



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR

Lead Department: City Manager

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Report #:2504-4466

TITLE

2025 City Council Priority Objectives, and Committee Objectives and Workplans

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the 2025 City Council Priority Objectives, and Committee Objectives and Workplans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Palo Alto's 2025 City Council Priority Objectives and associated Committee Workplans outline a comprehensive roadmap to advance the City's core priorities throughout the calendar year. Following Council's adoption of the 2025 priorities—Economic Development & Retail Vibrancy; Climate Action and Adaptation & Natural Environment Protection; Implementing Housing Strategies for Social & Economic Balance; and Public Safety, Wellness & Belonging—staff has developed a set of 70 objectives to be implemented in alignment with these priorities.

This report reflects extensive City Council feedback from the March 17, 2025 meeting, resulting in a refined and actionable list of objectives. Each objective includes estimated completion timelines, crossover benefits across multiple priorities, and funding requirements, all of which will inform budget planning for FY 2026.

The report also includes updates to the Climate Action & Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee and the Cubberley Ad Hoc Committee Objectives and includes current workplans for both the Policy & Services Committee and the Finance Committee.

BACKGROUND

Following the City Council approval of its Priorities, staff developed and recommended for City Council approval a set of objectives to advance each priority throughout the calendar year. The 2025 Priorities are:

- Economic Development & Retail Vibrancy
- Climate Action and Adaptation, & Natural Environment Protection
- Implementing Housing Strategies for Social & Economic Balance
- Public Safety, Wellness & Belonging

On March 17, 2025¹, the City Council completed its review of the proposed 2025 City Council Priority Objectives, including Committee Objectives and Workplans. This report incorporates the Council’s feedback and is recommended for final approval. Upon adoption, staff will define the scope and milestones for each objective and provide quarterly progress updates.

ANALYSIS

This report organizes the City Council’s feedback on the 2025 Priority Objectives, as well as Committee Objective and Workplans. A total of 70 objectives are being recommended for City Council approval, Attachment A includes the summary table with the following elements:

Carryforward/Revised/New- Objectives annotated by (C) are objectives that are carried over from the 2024 list. (R) are objectives from the 2024 list that may have a second phase to the project and have been revised to reflect 2025 goals. The number designation from the 2024 workplan is shown in parentheses. New Objectives (N) reflect a project that is new in 2025.

Objective Description- Summarizes the activity to be accomplished in calendar year 2025, and if needed, a brief sentence describing the project. Once approved, a more thorough description of the project and milestones will return to City Council at a later meeting.

Estimated Completion- Reflects the 2025 calendar quarter in which the Objective is expected to be completed, subject to change. Q1 is January-March, Q2 is April-June, Q3 is July-September, and Q4 is October-December.

City Council Priority Crossover- Identifies objectives that advance more than one City Council Priority.

Funding Needed- Reflects a project that requires additional resources (staffing, capital investment, or professional services) to achieve and complete the activity beyond current budgeted levels. \$ - up to 50K, \$\$ - 51-400K, \$\$\$ - 500K+. Additional resources will be considered for inclusion in the 2025-26 annual budget.

¹ March 17, 2025 City Council Meeting:

<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/meetings/ItemWithTemplateType?id=7574&meetingTemplateType=2&compiledMeetingDocumentId=13521>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RETAIL VIBRANCY

Objective: (Formerly Row 10) **Enhance partnerships with private-sector stakeholders.** *Meet regularly with businesses, brokers, property owners, and other private-sector partners to shape, inform, and enhance economic development efforts.* (10)

Council Feedback: This objective reflects ongoing core work, recommend removing or re-writing to reflect a specific intention.

Staff Response: Objective has been removed from the list. The Retail Committee has designated committee members to serve as liaisons to various local business groups.

Objective: **ED6. Council approval of funding to continue Downtown cleanliness enhancements and other medium-term investments.** Include necessary proposals and budget appropriations as part of the development of the FY 2026 Operating Budget to continue enhanced Downtown Cleanliness enhancements and other medium-term investments such as a Mobility Hub.

City Council Feedback: Concrete action should be placed in reactivating the intermodal center and primarily the station building in recognition of future partnership with Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

Staff Response: Objective now reflects investing in the Mobility Hub as a medium-term enhancement in the Downtown area.

Objective: **ED 8. Council approval of a final signage plan for California Avenue and funding appropriations.** *Review the signage plan for California Avenue with the Architectural Review Board (ARB), incorporate feedback, and seek Council approval to implement the plan.* (2)

City Council Feedback: Identify concrete actions such as milestones and completion dates.

