest.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development.

Standard: Windows shall meet at least **one** of the following requirements:

1. Recessed at least 3 inches from the plane of the surrounding exterior wall; or
2. Framed with a minimum projection of 4 inches from the façade (see Figure 9); or
3. Provide a combination of trim (at least 2 inches) and recess (at least 1 inch).
4. Built-up stucco trim or molding (“plant-ons”) are prohibited.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*



Figure 8. Building Corner with Façade Articulation

Photo by AWP



Figure 9. Framed Windows

Photo by AWP

2.3 Colors and Materials

Purpose Statement: Encourage high-quality materials that provide visual interest.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to any new development.

Standards:

- A. **Variation in Materials and Colors.** Buildings shall include at least 3 variations in material type, material size, texture and pattern, and/or color (See Figure 10). Any one material must comprise at least 20 percent of the building frontage, excluding windows, railings, base bulkheads, and trim.
- B. **Material Changes at Corners.** A change in material shall be offset by a minimum of 2 inches in depth. Materials shall continue around corners for a minimum distance of 4 feet. The same material shall continue to the next change in the wall plane.
- C. **Building Component Colors.** All vents, flashing, electrical conduits, gutters and downspouts shall be painted the same color as the adjacent surface.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

Recommendation:

Colors should be used to bring out contrast between walls, windows, and trim. Use of color is encouraged to make the area vibrant.



Figure 10. Building Frontage along San Pablo Avenue
Photo by CD+A

2.4 Rooftop Design Treatments

Purpose Statement: To minimize visual impact of rooftop elements needed for the function of the building such that they are not visible from any point at or below the roof level of the subject building.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to all new buildings.

Standards:

- A. **Roof Edge Treatment.** Buildings shall have at least **one** of the following roofline edge treatments:
 1. A decorative cornice treatment (other than just colored "stripes" or "bands"). Cornices shall project a minimum of 6 inches from the façade (see example Figure 11); or
 2. A sloped roof with overhangs and brackets; or
 3. A parapet, which shall include a cap and corner detail to create a shadow line to enhance the building.
- B. **Rooftop Elements.** Rooftop elements that are at least 2 feet in height, such as roof access and mechanical equipment, shall either be:
 - a. Set back minimum 10 feet from the roof edge; or
 - b. Screened with parapet walls, towers, or other architectural features.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*

Recommendation:

Rooftop equipment should be grouped together where practical.



Figure 11. Building Frontage Upper Stories and Roof Transition
Photo by AWP

2.5 Parking Garages

Purpose Statement: To minimize the visual impact of parking.

Applicability: These standards are applicable to new stand-alone parking structures and structured parking incorporated into a building.

Standards:

- A. **All Entries.** All entries to a structured parking garage shall be similar to the building façade. Architectural techniques can include matching façades, material treatments, or recessed garage entries.
- B. **Pedestrian Entries.** Pedestrian entrances shall be located at-grade, connecting directly to the public pedestrian circulation network, on each street-facing frontage.
- C. **Ground Level Design.** Except for vehicular entrances, the ground floor level, including any partially subgrade parking visible above grade, that faces a public right-of-way or publicly accessible open space or path, shall be concealed from public street view by:
 1. Lining with residential or non-residential use with a minimum depth of 20 feet on the ground floor, measured from the building façade; and
 2. Designing and treating the façade with the same level of detail, material quality, and façade articulation as other building façade areas; and/or
 3. Incorporating any of the following screening devices:
 - a. Landscaping (e.g., shrubs, landscaped trellises); or
 - b. Crafted ornamental metal screens (see Figure 12).
- D. **Upper-Level Design.** All parking levels above the ground level shall be designed and treated with the same level of detail, material quality, and façade articulation as other façade areas (e.g., façade articulation and modulation, use of real windows with glazing or false windows defined by frames, lintels, or sills); and/or
- E. **Light Screening.** Lighting shall be screened such that automobile headlamps are not visible from adjacent buildings, parcels, streets, public parks, or publicly accessible open spaces.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*



Figure 12. Ornamental Screening
Photo by AWP

3. Pedestrian-Level Design

3.1 Ground-Floor Design

As established in *LU-P.9 Establish Ground Floor Form Types to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors*, all ground-floor frontages of new buildings constructed within the Specific Plan Area shall construct a ground-floor frontage that complies with the requirements and standards of this section. There are 4 allowable ground floor frontage types, each having distinct design standards for the interface of the building and the street. The BMC includes the figure *Ground-Floor Frontage Types in Nodes* showing the locations where certain frontage types are required within Designated Nodes. Outside of Designated Nodes, any ground floor frontage type is allowed. A single development project may combine any number of ground-floor frontage types that are allowed on the development site.

