

# Planning & Transportation Commission Application

Submitted on	15 March 2024, 9:08pm
Receipt number	46
Related form version	10

## Personal Information

Name	Ashish Bhattacharya
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Cell Phone Number	[REDACTED]
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Home Phone Number	
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Email Address	[REDACTED]
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Are you a Palo Alto resident?	Yes
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Address	[REDACTED]
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City	[REDACTED]
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Postal Code	[REDACTED]
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Do you have any relatives or members of your household who are employed by the City of Palo Alto, who are currently serving on the City Council, or who are Commissioners or Board Members?	No
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Are you available and committed to complete the term applied for?	Yes
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<b>Fair Political Practices</b>	No
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California state law requires board/commission members to file a disclosure of financial interests ([Fair Political Practices Commission](#), [Conflict of Interest Form 700](#)).

Do you/your spouse have an investment in, or do you or your spouse serve as an officer or director of, a company doing business in Palo Alto which you believe is likely to:

1. Engage in business with the City;
2. Provide products or services for City projects; or
3. Be affected by decisions of this Board or Commission?

Excluding your principal residence, do you or your spouse own real property in Palo Alto?	No
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How did you learn about the vacancy on the Planning and	City Website
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## Consent to Publish Personal Information on the City of Palo Alto Website

Read the code, and check only ONE option below:

I request that the City of Palo Alto redact my home address, phone numbers, and email address from the attached Board and Commission Application prior to posting to the City's website.

## Personal and Job Experience

Occupation

Engineer

Please list your relevant education, training, experience, certificates of training, licenses, and professional registration. If describing work experience, please include company/employer name and occupation.

I'm a Computer Engineering graduate and have taken management courses at Stanford and USC. I manage a large team at my cyber security company. I'm involved in planning, strategy and execution of large initiatives

Please describe your involvement in community activities, volunteer and civic organizations, including dates and any offices held.

I am an active member of Canopy which is spearheading the green revolution. I have assisted my daughter to run a farm to table non profit which helps farmers connect with local communities. I've been a model PA citizen for the past 17 years having put my children through education and participated in all relevant community activities.

## Application Questions

1. Why are you interested in serving on the Planning & Transportation Commission and what experience would you bring to the position?

I want to improve the infrastructure in the city. The roads are in a very bad shape. There is a very big homelessness issue and we will need to build reasonable accommodations. Also I'm worried about the pedestrian accidents that happen regularly. I will find new means and ways to improve all of this through technology and outreach

2. Please describe an issue that recently came before the Commission that is of particular interest to you and describe why you are interested in it. If you have never been to a Commission meeting, you can view archived videos from the Midpen Media Center.

Archived video meetings are available from the [Midpen Media Center](#).

Pedestrian safety  
Biking lanes.  
Overbridges on train intersections  
Senior housing and safety

3. If appointed, what specific goals would you like to see the Planning and Transportation Commission achieve, and how would you help in the process?

Better infrastructure  
Use latest technology to improve driver and pedestrian safety  
Address homelessness and plan development of residential and commercial units  
Improve roads and manage traffic congestion.  
Children safety

4. Planning and Transportation Commission Members work with the documents listed below. If you have experience with any of these documents, please describe that experience. Experience with these documents is not required for selection.

[Palo Alto 2030 Comprehensive Plan \(2017\)](#)

[Zoning Code](#)

[City Charter](#)

[California Environmental Quality Act](#)

[El Camino Real Design Guidelines](#)

[El Camino Real Master Plan Study \(2007\)](#)

[Area Plans such as the South of Forest Avenue \(SOFA\) I \(2000\) and II \(2003\)](#)

[Plans](#)

[Baylands Master Plan \(2008\)](#)

Palo Alto zoning code  
El Camino real master plan

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If you'd like to provide any additional documents, please upload below.

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**Please confirm that you have read the Boards and Commissions Handbook.**

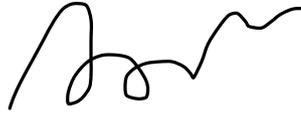
Yes

View the [Boards and Commissions Handbook](#).

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**Signature**

Name of signatory: Ashish Bhattacharya



[Link to signature](#)

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**Date Completed**

3/15/2024

# Planning & Transportation Commission Application

Submitted on 27 January 2024, 10:14am  
Receipt number 41  
Related form version 10

## Personal Information

Name barton hechtman

Cell Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Home Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Are you a Palo Alto resident?

Yes

Address

[REDACTED]

City

[REDACTED]

Postal Code

[REDACTED]

Do you have any relatives or members of your household who are employed by the City of Palo Alto, who are currently serving on the City Council, or who are Commissioners or Board Members?

Yes

Are you available and committed to complete the term applied for?

Yes

**Fair Political Practices**

No

California state law requires board/commission members to file a disclosure of financial interests ([Fair Political Practices Commission](#), [Conflict of Interest Form 700](#)).

Do you/your spouse have an investment in, or do you or your spouse serve as an officer or director of, a company doing business in Palo Alto which you believe is likely to:

1. Engage in business with the City;
2. Provide products or services for City projects; or
3. Be affected by decisions of this Board or Commission?

Excluding your principal residence, do you or your spouse own real property in Palo Alto?

No

How did you learn about the vacancy on the Planning and

Other: I am a PTC Commissioner who's term is expiring.

## Consent to Publish Personal Information on the City of Palo Alto Website

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Read the code, and check only ONE option below:

I give permission for the City of Palo Alto to post to the City's website the attached Board and Commission Application intact. I have read and understand my rights under Government Code Section 6254.21. I may revoke this permission at any time by providing written notice to the Palo Alto City Clerk.