Staff Response: The near-term signage improvements for California Avenue include replacement of El Camino Real (ECR) and Oregon Expressway signs to be completed by calendar year Q3. Longer-term improvements will include formulating a comprehensive sign program, with a proposal to be developed and reviewed by Q3, and built into Fiscal Year 2027 CIP budget cycle, for implementation in Q3 of 2026.

Objective: **ED 12. Refine destination marketing efforts and enhance Palo Alto's international reputation.** *Meet with hospitality partners and incubator/accelerators to assess willingness to partner with the City on destination marketing efforts and propose next steps, including necessary appropriation actions, to City Council.*

City Council Feedback: Palo Alto is internationally known for incubator and innovative businesses, we should be capitalizing on our reputation instead of losing it.

Staff Response: The objective has been edited to capture City Council feedback to recognize our incubator/accelerators partners and the City of Palo Alto's international reputation on business innovation.

CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION, & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

New Objective: **CA 22. Complete implementation of the Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan, including Strategy 4 – conducting a cost/benefit analysis of flexible energy resources such as battery storage and microgrids (including evaluation of the airport microgrid), and Strategy 5 – recommending potential programs for Council consideration.**

City Council Feedback: Initiate work on assessing how to establish a microgrid and battery storage system in Palo Alto.

Staff Response: Staff has added a new objective to address City Council feedback.

Objective: **CA 23. Develop and obtain Council approval for strategies and a 2026/2027 work plan for the next phase of S/CAP implementation of climate and sustainability goals,** including engaging with Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition on its Heat Mapping project for possible inclusion.

City Council Feedback: Keep objective high level, consider removing Palo Alto Student Coalition.

Staff Response: Objective has been edited with recommended edits.

New Objective: **CA 25. Identify locations and design concepts for additional east-west bicycle and pedestrian crossings of the Caltrain railroad tracks in the southern part of the city.**

Council Feedback: There is a missing objective on the East-West bike/pedestrian grade crossing project, would like to see it listed as recommendations will come back to City Council this year.

Staff Response: A new objective has been added to incorporate recommendations from the South Palo Alto Bike/Pedestrian Connectivity project, which will be reviewed by the City Council. By Q4 2025, community engagement efforts will focus on identifying preferred crossing locations, design options, and related network improvements for east-west bicycle and pedestrian grade crossings. A formal report summarizing these recommendations will be publicly circulated and presented for City Council adoption in 2026. Subsequent steps will include pursuing grant funding for final design and construction.

IMPLEMENTING HOUSING STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL & ECONOMIC BALANCE

Objective: **IHS 48. Present to Council the Downtown Housing Plan Community Assessment report and receive Council direction on draft housing plan scenarios.** *Continue advancing the plan development and public engagement strategy to prepare draft housing plan and environmental review. (36)*

City Council Feedback: Remove *Ongoing* designation from the estimated completion date and add 2025 milestones.

Staff Response: The above objective will be completed by Q4 of 2025. Staff plans to present the City Council with the Community Assessment in Q2, and will continue policy development and community engagement efforts through Q4 of 2025.

Objective: **IHS 49. Initiate the San Antonio Road Area Plan.** *Begin data gathering, document review, implementing a community outreach and engagement strategy, check-in meetings with appointed and elected officials, and review by the City Council of a community assessment report and receive updated project direction, consistent with Housing Element Program 6.6 C. (40)*

City Council Feedback: Remove ongoing designation for estimated completion date and add milestones for the above objective. Additionally, planning for future infrastructure needs such as bike lanes and adding park land needs to start now and should be added to the objective.

Staff Response: The 2025 milestones for the above objective include securing professional services to conduct community outreach and as part of that engagement, form a community advisory committee by Q2. Community outreach will commence in Q3 and conclude by Q4.

To the extent feasible and in a manner that respects the public engagement aspects of the area planning initiative, staff will engage with prominent property owners and key stakeholders on future infrastructure planning, including exploring any short-term needs to support future multi-modal improvements in the project area.

Objective: **IHS 50. Advance affordable housing project on Downtown surface parking lot (Lot T).** Enter into an exclusive negotiating agreement with Alta Housing; receive an updated project concept design & prescreening application for Council review; receive formal planning entitlement application, consistent with Housing Element Program 1.4 A. (8)

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: 2025 milestones include an exclusive negotiating agreement with Alta Housing to Council in Q2. Revised project concept design based on January 2025 Council direction, with pre-screening, if applicable, for Council consideration in Q4.

Objective: **IHS 53. Work with the Santa Clara County Housing Authority to determine next steps to maintain affordability and improve conditions at Buena Vista Mobile Park. (56)**

City Council Feedback: How will the project move forward? Identify the milestones.