3.1.1 Storefront

Purpose Statement: To provide a building form that is functional for mixed-use buildings, primarily to encourage a strong retail-oriented commercial frontage, where residential use is allowed on the ground floor behind commercial frontages. The design of the building should provide visibility between the public realm of the sidewalk and the activities of the use inside the building.

Applicability: Storefront Ground Floor Design is required for all new buildings located within a Designated Node, generally along San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue, except where shown in the BMC Figure: *Ground-Floor Frontage Types in Nodes*.

Standards:

- A. **Frontage Zone and Landscaping.** Projects shall be consistent with the frontage zone dimension and landscaping standards in *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*.
- B. **Ground Floor Dimensions and Interior Requirements:**
 1. **Ground Floor Height.** Ground floors shall have a minimum floor to floor height of 15 feet.
 2. **Tenant Space Depth.** Ground floor tenant spaces shall be a minimum:
 - a. *Within Designated Nodes.* 40 feet in depth for a minimum of 50 percent of primary street building façades.
 - b. *Outside Designated Nodes.* 30 feet in depth. Sidewalk easements/outdoor dining may count towards the minimum depth.
- C. **Transparency.** Ground floor frontages shall be 60 percent transparent between 2.5 and 8 feet above finished grade. The following are prohibited: permanent covering of windows with frosted/opaque film, curtains, blinds, or tinted or reflective glass. See example Figure 13.
- D. **Entries.** Entries shall be weather protected to a minimum depth of 3 feet, by recessing the entry and/or constructing either an awning or canopy.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.9 Establish Ground Floor Form Types to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors*.



Figure 13. Storefront Frontage Design
Building fronting San Pablo Avenue.
Photo by CD+A

3.1.2 Active

Purpose Statement: To provide a building form that is functional for a range of non-residential uses allowed in the Specific Plan Area, as well as residential amenity spaces.

Applicability: Active Ground Floor Design is a frontage type that is allowed in addition to Storefront Ground Floor Design for all new buildings located within the Designated Nodes, generally along streets intersecting San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue, as shown in the BMC Figure: *Ground-Floor Frontage Types in Nodes*.

Standards:

- A. **Frontage Zone and Landscaping.** Projects shall be consistent with the frontage zone dimension and landscaping standards in *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*.
- B. **Ground Floor Dimensions + Interior Requirements:**
 1. **Ground Floor Height.** Ground floors shall have a minimum floor to floor height of 15 feet.
 2. **Tenant Space Depth.** Ground floor tenant spaces shall be a minimum 30 feet in depth.
- C. **Transparency.** Ground floor frontages shall be 50 percent transparent between 2.5 and 8 feet above finished grade. The following are prohibited: permanent covering of windows with frosted/opaque film, curtains, blinds, or tinted or reflective glass.
- D. **Entries.** Entries shall be weather protected to a minimum depth of 3 feet, by recessing the entry and/or constructing either an awning or canopy. See example Figure 14.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.9 Establish Ground Floor Form Types to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors.*



Figure 14. Example of Active Frontage Design
Building fronting San Pablo Avenue.
Photo by CD+A

3.1.3 Residential

Purpose Statement: To provide a building form that fosters social interaction and street activation while providing appropriate transitions between public and private space.

Applicability: Residential Ground Floor Design is a frontage type that is allowed for all new buildings in locations within the Specific Plan Area where either Storefront or Active Ground Floor Design are not required. See the BMC Figure: *Ground-Floor Frontage Types in Nodes*.

