

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Public Hearing – Recommendation to City Council to adopt the Final Draft

Planning Commission
June 3, 2026



Outline

- 1. Specific Plan Goals**
- 2. Outreach and Engagement**
- 3. Specific Plan Summary**
- 4. Plan Changes**
- 5. CEQA Analysis**
- 6. Staff Recommendation**

Agenda Packet

- 1. San Pablo Specific Plan**
- 2. San Pablo Specific Plan Design Standards Document**
- 3. Zoning Ordinance and Map amendments**
- 4. General Plan and Other Plan Changes**
 - a. General Plan and Map**
 - b. West Berkeley Specific Plan (retire)**
 - c. San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan (retire)**
 - d. University Avenue Strategic Plan**



Specific Plan

Vision and Desired Results

San Pablo Avenue is a vibrant, mixed-use district that connects neighborhoods, supports a variety of housing and local business, and reflects Berkeley's cultural heritage.



Increased Diversity of Housing Types and Supply of Housing



Increased Business Activity to Support a Thriving Community



Enhancing Interaction between Public and Private Spaces

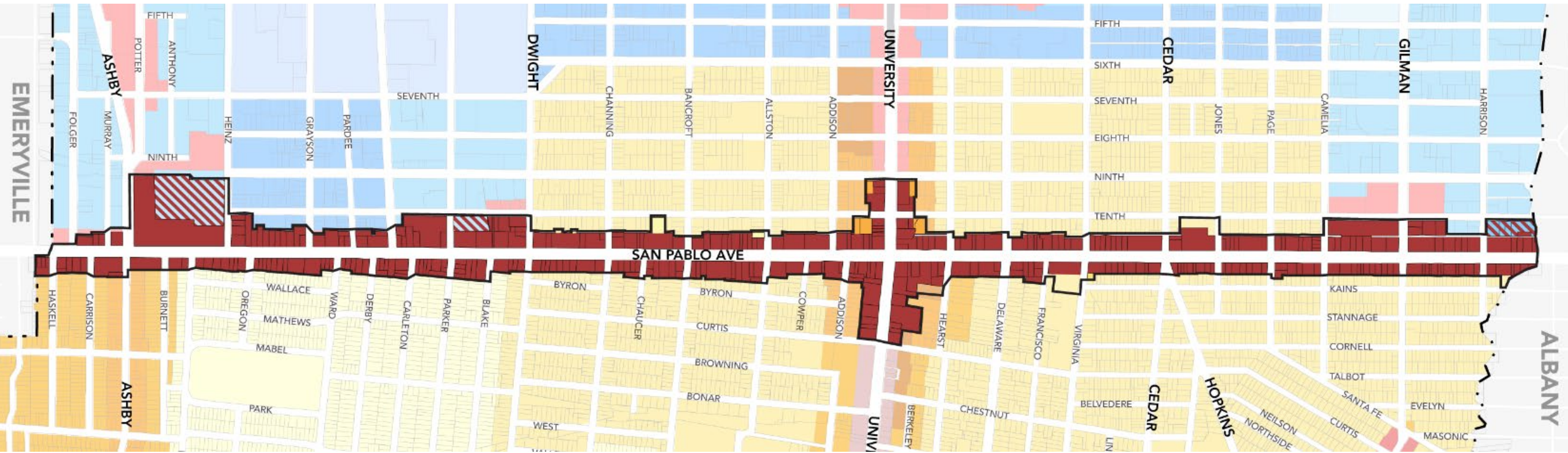


Enhanced Local and Citywide Access

Community Outreach and Engagement and Plan Development Process

Phase 1 Initial Outreach 2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key Community Leader Interviews (Aug 2023)• Pop-up at the Harvest Festival (Oct 2023)• Small Group Meetings (2023-2024)• Targeted Intercept Survey (Nov 2023)• Community Meeting #1 (Jan 2024)
Phase 2 Policy Development 2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pop-ups (Sept 2024)• Community Survey (Sept 2024-Oct 2024)• Community Meeting #2 (Sept 2024)• Site Tour (Nov 2024)
Phase 3 Plan Review and Adoption 2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Meeting #3 (Oct 2025)• Planning Commission and City Council Workshops (Nov 2025)• Public Review Draft Comment Period (PC: March 2026)• Final Draft Plan• Planning Commission Public Hearing (We are here!)• City Council Adoption

