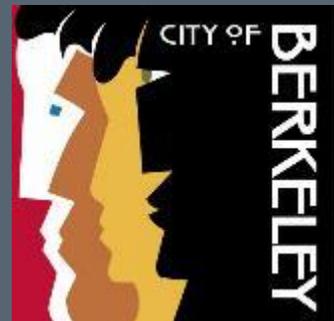


San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Input on Revisions to the Public Review Draft

Planning Commission
March 18, 2026



Agenda

- 1. Project Background**
- 2. Questions for PC Input**
 - 1. Maximum Building Height**
 - 2. Voluntary Commercial In-Lieu Fee**
 - 3. Local Density Bonus Program**
 - 4. Allowed Uses**
 - 5. West Berkeley Plan**
- 3. Other Plan Revisions**
- 4. Next Steps**

A blurred street scene with trees and buildings in the background. The text "Project Background" is overlaid in the center.

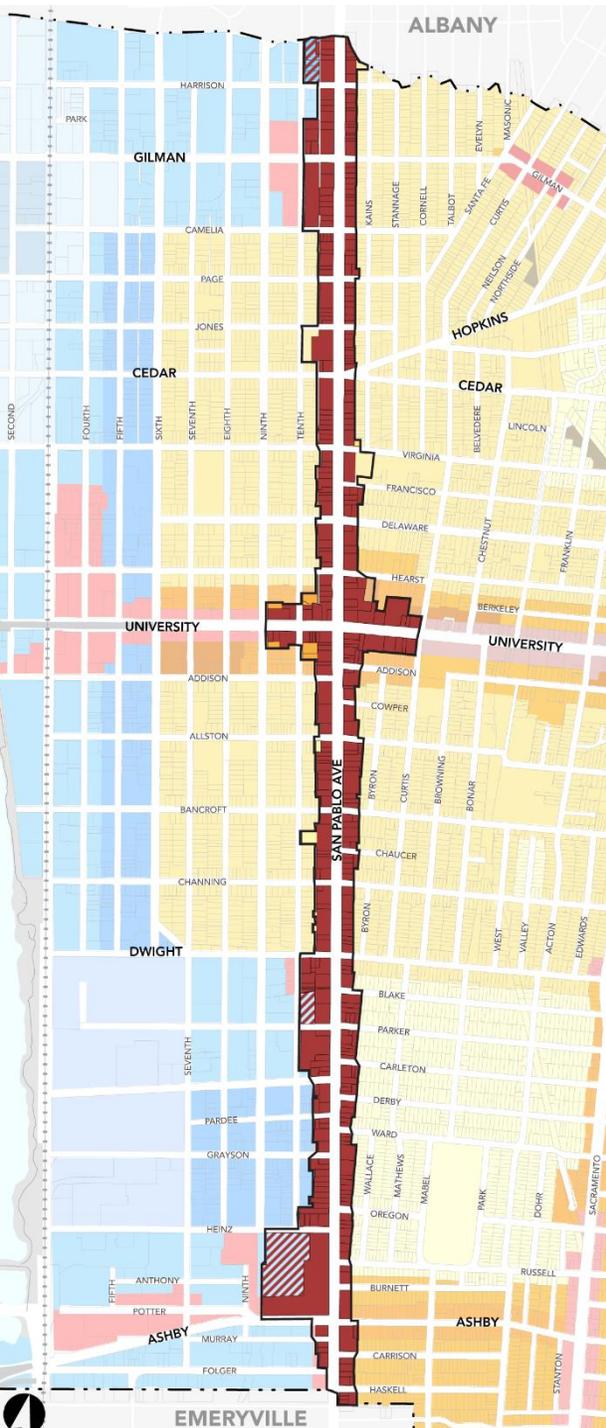
Project Background



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.

Why this Specific Plan?

