



Our neighborhood was built in 2025, just before I was born.

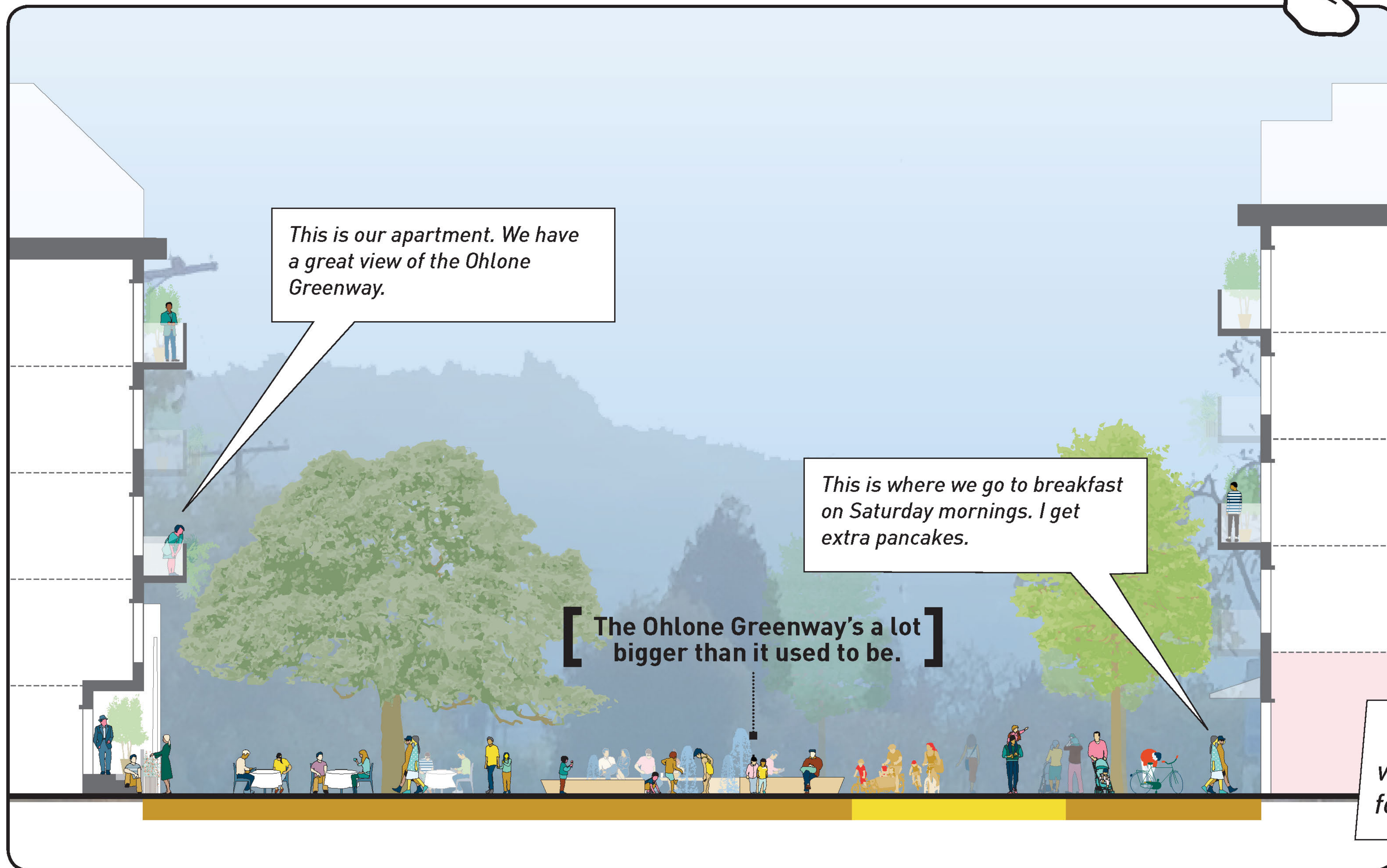
Hi, my name is Mia and this is my neighborhood.



My dad and I wait for mom to get home from work at the station. We buy food for dinner and watch people bike home. It's about 3 minutes to our house.