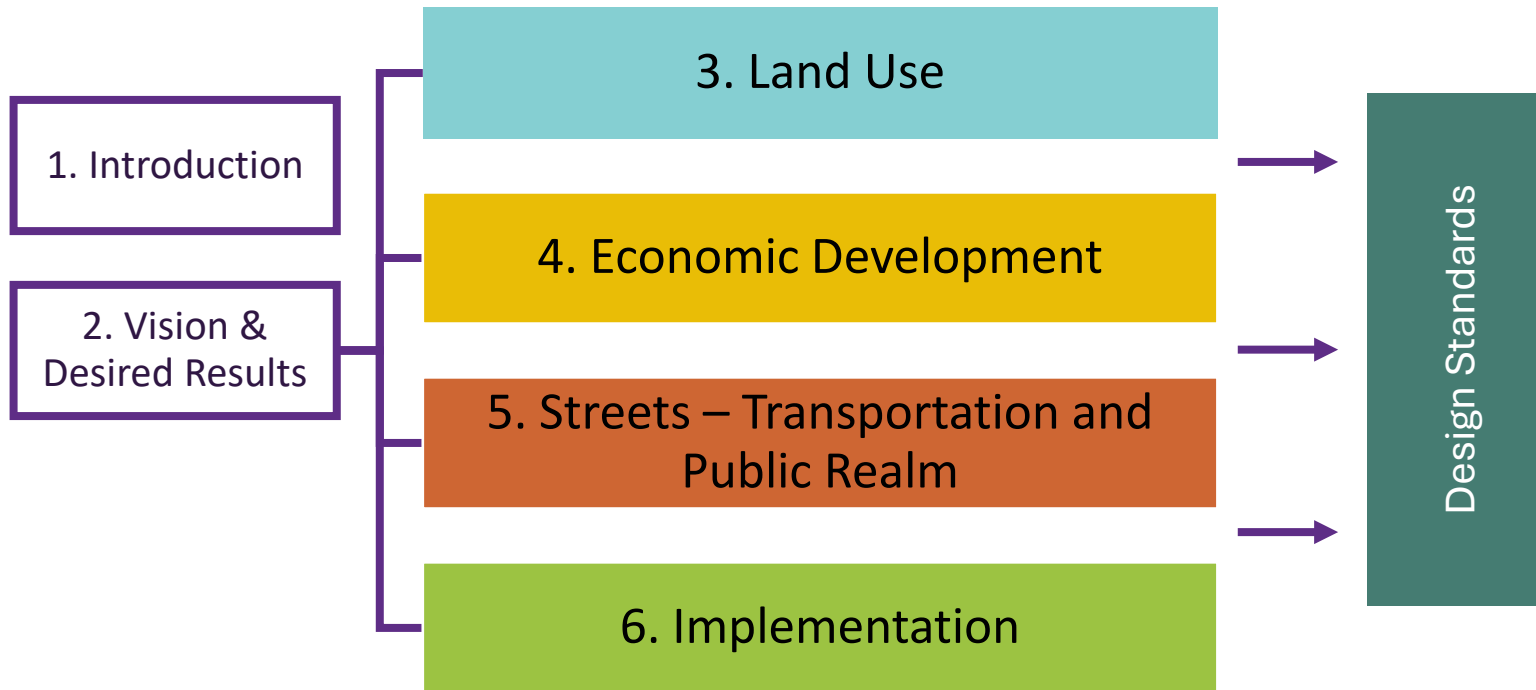
Specific Plan Area



- Most of the parcels are in the West Berkeley Commercial district (C-W)
- 15 opportunity sites included additional
- Some parcels are within the West Berkeley Plan Area and the University Avenue Strategic Plan Area