1. 2015 City Council Referral –
“Develop a Plan to guide development on San Pablo Ave”
2. Priority Development Areas (PDA) Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) designation
 - a) ABAG/MTC Grant 2021
3. Housing Element 2023-2031:
Program 27 - Priority Development Areas (PDA), Commercial and Transit Corridors –
“increase new housing opportunities...on commercial and transit corridors”



Specific Plan Boundary

- Derived from the MTC-defined PDA
- Most of the parcels are part of existing West Berkeley Commercial district (C-W)
- Refined to include opportunity sites
- Includes parcels in the West Berkeley Plan Area

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

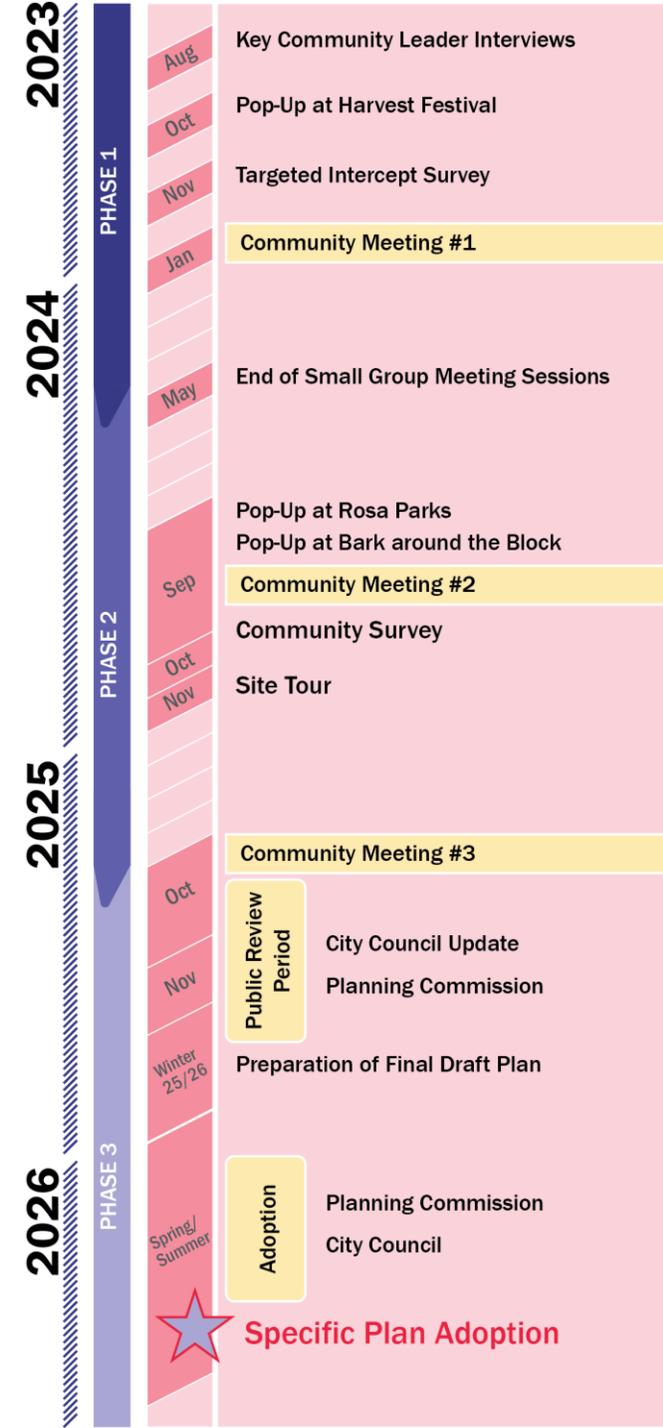
Specific Plan Overview

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



Community Engagement and Plan Development Process

<p>Phase 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Community Leader Interviews • Pop-up at the Harvest Festival • Small Group Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Intercept Survey • Community Meeting #1
<p>Phase 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop-up at Rosa Parks Elementary • Community Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Meeting #2 • Site Tour
<p>Phase 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Meeting #3 • Public Review Draft Comment Period • Final Draft Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Hearings • Adoption