A proposal based on five principles:

1. Create a neighborhood for all stages of life—especially making safe places for the very young. If it works for kids and elders, it will work for others.
2. Design for diversity. Invite for social diversity by building in architectural diversity—many unit types, and lots of variety in form. Appreciating differences starts at the block level.
3. Use perimeter blocks to provide “soft” courtyards for neighborhood community, “active” exterior edges for lively streets, and residential units with light from two sides.
4. The expanded Ohlone Greenway is the main address, with buildings facing it.
5. Rebuild the public realm—streets, sidewalks, and the Ohlone Greenway—to prioritize people and active mobility.



This is our apartment. We have a great view of the Ohlone Greenway.

This is where we go to breakfast on Saturday mornings. I get extra pancakes.

[The Ohlone Greenway's a lot bigger than it used to be.]



My friend Ian lives down the Greenway. We basically own this block.

Our house is 2322 Ohlone Greenway. When we get home, some of my friends are waiting for me and we play while mom and dad cook.

VISION

North Berkeley Station is a neighborhood hub where active, ecologically sustainable mobility meets regional rail. It is safe, enjoyable and efficient for anyone from eight to 80 years old to reach the Station walking or biking from all directions, and these modes are given top connection priority. Daily necessities are provided as close as possible to the station for maximum convenience. The Station connects to the Bay Area, but also provides a neighborhood-focused destination.

The scale of North Berkeley Station is dense but human. It varies across the site. It is not defined by a perception of large projects, but by the perception that the 40-50' lot widths of the surrounding fabric are also at work here. Facades, buildings and entrances create interest every few seconds at a walking pace. At no point does the development create a scale where it is hard to see people's faces who live on stories above. The public realm meets individual dwelling entrances directly—there aren't vast lobbies or corridors to separate residents from the life of the street. This is a place to be neighborly and to be connected.

North Berkeley Station provides housing options for all income levels and most household sizes found in Berkeley. Long term tenure is guaranteed for those who want it; shorter term rental for those who want to locate near commuter rail is equally available. High quality public and semi-public amenities to support a rich community life for residents and visitors of all ages are integrated into the Station, housing, and the fabric of the public realm around it. The Station is a place to live as much as it is a place to pass through.

North Berkeley Station showcases Berkeley's ambitions for a sustainable city and provides an exemplar for the Bay Area and California. Active mobility and mass transit are given top priority, as are all construction and utility practices that reduce CO2 emissions and waste. Rooftop solar, green roofs, greywater systems, etc. are the norm here. North Berkeley Station is urban while still being green and lush, in keeping with the garden neighborhood that surrounds it.

Parking, to the extent that it is provided, is shared among transit users, residents (unbundled from housing), and other visitors and priced to make driving to the station significantly less desirable on a daily basis than other modes. It is recognized that providing cheap and abundant parking creates negative consequences for all other aspirations of the project, and saddles future generations with its impacts—and so is priced accordingly. Given that the Station provides unparalleled regional rail access, carshare is prioritized over private vehicle ownership for residents. Parking is provided in proportion to the amount the city wishes to see people driving in 30 years.

Streetscape and Public Realm

Ohlone Greenway

Because the Ohlone Greenway is one of Berkeley's premiere pieces of pedestrian- and bicycle-focused infrastructure, and a significant gap exists at the North Berkeley Station, a great opportunity exists to strengthen and reorient the Ohlone Greenway to the North Berkeley Station here. The Greenway can become both recreational and practical infrastructure, reducing the need for driving for those visiting this hub, and providing a model for active mobility infrastructure that connects to mass transit.

The Ohlone Greenway is treated as the primary route and "front" to the project along every frontage. Fences, garage entrances, service areas, and blank facades not provided along the Greenway. The Greenway adjoined by main entrances, gateways and intuitive wayfinding. Public amenities and recreational facilities, such as playgrounds, cafes, community spaces, etc. are oriented to adjoin and be accessible from the Ohlone Greenway.

The Ohlone Greenway is expanded and improved between Acton Street and Virginia Gardens (site of the existing satellite parking lots). The Greenway's width at this section match, at a minimum, other +/- 65' sections of Greenway recently improved to the north of Gilman Street.

The North Berkeley Station is an important hub and landmark along the Ohlone Greenway's 5.3 miles between Ohlone Park in Berkeley and Gateway Park in El Cerrito. (Roughly 1/2 miles to Cedar Rose Park to the north and Grant Street to the east.)