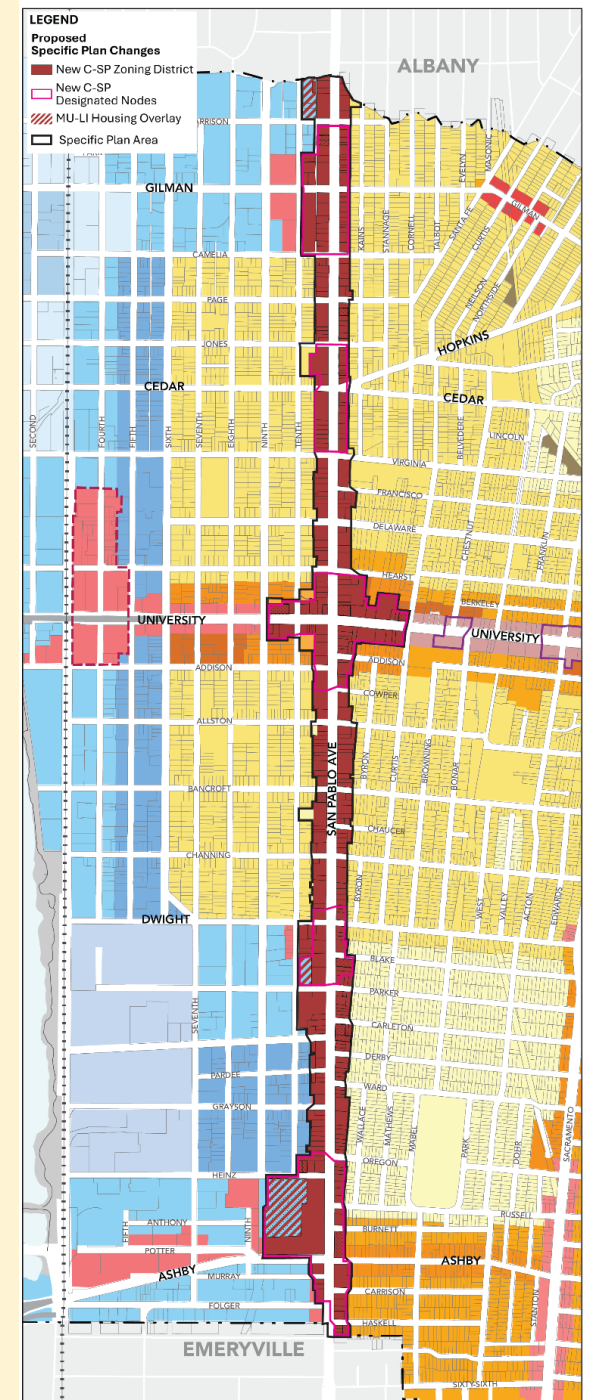
Specific Plan Overview

The Plan is organized into six chapters and includes a Design Standards document:



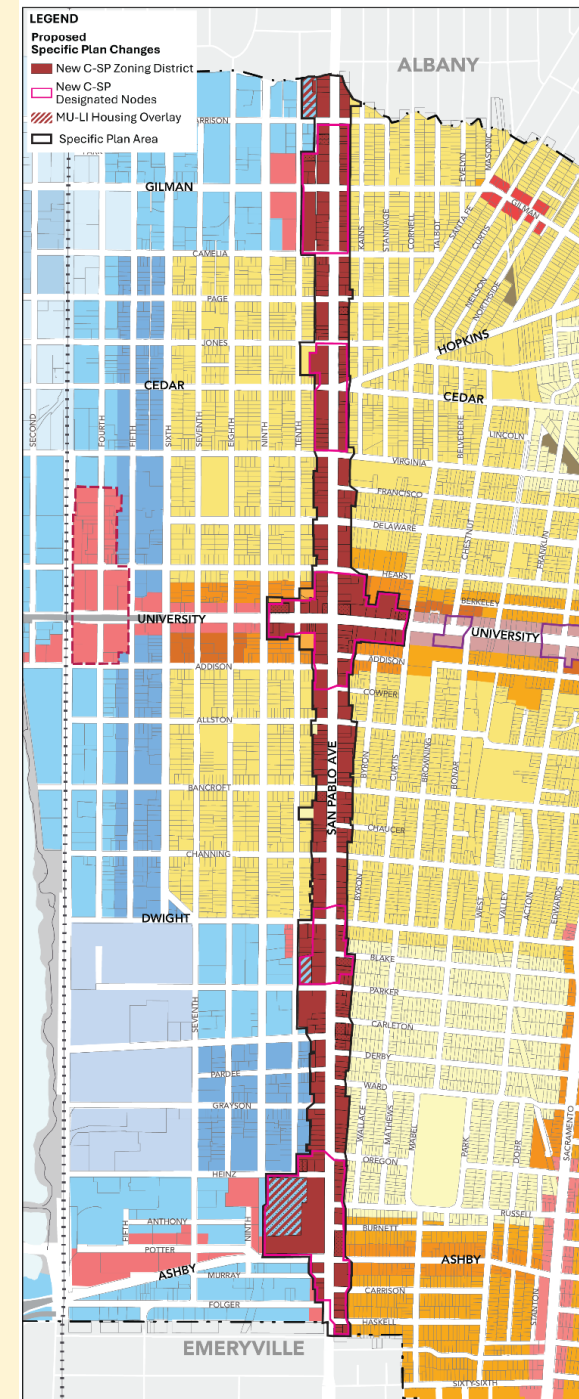
Land Use

- C-SP zoning district
- Affordable and Family-Friendly Housing in MU-LI
- Public Open Space Incentives
(sidewalks, POPOS, plazas)
- Allowed Uses, including Temporary Uses
- Ground Floor Form Types
- Local Density Bonus Program pilot



Land Use: Revisions

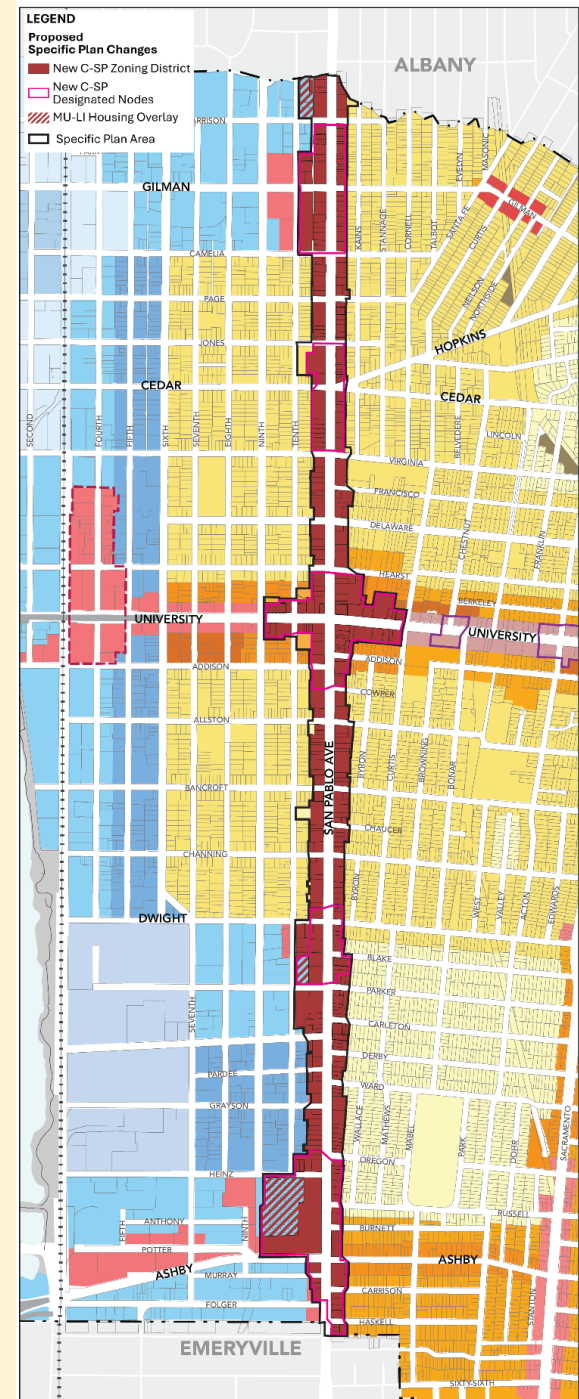
- Removed Tier 1 and Tier 2 Nodes: all Nodes equal!
- 7 stories/75 feet across entire corridor
- Removed Commercial In-Lieu Fee
- More allowed commercial uses in Designated Nodes
- Public Open Space provisions are now incentives
- Removed requirement that 50% of residential amenities be located on the ground floor
- Local Density Bonus Program: pilot for condos only