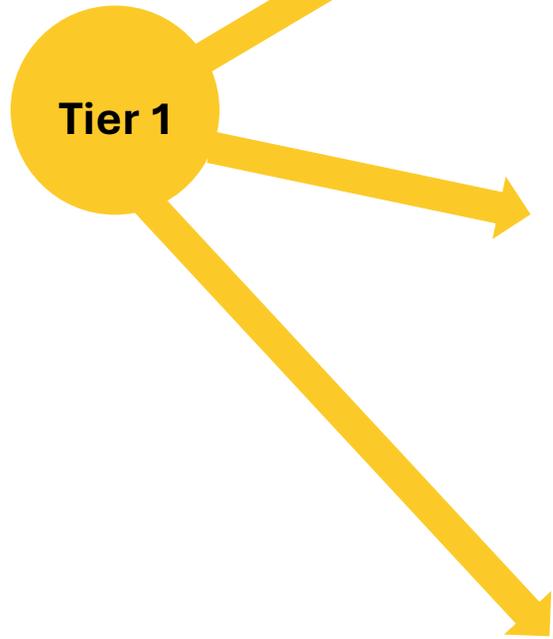
Plan Policies Addressing Commercial Vacancy

- Maximum building height
- Ground floor design standards
- Types of commercial uses allowed
- Level of discretion required for community serving and entertainment uses.



Maximum Building Height

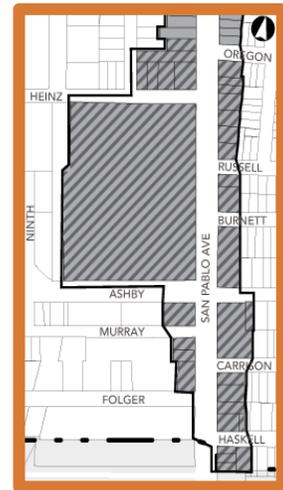
Node Structure



Gilman

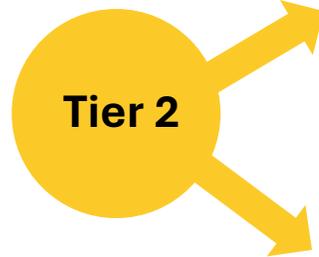


University



Ashby

Tier 2



Cedar



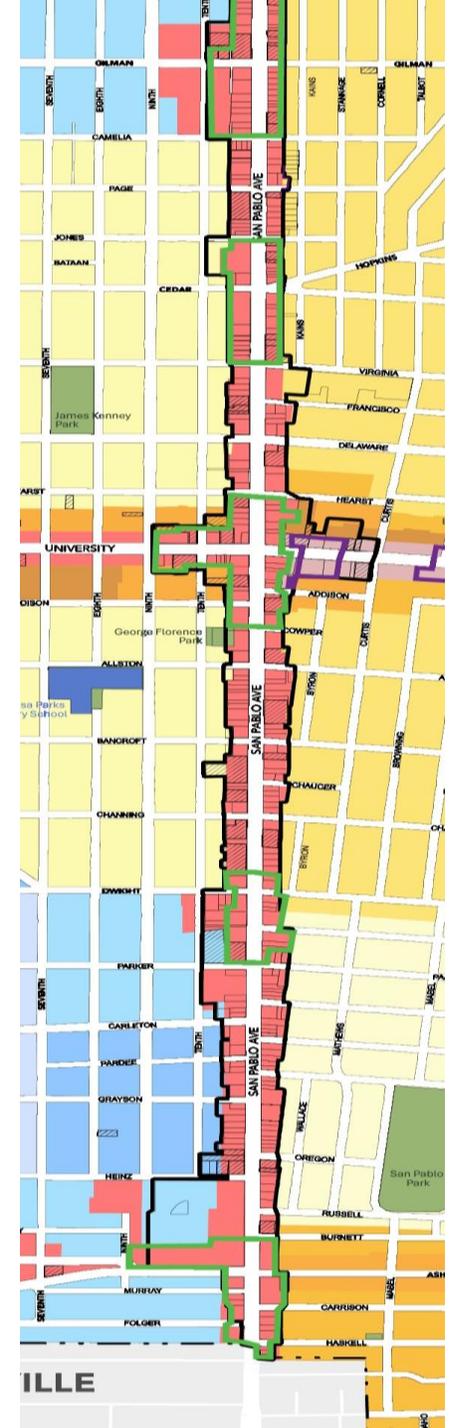
Dwight

Internal



Maximum Height – Existing and Public Review Draft

Building Type	Existing	Public Review Draft	
Mixed-Use	4 stories 50 feet	Tier 1 Node	8 stories 85 feet
		Tier 2 Node	6 stories 65 feet
		Outside Node	5 stories 55 feet
Residential & Non-Residential	3 stories 40 feet	Tier 1 Node	3 stories 40 feet
		Tier 2 Node	
		Outside Node	



