



Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC)

2023-24 Workplan and 2022-23 Workplan Overview

Date approved by PTC April 26, 2023

Staff Liaison: Amy French, Chief Planning Official, Planning and Development Services (PDS)

Lead Department: Planning and Development Services (PDS); Office of Transportation (OOT)

About the Commission

The Planning & Transportation Commission's work plan covered April 2022 - April 2023. The members and chairs are listed below. Members serve 4-year terms. The PTC has 7 members. For more information about Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) please visit our webpage, go to <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/boards/ptc/default.asp>

Current Commissioners

- Doria Summa (Chair)
- Bryna Chang (Vice Chair)
- Bart Hechtman
- Keith Reckdahl
- Carolyn Templeton
- Allen Akin
- George Lu

Mission Statement

The Planning & Transportation Commission advises the City Council, Planning Director, and Transportation Director on land use and transportation matters, including the Comprehensive Plan, zoning, transportation programs, and related matters. The Commission's primary responsibilities include:

- Preparing and making recommendations to the City Council on the City's Comprehensive Plan and applying the Comprehensive Plan to proposed development, public facilities, and transportation in Palo Alto
- Considering and making recommendations to the City Council on zoning map and zoning ordinance changes; any changes to Title 18 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code must be reviewed by the PTC and the City Council
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on subdivisions and Site and Design Reviews, on appeals on variances and use permits
- Considering other policies and programs affecting development and land use in Palo Alto for final City Council action
- Reviewing and making recommendations on individual projects as described in the Municipal Code, and Open Space development;
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on transportation, parking, and other related mobility issues
- Ensuring robust community engagement and dialogue regarding planning, land use, and transportation and providing recommendations to the City Council regarding these matters and incorporating the public discussion. The PTC hearings provide a forum for public comment and public interaction

Prior Year Accomplishments

The PTC addressed many items on the 2022-2023 PTC work plan including considering ordinances, providing feedback during study sessions, and recommending policy direction on a variety of topics. That plan can be found here: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/planning-and-transportation-commission/planning-and-transportation-commission-2022-work-plan.pdf>. Accomplishments the PTC contributed to include Housing Element draft and EIR addendum, completing Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance Amendment, NVCAP preferred plan Council endorsement, Admin draft NVCAP, ADU ordinance update to align with SB897 and AB2221, SB9 ordinance, electrification ordinance, retail interim ordinance extension (CUP thresholds), Project Homekey Comp Plan amendment, 3200 Park Boulevard, 1700 Embarcadero, 660 University Comp Plan and PHZ, traffic safety, annual reports.



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PROJECT/GOAL A: Road Safety

Several safety-related reports will come to PTC, specifically the Crescent Park Traffic Calming pilot, the Caltrain Corridor Quiet Zone Project, and a Federally-funded Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan.

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Opportunity to investigate an area of considerable public concern.	Reports will be shared as they are drafted or completed.	The Police Department may need to provide additional data/information.	Substantive and informative discussion.	No
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists is important. Reducing and/or eliminating injury and death resulting from collisions is an important priority for many residents. A public dialogue at the PTC is welcomed by those concerned members of the public.		The challenges in this area are addressed through existing committees and active projects. The work continues regardless.		No

PROJECT/GOAL B: Retail Recovery

Retail Recovery, the Future of Retail, and Retail Preservation: This project consists of several interrelated and overlapping topics and council assignments.

The high-level study contract PDS is overseeing has an expanded scope for 2023 to consider state legislation AB2097 and include further outreach beyond the efforts in 2022.

The PTC will eventually resume discussion of a permanent ordinance regarding conditional use permit thresholds and may take up the Council referral to evaluate the retail preservation ordinance. The City's economic development staff oversaw a contract to develop an economic development strategy which was presented to City Council in March 2023. Efforts are aligned and done in coordination with broader economic development efforts. The PTC is slated to discuss the changes to Title 18 this summer, to implement the permanent parklet program for recommendation to City Council.

