



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 11786)

Report Type: Study Session **Meeting Date:** 11/19/2020

Summary Title: ARB Annual Report to Council

Title: Discussion Regarding the Annual ARB Report to Council

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) reflect on the hearings they have conducted over the past year and discuss the information that will be included in a report to City Council.

Background

As noted in Municipal Code Section 2.21.030, the ARB shall send a report, not less than once a year, to the Planning Commission and City Council for the purpose of communicating the concerns of the Board with respect to the City's plans, policies, ordinances and procedures as these affect the projects which the Board reviews.

The report could outline activities of the ARB for 2020, summarize development trends demonstrated by projects reviewed by the ARB during this period and recommend key policy issues to address in the future. To facilitate discussion, staff has included a list of projects reviewed this year and a copy of the ARB's 2019 report.

The Board may review and comment as it deems appropriate.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: List of ARB Hearing Items from August 2019 to December 2020 (PDF)
- Attachment B: 2019 ARB Annual Report to Council (PDF)

Meeting : 08/01/19

Meeting Group	Doc ID	Short Title	Placement	Preparer
Architectural Review Board	10360	486 Hamilton Ave: Mixed-use Building (Prelim)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10393	702 Clara Drive: Three Detached Units (2nd Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10523	3265 El Camino Real: Subcommittee Review of Louvre Window and Sta	Subcommittee	Adam Petersen

Meeting : 08/15/19

Architectural Review Board	10435	788 -796 San Antonio Road Mixed-Use (1st Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10525	180 El Camino Real: L'Occitane Facade Remodel (1st Formal)	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 09/05/19

Architectural Review Board	10562	180 El Camino Real: Market Plaza and Tenant Facade Update (1st Form	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez
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Meeting : 10/03/19

Architectural Review Board	10676	180 El Camino Real: Macy's Mens Redevelopment (2nd Formal)	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez
Architectural Review Board	10680	Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project - Paralleling Station Perimeter L	Action Items	Amy French

Meeting : 10/17/19

Architectural Review Board	10654	2342 Yale Street: Duplex Project (2nd Formal)	Action Items	Emily Foley
Architectural Review Board	10678	3585 El Camino Real: Mixed-Use (1st Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10691	3265 El Camino Real: Subcommittee Review of Louvre Window and Sta	Subcommittee	Adam Petersen
Architectural Review Board	10759	180 El Camino Real: Subcommittee Review of L'Occitane Facade	Subcommittee	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 11/07/19

Architectural Review Board	10755	Discuss Topics for Study Session with Council	Action Items	Jodie Gerhardt
Architectural Review Board	10775	565 Hamilton Avenue: Subcommittee Review	Subcommittee	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10823	180 El Camino Real: Continuation of Macy's Mens Redevelopment	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 12/05/19

Architectural Review Board	10760	180 El Camino Real: Macy's Mens Redevelopment (3rd Formal)	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez
Architectural Review Board	10787	Introduction of Objective Standards Project	Study Session	Hang Huynh
Architectural Review Board	10835	2342 Yale: Subcommittee Review of Materials and Details	Subcommittee	Emily Foley
Architectural Review Board	10838	250 Sherman: Subcommittee Review of Public Safety Building Tower De	Subcommittee	Amy French

Meeting : 12/19/19

Architectural Review Board	10859	702 Clara Drive: Three Detached Units (3rd Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10860	1700 & 1730 Embarcadero Road: Mercedes and Audi Dealerships	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10867	250 Hamilton Avenue: Bus Shelters in the Stanford Research Park	Action Items	Garrett Sauls

Meeting : 01/16/20

Architectural Review Board	10503	4256 El Camino Real: 97 Room Hotel (3rd formal)	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez
Architectural Review Board	10947	788 San Antonio Road (2nd Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	10948	3215 Porter Drive: New Office/R&D Building	Action Items	Garrett Sauls
Architectural Review Board	10963	180 El Camino Real: Market Plaza Subcommittee	Subcommittee	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 01/30/20

Architectural Review Board	11040	Discuss 2020 ARB Awards		Vinhloc Nguyen
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Meeting : 02/06/20

Architectural Review Board	10833	Issues and Options for Objective Standards	Study Session	Hang Huynh
Architectural Review Board	11044	744 San Antonio Road: Subcommittee Review of Wall Color	Subcommittee	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11065	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	Action Items	Jodie Gerhardt

Meeting : 03/05/20

Architectural Review Board	11076	1700 & 1730 Embarcadero Road: Mercedes and Audi Dealerships (2nd f	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11091	180 El Camino Real: Wilkes Bashford (1st Formal)	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez
Architectural Review Board	11140	400 Channing Ave and 909 Waverley Street: Subcommittee Review of F	Subcommittee	Danielle Condit
Architectural Review Board	11141	180 El Camino Real: Subcommittee Review of Bicycle & Tree Locations	Subcommittee	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 04/16/20