Standards:

- A. **Frontage Zone and Landscaping.** Projects shall be consistent with the frontage zone dimension and landscaping standards in *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*.
- B. **Transparency.** Ground floor frontages shall be 30 percent transparent between 4 and 7 feet above finished grade.
- C. **Entries:**
 - 1. **Primary Shared Entries.** Primary entries shared by multiple residential units shall be:
 - a. Located at least once for each 200 feet of building frontage; and
 - b. Recessed by a minimum of 3 feet.
 - 2. **Primary Individual Entries.** Primary entries to an individual residential unit (see Figure 15) shall be:
 - a. Located facing the street; and
 - b. Weather protected to a minimum depth of 3 feet, by recessing the entry and/or constructing either an awning or canopy.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.19 Establish Ground Floor Form Types to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors.*

Recommendations:

To create a semi-private transition between the sidewalk and residential units, raising the finished floor a minimum of 2 feet above finished grade and providing raised entries in form of either individual stoops or shared entry terraces is strongly encouraged.



Figure 15. Elevated Individual Residential Entries
Photo by AWP

3.1.4 Live/Work

Purpose Statement: To support the unique needs of spaces that combine living and working on the ground floor and provide a storefront character to enhance the pedestrian environment within the Specific Plan Area.

Applicability: Live/Work Ground Floor Design is allowed outside of Designated Nodes.

Standards:

- A. **Frontage Zone and Landscaping.** Projects shall be consistent with the frontage zone dimension and landscaping standards in *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*.
- B. **Ground Floor Dimensions and Interior Requirements:**
 1. **Ground Floor Height.** Ground floors shall have a minimum floor to floor height of 15 feet.
 2. **Storefront Character.** A minimum of 50 percent of the live/work unit façade shall be designed as a storefront (see Figure 16), as follows:
 - a. Storefront areas shall be 60 percent transparent between 2.5 feet and 8 feet from finished grade.
 - b. Storefront areas shall be designed to include signage and lighting when being used for commercial use.
 - c. The following are prohibited within the commercial portion of a live/work unit: permanent covering of windows with frosted/opaque film, curtains, blinds, or tinted or reflective glass.
- C. **Entries:**
 1. Access to the non-residential portion of the unit shall be located on the street-facing façade.
 2. Access to the residential portion of the unit is not permitted on the street-facing façade.
 3. Primary ground floor entrances shall be weather protected to a minimum depth of 3 feet, by recessing the entry and/or constructing either an awning or canopy.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.9 Establish Ground Floor Form Types to Promote Pedestrian-Scaled and Flexible Ground Floors.*

Recommendations:

The following design strategies are encouraged to support a storefront character that enhances the pedestrian environment within the Specific Plan Area:

- Window display cases at least 4 feet in depth for a retail-oriented character.
- Roll-up doors compatible with the storefront design for artist studios or maker spaces.



Figure 16. Street Facing Frontage of Live/Work Unit
Photo by AWP

3.2 Private Open Space Design

3.2.1 Common Private Open Space

Purpose Statement: To ensure that common private open space provided in new development supports social interaction while providing a suitable level of privacy for residents. See example Figure 17.

Applicability: These standards apply to all new development projects in the Specific Plan Area.

Standards:

A. Dimensions, Placement and Access:

1. Common private open spaces are shared and accessible only to the occupants of the building and their visitors.
2. Required common private open spaces may be located on the ground floor, parking or commercial podiums, or rooftops.
3. All common private open space must have a minimum width and length of 10 feet.

B. Shading. A maximum of 25 percent of the total common private open space area may be covered by an architectural element that provides shade. If provided, such elements shall be at least 8 feet above the grade of the open space.

C. Seating. Seating shall be provided that meets all of the following standards:

1. Seating may only be provided by at least one of the following: Moveable seating, fixed individual seats, fixed benches with and without backs, and design-feature seating such as seat walls, planter ledges, or seating steps.
2. Devices or forms affixed or incorporated into planter ledges, steps, sills or other horizontal surfaces that would otherwise be suitable for seating that are intended to prevent or inhibit seating (such as spikes, metal bars, or pointed, excessively rough, or deliberately uncomfortable materials or forms) shall be prohibited.
3. Seats that face building walls must be located a minimum of 6 feet from such wall.

