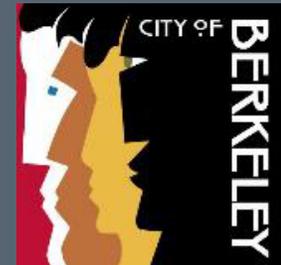


# San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Planning Commission 12.04.24 - Status Update and Overview



# Agenda

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1. Project Overview & Background
2. Status Update
3. Community Open House Overview
4. Next Steps
5. Questions and Discussion

## Background

1. 2015 City Council Referral
2. 2021: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Priority Development Areas (PDA).
  - a) ABAG/MTC Grant
3. 2023: Housing Element: Program 27 - Priority Development Areas (PDA), Commercial and Transit Corridors.

*Develop a “San Pablo Avenue Corridor PDA Specific Plan, which will increase allowed densities and/or development capacity, and study design standards, public improvements, and mechanisms to incentivize affordable housing.”*

## Project Outcomes

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### **What is a Specific Plan?**

Articulate a vision for the future of San Pablo Avenue

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Define community-based and context-sensitive regulation and policy that can apply to the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan Boundary

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Identify improvements to provide a multitude of opportunities for living, working and community life.

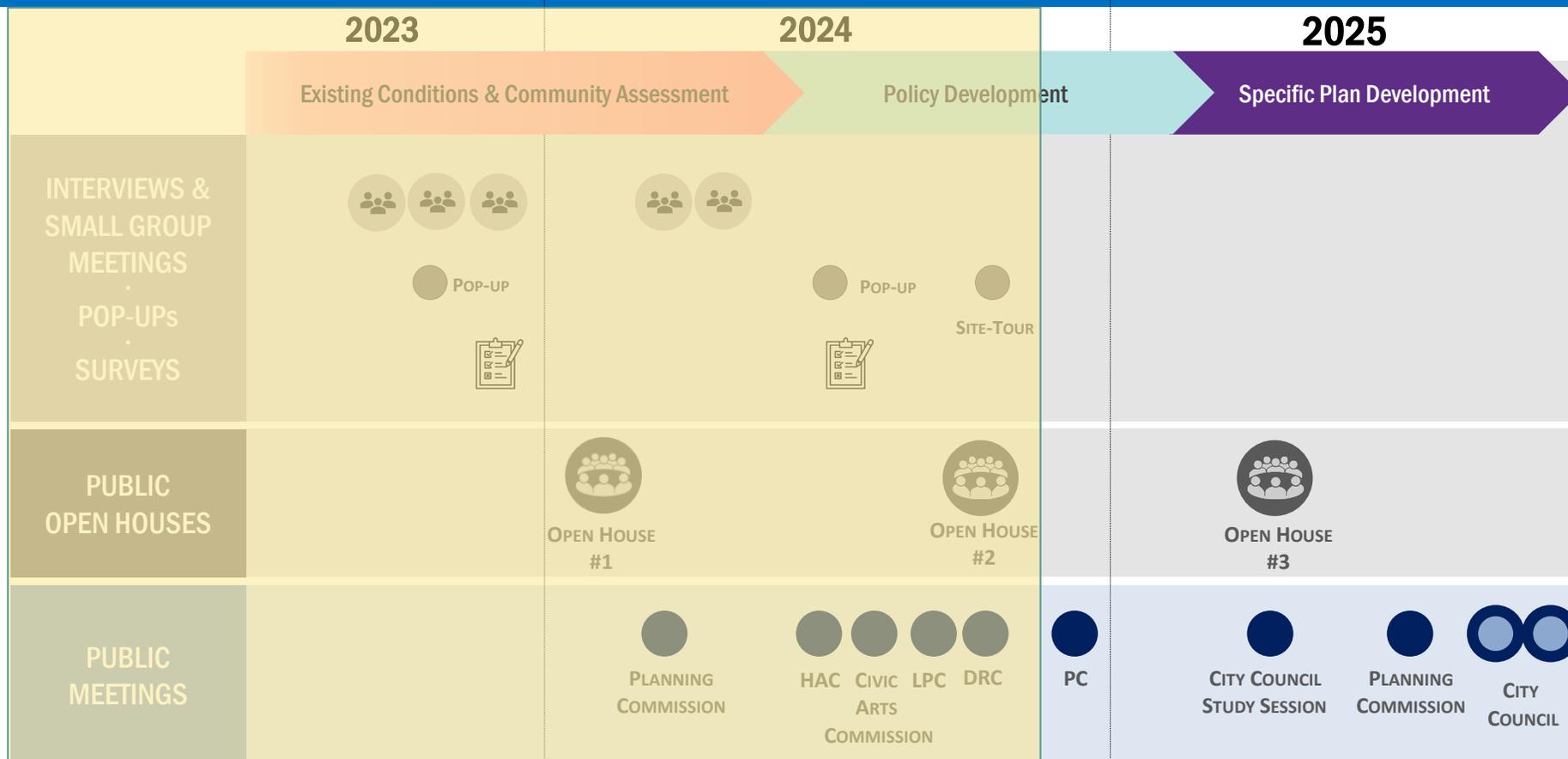
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## Specific Plan Boundary and Study Area