Maximum Height Options for Planning Commission Input –

1. Seven stories across the Plan area for residential and mixed use only.
2. Three different maximums:
 - Within Nodes: Eight stories
 - Outside Nodes:
 - Seven stories mixed-use
 - Four stories residential
3. Eight stories within nodes, seven stories outside of nodes



Height Option 1 – No Variation

Maximum Height	Existing	Inside Nodes	Outside Nodes
Mixed-Use	4 stories 50 feet	7 stories 75 feet	
Residential	3 stories 40 feet		
Non-Residential	3 stories 40 feet		

Policy consideration: Development not concentrated in nodes.



Height Option 2 – Vary Based on Location & Use

Maximum Height	Existing	Inside Nodes	Outside Nodes
Mixed-Use	4 stories 50 feet	8 stories 85 feet	7 stories 75 feet
Residential	3 stories 40 feet	8 stories 85 feet	4 stories 50 feet
Non-Residential	3 stories 40 feet		

Policy consideration: *Only option* supporting the voluntary commercial in-lieu fee. Revenue supports economic development goals.



Height Option 3 – Vary Based on Location Only

Maximum Height	Existing	Inside Nodes	Outside Nodes
Mixed-Use	4 stories 50 feet	8 stories 85 feet	7 stories 75 feet
Residential	3 stories 40 feet		
Non-Residential	3 stories 40 feet		

Policy consideration: Additional story accounts for loss of residential units with *ground floor commercial requirement in nodes.*



Height Options – Summary

Policy Consideration	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Ground Floor Activation Fee Program	X	✓	X
Mixed-Use Building Incentive	X	✓	X
Development Buildout	=	=	+
Affordable Units	+	=	+
Administrative Complexity	=	+	=

Question for Planning Commission Input – Maximum Height

Should maximum height:

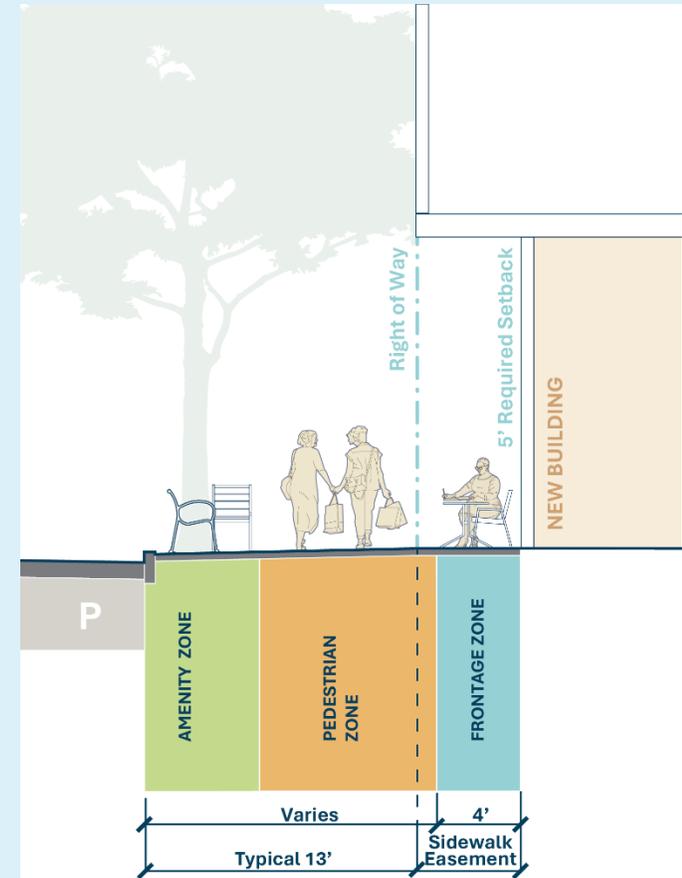
1. Be consistent for both residential and mixed use buildings, across the Plan Area?
2. Vary based on building type and location?
3. Be consistent for both residential and mixed use buildings, and vary based on location?



