



City Council Staff Report

Report Type: STUDY SESSION
Lead Department: City Manager

Meeting Date: December 16, 2024
Report #:2412-3856

TITLE

Discussion of 2024 City Council Ad Hoc Committees Activities

RECOMMENDATION

The City Council is to receive reports from the seven 2024 City Council Ad Hoc Committee activities.

BACKGROUND

The City Council uses Ad Hoc Committees to explore City business in greater depth than what is possible in the allotted Council and Standing Committee meetings. The City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook outlines a set of procedural rules that address: Definition of Ad Hoc Committees; Brown Act; Creation and Appointment; Duration; Members; Reporting; Termination; and Conclusion. Information on each of the topics can be found on page six (6) in the City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook.

At its 2024 Annual Retreat, the Council took a strategic approach to advancing its identified priorities, engaging in a thoughtful discussion on its envisioned role in each priority area. This approach included the identification of ad hoc committees to advance specific goals. In 2024, there were seven Ad Hoc committees in addition to the Council's standing committees (Finance, Policy & Services, Council Appointed Officers, and City/Schools Liaison): Retail, Stanford, Housing, Climate Action, Rail, Cubberley and El Camino Real.

According to the Council Handbook 1.2(f) Ad Hoc Committees- the Council may create Ad Hoc Committees on a limited time basis where necessary to study City business in greater depth than is possible in the time allotted for Council and Standing Committee meetings. Ad Hocs are intended to be temporary, and therefore should be concluded or at least reconsidered each year. Most Ad Hocs will complete their work within one year or less, though in some cases the need for an Ad Hoc may extend for several years. For Ad Hocs that have a single or limited purpose and are dissolved in a short period of time--one year or less--the Ad Hoc may meet without observing Brown Act procedures. Ad Hocs that have continuing subject matter jurisdiction over a matter or group of related matters, or that continue their work for more than one year, should observe Brown Act procedures.

ANALYSIS

The City Council has used ad hoc committees in 2024 in seven focused areas to continue to advance key initiatives and priorities of the Council. Most of the seven committees were discussed at the 2024 City Council retreat, with purpose statements as approved by the Council below. Each committee has drafted a summary of activities worked in 2024 and are attached to this report in Attachments A – F. One of the outcomes of the ad hocs was for the committees to report out to the full Council and this study session provides the forum for a year-end review.

2024 City Council Ad Hoc Committees Purpose Statements

Cubberley Real Estate Transaction Committee (Attachment A): The Cubberley Ad Hoc will work with staff and negotiate a real estate transaction with PAUSD for the long-term community use of the Cubberley site. The Cubberley Ad Hoc will report to the full Council, typically in closed session, and results of the negotiation brought to Council in public session at appropriate points with expected completion in 2024.

Climate Protection Ad Hoc Committee (Attachment B): The Climate Protection Ad Hoc Committee was formed by City Council in January 2024 to accelerate the implementation of the Climate Action workplan items of the Three-Year Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) Workplan, including: Full Scale Heat Pump Water Heater (HPWH) Program; Commercial HVAC Pilot Program; Single Family Whole Home Electrification Pilot Program; Multi-family Electric Vehicle (EV) Charger Program; EV Strategic Plan; and S/CAP Funding Study. The Committee will provide periodic updates during Council Member Questions, Comments and Announcements and will make an oral year-end report on its work no later than December 2024.

El Camino Ad Hoc Committee (Attachment C): This Committee was established after the 2024 Council Priority Setting activities in response to the capital improvements planned for El Camino Real within the City limits of Palo Alto. Areas of interest included safety improvements (bikeway), parking alternatives, engagement efforts to impacted stakeholders, and support to accommodate recreational vehicle/vehicle dwellers.

Housing Ad Hoc Committee (Attachment D): Provide staff guidance in preparation for full Council review on the following initiatives to address housing affordability, availability, and stability: rental registry and renter protection policies; housing element programs and implementing objectives; Coordinated Area Plan processes; and affordable housing funding strategies. The Committee will provide periodic updates during Council Member Questions, Comments and Announcements and will make an oral year-end report on its work no later than December 2024.

Rail Ad Hoc Committee (Attachment E): This committee meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. Agendas can be found here: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Clerk/City-Council-Committees/Rail-Committee>

The Rail Committee discusses topics on rail grade separation. They also review the work performed by the [Expanded Citizen Advisory Panel \(XCAP\)](#). The Committee uses the [Rail Guiding Principles\(PDF, 270KB\)](#) as a standard to assist with their decision-making process. For information on project updates, please visit the [Connecting Palo Alto](#) website.

Retail Ad Hoc Committee (Attachment F): This committee meets monthly on the third Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. Agendas can be found here:
<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Clerk/City-Council-Committees/Retail-Committee>

Accelerate implementation of the Council-approved Economic Development Strategy by: enhancing Council engagement and personal contacts with business and community stakeholders; and, providing feedback to staff in preparation for full council review on near term improvements to support businesses in University Ave, Cal Ave and Midtown; proposed University and Cal Avenue design concepts; and citywide retail zoning code changes.

Stanford Ad Hoc Committee (Attachment G): Information sharing on issues of concern to Stanford University and the City in 2024: a proposed extension of Quarry Road; Climate Action plans; transit improvements; City use of Stanford lands; and housing development of mutual interest. The Committee will provide periodic updates during Council Member Questions, Comments and Announcements and will make an oral year-end report on its work to Council no later than December 2024.

Policy & Services 2025 Priority Setting Process Discussion

In addition to this year-end review and receipt of reports, on December 10, 2024, the Policy & Services Committee will discuss the 2025 City Council retreat and priority-setting activities including how to incorporate discussion of ad hocs into the Council retreat. Staff is recommending the retreat discussion include Brown Act considerations and workload management, as well as integration with existing Standing Committees. Staff will recommend reducing the number of ad hocs, as the current level of effort required from staff to support the current number of committees is not sustainable.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

No additional resource impact is expected at this time.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The attached summaries have been coordinated with the City Council ad hoc committee chairs and other members.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This is not considered a project as defined by CEQA and no review is required.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Cubberley Real Estate Transaction Ad Hoc 2024

Attachment B: Climate Protection Ad Hoc 2024

Attachment C: El Camino Real Ad Hoc 2024

Attachment D: Housing Ad Hoc 2024

Attachment E: Rail Ad Hoc 2024

Attachment F: Retail Ad Hoc 2024

Attachment G: Stanford Ad Hoc 2024

APPROVED BY:

Ed Shikada