- **Existing Development Standards:** Mixed-use projects are required within nodes. Mixed-use projects are permitted an additional story of residential use (40ft to 50ft)
- **Ground Floor Uses:** Following uses within nodes must be:
  - Retail sales
  - Personal and Household services
  - Banks
  - Food and Alcohol Services
  - Tourist Hotel/Motel
  - Entertainment and Assembly
  - Gasoline/Vehicle Fuel Stations
  - Vehicle Repair uses
  - New Car Sales
  - Used Vehicle Sales
  - Required access to and lobbies serving upper story uses

# Project Timeline



# Major Goals from Community Assessment Report



San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

## Community Assessment Report

August 20, 2024



City of Berkeley

1. Increase business activity along the corridor.
2. Increase housing supply and diversity
3. Improve the public realm
4. Improve and increase interaction between private and public spaces
5. Enhance local access

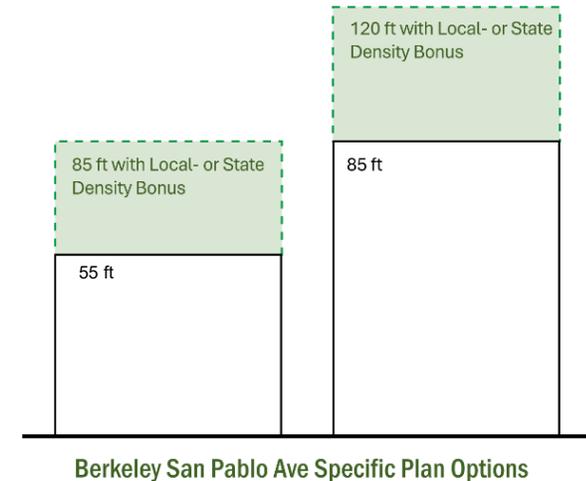
# Increase Business Activity Along the Corridor

1. Improve Commercial Identity
  - Focus uses in certain areas
  - Focus public investment on nodes to support local business clusters
2. Reduce Commercial and Retail Vacancy
  - Allow more temporary pop-up uses by-right
  - Allow residential ground floors with conditions
3. Support Local Business Vitality and Growth
  - Establish a Local Small Business Support Fund
  - Establish public-private events



# Increase Housing Supply and Diversity

1. Revise Housing Development Regulations
  - Increase by-right maximum allowed height and floor area ratio
  - Policy levers include
    - Increase Height and FAR throughout the whole corridor
    - Increase only within certain nodes
    - Potential Local Density Bonus
2. Support Increased Diversity of Housing Types
  - Allow density to be counted as units or bedrooms
  - Waive mixed-use ground floor commercial requirements for specific housing types
  - Allow flexibility in development standards for workforce housing
3. Support Housing Affordability
  - Permit 100% affordable housing on select MULI parcels
  - Establish a program to reserve affordable units for artists



# Improve the Public Realm

1. Increase Amount and Quality of Sidewalk Space
  - Require sidewalk easements, create curb extensions and expand public spaces
2. Improve and Maintain Lighting, Sidewalks, and Landscaping
  - Update the San Pablo Public Improvement Plan
  - Pursue grant funding for public improvements
3. Increase Public Open Space and Community Gathering Space
  - Create plazas by closing streets
  - Require and incentivize privately-owned public open space
4. Integrate Public Art and Cultural Programming
  - Expand Opportunities for public art in the corridor
  - Highlight neighborhoods through branding and improve wayfinding through art



Oregon St and San Pablo

# Improve/Increase Interaction – Private Public Space

## 1. Engaging Buildings

- Incentivize public access to amenities
- Require new development amenities to be on the ground floor
- Define objective standards for articulation of upper floors

## 2. Engaging Site Frontages

- Establish objective design standards for ground floor frontage
  - Storefront standards
  - Active Ground Floor Standards
  - Active Residential Ground Floor Standards



2700 San Pablo Avenue (Live-work units on the ground floor)

# Enhance Local Access

1. Improve east-west connectivity
  - Study feasibility of shared shuttle services
2. Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Access
  - Implement way findings standards
  - Improve connections between transit hubs
  - Encourage mid-block pathways
3. Improve Transit Access and Frequency
  - Collaborate with AC Transit to maintain/improve bus service
4. Manage on –Street Parking and Loading
  - Establish parking and loading management programs
  - Study expansion of parking meter locations



# Community Workshop- September 26, 2024

## Potential Plan Area Improvements and Resources

### What are Potential Improvements and Resources?

A range of investments in physical improvements, resources and benefits for local businesses and community vitality. The following list of improvements and resources is based on the findings from the previous Existing Conditions and Community Assessment phase of the planning process.