Sacramento Street

Sacramento Street connects Hopkins Street to University Avenue, but currently has no real identity in between. Significant opportunities exist for a "road diet", pedestrian safety measures, aesthetic improvements and stronger neighborhood identity centered around Sacramento.

Signalized intersection and pedestrian crossing beacons are provided at Virginia Street. (This Bicycle Boulevard currently has a dangerous crossing across Sacramento with large numbers of pedestrians and cyclists attempting to stop four lanes of traffic.) The connection between Ohlone Greenway Park east of Sacramento and the North Berkeley Station is strengthened by removing excess asphalt, lane width, travel lanes, and turn lanes along Sacramento between University and Rose. Bulb-outs are provided to shorten crossing pedestrian distances at Virginia, Francisco, and Delaware.

Casual Carpool pickup and carshare is highlighted, as is bus stops, and kiss-and-ride dropoffs along Sacramento. These are important pieces of transit infrastructure whose current configuration is generally confusing.

Delaware Street

Road diet performed by removing turn lanes, reducing lane widths, improving cycle lanes, and reducing corner radii. Delaware requires only 1 lane in each direction.

Acton and Virginia Streets

Road diet by removing turn lanes, reducing lane widths, improving cycle lanes, and reducing corner radii. Acton and Virginia require only 1 lane in each direction.

Internal Blocks

Internal streets create a walkable scale and serve as public space first, circulation second. They may line up with and respect the historical streets (Short and Francisco Streets) but may also create terminal views or function as paths, paseos, woherlfs, etc. by diverging from grid pattern.

Inclusion & Equity

A neighborhood for all Berkeleyans

To the greatest extent possible, the residents of North Berkeley Station represent the general population of the city's demographics. Housing options and amenities are provided that cater to many age ranges and household sizes. Amenities for elders, children, and adults will be integrated with one another to help reduce social isolation and increase community ties across generations.

Various levels of affordability are provided within the same project and on the same streets and blocks. Housing types and costs are to be mixed.

Parcelization and development project size

Smaller scale developments are made feasible by the option of smaller parcelization. Larger footprint projects are required to have multiple designers and/or developers to create architectural heterogeneity and open opportunities to community-based developers.

Safety and Health

The urban physical environment is recognized as an extension of the body and the community. Design supports healthy routines, creates opportunities for building trust and positive daily social interactions, and aligns what is easy with what keeps people safe and healthy.

Active mobility is given top priority—walking and cycling are made easiest to and through the site. The existing high-quality transit is considered to be a "user experience" that connects directly to active modes and includes high quality waiting areas with interest and amenities available during waiting. Healthy retail and food options are incentivized over low-quality options. North Berkeley Station provides places to gather socially both as visitor destination (i.e. cafe or playground) and for residents (patios, courtyards).

Passive surveillance and "eyes on the street" are provided on all public frontages. The Station entrance uses active uses (flower stands, snack kiosks, cafe) to help keep the station interesting and safe at all hours.

Human Scale

Heights

Buildings along Sacramento are up to 6 stories, varying in height. Buildings along Acton, Delaware and Virginia are 2-4 stories. Some buildings interior to the site are up to 8 stories, but only to the extent that the buildings' highest points are not more than 2 additional stories visible above the level of the lower tier, from the far side of surrounding streets. No building height creates a height-to-street-width ratio of taller than 1:1 on exterior streets.

Bulk and Form

Buildings are modulated every 20'. Facades are of high quality materials and differentiate the first story from upper stories. Building entrances are provided no less than 50' apart and preferably less than 40' apart, in keeping with the scale of the surrounding fabric.