Voluntary Commercial In-Lieu Fee
(San Pablo Avenue Ground Floor Activation Fee Program)

Ground Floor Activation Fee

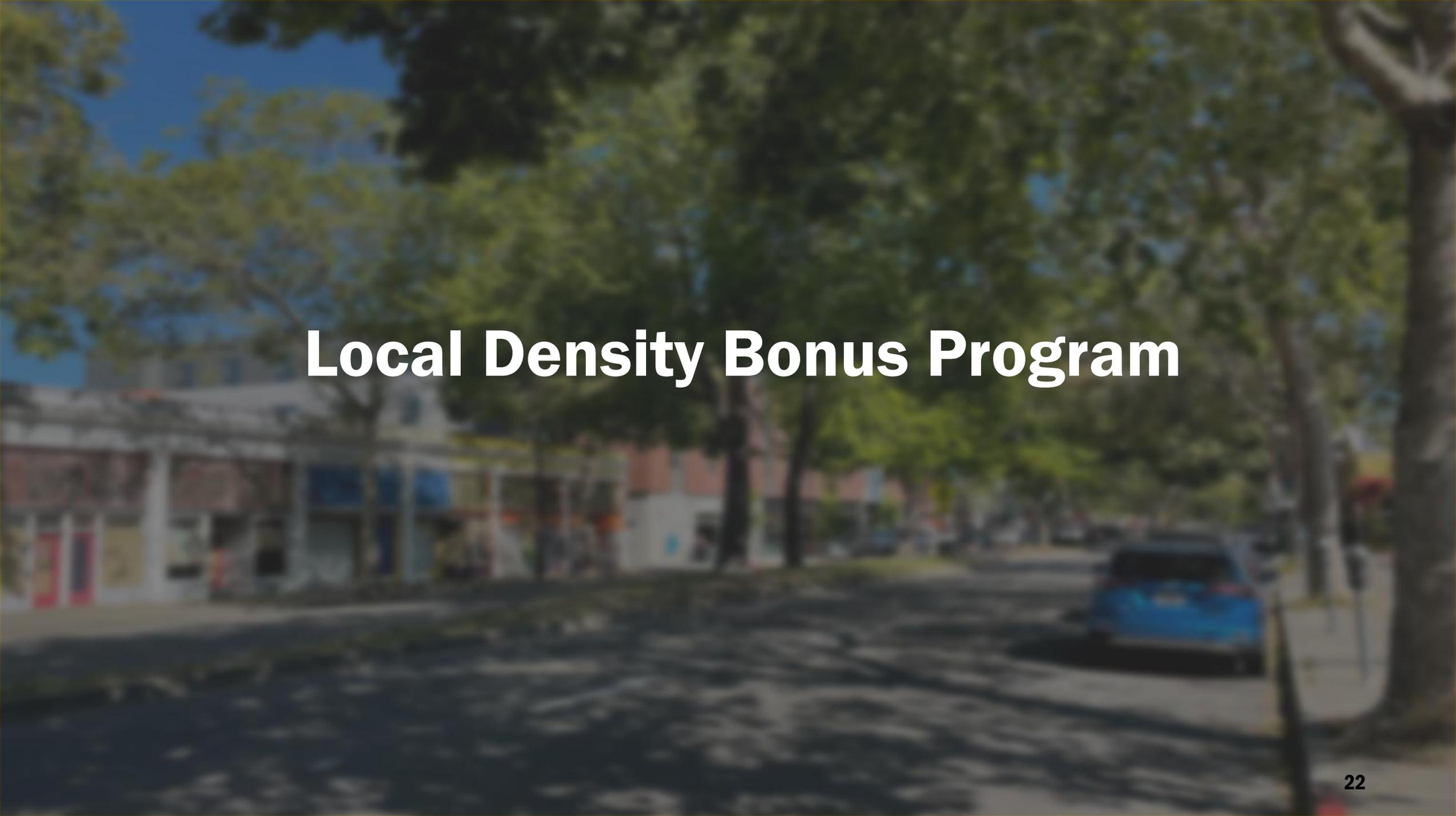
- ***Voluntary program outside of nodes*** that would allow a developer to access mixed use height but not provide the commercial on the ground floor.
- **Revenue would support:**
 - Establishment of a new Business Improvement District, which would direct funds toward **improvements in the public realm within nodes.**