#### Additional workforce, senior or family friendly housing

Provide a threshold percentage of workforce, senior or family-friendly housing



#### Allocated community space within the development.

Provide interior space for a community room for public meetings, community celebrations, etc., or for non-profits providing day care or other services for seniors and youth.



#### Improvements and Resources Fund to support local small businesses

Developers pay into a Small Business Support Fund (through commercial in-lieu fee and/or alternate zoning requirements)

The local Small Business Support Fund may be used for start-up or other small businesses to fund tenant improvements, relocation funding, start-up rent abatement or to waive permit or other City fees.



#### Open space & community gathering spaces

Provide via privately owned public space, an in-lieu fee, and/or publicly funded improvements



#### Neighborhood access to new development amenities

Such as meeting rooms, workout rooms, rooftop open space, etc.  
 Semi-private access to amenities through neighborhood key-card program.



#### Streetscape setbacks

Expand the sidewalk into private property with a ground floor setback



#### Additional streetscape improvements

(more details in the Public Realm activity)  
 Landscaping, decorative lighting, open space furnishing beyond the min. required through streetscape standards

### Other Ideas for Plan Area Improvements and Resources

Sticky Notes

City of Berkeley with grant funding from the Association of Bay Area Governments | Metropolitan Transportation Commission

## Public Realm

### Types of Open Space and Community Gathering Spaces



#### Side street curb extension

Provide space for public use and outdoor dining, and more landscape



#### Parklets

On San Pablo Avenue parklets are required to be public space by Caltrans. Side street parklets can be part of standard Berkeley program



#### Ground Floor Setbacks

Provide more space for use of public sidewalk



#### Outdoor Dining/ Cafe Space

Sidewalk space can be used for outdoor dining



#### Indoor Multi-Purpose Room

Street fronting community rooms can be used by residents and for public activities



#### Mid-block pathways

Some new developments can provide pathways between San Pablo Ave and adjacent neighborhoods



#### Other Indoor Community Gathering Spaces

Social activity spaces, such as gyms or co-working spaces that can be used by residents and the neighborhood



#### Small plazas by closing minor side street access

Closing access from San Pablo Ave to minor streets for small public plazas for public use and urban greening



Mark public realm improvement locations on this map

Sticky Notes

City of Berkeley with grant funding from the Association of Bay Area Governments | Metropolitan Transportation Commission

## Development Scenarios

### Height Diagram: University Ave to Hearst St



### Example Densities and Heights



Berkeley Mixed Use | 12 Stories | 100 Units | 110 ft

Oakland Mixed Use | 8 Stories | 107 Units | 1-45 ft

Emeryville Mixed Use | 9 Stories | 107 Units | 76 ft

Oakland Mixed Use | 5 Stories | 101 Units | 1-45 ft

El Cerrito Mixed Use | 4 Stories | 100 Units | 2 Live Work | 1-45 ft

# Community Workshop– September 26, 2024

University  
appropriate for  
higher bldgs  
6-8 stories

Wider sidewalks  
rather than  
gathering  
spaces  
(like parks)

Keep affordable  
for artists,  
rent control

## Housing

- Strong support for mixed-income, with affordable housing and higher density

## Open Space and Parks

- Need for more accessible, well-maintained green spaces.
- Desire for small public gathering spaces and corridor beautification.

## Streetscape and Infrastructure:

- High priority for streetscape improvements (setbacks, greenery, lighting).
- Desire for more Public art and landscaping

## Public-Private Partnerships:

- Support for partnerships to enable community events in private spaces.
- Support to reduce storefront vacancies.

## Commercial Flex Spaces:

- Broad support for active ground floors with commercial, art studios, and live-work spaces.