C-SP Summary

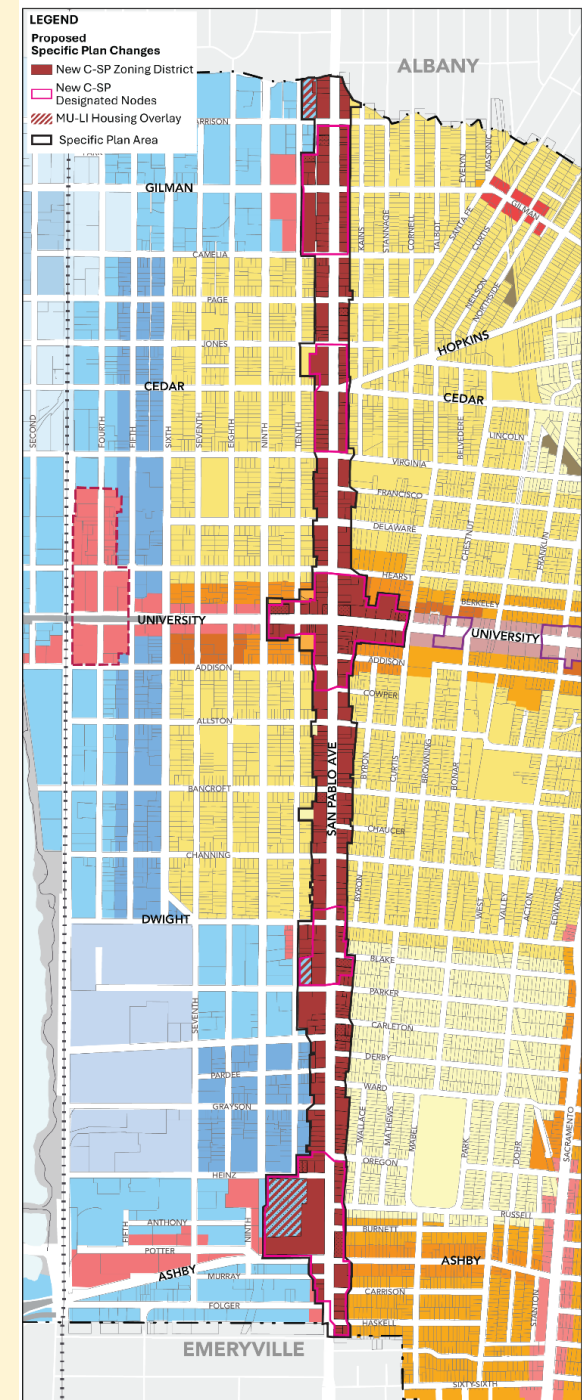
Maximum Heights

Building Type	Existing	Public Review Draft		Proposed C-SP
Mixed-Use	4 stories 50 feet	Tier 1	8 stories	7 stories 75 feet
		Tier 2	6 stories	
		Other	5 stories	
Residential Only	3 stories 40 feet	3 stories 40 feet		3 stories 40 feet
Non-Residential Only	3 stories 40 feet	3 stories 40 feet		