Meeting Group	Doc ID	Short Title	Placement	Preparer
Architectural Review Board	10988	620 Emerson Street: Nobu Restaurant (Revision - 1st Formal)	Action Items	Samuel Gutierrez
Architectural Review Board	11103	3705 El Camino Real: Subcommittee Review of Landscaping and Minor	Subcommittee	Claire Raybould

Meeting : 05/07/20

Architectural Review Board	11115	3215 Porter Drive: New Office/R&D Building (2nd Hearing)	Action Items	Garrett Sauls
Architectural Review Board	11132	411 Lytton Avenue: Addition of two units (Prelim)	Study Session	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11159	Newell Road Bridge Replacement (2nd Formal)	Action Items	Claire Raybould
Architectural Review Board	11289	Discuss Procedures for Virtual Hearings	Study Session	Vinhloc Nguyen
Architectural Review Board	11290	Appoint Subcommittee for Objective Standards	Action Items	Vinhloc Nguyen

Meeting : 05/21/20

Architectural Review Board	11214	250 Hamilton Avenue: Bus Shelters in the Stanford Research Park	Action Items	Garrett Sauls
Architectural Review Board	11270	486 Hamilton: Mixed Use with Four Units (1st Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11271	3585 El Camino Real: Mixed Use (2nd Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11308	4256 El Camino Real: Subcommittee for Hotel Colors & Details	Subcommittee	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 06/04/20

Architectural Review Board	11350	380 Cambridge: Subcommittee Review	Subcommittee	Sheldon AhSing
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Meeting : 07/02/20

Architectural Review Board	11215	4260 El Camino Real: Facade Change to Existing Office Building	Action Items	Emily Foley
Architectural Review Board	11427	3215 Porter Drive: Subcommittee Review of Rear Balcony and Materials	Subcommittee	Garrett Sauls
Architectural Review Board	11432	620 Emerson Street: Subcommittee Review of Details for Metal Gates/G	Subcommittee	Samuel Gutierrez

Meeting : 07/16/20

Architectural Review Board	11438	656 Lytton Avenue: Facade Modifications and Site Revisions (1st Forma	Action Items	Emily Foley
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Meeting : 08/20/20

Architectural Review Board	11193	1310 Bryant, 1235 and 1263 Emerson: Castilleja First ARB	Action Items	Amy French
Architectural Review Board	11484	788 - 796 San Antonio Road Mixed-Use Project (3rd Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing

Meeting : 10/01/20

Architectural Review Board	10113	1310 Bryant (Castilleja School) 2nd Formal ARB Hearing	Action Items	Amy French
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Meeting : 10/15/20

Architectural Review Board	11448	ARB Review of Objective Standards	Study Session	Jodie Gerhardt
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Meeting : 11/05/20

Architectural Review Board	11181	3rd ARB meeting Castilleja School Project	Action Items	Amy French
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Meeting : 11/19/20

Architectural Review Board	11703	ARB Review of Objective Standards	Study Session	Jean Eisberg
Architectural Review Board	11705	744 - 750 San Antonio Road: Master Sign Program (1st Formal)	Action Items	Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11766	Ex-parte Communications: Study Session	Study Session	Jodie Gerhardt
Architectural Review Board	11786	ARB Annual Report to Council	Study Session	Jodie Gerhardt

Meeting : 12/03/20 FUTURE MEETING

Architectural Review Board	11704	3585 El Camino Real: Mixed-Use (3rd Formal)		Sheldon AhSing
Architectural Review Board	11707	3241 Park Boulevard: New Commercial Building (1st Formal)	Action Items	Garrett Sauls
Architectural Review Board	11767	ARB Chair/Vice-Chair Elections and By-Laws Update	Action Items	Jodie Gerhardt

To: City Council of the City of Palo Alto
 Planning and Transportation Commission of the City of Palo Alto
 From: Architectural Review Board of the City of Palo Alto
 Re: Annual Report from the ARB
 Date: July 29, 2019

PAMC Section 2.21.030 directs the Architectural Review Board to report annually our “concerns... with respect to the city’s plans, policies, ordinances and procedures as these affect the projects which the board reviews.” Our reviews are site specific – we look at individual development proposals, not broad policies. At the same time, we are directed to look at each project in both its physical and regulatory context – how it will enhance its neighborhood (or not) and how it will implement the City’s policies, from the Comprehensive Plan to the various design guidelines the City uses. Because we look at many projects each year, and because many board members have years of experience in Palo Alto, patterns emerge and specific areas of concern have been identified.