## Personal and Job Experience

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Occupation

Attorney

Please list your relevant education, training, experience, certificates of training, licenses, and professional registration. If describing work experience, please include company/employer name and occupation.

I am a California-licensed attorney, specializing in land use, zoning and eminent domain law, since 1987. I am a member of the law firm Matteoni, O'Laughlin & Hechtman.

I have appeared before Planning Commissions, City Councils, and Boards of Supervisors well over one hundred times, primarily within Santa Clara County, but also in surrounding counties.

I was the assistant City Attorney for the City of Scotts Valley for three years ('91-'94) where my principal responsibilities were to advise the Planning Commission and Planning Staff.

I have been a PTC Commissioner since January of 2020.

Please describe your involvement in community activities, volunteer and civic organizations, including dates and any offices held.

Served on the Crescent Park Neighborhood Association Board of Directors for perhaps three years approximately twenty years ago.

Was a member of the Site Council for one or two years at Ohlone Elementary School more than fifteen years ago.

Was an AYSO referee for two or three years, an assistant basketball coach for NJB one year, and volunteered for various tasks with the Greenmeadow swim team and Palo Alto little league during the years our three kids were in those programs.

Served on the Board of Directors at Congregation Etz Chayim from 6/10 until 1/18, including two years as president of the Board. Active before, during and after my Board duty as a class parent, design committee member and in a variety of other roles.

Have been a PTC Commissioner since January of 2020

## Application Questions

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1. Why are you interested in serving on the Planning & Transportation Commission and what experience would you bring to the position?

I have spent most of my career in work related to urban development. The kind of planning issues faced by the PTC are at the core of my law practice.

In my land use work, I am often retained to assist with new residential and/or commercial projects, or use permits for new businesses. I frequently study the local jurisdiction's planning documents to help shape the project to fit the regulatory scheme, and sometimes seek to change the regulatory scheme to fit the project. Most of this work includes interaction with planning staff, and often, appearances before the local planning commission.

Similarly, planning issues are at the heart of my eminent domain practice, because a condemnation case requires an analysis of the uses to which the land is adaptable under applicable regulations to determine its value.

I enjoy this work and for the past four years, I have used my knowledge to help Palo Alto make wise planning decisions. I would like to continue to do that for four more years.

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**2. Please describe an issue that recently came before the Commission that is of particular interest to you and describe why you are interested in it. If you have never been to a Commission meeting, you can view archived videos from the Midpen Media Center.**

Archived video meetings are available from the [Midpen Media Center](#).

Since Castilleja last passed through the PTC on its way to completing its epic journey through our use permit amendment approval process, certainly the most important issue the PTC has wrestled with is the updated Housing Element.

I have no illusion that 6087 new residential units or anything remotely approaching that will get built by 2031, and I share the belief that the methodology by which the HCD arrived at that number is flawed. But the planning that is now legally required to make that volume of development a possibility is a Herculean task that has and will continue to occupy the PTC, the City Council and our planning staff.

I'm interested in this issue because this city is my city, these housing pressures are going to dramatically change my city, and the leaders of this city are going to have to decide whether we want that change thrust upon us, or will we shape that change by planning in a way that incentivizes and makes feasible the kind of change we want.

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**3. If appointed, what specific goals would you like to see the Planning and Transportation Commission achieve, and how would you help in the process?**

If appointed, I would like to see the PTC achieve decision-making authority. Palo Alto is the only jurisdiction I am aware of (both in this County and in all the other Bay Area cities and counties I have worked in) where the planning commission is a purely advisory body. Providing the PTC with decision-making authority for appropriate types of decisions, subject to appeal to the City Council, will empower the Commission and provide a more rewarding experience for its commissioners. Additionally, I believe that the City Council will find that it results in a reduction in the City Council's workload (because most appealable decisions are not appealed) and more robust public participation at PTC hearings (since the decision might be final), without any reduction in the City Council's power (because PTC decisions can be appealed). I would help in that process by creating a matrix of the "review authority" in all other jurisdictions in this County to illuminate the options available.

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**4. Planning and Transportation Commission Members work with the documents listed below. If you have experience with any of these documents, please describe that experience. Experience with these documents is not required for selection.**

[Palo Alto 2030 Comprehensive Plan \(2017\)](#)

[Zoning Code](#)

[City Charter](#)

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[El Camino Real Design Guidelines](#)

[El Camino Real Master Plan Study \(2007\)](#)

[Area Plans such as the South of Forest Avenue \(SOFA\) I \(2000\) and II \(2003\) Plans](#)

[Baylands Master Plan \(2008\)](#)

During my time as a PTC Commissioner, I think that the two areas to which the PTC has devoted the most time are zoning code amendments and the new Housing Element, which is part of the 2030 Comp Plan, we apply CEQA to every discretionary project, and I believe I have interacted with the other listed documents to a lesser extent.

Additionally, I have analogous experience with similar documents in numerous other Bay Area jurisdictions. I have worked extensively with general plans, specific plans, zoning codes, design guidelines, and overlays, and understand the hierarchy of these planning documents, how they work together, how to harmonize inconsistencies between them, and what happens when you can't.

A substantial part of my law practice involves representing applicants for discretionary governmental approvals; those require CEQA review. I have worked on projects involving every category of CEQA document and have defended governmental CEQA decisions in court on four occasions.

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**If you'd like to provide any additional documents, please upload below.**

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**Please confirm that you have read the Boards and Commissions Handbook.**

Yes

View the [Boards and Commissions Handbook](#).

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**Signature**

Name of signatory: Barton Hechtman



[Link to signature](#)

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**Date Completed**

01/27/2024