D. Landscaping:

1. A minimum of 40 percent of the open space area shall be planted with trees, ground cover, shrubs, or be located within either movable or permanent planters, except for open space located on a rooftop.
2. A minimum of one tree per 600 square feet of the portion of the total common private open space in a development that is located outdoors shall be planted, except for podium-level courtyards.

E. Screening:

1. Residential units located on the same floor as a common private open space must be screened with a barrier to sufficiently screen the unit from view, such as landscaping, fencing, or decorative walls.
2. Bedroom windows located within 5 feet of an internal pathway or common private open space must be screened with a landscape barrier to screen the window from view.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*



Figure 17. Enclosed Courtyard with Common Amenities
Photo by AWP

3.2.2 Personal Private Open Space

Purpose Statement: To ensure that personal private open space provided in new development supports livable outdoor areas while maintaining a suitable level of privacy for residents.

Applicability: These standards apply to all new development projects in the Specific Plan Area.

Standard: Personal private open space shall meet all the following requirements:

1. All personal private open space must have a minimum clear height of 8 feet, measured from the ground floor or decking (see Figure 18);
2. Ground-floor personal private open space located outdoors must have a minimum dimension of 8 feet in at least one direction and 5 feet in all other directions; and
3. Balconies must have a minimum width and length of 5 feet.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards.*



Figure 18. Balconies
Photo by AWP

3.3 Public Open Space Design

3.3.1 Sidewalk Expansion

Purpose Statement: To serve the range of uses and infrastructure located within each sidewalk zone along San Pablo Avenue, Gilman Street, Cedar Street, Hopkins Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, and Ashby Avenue, consistent with the Pedestrian Plan (2020)¹ preferred widths for a Mixed-Use Residential Boulevard.

Applicability: These standards apply to all eligible projects seeking to provide a sidewalk expansion as a public open space incentive.

Standards: Sidewalk design and use shall comply with the objective design standards in *PR-S.1 Sidewalk Zone Standards*.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.7 Public Open Space Enhancements*, *LU-S.1 Sidewalk Expansion Incentive*, and *PR-P.1 Sidewalk Zones*.

3.3.2 Privately-Owned Public Open Space (POPOS)

Purpose Statement: To ensure the creation of high-quality POPOS within Designated Nodes to enhance placemaking and provide community open space within the Specific Plan Area. See example Figure 19.

Applicability: These standards apply to all eligible projects seeking to provide POPOS as a public open space enhancement consistent with *LU-P.7 Public Open Space Enhancements*.

Standards:

A. Dimensions, Placement and Access:

1. POPOS must have a minimum size of 5 percent of the site area, or 400 square feet, whichever is greater.
2. POPOS must have a minimum dimension of 20 feet in at least one direction.
3. POPOS must be clearly visible from the public right-of-way and have a direct publicly accessible connection to a sidewalk on one of the following public streets: San Pablo Avenue, Gilman Street, Cedar Street, Hopkins Street, University Avenue, Dwight Way, or Ashby Avenue and within a Designated Node. POPOS are prohibited on roofs.
4. Public access must be permitted daily at least during all hours that City parks are open pursuant to Section 6.32.020 of the Berkeley Municipal Code.
5. POPOS shall include signage that is located in a publicly conspicuous place stating that the open space is available for public use, hours of use, and identifies the party responsible for maintenance.

B. Shading:

1. Where provided, a maximum of 40 percent of the total area may be covered by permanent shade structures, such as awnings and trellises.



Figure 19. POPOS Plaza in Front of Mixed-Use Development
Photo by CD+A

¹ Berkeley Pedestrian Plan. Appendix B: Engineering & Design Guidance, Sidewalks – Preferred Widths for Sidewalk Zones, page B-8.

<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2020%20Pedestrian%20Plan%20Appendix%20B%20%28adopted%29.pdf>

2. POPOS with a clear vertical volume of at least 2 stories in height may be entirely covered by the floor area of the third story of the building and above.