Question for Planning Commission Input – Ground Floor Activation Fee Program

Should the fee program:

1. Be **removed**
2. Be **revised** to include a defined evaluation period and option to sunset or extend the policy. Following this review, the City may modify the policy, extend it, or discontinue it, based on the findings and implementation results.
3. **Remain** in the Plan

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a street scene. It shows a row of trees with green leaves in the foreground, a sidewalk, and a street with a crosswalk. In the distance, there are buildings and a blue car parked on the right side. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Local Density Bonus Program

San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program

- Provides an alternative to the State Density Bonus
- **In-lieu fee** to the City's **Affordable Housing Trust Fund**
- Developers must follow the Plan's **Objective Design Standards**
- **Pilot program**
- Applicable only to **condominium projects**



San Pablo Avenue Density Bonus Program

In-Lieu Fee (Local Program)

Fee revenue can be leveraged for Affordable Housing Trust Fund supported projects

Units in 100% affordable housing funded with fee typically provide more deeply affordable rents and serve lower income residents

Improves feasibility of market rate housing

On-Site Affordable Units (State Program)

Project makes a greater monetary contribution to affordable housing

Units are on-site delivered simultaneously with market rate housing

Costs developers twice as much as paying in-lieu fee



Question for Planning Commission Input – Local Density Bonus Program

Should the fee program:

1. Be **removed**
2. Be **revised** as a pilot program and apply only to condominium (ownership) projects.



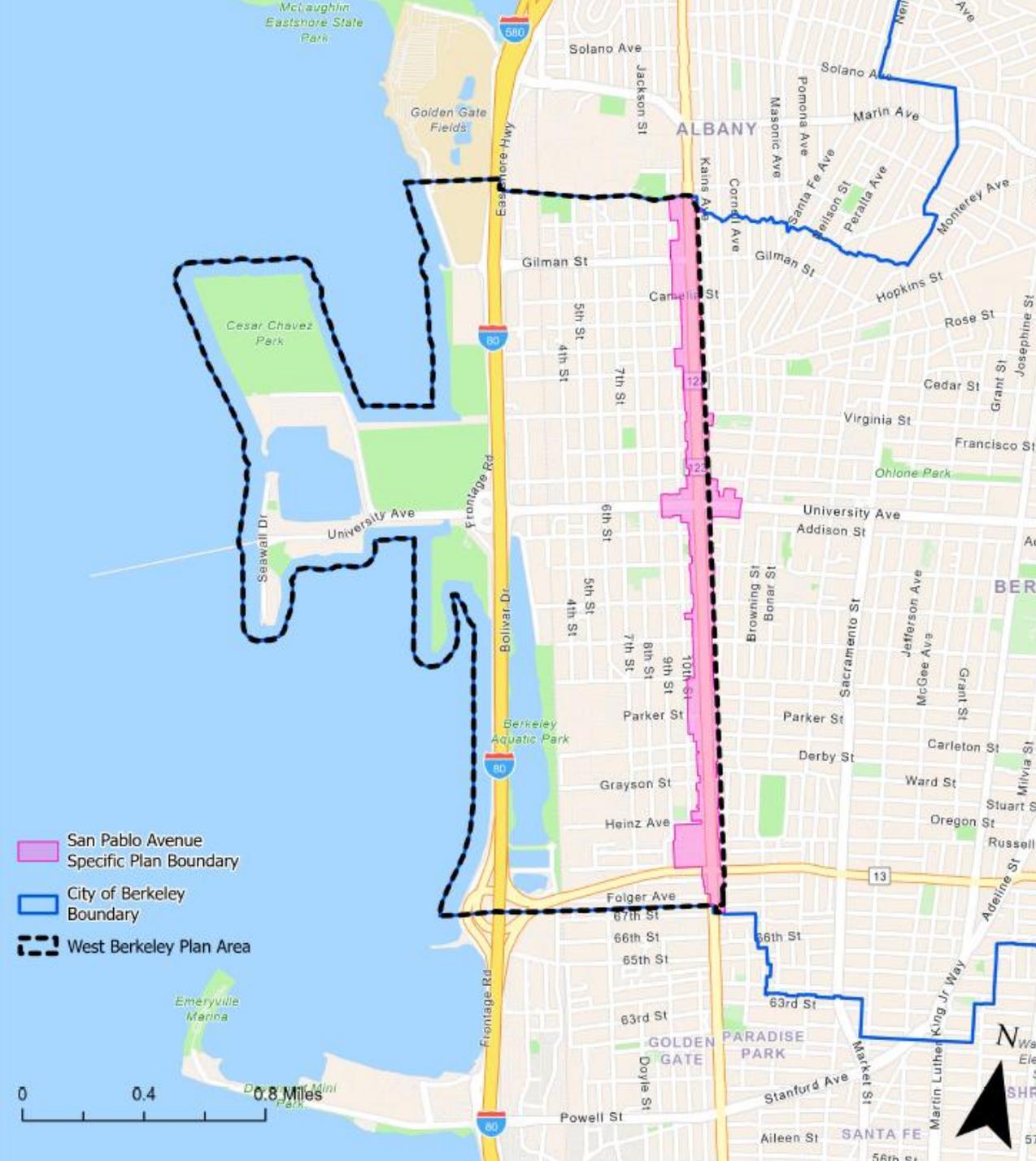
Allowed Uses

Required Zoning Permits for Community Gathering, Entertainment Spaces

Use	Existing C-W	Proposed C-SP
Bar/Cocktail Lounge/Tavern/Tap Room/Wine Tasting	AUP	ZC
Commercial Recreation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ZC (under 5,000 sq. ft. of indoor use) • AUP (5,000 to 10,000 sq. ft. of indoor use) • UPPH (over 10,000 sq. ft. indoor use and any outdoor use) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ZC (under 10,000 sq. ft. of indoor use) • AUP (over 10,000 sq. ft. indoor use and any outdoor use)
Entertainment Establishment	UPPH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUP Outside of Node • ZC inside of Node
Food Service Establishment, 3,000 sq. ft. or larger	AUP	ZC



West Berkeley Plan



West Berkeley Plan (1993)

- Nearly all of the Plan's implementation measures have been completed
- Retirement of the WBP could simplify future policy development in West Berkeley

Question

Should the West Berkeley Plan be amended to adopt this Plan, or should it be retired?

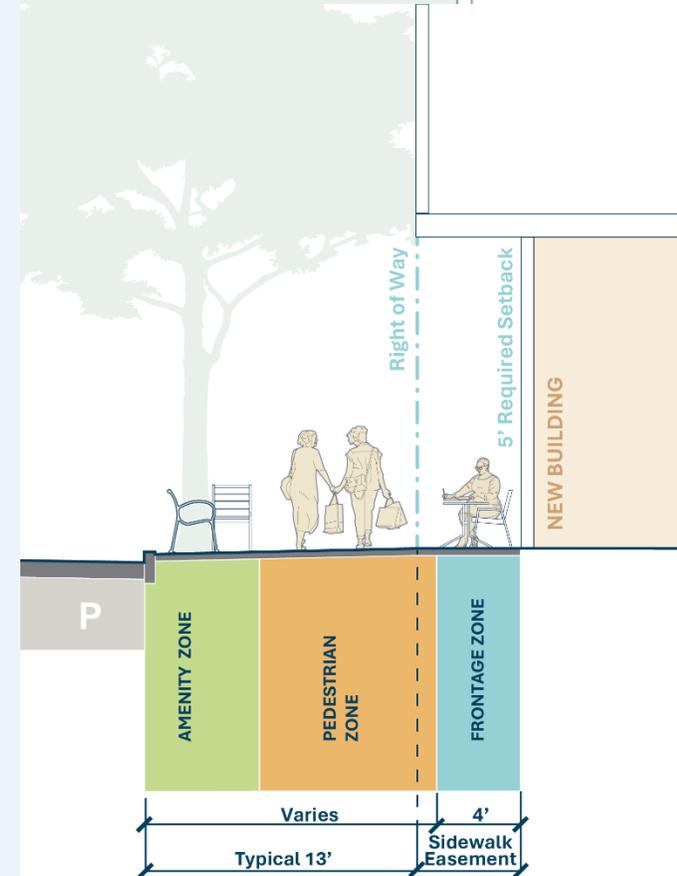
The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a street scene. It shows a row of trees with green foliage in the foreground and middle ground. In the background, there are multi-story buildings with various window patterns. A blue car is visible on the right side of the street. The overall image is out of focus, creating a soft, atmospheric effect.

