



Architectural Review Board Staff Report

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

Meeting Date: April 6, 2023
Report #: 2303-1176

TITLE

Draft Architectural Review Board's (ARB) Annual Report and Draft Work Plan

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Discuss the draft Annual Report and Work Plan, suggest changes, and recommend submission of the Draft Work Plan to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

The ARB Chair is expected to prepare an annual report/work plan by the second quarter of each calendar year with help from staff and their fellow Board members. City Council reviews the plan and provides feedback annually at a dedicated City Council meeting. The plan must be submitted to the City Clerk in May for Council consideration in June, prior to the end of the fiscal year. The plan should include the results of the prior year's plan and activities included in the board's work for the next fiscal year. The Council Handbook has a template for work plan development. If new issues arise during the year, the work plan can be amended and forwarded to Council for review and approval.

ANALYSIS

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 the next fiscal year. A draft plan has been prepared by the ARB Chair and staff (Attachment A) using Council's new template. The attached plan includes a summary of the ARB's accomplishments from last year and how they aligned with last year's work plan goals. The ARB is asked to review this document, suggest updates, and add any 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 June 2023.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Annual Report and Work Plan

AUTHOR/TITLE:

Claire Raybould, AICP, Senior Planner



Architectural Review Board 2023-2024 Workplan

Staff Liaison: Claire Raybould, AICP, Senior Planner

Lead Department: Current Planning, Planning and Development Services Division

About the Board

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 See Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Sections.16 and 2.21. Residency is not required. For ARB webpage go to bit.ly/paloaltoARB.

Current Boardmembers

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

Mission Statement

The Architectural Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director on the building design, site planning, landscape planning, massing and facades, material selection, lighting, signage and other related issues for most major new construction including additions and renovations that alter the exterior building face. The type of buildings reviewed include commercial, industrial, and residential. In addition, as noted In Project/Goal 5, we are a resource as knowledgeable observers of many varied urban environments, to assist Palo Alto to develop a physical plan for the impending major housing initiative.

The ARB Scope of Review is fully noted in Title 18 of the Municipal Code under 18.76.020

Prior Year Accomplishments

- The ARB takes prides in its collaborative process of review, where they meld their individual opinions and experience into one democratic summary that improves proposed projects and therefore the quality of the Palo Alto built environment. This past year, the ARB reviewed over 20 projects including 10 major multi-family housing and commercial projects as well as larger retail modifications in Stanford Shopping Center, meeting Goal 1 of the annual work plan for 2022-2023.
- ARB provided valuable feedback to assist council with respect to the permanent parklet program as well as updates to the city's tree protection ordinance> The feedback assisted Council in adopting a New Ordinance, which was effective in July 2022. The permanent parklet program ordinance is set to go before the City council before the end of this fiscal year. This work was consistent with Goal 2 of the fiscal year 2023 work plan.

- The ARB used their expertise in coordination with staff and their consultant to develop Objective standards from the City's existing subjective guidelines and findings that are unique to the City. This will help to ensure that housing development projects continue to meet the City's high-quality design standards while also going through the City's streamlined review process. This work satisfied Goal 3 of the 2022-2023 work plan.
- The ARB held an awards ceremony on September 21st to celebrate outstanding projects that have been built in the city over the last couple of years, meeting objective 4 of the annual Work Plan for 2022-2023.
- The ARB adopted updates to its by-laws to conform with Council's new handbook and again more recently to address new changes to the Brown Act in accordance with Council's direction, meeting Goal 5 of the 2022-2023 annual work plan.
- The ARB provided feedback for the Homekey project, prioritizing this critical housing project for the homeless. The ARB's feedback ensured that the project is well designed to address the residents needs and is appropriate to its location within the Baylands with respect to colors and massing.
- The ARB reviewed and swiftly approved amendments to the Stanford Medical Center Master Signage program to accommodate new directional signage, ensuring ease in locating needed medical services.

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.	Issuance of recommendations on projects and high-quality architecture throughout the City.	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Projects that include new housing units that will help with City reach its regional housing needs allocation (RHNA)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">New office projects that will exacerbate the City's jobs/housing imbalance		N/A
PROJECT/GOAL 2:	Review the adopted SB 9 Objective Standards for unit design and urban lots splits, which were adopted in conjunction with an interim ordinance, and recommend modifications to Council			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED

To streamline SB 9 housing projects to assist the City in meeting its RHNA allocation while still maintaining high quality design on single family residential properties.	Provide recommendations by Summer/Fall 2023	Planning Staff	Council Approval	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
N/A		N/A		Yes

PROJECT/GOAL 3:	Consider modifications to the Objective Standards based on research from projects as they go through the objective standards ministerial process and to better address different housing typology.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Streamline the objective standard ministerial review process and ensure that projects using the ministerial review process/objective standards conform to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Goals and Policies, including its high-quality design standards	Provide high level modifications to the objective standards to Council by Fall 2023; If directed by Council, work with staff to propose specific code language for Council adopted by the end of FY 2024	Additional staff at Planning so that the quality and completeness of the work is maintained.	Council Approval	NO
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Modifications to address townhome projectsModifications based on implementation of the objective standards for projects under review (addition of standards or modifications to existing standards based on experience implementing the standards)		N/A		No
PROJECT/GOAL 4:	Discuss specific Comprehensive Plan Goals, Policies, Programs or Design Guidelines 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
Packet Pg. 130				

HIGH PRIORITY	LOWER PRIORITY	COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide input on development standards for the GM Zoned properties between San Antonio and Fabian Way, which will be required to rezone to allow multi-family housing in accordance with the proposed Housing Element• Explore modifications to zoning code and/or land use as needed to facilitate and encourage mixed-use development of surface parking lots in the downtown area without loss of parking and on Stanford lands• Modifications to the El Camino Real and South El Camino Real Design Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinated Area Plan for the San Antonio Area	No