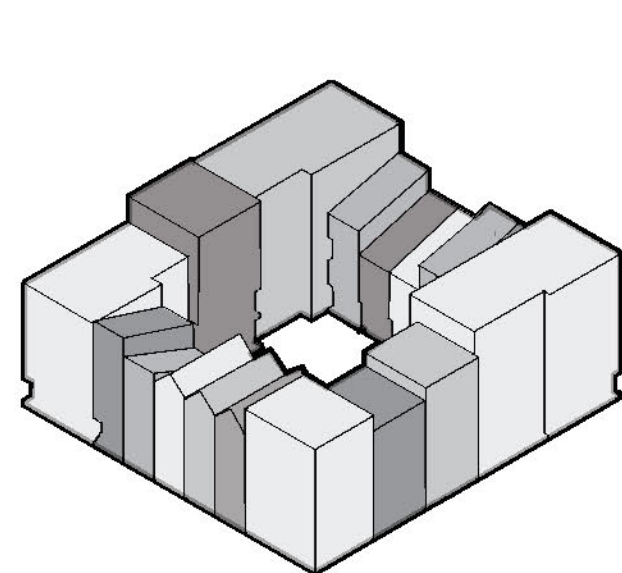
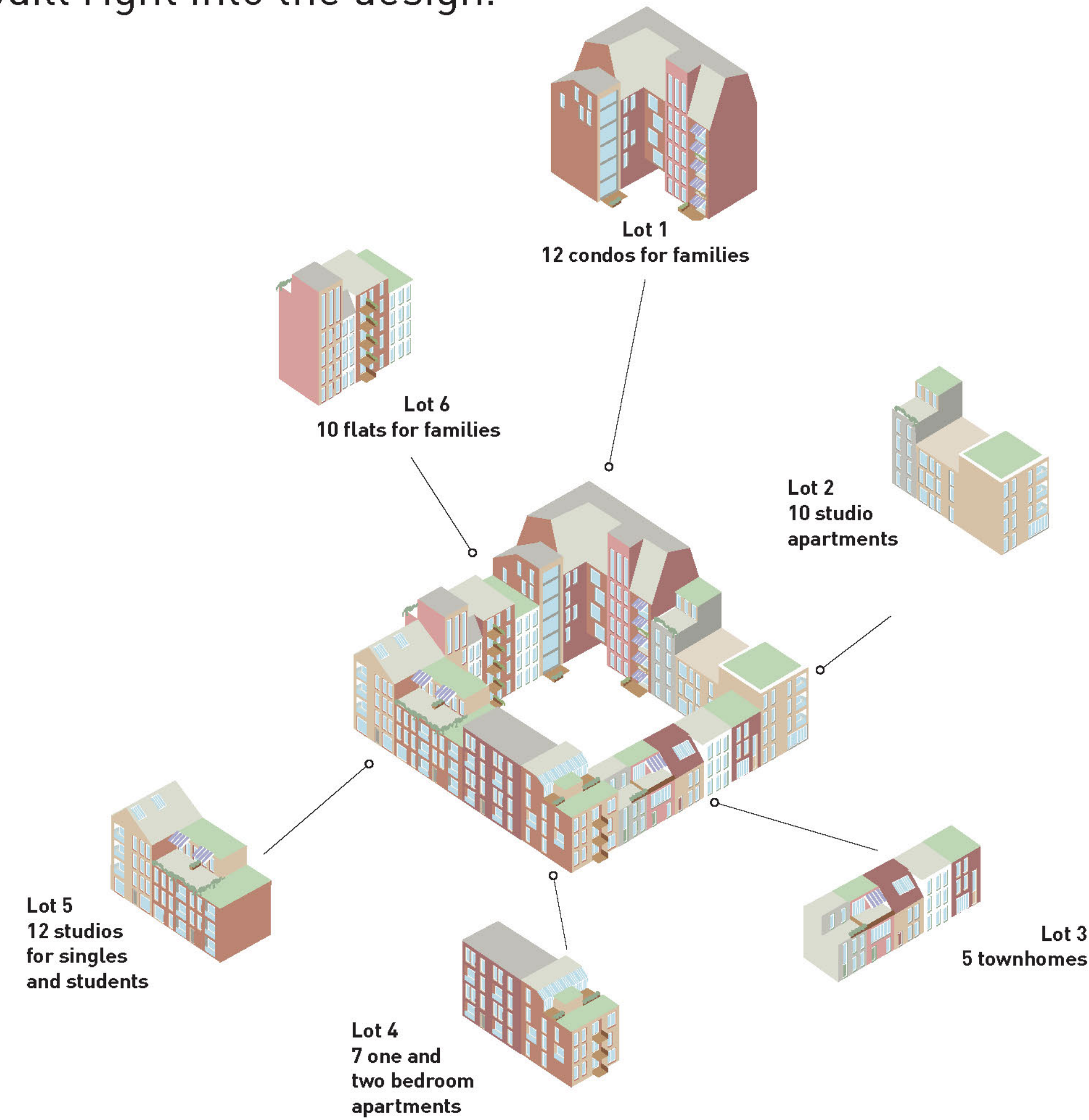
Sociability

Building entrances will provide porches, semi-private places, and transition zones. Upper floors will have operable windows and/or usable balconies. No building entrance serves more than 12 units. Shared courtyards and patios are placed in interior spaces off of main circulation.

