



# Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report (ID # 14363)

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<b>Report Type:</b>	Action Items	<b>Meeting Date:</b> 5/5/2022
<b>Summary Title:</b>	ARB Workplan and Annual Report (continued from 4/21)	
<b>Title:</b>	Discuss the Draft Architectural Review Board's (ARB) Draft Work Plan, Suggest Changes, and Recommend Submitting the Draft Work Plan to the City Council; and Discuss the ARB's Annual Report and any Bylaw Changes Needed (Continued from March 3, 10, 17, April 7 and 21, 2022).	
<b>From:</b>	Jonathan Lait	

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) take the following action(s):

1. Discuss the Revised draft Work Plan, suggest changes, and recommend submission of the Draft Work Plan to the City Council.
2. Discuss process for the ARB Annual Report and Bylaw changes that may be required.

### Background

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

#### Work Plan

- The ARB is expected to prepare an annual work plan by the second quarter of each calendar year, starting June 2021.
- 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.
- The Handbook has a template for work plan development.

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<sup>1</sup> Handbook: [https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/city-clerk/palo-alto-boards-commissions-and-committees-handbook\\_final\\_adopted\\_november-2020.pdf](https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/city-clerk/palo-alto-boards-commissions-and-committees-handbook_final_adopted_november-2020.pdf)

- If new issues arise during the year, the work plan should be amended and forwarded to Council for review and approval.

## Discussion

An ARB annual report is required in the Bylaws and reviews the prior year, while the Council's new work plan requirement is to look forward. On June 17, 2021, the ARB adopted its first work plan. At that time, the ARB thought it best to combine the newly required Work Plan and the ARB's Annual Report which is usually done in December. However, there was not sufficient time to complete the ARB Annual Report.

The ARB may wish to solidify the combination of these two documents and have them due at the same time, with a change to the Bylaws. As an alternative, these could remain two separate documents. In either case, a draft work plan has been prepared by staff (Attachment A) using Council's new template. The ARB is asked to review this document suggest updates and additional tasks as needed.

Council is scheduled to review this plan—as well as all other board and commission work plans—and adopt any changes to this plan in April 2022.

## Public Notification, Outreach & Comments

The Palo Alto Municipal Code does not require publication of this hearing item in a local newspaper.

**ARB<sup>2</sup> Liaison & Contact Information**  
Jodie Gerhardt, AICP, Planning Manager  
(650) 329-2575  
[jodie.gerhardt@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:jodie.gerhardt@cityofpaloalto.org)

### Attachments:

- Attachment A: 2022-23 Draft ARB Workplan (PDF)
- Attachment B: 2021-22 ARB Workplan (PDF)

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<sup>2</sup> Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: [arb@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:arb@cityofpaloalto.org)



## Architectural Review Board

### 2022-2023 Workplan Overview

Date approved by [ABBREVIATED BCC]: 4/1/2022

**Staff Liaison:** Jodie Gerhardt, AICP, Manager of Current Planning  
**Lead Department:** Planning and Development Services (PDS)

**About the Commission**

The Architectural Review Board is composed of five members, at least three of whom are architects, landscape architects, building designers or other design professionals. Terms are for three years and commence on December 15. See Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Sections 2.16 and 2.21. Residency is not required. For the ARB webpage, go to [bit.ly/paloaltoARB](http://bit.ly/paloaltoARB)

**Current Commissioners**

- Osma Thompson (Chair)
- David Hirsch (Vice Chair)
- Peter Baltay
- Yingxi Chen
- Kendra Rosenberg

**Mission Statement**

The Architectural Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director on design and related issues for certain new construction, and changes and additions to commercial, industrial and multiple family projects, as described in the Municipal Code. The Board's goals and purposes are to:

- Promote orderly and harmonious development of the City
- Enhance the desirability of residence or investment in the City
- Encourage the attainment of the most desirable use of land and improvements
- Enhance the desirability of living conditions upon the immediate site or in adjacent areas
- Promote visual environments which are of high aesthetic quality and variety and which, at the same time, are considerate of each other
- To implement and enforce the city's ordinances pertaining to architecture and design

**Prior Year Accomplishments**

With a few exceptions, all items on the 2021-2022 ARB work plan were addressed by the Board. This includes considering and making recommendations on many Planning applicants, the full Board and AdHoc Committee working with staff on Objective Design Standards, and finalizing the 2020 ARB Awards that had been postponed due to the pandemic.