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Overall, this project aims to ensure a strong climate for retail businesses in Palo Alto that can allow Palo Altans to meet their daily needs and have a high quality of life.	The high-level reviews of trends and best practices in retail are underway; In March, Council reviewed a retail strategy document and parklet standards. The PTC review of CUP thresholds in 2022 resulted in the extension of the interim ordinance.	Consultant work, staff oversight and meetings preparation, and participation from the local retail community.	These interrelated projects may result in the development of new ordinances and/or broader policy recommendations to the City Council.	Yes - Council assigned.
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The recovery from the pandemic as well as any shifts in retail trends that will endure beyond the pandemic are occurring and can benefit from further and refined action by the City.		While this is an impactful body of work, the need to get it right and coordinate with existing and new resources outweighs the need to quickly pursue the work.		Yes

Coordinated Area Plan Planning – This updated goal carries forward the prior year goal regarding neighborhood planning approaches and overall effectiveness of various approaches to neighborhood planning. The staff and PTC will consider new neighborhoods that may result from the 6th cycle Housing Element sites and demand for public facilities/services. Council directed staff to construct a preliminary for starting new coordinated area plans for San Antonio Road; California Ave; Downtown; and El Camino Real. This macro discussion will likely involve study sessions with the Architectural Review Board jointly with the PTC about the scope of work. This will include process analysis – to study how a CAP process can be different (more efficient) than the NVCAP process,

PROJECT/GOAL C: CAP Planning

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
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Development of preliminary schedule for new CAPs will enable City Council to provide direction	By December 2023	Staff time to research and prepare a staff report to PTC and ARB	Successful conversation and possible identification of an approach (or approaches) to guide the City's future.	No
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Council directed work on a preliminary schedule by the end of 2023		It would be timely to hold study sessions after the Housing Element has been certified		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL D: North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan – Finalizing the plan to return to the PTC and City Council for adoption				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Transit oriented neighborhood	June 2023 is targeted for return to PTC	Consultant resources to complete the project	An adopted area plan.	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Per grant requirements, the project must be completed by June 2025. However the goal is still to complete the plan in 2023 in part to keep within budget.		N/A		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL E: Housing Element Adoption and Implementation				
The PTC reviewed the draft Housing Element the city submitted to HCD on March 8. Council and PTC will jointly review and potentially adopt the 6 th cycle HE incorporating responses to HCD comments on May 8, 2023. Then staff begins preparing the required zone changes and Comp Plan amendments to achieve the RHNA housing yields. Housing Incentive Program expansion & adjustments The next step is the phased implementation of the Housing Element programs that include implementing ordinances - Citywide rezoning, by-right housing, allowing/increasing residential density in GM/ROLM, Housing Incentive Program ordinance – expansion to other zones, Objective Standards in SOFA ordinance.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Compliant housing element and programs to encourage housing development	PTC and Council review May 8 th , submittal of final draft for HCD certification	Staff and consultant resources employed	Compliant Housing Element that meets the needs of current and future Palo Altans	Yes - State Mandated Policy Development
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
City subject to Builder's Remedy - Compliance with state law is necessary to prevent invalidation of the local ordinance.		N/A		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL F-1: State Law Implementation - 2021-2023 Laws				
SB9 and AB2097 Implementation and related policy considerations. SB9 standards - Standards will be further studied in 2023 with PTC assistance and SB9 adjustment legislation at state level in process may be acted upon and further adjustments to standards or the ordinance may be needed. AB2097 policy related discussions and including development of map, handout, and amendment to Title 18 parking regulations. Development of policy considerations related to TDRs in Downtown and SOFA, parking district policies and in lieu parking fees, alternative parking facilities, loading zone and ride-share passenger loading; AB2097 went into effect January 2023.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Provide clarity to property owners and potential developers.	Spring 2023 through November 2023	Staff resources have been assigned.	Adoption of ordinance amendments	Yes - State
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
		N/A		Possibly - direction in April
PROJECT/GOAL F-2: State Law Implementation - 2023 - 2024 Laws				
AB2011/SB6 Implementation: July 2023 effective, Ordinances implementing affordable/mixed-income housing by-right in commercial zones, other state legislation to pass in fall 2023 becoming effective in 2024				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED

Meet state law regarding housing development.	Draft ordinance AB2011-SB6 should be considered by the PTC in summer 2023	Need to assign resources (staff)	Adopted ordinance	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Prior to July 1, 2023 effective date for state laws AB2011 and SB6		Laws adopted fall 2023 that may have a July 2024 effectiveness date		No
PROJECT/GOAL G: Parking Programs The PTC will receive an update regarding options for improving the City's parking programs. This includes a Roadmap for Residential Parking Permit Program improvements and commercial parking improvements. Parking Data Portal - PTC will receive an update regarding parking availability data. The new license plate reader technology allows for regular collection and reporting of parking availability.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Improved parking operations.	Ongoing.	Ongoing.	Feedback from PTC and continued engagement from the public.	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The staff work behind the project continues; proposed updates help advance the work. Additionally, the public welcomes opportunities to engage w/the PTC on this topic.		This project represents a large body of ongoing work to manage parking supply and parking policy.		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL H: On-Demand Transit Program Staff expects to bring a one-year evaluation of the Palo Alto Link on-demand transit service to PTC in Spring of 2024.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
On-demand transit program to provide service, understanding, and insight into future transit programs.	Spring 2024	Grant money has been awarded for the project. Additional funding is needed to extend the service and is being pursued.	Feedback, knowledge, and insight.	Council accepted grant award.
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Grant project to be executed w/in prescribed timeline.		Must unfold as resources are procured.		No
PROJECT/GOAL I: Bike and Ped Transportation Plan Update A citywide evaluation of the bicycle network and pedestrian network. The plan will identify opportunities to enhance and connect the network.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Updated bike and ped transportation plan	Study sessions on visioning, needs and concerns in 2023. Final plan update in 2024	Consultant resources are being procured.	Updated bike and ped plan.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
N/A		Update is timely, but not mandated by any state laws.		No

PROJECT/GOALJ: Car-Free Streets: California Avenue and Ramona Street. Planning and design of alternatives for permanent closures.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Evaluate alternatives for street closures to improve placemaking and provide economic benefit to local businesses.	2023-2024.	Funds for consultant resources must be appropriated and a consultant procured.	Recommendation made to Council.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The study and subsequent recommendation/decision needed for local businesses to plan effectively.		The temporary closure can continue while the study takes place.		Yes - Council
PROJECT/GOAL K: RRP Rental Registry Program				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
The ordinance enables the city to establish a rental registry to learn about the Palo Alto rental landscape; make data-informed policy decisions that protect public health, safety and welfare of residents and support stability, certainty, and fairness in the rental market for renters and landlords. In addition, the program would provide awareness to the public of renter protections.	PTC to review in late May 2023	Staff time to draft reports to the PTC, HRC, Policy & Services Committee and City Council Will need budget for implementation of registry software and ongoing maintenance of program.	Adopted ordinance enabling registry program. Procurement of vendor to establish registry software and launch of registry by end of year.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Adoption of an ordinance.		Other aspects of the project are occurring concurrently, such as the request for proposals.		Yes - Council
PROJECT/GOAL L: Bird Safe Glass/Dark Skies Ordinance				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
A Council objective is to protect birds in Palo Alto; set new standards for development, rather than rely on general policies or subjective guidelines	TBD	Staff is reaching out to consultant to perform this work	Ordinance adoption	No
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Meet with a consultant and identify budget, prepare draft ordinance for PTC review and recommendation to City Council		Complete the work with Council adoption of ordinance		Yes - Council
PROJECT/GOAL M: Comprehensive Plan Policy Implementation. This includes Streamside Corridor changes in Title 18 and other Comp Plan policies that lead to Title 18 revisions.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED/LOCAL LAW/COUNCIL APPROVED
Work through the relevant remaining Comprehensive Plan policies and programs to completion	TBD – need to work through the list and identify priorities; Staff identifies these tasks in annual reports	Staff and consultant assistance – during a year when staff resources will be focused on implementation of the Housing Element	Adopted ordinances to amend Title 18	No
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL
Some of the programs and policies are higher priority		Some of the programs and policies are lower priority		Yes – Comprehensive Plan