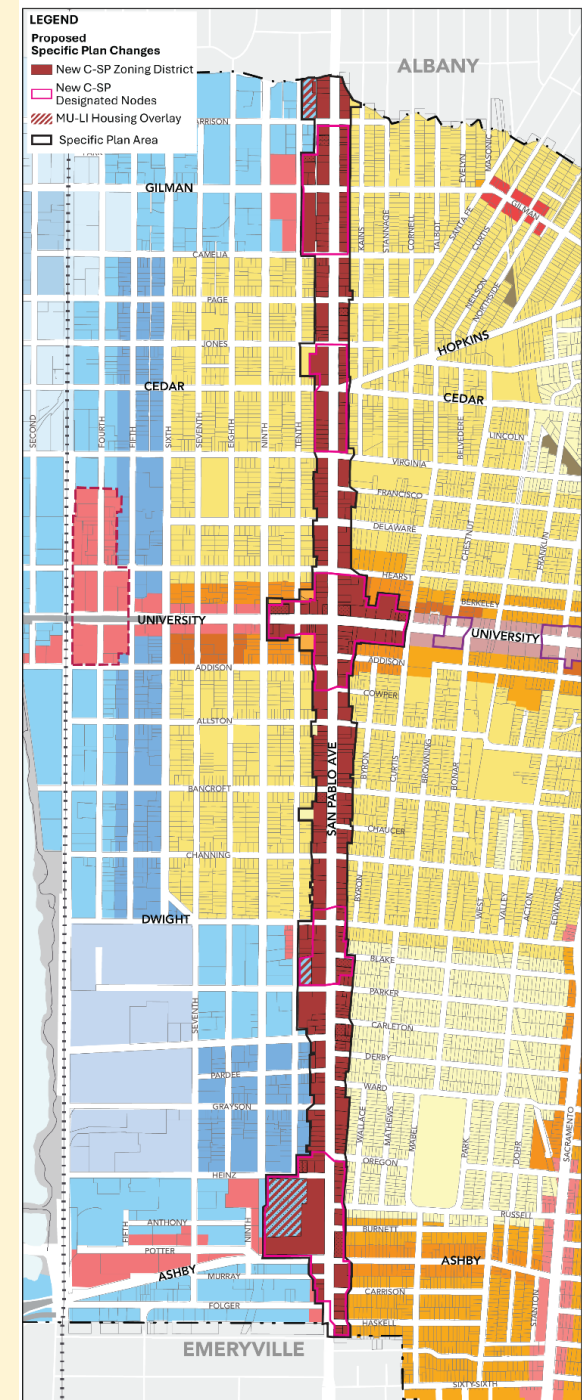
Zoning Ordinance Amendments Notable Provisions

- **Allowed Uses:** Same as C-W, except:
 - Public Markets and Commercial Recreation Centers are easier to establish
 - Maker Spaces allowed with a ZC
 - Temporary Uses: public markets and food service allowed with a ZC
 - Outdoor Temporary Uses: allowed with a ZC, with operating standards
 - Designated Nodes: specific uses prohibited



Zoning Ordinance Amendments Notable Provisions

- **Development standards:**
 - New maximum height
 - Minimum density standard of 145 du/acre
- **Ground Floor Frontage Types:**
 - Storefront, Active, Residential, Live-Work
- **Public Open Space Incentives:** 1.5 – 2 square feet of credit for every 1 square foot:
 - Wider Sidewalks, POPOS, Side Street Plazas or Mid-Block Plazas
- **Affordable and Family Housing Areas** in the MU-LI
- **Local Density Bonus Program** *removed* from BMC



Economic Development

- Outdoor business activation (sidewalks uses and parklets)
- Flexible commercial spaces
- Public/Private partnerships
- Business Improvement/Community Benefit Districts
- Economic development technical assistance
- Prioritize infrastructure investments in Designated Nodes



Economic Development: Revisions

- Removed the Small Business Fund (no Commercial In Lieu Fee)
- Removed dedicated Economic Development Liaison
- Added option to form Community Benefit District or BID
- Clarified prioritization process for investments in Designated Nodes



Streets, Transportation and Public Realm

- Improve multi-modal access and safety
- Study future transportation needs, with a priority for San Pablo projects in planning efforts
- Sidewalk zone standards
- Lighting, landscaping, tree, furniture and parklet standards.



Streets, Transportation and Public Realm: Revisions

- Defer improvements to future transportation plans (e.g. Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan)
- Easement no longer required for widened sidewalks
- Waive city review fees for parklets, sidewalk seating and sidewalk commerce
- Side street plaza standards



Design Standards

- **Site Design**
 - Pedestrian and vehicle access
- **Building Design**
 - Façade
 - Windows
 - Colors and materials
 - Rooftops
 - Parking and garages
- **Pedestrian-Level Design**
 - Ground floor
 - Private and public open spaces
 - Private parklets
 - Public art



