



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Historic Resources Board Staff Report

From: Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: April 13, 2023
Report #: 2304-1241

TITLE

HRB Discussion of 2022 Work Plan Results and Draft 2023 Work Plan, and Receipt of Submitted CLG Annual Report Covering the 2021-22 Reporting Period

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board (HRB) take the following action(s):

1. Provide comments about results of the adopted 2022-23 HRB work plan (Attachment A)
2. Review and provide comments on the draft 2023-24 HRB work plan (Attachment B)
3. Review CLG responsibilities (Attachment C) and Receive CLG Annual Report for October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022 (Attachment D)

BACKGROUND

HRB Work Plans

On November 30, 2020, the City Council adopted a new City Boards, Commissions, and Committees Handbook (can be found [online](#)).^[1] The Handbook included the need for a Work Plan that would be approved by the City Council, as described below.

- The HRB is expected to prepare an annual work plan by the 2nd quarter each calendar year
- The work plan should include information on equity in the work
- City Council will review the work plan and provide feedback annually at a dedicated City Council meeting
- The work plan should include the results of the prior year's plan, metrics of community involvement in meetings and activities included in the commission's work
- If new issues arise during the year, the work plan should be amended and forwarded to Council for review and approval

2022-23 Work Plan

On March 10, 2022, the HRB adopted its 2022-23 Work Plan. This was submitted to the City Council with the work plans of other boards and commissions in the Council packet of June 1,

2022. The work plan from 2022-2023 is attached to this report (Attachment A). The work plan notes impacts, timelines, resources needed, measures of success, and indicates priority (high or lower). The work plan established five projects/goals for 2022:

- (1) Review alterations to Historic Resources
- (2) Implement Comp Plan Policy L7.2
- (3) Implement Comp Plan Policy L7.1.1
- (4) Outreach, incentives, and work program development
- (5) Mills Act program

The HRB is invited to provide comments on past year work plan ‘results’, the ‘equity in the work’, community involvement, and activities from April 2022 through April 2023. The time period of the plan March 11, 2022, through April 13, 2023, included 14 regular HRB meetings. Relevant comments regarding the 22-23 plan can be noted the 2023-24 work plan that will be forwarded to Council.

Annual CLG Report

The City of Palo Alto is a Certified Local Government (CLG). Responsibilities of a CLG are described in Attachment C. The State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) collects information related to how the CLG program is working. The National Parks Service (NPS) collects “products” - information such as the number of properties designated. The OHP sends these reports to the NPS on behalf of the CLGs. Filing the CLG annual report allows local governments to qualify for OHP grants. Palo Alto currently has a small grant from OHP from 2022, used to offset consultant costs. CLGs are required to file the Annual Report documentation for the 2021-22 reporting period, due March 31, 2023. In order to compete for the 2022-2023 CLG grant cycle, OHP must have received the City’s completed Annual Report prior to the grant application deadline of May 13, 2022.

DISCUSSION

Review of Current Work Plan

Attachment A to this report is the current work plan, extending from March 11, 2022, through April 13, 2023, during which time the HRB held 14 regular HRB meetings. The community meeting on April 25, 2023, will be the first meeting of the next work plan period that will begin April 14, 2023.

Staff considers Goals 1 and 2 of the 2022-23 plan to be generally successful, and ongoing activities, and therefore these are included in the 2023-24 plan. Staff has not yet revised the Review Bulletin from 2016, noted as an objective within Goal 1. Staff intends to bring this forward in the coming months.

Goal 3 is underway. In 2022, staff prepared a request for proposal, obtained and reviewed proposals, and selected a consultant. In February 2023, the contract was signed and staff, consultants and the HRB kicked off the historic inventory update project. The reconnaissance phase is underway as the team will verify the eligible historic resources the week of April 10th. The outreach effort also has begun with webpage development¹, mailing of initial letters to owners of eligible properties, and scheduling of the first community meeting on April 25th. The nominations process will be underway thereafter, with HRB meetings scheduled to provide recommendations to City Council. This item continues to be shown on the 2023-24 work plan since work will continue past July 2023.