## Building Height and Density:

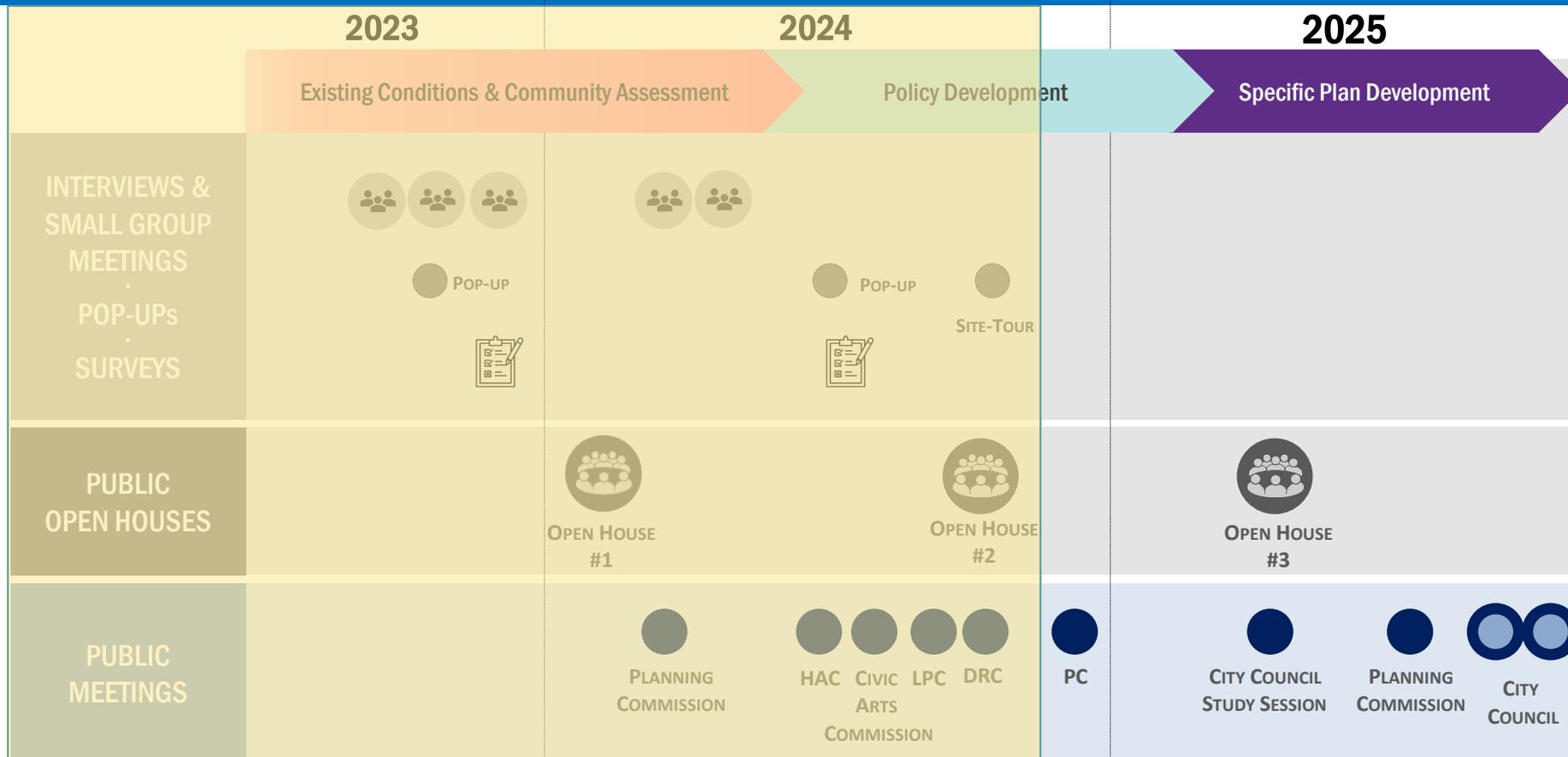
- Mixed opinions on building height throughout the corridor except for University.
- Support for increased density and increased height on University
- Concerns about shadows and clustering of tall buildings along the corridor.

Hub of  
businesses  
without  
any vacant  
commercial  
spaces

Prioritizing  
live work  
units for  
artists &  
make san  
pablo a hub  
for open art  
studios

Tall buildings  
&  
open spaces

# Project Timeline



# Questions and Discussions

1. Density, height and FAR standards within the existing node framework?
  - Are there any nodes where density and height should be prioritized more than others?
  - Are there any incentives or requirements for specific uses in select locations?
  
2. Local density bonus
  - Would a local density bonus be feasible?
  - What are some corridor improvements that could be provided in exchange for more density?
  - Are there any other alternatives to a local density program that would provide corridor improvements?
  
3. Ground-floor uses
  - Currently ground-floor residential is prohibited in nodes, should we allow ground-floor residential within certain nodes?
  - Are there specific uses that should be encouraged for all nodes/certain nodes?
  - Should ground-floor commercial be encouraged outside of nodes?
  - Would establishing an in-lieu fee be beneficial?
  
4. Provide feedback to [SanPabloPlan@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:SanPabloPlan@berkeleyca.gov)

# Questions and Discussions