CITY OF  
**PALO ALTO**

**Board/Commission Name**

**2022-2023 Workplan**

**Staff Liaison:** Jodie Gerhardt, AICP, Manager of Current Planning

**Lead Department:** Planning and Development Services (PDS)

**PURPOSE STATEMENT:** The Architectural Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director on design and related issues for certain new construction, and changes and additions to commercial, industrial and multiple family projects, as described in the Municipal Code.

**PROJECT/GOAL 1 :** Review Planning applications for conformance with ARB Findings and Objective Standards

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
This is the Board's main mission and serves to ensure the City develops high quality projects	On-Going	Planning staff prepare staff reports, packets and presentations. They ensure paper plan sets and material boards are ready for ARB review. Other departments, such as, City Attorney, Urban Forestry, Transportation, etc., may be required from time to time. Consultants, including CEQA consultants, may also be required.		Yes
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Projects that include new housing units that will help with City reach its regional housing needs allocation (RHNA)		New office projects that will exacerbate the City's jobs/housing imbalance		N/A

<b>PROJECT/GOAL 2:</b> Discuss specific Goals, Policies, Programs the ARB would like to further explore/implement				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
This project would enhance implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan	On-going	Planning staff to help research policies and programs	Increased adherence to Comprehensive Plan policies	No
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
				No
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 3:</b> Finalize review of the Objective Standards project, that was approved by the ARB on April 1, 2021, as directed by City Council				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Without this project, the City has limited development standards to ensure high quality housing development projects.	Review Council's November 2021 motion and finish Spring/Summer 2022	Planning staff and consultant prepare staff reports, packets and presentations. Staff/Consultant hold community meetings with residents. City attorney is also engaged as needed.	Council approval	Yes
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
The sooner the City can define objective standards, the better the program will serve our community and ensure high quality projects		After approval of this phase, the Board may wish to refine the objective standards based on research from projects that have gone through the objective standards ministerial process.		Council remanded this project to staff and the ARB on November 2021

<b>PROJECT/GOAL 4:</b> Hold ARB Awards ceremony for 2015 to 2020 award winners (Awards were postponed due to the pandemic) Next Awards in 2025.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Highlights excellent work, which provides an example and encourages other to excel	Awards Ceremony in Spring of 2022	Planning and administrative staff to coordinate the event	Good examples that others can use to move quickly forward in the process	Yes
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Schedule event date, contact winners, other event details		N/A		N/A
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 5:</b> Update By-laws as needed to be in conformance with Council's new Handbook				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Will ensure all guiding documents are consistent with each other	Spring/Summer 2022	Planning staff to finalize suggested changes	Consistent guideline documents	No
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Ensuring the election of the Chair and Vice Chair, and ARB terms, are aligned with the Council's Handbook		N/A		N/A
The ARB is interested in being part of height and massing discussions, as may be needed to allow increased housing in the City. The Board is also interested to know if Council would like to update the South El Camino Real Guidelines and/or create guidelines for increased densities along San Antonio Road.				



## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD Workplan 2021-2022

**Staff Liaison Name and Contact Information:** Jodie Gerhardt, AICP, Manager of Current Planning  
**Lead Department:** Planning and Development Services (PDS)

**General Purpose and/or Purview of Board/Commission:**

The Architectural Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director on design and related issues for certain new construction, and changes and additions to commercial, industrial and multiple family projects, as described in the Municipal Code. The Board's goals and purposes are to:

- Promote orderly and harmonious development of the City
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- To implement and enforce the city's ordinances pertaining to architecture and design

The Board is composed of five members, at least three of whom are architects, landscape architects, building designers or other design professionals. Terms are for three years and commence on November 1. See Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Sections 2.16 and 2.21. Residency is not required.

For the ARB webpage, go to <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/boards/architectural/>

Anticipated Item/Topic	Description and/or Info	Quarter (July 2021 – June 2022)
Review of projects	Review Planning applications for conformance with ARB Findings	On-going
Comprehensive Plan	Discuss specific Goals, Policies, Programs the ARB would like to further explore/implement	First/Second Quarter
Objective Standards	Ad Hoc Committee to work with staff, PTC, and Council to finalize the creation of Objective Standards that were approved by the full Board on April 1, 2021	First Quarter
ARB Awards (every 5 years)	Review projects constructed from 2015 to 2020 for ARB Awards. (Awards were postponed due to the pandemic)	First/Second Quarter
By-laws	Update By-laws as needed to be in conformance with Council's new Handbook	After Council adoption of necessary Ordinance changes

The ARB is interesting in being part of height and massing discussions, as may be needed to allow increased housing in the City. The Board is also interested to know if Council would like to update the South El Camino Real Guidelines and/or create guidelines for increased densities along San Antonio Road.