Goal 4, to *'Improve outreach, review incentives, develop work program'* began in 2022 as the HRB discussed improvements to outreach materials, and members of the HRB began drafting an outreach letter about the benefits of owning a historic resource. The letter was modified to become the letter staff recently sent to owners of eligible resources, as part of the historic resources reconnaissance/nominations project. This goal continues as an ongoing activity in the 2023-2024 work plan. The outreach that is underway for the inventory update will be supplemented with highlights of existing incentives for rehabilitation.

Goal 5 encouraged progress in establishing a tailored Mills Act program. The September 2021 staff report^[2] included the draft tailored program outline for HRB review and comment. The HRB has expressed interest in bringing a pilot program concept to City Council, envisioned to have an associated historic property suitable for the benefits of the Mills Act. Staff and the HRB did not make progress on Goal 5 during the current workplan period; therefore, it is noted in the 2023-2024 work plan.

Work Plan for 2023-24

Attachment B to this report is the draft work plan (for upcoming period April 14, 2023, through spring 2024). This will be submitted in May 2023 to the City Clerk for a report to Council regarding board and commission work plans. Staff has adjusted the 2022-23 Work Plan goals for use in the 23-24 draft work plan for the HRB's review. All items were carried forward, with a few changes to descriptions and timelines. The City obtained a nominal grant from OHP in 2022 to offset consultant costs. Staff will prepare a summary report to OHP to show how these funds were spent (related to the Goal 3 project).

Council Priorities

The HRB Work Plan does not need to cite or refer to the Council's published priorities. These are shown below for information only.

The Council recently reconfirmed its priorities for 2023, which include:

1. Economic Recovery & Transition

¹ Webpage link for inventory update project: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Historic-Preservation/2023-Reconnaissance-Survey>

2. Climate Change & Natural Environment - Protection & Adaptation
3. Housing for Social & Economic Balance
4. Community Health & Safety.

The Council adopted objectives for each priority that may be viewed online: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/content/public/departments/city-clerk/city-council/citycouncil-priorities/february-2023-status-update.pdf>

Other HRB Projects/Objectives to Consider

Prior topics the HRB considered in prior years that were not included in the 2022-23 work plan (due to the pressing need to pursue Goal 3, Comprehensive Plan Policy L7.1.1 implementation) or unaccomplished objectives included:

- Development of New Historic Districts
- System to store information on lost resources

The HRB may wish to again discuss adding these goals to the 2023-24 work plan.

^[1] Handbook: https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/city-clerk/palo-alto-boards-commissions-and-committees-handbook_final_adopted_november-2020.pdf

^[2] Link to September 2021 staff report with Mills Act draft program outline <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/historic-resources-board/2021/hrb-9.9-retreat.pdf>

2021-22 CLG Report Submitted to OHP

Staff prepared the CLG Annual Report (Attachment D) for October 2021 through September 2022 as well as a cover memo. Attachment C describes a CLG responsibilities. The cover memo noted that Palo Alto's program is primarily an incentive-based historic preservation and public outreach program, assisted by a qualified historic preservation consultant(s). It briefly highlighted actions related to historic preservation during the reporting period, including:

- 15 HRB meetings during the 21-22 reporting period
- Continued implementation of Comprehensive Plan policy (L7.2); this study of 23 properties between the last CLG report 3/2021 and the end of reporting period 9/2022 resulted in two properties found eligible for California Register of Historical Resources.
- Work toward securing a consultant to help launch the Historic Inventory update

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The subject project is not subject to review according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Thus, no CEQA review has been performed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2022-23 HRB Work Plan

Attachment B: Draft 2023-24 Work Plan

Attachment C: Requirements for CLG

Attachment D: CLG Annual Report for 2021-22

AUTHOR/TITLE:

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