Staff Response: Staff plans to meet with Housing Authority regularly to identify feasible next steps. Including reviewing financing approach and maintaining Council abreast of identified

options and approach. Work on this project will be reported quarterly and as necessary, with activities concluding in Q4.

Objective: **IHS 54. Update development impact fees for public safety, government facilities, housing, transportation, parks, and community services.** *Conduct a nexus and feasibility study to ensure housing remains viable. Consider potential policy to waive impact fees associated with for low-income inclusionary units with when 20% of the units are deed restricted. (Housing Element Programs 2.1B; 3.1 B&C)*

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: In Q2, a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued to conduct a feasibility study on development impact fees and ensure housing production remains viable. Explore solutions that ensure housing production viability by considering waiving fees for low-income units. The project will begin in Q3.

New Objective: **IHS 55. Present options to address homelessness impacts, particularly relating to individuals living in vehicles, to Policy & Services Committee for prioritization.** *Identify feasible regulatory approaches to manage the use of public space and policy solutions to expand RV safe parking. Present options to the Policy & Services Committee for consideration and prioritization.*

City Council Feedback: None

Staff Response: New objective has been added to address homelessness impacts, in particular, solutions to manage RV safe parking originally discussed during the February 10th City Council Study Session.

New Objective: **~~IHS 56. Identify and evaluate~~ Organize an initial review of sources and methods to raise funding to support new affordable housing production for future evaluation.** *Conduct research to identify and evaluate sources and methods. ~~Present findings~~ Work with Finance Committee to develop recommendations for City Council direction.*

City Council Feedback: Identifying funding strategies is a key strategy to advance affordable housing production in the city. Add back objective “n” from the Staff Not Recommended list.

Staff Response: Objective *n* has been added to the 2025 Priority and Objectives list and staff has also added it to the Finance Committee Workplan.

PUBLIC SAFETY, WELLNESS & BELONGING

Objective: **PS 62. Implement the 2024-2025 Equity Wellness & Belonging Action Plan.** *Complete the 28 action items in the action plan in collaboration with partners.*

City Council Feedback: Edit title of the action plan while continuing to implement the strategies within the plan.

Staff Response: The 2024-2025 Equity Action plan will be renamed to the 2024-2025 Wellness & Belonging Action Plan.

Objective: **PS. 63 Implement New Expanded CSD Recreation Special Events Workplan.** *Approve and implement the Workplan which expands Community Special Events that foster togetherness, belonging and celebrate the rich diversity of our community (60)*

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: In Q1, City Council reviewed and provided feedback on the Special Events Workplan. Staff has begun implementing the Workplan and will be providing quarterly updates, concluding in Q4 of 2025.

Objective: (Formerly Row 67) **Support visible police presence by maintaining full police officer staffing through continuous recruiting and retention efforts.** *Identify and plan for anticipated vacancies and retirements, hold monthly testing and interview sessions and timely background checks to maintain a vacancy of less than 5%. (67)*

City Council Feedback: This objective is “business as usual,” the Police Department should continue efforts to reduce officer vacancies but does not need to be reflected on the list of 2025 Priority Objectives.

Staff Response: Objective has been removed.

Objective: **PS 64. Continue engagement with San Francisco Airport on SFO's Ground Based Augmentation System (GBAS) project and other potential opportunities to decrease SFO noise impacts on Palo Alto. (79)**

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: Estimated completion date has been updated to Q4, staff will continue to provide quarterly updates on progress.

Objective: **PS 67. Enhance and Expand Inclusive Programs and Services.** *Enhance services to support individuals with disabilities seeking accommodation support, expand community partnerships that serve the disability community, and implement new therapeutic recreation programs*

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: Q1 Enhanced accommodation request process for community, partnered with local organization to expand inclusive programs and events including Magical Bridge and Community Advisory Committee for Special Education in Palo Alto (CAC). Q2 Launch City of Palo Alto Therapeutic Recreation programs that foster emotional and social connection, as well as physical movement. Q3 Implement a new summer aide staff position to support our expansive and diverse summer camp programs. Q4 Continue to support community partnerships, facilitate City sponsored Therapeutic Recreation programs, and provide accommodation support for the community.

Objective: **PS 68. Support Community Mental Health.** *Provide support for all ages through community partnerships, programs, and initiatives. (65)*

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates. Consider adding a partnership with the Jed Foundation.

Staff Response: 2025 milestones under this objective will include that by Q4, the City of Palo Alto and Palo Alto School District further refine the scope with stakeholders for Council discussion and potential direction and for continued collaboration with the School District.