C. Landscaping:

1. A minimum of one tree per 400 square feet of POPOS is required and trees may be located within a freestanding fixed planter.
2. A minimum of 20 percent of the POPOS must be landscaped. Landscaping shall include at least one of the following elements: (1) in-ground planting areas; (2) raised freestanding fixed or ballasted planters; or (3) integrated green infrastructure that treats stormwater.

D. Screening. Where provided to define the edge of a POPOS, screening material shall meet the following requirements:

1. Materials shall provide at least 75 percent transparency and be decorative, transparent and/or perforated; and
2. Materials may not exceed 36 inches in height from finished grade.

E. Lighting. Pedestrian-scale lighting that meets the standards in Table 5.2: Recommended Light Levels, *PR-P.3 Improve Street Lighting for the Safety and Comfort of All Users*, shall be provided.

F. Seating:

1. A minimum of one linear foot of seating for each 30 square feet of POPOS shall be provided.
2. Seating may only be provided by at least one of the following: Moveable seating, fixed individual seats, fixed benches with and without backs, and design-feature seating such as seat walls, planter ledges, or seating steps. See example Figure 20.
3. Devices or forms affixed or incorporated into planter ledges, steps, sills or other horizontal surfaces that would otherwise be suitable for seating that are intended to prevent or inhibit seating (such as spikes, metal bars, or pointed, excessively rough, or deliberately uncomfortable materials or forms) shall be prohibited.
4. Seating for the purpose of a sidewalk cafe shall not count towards meeting the seating requirement.
5. Seats that face building walls must be located a minimum of 6 feet from such wall.



Figure 20. Quick-build POPOS plaza
Photo by CD+A

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.7 Public Open Space Enhancements*.

3.3.3 Side Street Plaza

Purpose Statement: To encourage the enhancement of the pedestrian environment and support placemaking along San Pablo Avenue.

Applicability: These standards apply to all eligible projects seeking to provide a side street plaza as a public open space incentive.

Standard: Contribute to designing and building of a Side-Street Plaza, meeting the design and access standards described in *PR-P.15 Create Side-Street Plazas*.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.7 Public Open Space Enhancements* and *PR-P.15 Create Side-Street Plazas*.

3.3.4 Mid-Block Passage

Purpose Statement: To incentivize publicly accessible mid-block pathways in new through-lot developments. See example Figure 21.

Applicability: These standards apply to all eligible projects seeking to provide a side street plaza as a public open space incentive.

Standards:

A. Dimensions, Placement and Access:

1. Located at the ground level and be accessible from San Pablo Avenue and/or University Avenue.
2. A minimum 16-foot width and 16-foot height, allowing for built space above and/or below the surface of the passage.
3. Provide unobstructed visibility from one public space to another.
4. Provide signage that is located in a publicly conspicuous place stating that the open space is available for public use, hours of use, and identifies the party responsible for maintenance.

B. Lighting. Provide nighttime illumination pursuant to Ordinance N.S.-7424 and *PR-P.3 Improve Street Lighting for the Safety and Comfort of All Users*.

C. Wayfinding. Provide at least one wayfinding sign on each side of the passage.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.3 Mid-Block Passage Incentive and PR-P.7 Public Open Space Enhancements*.



Figure 21. Mid-block Crossing
“The Dogpatch Artwalk” in San Francisco.
Photo by Fletcher Studio

3.4 Service and Utility Design

Purpose Statement: To minimize visual impact on the pedestrian experience and neighboring properties to the extent feasible.

Applicability: These standards apply to all projects that provide any of the following service and utility elements within the Specific Plan Area, unless otherwise prohibited by the utility provider, building and/or fire codes:

- Utility Equipment (e.g., electric and gas meters, fire sprinkler valves).
- Service, storage areas and loading areas.
- Communal refuse, recycling, and compost collection

Standards:

A. Design. All above-ground utility equipment, service, storage, and communal refuse, recycling, and compost/green waste collection areas shall be similar to the project building and landscape design.

B. Screening. All above-ground utilities and equipment, service, storage, and outdoor loading areas or enclosures located outside shall be screened (see Figure 22).