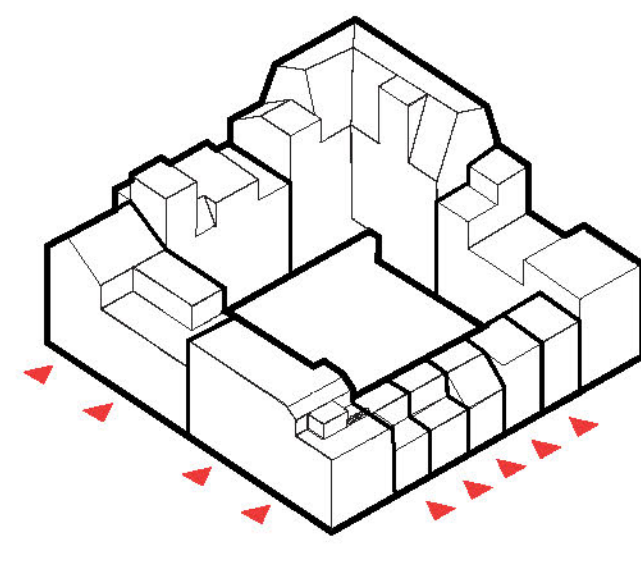


Blocks that keep Berkeley diverse

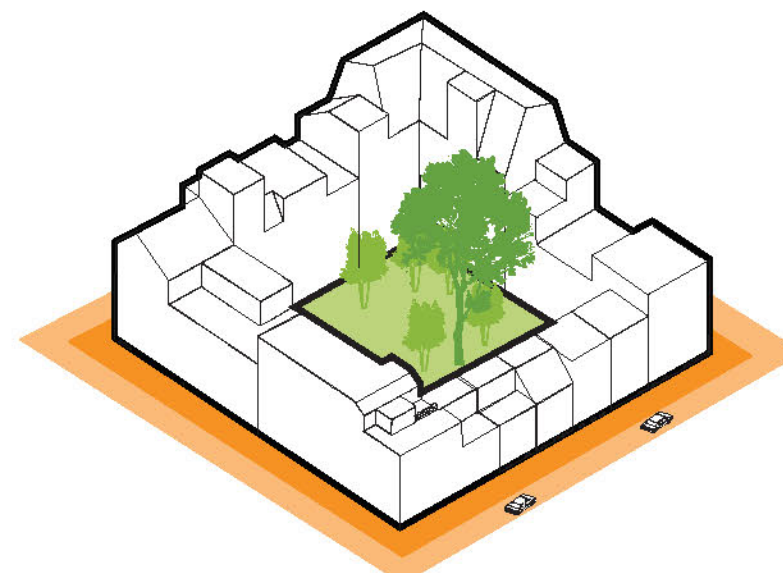
Each block is made of many types of building and homes to accommodate people in different stages of life in the same place: students, empty-nesters, growing families, young adults—at different affordability levels. Diversity is built right into the design.



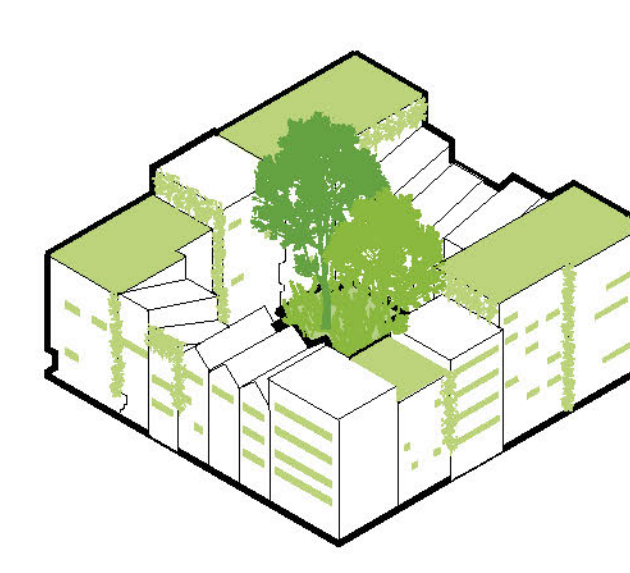
Each block is a mix of buildings—not just one