Other Plan Revisions

Revisions Based on Council Feedback – Privately-Owned Public Open Spaces

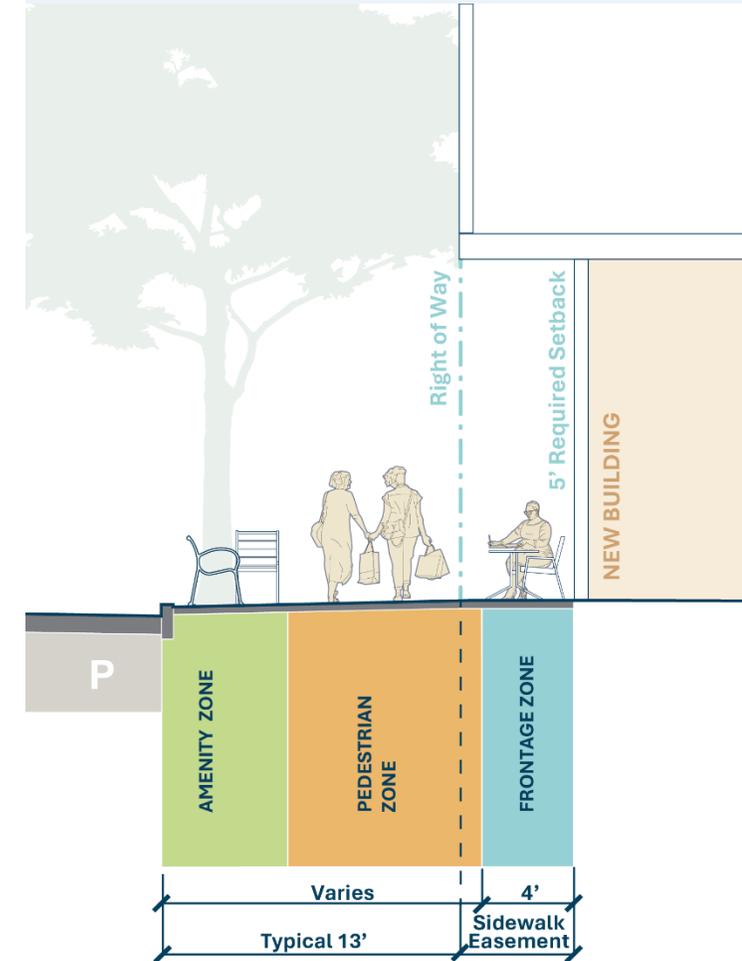
Voluntary Incentive

- POPOS credited in lieu of Usable Open Space, reduce by no more than 70 percent.
- Fee waivers for any associated park or public works review of facilities.
- Public open space community benefit funds to subsidize amenities and programming of the spaces.



Revisions Based on Council Feedback – Sidewalk Widening

Strengthening frontage requirements along San Pablo Avenue to facilitate wider sidewalks and expanded public realm.



Revisions Based on Council Feedback – Design Standards

- Remove small and middle housing
- Revise for more flexibility
- Allow exceptions



Staff Revisions – Economic Development

- ED-P.4: Study Feasibility of Forming a Business Improvement District (BID)
 - Tiered rollout based on revenue collected
 - Funds support investments in public realm only
- ED-P.5: Economic Development Liaison
 - Technical assistance to support establishing BID



Staff Revisions – Maker Spaces

- Encourage light manufacturing compatible with residential.
- Ground floor, within Nodes.
- Allow with Zoning Certificate, subject to conditions to reduce potential conflicts with residential.



Next Steps

Next Steps

- **Winter/Spring 2025/2026**
 - Final Draft Plan, Zoning, Design Standards
- **Summer 2026**
 - Planning Commission Recommendation
 - City Council Adoption