Design Standards: Revisions

- Standards simplified throughout
- Standards for all buildings and for tall buildings (4+ stories)
- Many massing standards removed:
 - Massing breaks
 - Vertical breaks along façade
 - Stepbacks adjacent to R districts
- Ornamental façade requirements removed
- No Design Review when complying
- DRC can provide an exemption for a standard



Plan Changes

General Plan (2002)

- Create new Land Use Policy to implement the Specific Plan
- Amend Avenue Commercial land use designation to reference C-SP District
- Amend land use diagram to designated Specific Plan Area as Avenue Commercial

West Berkeley Plan (1993)

- Plan will be retired
- Implementation steps complete and reflected in BMC

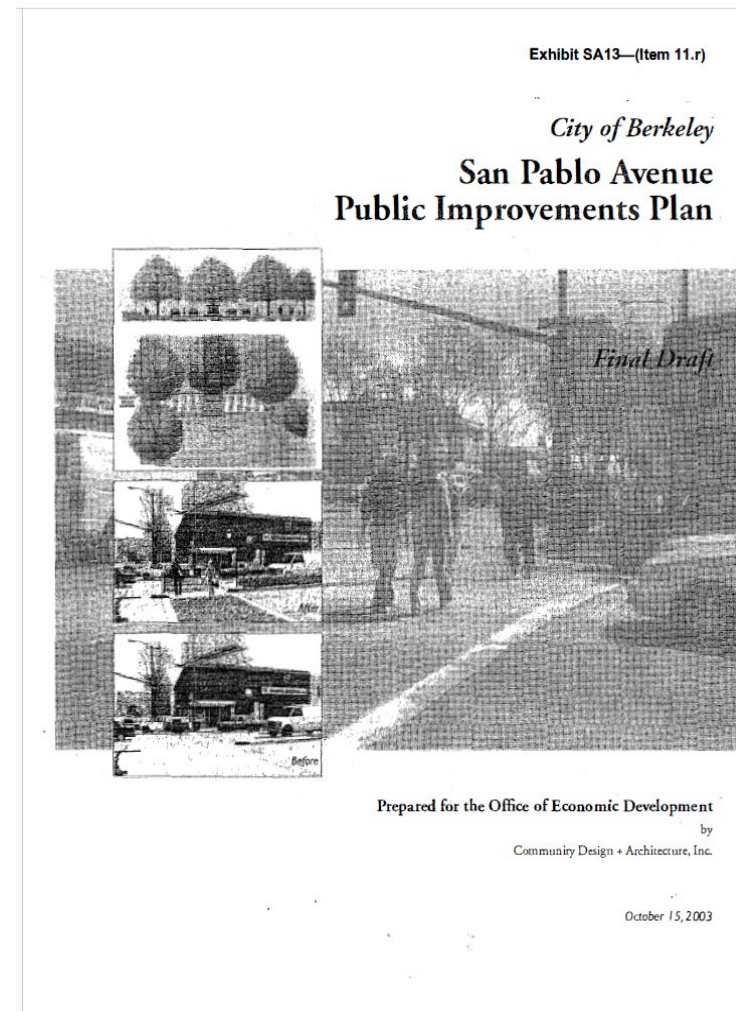


University Avenue Strategic Plan (1998)

- Specific Plan supersedes this Plan by establishing new C-SP zoning and policies applicable to San Pablo Avenue node.

San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan (2004)

- Plan will be retired
- Most proposed improvements have been completed
- Remaining improvements found in Specific Plan



The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a street scene. It shows a row of trees with green foliage in the foreground and middle ground. In the background, there are multi-story buildings with various window patterns. A blue car is visible on the right side of the street. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the pavement.

CEQA Analysis

SB 131 and Draft Addendum

- SB 131: CEQA exemption for rezoning undertaken to implement the schedule of actions in an adopted Housing Element (Program 27)
- CEQA Addendum prepared: no new or more severe impacts than disclosed in Housing Element EIR.
 - Includes projections with State Density Bonus



Staff Recommendation

Receive public comment, and make a recommendation to the City Council, on the proposed Specific Plan, Design Standards Document, and associated amendments to the:

- **Zoning Ordinance and Map**
- **General Plan and Land Use Diagram**
- **University Avenue Strategic Plan**
- **West Berkeley Plan**
- **San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan**



QUESTIONS