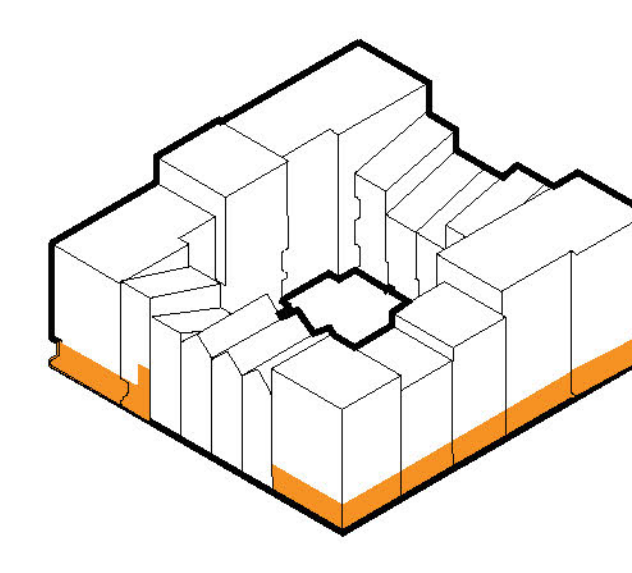
Lots of entrances keep eyes on the street



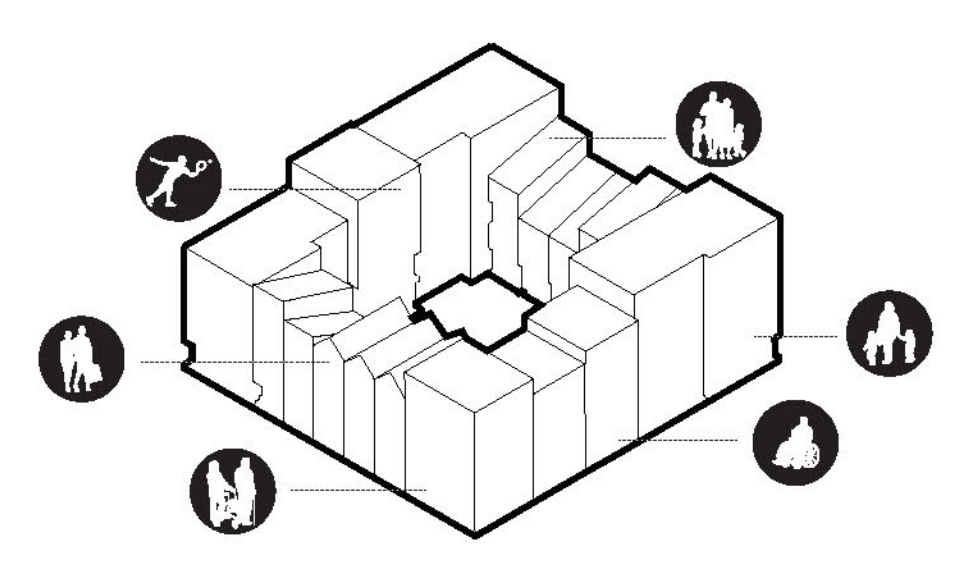
Interior courtyards to socialize with neighbors



Green spaces above and below



Active ground floors on the street



Social diversity within each block

I chose a studio here because I commute on Bart, but everything else I do by bike, from getting groceries to getting around Berkeley.

Our three kids play in our courtyard or in the courtyard across the street. Our townhome is big enough for our family, but the outdoor space adds room too.

We know lots of different people who all live in our building and on our block. I like talking to Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez because they're almost like my grandparents.

I moved to Berkeley as a researcher. We found a good starter apartment.

My husband and I downsized, and living here means we don't need to drive.