Objective: **PS 69. Enhance safety and improve quality of life in commercial areas by reducing criminal activity through business engagement and the deployment of officers and technology.** *Establish a Business Watch program to enhance collaboration with businesses and assign two officers at a minimum to patrol high traffic commercial areas.*

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: Engagement with business owners to establish a Business Watch Program will be initiated in early 2025 and implemented by Q4 of 2025.

Objective: **PS 70. Initiate an update to the City's seismic hazards ordinance.** *Conduct an assessment of previous study, update potentially eligible buildings, and begin work on seismic hazard identify and mitigation ordinance. (75)*

City Council Feedback: Update objective with concrete milestones and estimated completion dates.

Staff Response: Milestones for the update of the Seismic Hazards Ordinance will include the update of the eligible buildings list (Task A) from the previous study and present findings to the City Council by Q3.

COMMITTEE WORKPLANS AND OBJECTIVES

In addition to reviewing 2025 Priority Objectives, the City Council also reviewed Committee Objectives (Attachment B), Policy & Services Workplan (Attachment C), and Finance Committee Workplan (Attachment D).

Climate Action & Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee

The City Council provided feedback on the Climate Action & Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee objectives, requesting that it reflect more of the work on the sustainability aspect of the Climate Action & Sustainability Plan. The Ad Hoc Committee's objective has been edited as follows:

The Climate Action & Sustainability Committee will support implementation of the Three-Year Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) Workplan and the 2025 Council Priority Objectives for the Climate Action & Adaptation, and Natural Environment Council priority. The Committee will also discuss and provide recommendations on S/CAP implementation strategy leading to Council approval and the development of the upcoming 2026-2027 S/CAP Workplan, including consideration of appropriate actions toward the 2030 Carbon Neutrality goal.

Recommendations for funding S/CAP programs through the budget process will be made by the Utility Advisory Commission (UAC) and Finance Committee based on priorities established by the Climate Action & Sustainability Committee.

Cubberley Ad Hoc Committee

The Council reverted the Cubberley Committee to a non-Brown Act Ad Hoc at the March 10th City Council meeting². As a non-Brown Act body, the Cubberley Ad Hoc must work on a set subject and timeframe. Staff recommends the following purpose statement.

Cubberley Ad Hoc Committee (as a non-Brown Act body) - The Cubberley Ad Hoc will review and advise staff on efforts related to polling and development of a ballot measure that will successfully receive voter support in 2026. Efforts include polling, financial and revenue forecasting, master planning, and community outreach to complete the Master Plan and place a measure on the November 2026 ballot.

Policy & Services Committee Workplan

Committee workplans will continue to evolve as City Council advances objectives within each Priority. Each workplan also reflects City Council referrals throughout the year on other important City projects. Staff inadvertently left out a referral on gas powered leaf blowers. The following City Council referral will be retained for future consideration of the Policy & Services Committee:

- Refer to Policy & Services Committee discussion considering a ban on gas powered leaf blowers citywide and evaluate replacement of internal combustion engines for residences and commercial properties maintenance based on available replacement

² March 10, 2025, City Council Action Minutes

file:///C:/Users/lalamos/Downloads/Meetings2415Action%20Minutes_20250311233000342.pdf

technologies. Discussion should also address evaluation of decibel levels for leaf blower equipment.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

City Council approval of Priority Objectives does not have an immediate fiscal impact; however, resources will need to be allocated to implement Council Priorities. Opportunities to allocate resources to projects include the FY 2026 annual budget process, with adoption scheduled for June 16, 2025. In addition, the City Council may amend the budget throughout the year.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

City Council, community and stakeholder engagement is a key area of focus that is woven into the workplans to implement the proposed City Council objectives contained in this report.

The City uses the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) as a guide to structure community participation and align that participation with the type of input or feedback needed based on the project/issue. Workplan engagement typically fit within these general focus areas:

Inform: Fact sheets, webpages, blog posts, information sessions, open houses, frequently asked questions, community briefings, and website feedback forms

Consult & Involve: Surveys, focus groups, questions and answer sessions, office hours, public meetings like community meetings, town halls, panel discussions, workshops, and polling

Collaborate & Empower: Working groups, ad hoc groups, feedback groups, boards, commissions and committee meetings, community advisory panels, advisory groups, digital engagement platforms, and voter ballot measures.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

City Council action on this item is not a project as defined by CEQA because the City Council discussion on 2025 Priority and Committee Objectives are a continuing administrative or maintenance activity. CEQA Guidelines section 15378 (b)(2).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2025 City Council Priority Objectives

Attachment B: 2025 Committee Objectives

Attachment C: 2025 Policy & Services Committee Workplan

Attachment D: 2025 Finance Committee Workplan

APPROVED BY:

Ed Shikada, City Manager