C. Backflow Preventors. Backflow preventors shall be located within landscaped setback areas and painted black or green. If no landscaped setback areas exist on the site, then they shall be incorporated into the front of the building and concealed from public street view.

D. Transformers. All transformers should be undergrounded.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards*.



Figure 22. Utility Equipment Location
Photo by AWP

3.5 Private Parklets

Purpose Statement: To increase flexibility for temporary uses that support an active, pedestrian-oriented and economically resilient Specific Plan Area. See example Figure 23.

Applicability: These standards apply to any parklet constructed on private property within an existing off-street parking space(s).

Standards:

A. Design:

1. Any fixtures or temporary materials constructed for the purpose of creating a Private Parklet shall be removable.
2. A visible edge to the Private Parklet must be provided. Any railing, fencing, or landscaping material installed for the purpose of providing a visible edge shall be a maximum of 36 inches in height and decorative, transparent, and/or perforated with a minimum of 75 percent transparency.

B. Access:

1. The Private Parklet shall be accessible to customers during business hours.
2. Access and circulation from, to and within the remaining area of the off-street parking lot, driveway, and loading areas shall be maintained during operating hours as approved by the Public Works Department.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-P.8 Expand Allowed Primary and Temporary Uses and PR-P.16 Support Use and Creation of Parklets.*



Figure 23. Parking Lot with Restaurant Seating

Photo from Vik's Chaat, vikschaatcafe.com, accessed April 2025.

3.6 Public Art

Purpose Statement:

- Create a sense of place along San Pablo Avenue and celebrate the neighborhood’s identity through integrated, high-quality public art.
- Activate Designated Nodes, open spaces, and building frontages with artwork that enhances the visual experience of the Avenue.
- Encourage collaboration with local artists and inclusion of art that reflects community.

Applicability: These standards apply to all projects subject to the Percent for Art Ordinance (BMC Chapter 23.316, Percentage for Public Art on Private Projects).

Standards:

- A. **Guidelines and Procedures.** All public art provided within the Specific Plan Area shall comply with the guidelines and procedures in BMC Chapter 23.316, Percentage for Public Art on Private Projects.
- B. **Location.**
1. Public art shall be located in publicly visible areas (e.g., building entries, courtyards, plazas, side street plazas, POPOS, and pedestrian walkways).
 2. Public art shall be either freestanding or incorporated into building elements (e.g., façades, paving, railings, columns). See example Figure 24.
- C. **Visibility.** Public art shall be visible from at least one of the following public vantage points:
1. Public right-of-way (preferably from San Pablo Avenue or University Avenue);
 2. Publicly accessible plaza; or
 3. Designated pedestrian pathway.
- D. **Access.** Public art shall be accessible without barriers or restricted access during daylight hours. Examples include building murals, fencing murals, art installations in parking lots, landscaped areas, or inside businesses with visibility from the public realm within the Specific Plan Area.

Specific Plan Policy Reference: *LU-S.6 Design Standards* and *PR-P.13 Facilitate Installation of Public Art that Benefits the Public Realm.*

Recommendations:

Projects within the following Designated Nodes are strongly encouraged to provide on-site public art: Gilman Street, University Avenue, and Ashby Avenue. Privately funded art installations located on buildings and other private properties that are visible from the public right-of-way are encouraged.



Figure 24. Public Art on Walls and as Surface Treatment

Top: Public art Wall Mosaic - 2352 Shattuck Avenue. Bottom: Painting on pavement in reuse of former parking lot - Broadway and 21st Street in Oakland. Photos by CD+A

4. Glossary

1. **Ballasted Planter.** A planter that is secured with heavy material to ensure that it is stable against wind or other factors.
2. **Blank Wall.** A building façade without doors, windows, landscaping treatments, or public art.
3. **Chamfer.** A transitional edge between two building façades, typically created by a 45-degree angle.
4. **Datum Lines.** Continuous horizontal architectural elements along a building façade that establish a consistent line of alignment.
5. **Freestanding Fixed Planter.** A planter that is self-supporting – it does not rely on another external structure for support.
6. **Through-lot.** A lot that has frontage on two opposite sides onto two or more public rights-of-way.
7. **Wall Plane.** Continuous wall surface.