- A. **Trees.** City policy calls for and the Board whole-heartedly supports the inclusion of appropriate, robust, and ample landscaping in all development projects. However, recent development trends towards underground parking and the replacement of single-story structures with multiple story buildings, which the board also generally supports, can cause conflict. We have observed the following:
- Small commercial buildings surrounded by parking lots are being replaced with larger commercial/mixed use buildings with underground parking garages that extend beyond the building footprint. While the reduction of surface parking is generally a positive change, less space is available on-site for larger trees to grow and mature.
 - Replacement of single-story buildings with multiple story buildings can reduce the size of street trees as canopies are constrained by the upper stories. (A look down Lytton Avenue from Alma Street provides examples.) We understand that multiple story buildings are a positive response to urban growth, but strive to also maintain a vibrant and robust urban street canopy.
 - Higher density zoning for hotels discourages extensive landscaping. The setback of upper floors and use of roof gardens can help mitigate the impact of larger buildings.

These issues can be addressed in part through design review but more explicit landscaping standards would be beneficial.

- B. **Curb Management.** Curbside traffic management is increasingly important, especially commercial areas.
- Underground parking has many advantages over surface parking. However, the elimination of easily accessible surface parking shifts the demand for space for commercial deliveries and ride sharing services to the curb. New buildings need to be designed to accommodate these uses. This is especially true for buildings fronting on streets with no parking permitted and no possibility of temporary double parking for commercial and passenger loading and unloading.
 - A number of “smart curb” programs have been put in place in other Bay Area cities. Fehr and Peers prepared a Curb Study for Uber for San Francisco in 2018. Mountain View has provided ride service loading zones off Castro Street.

Updated standards for commercial delivery areas and more explicit standards for ride sharing pick-up and drop-off zones would be beneficial.

- C. **Displacement of Small Businesses.** The redevelopment of commercial sites often eliminates small business spaces in favor of larger sites that appeal to tech companies. (The replacement of many small office spaces at 2600 El Camino Real is an example. This is also occurring in the Downtown and California Avenue business districts.) The displaced businesses typically provide personal and professional services to individuals – barber shops, therapists’ offices, accountancy firms, etc. The City’s current ordinances do not protect these uses. San Francisco’s [Neighborhood Commercial zone](#) requires new, large commercial

ground floors to carve out street facing spaces (approximately 500 square feet minimum) for smaller tenants. The City of Palo Alto ought to consider the same—small businesses are an important part of the urban landscape and Palo Alto culture.

- D. Parking.** Parking at the Stanford Shopping Center is increasingly congested. Transportation Demand Management programs allow parking requirements to be more carefully tailored to specific needs, but require careful monitoring.
- The Stanford Shopping Center's parking requirements allow the required parking to be provided anywhere on the site. The standard does not distinguish among uses. As a variety of uses (exercise studios, restaurants, etc.) replaces more conventional retail spaces, more users are drawn to the site. This may require new approaches to planning for and managing parking, whether through increased parking requirements, more proximate underground parking or employee parking management programs.
 - Transportation Demand Management (TDM) agreements are increasingly used by applicants who wish to meet their projects parking needs with fewer spaces than the code would otherwise require. The Board supports providing only the number of parking spaces actually needed. However, TDMs required regular and complaint-based monitoring to be effective. While aerial photos can be used to monitor parking lots, the City needs future access to underground garages to monitor their use. Board members have received comments that internal parking intended for customer or employee use is in fact not available at some sites.

The Stanford Shopping Center parking requirements should be reviewed in light of the changing nature of shopping center uses. TDM program enforcement should be monitored and more strongly supported.

- E. Pedestrian Mobility.** For people to move freely in our commercial districts and along El Camino Real, we need more seating available to pedestrians. The City should set and implement street furniture standards that combine public and private seating to make walking possible for those who need to rest. Specific standards, such as the VTA 2003 Pedestrian Technical Guidelines, which call for 13'-18' wide sidewalks in order to have a furnishing zone, or the 2012 Rail Corridor Study, which recommends 15' min sidewalks in Main Street areas for cafe seating and retail merchandising, may be helpful references.
- F. El Camino Real.** There is a continuing loss of places to go along El Camino Real.
- Zoning encouraging new hotels includes parking standards that discourage the addition of potential neighborhood social spaces such as coffee shops, restaurants, and bars.
 - Parking standard for El Camino Real development that make it difficult to add restaurant uses on small parcels.

Revised parking standards for development along El Camino Real would promote the development of neighborhood retail and restaurant businesses.

- G. Architectural Review Board-required findings.** The City Council modified the required findings for the Architectural Review process in 2017, resulting in six findings which must be made to recommend Architectural Review approval. The revised findings have resulted in an improved review process, as board members, staff and the public are more easily able to reference which finding is applicable and appropriate for any given project or situation. The result has been an increased focus on ensuring compliance with the findings.