



# Planning & Transportation Commission

## Staff Report (ID # 8233)

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<b>Report Type:</b>	Action Items	<b>Meeting Date:</b> 6/14/2017
<b>Summary Title:</b>	Comp Plan Update Review Process	
<b>Title:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Review Process	
<b>From:</b>	Hillary Gitelman	

### Recommendation

Staff recommends the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) discuss the process that the Commission will use to review the draft Comprehensive Plan Update and select Option 1 or Option 2 presented in this report.

### Report Summary

On June 12, 2017, staff anticipates that the City Council will refer the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update to the PTC for review and a recommendation. Staff also anticipates that the Council will reference the 90 day timeframe for this review in Section 19.04.080 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code, with the 90 days beginning on or before June 30, 2017.<sup>1</sup>

On two recent occasions, the Commission has discussed how they would conduct their review, whether it was feasible within 90 days, and whether to use one or more subcommittees. Tonight's agenda item will allow for final resolution of this issue and staff is presenting two options based on the Commission's prior discussions.

- Option 1 would involve six meetings of the full Commission and use of a subcommittee focused on the Land Use and Transportation Elements; and
- Option 2 would involve six meetings of the full Commission and no subcommittee.

### Background & Discussion

The City Council initiated the update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2006 and the PTC then spent close to six years working on the Comprehensive Plan Update (from 2008 to 2014), ultimately sending its recommendation to the City Council in April of 2014. Upon receipt of the PTC's

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<sup>1</sup> As requested by the PTC, staff will inform the Council of the Commission's request for more time, and for a start date after vacation season. The options presented in this report may be modified if the Council grants these requests.

recommendations, the City Council elected to create a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to engage in further dialog and community outreach to inform the Council's amendments.

Section 19.04.010 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code states that the planning commission "*shall have the primary duty to prepare, adopt, and recommend to the City Council for their adoption, a long range, comprehensive general plan...*" and subsequent sections of the Code specify relevant duties and procedures.

Section 19.04.080 of the Municipal Code describes two processes for adoption of a Comprehensive Plan Update and reflects the State law as it existed in 1955. Former Government Code sections 65501 through 65510 apply to updates initiated by the PTC, while former Government Code sections 65511 through 65513 apply to updates initiated by the Council. The procedures are very similar in both instances: the PTC must hold at least one public hearing prior before making a recommendation to the Council. Where the PTC has initiated an update, Council amendments are referred back to the PTC for a 45 day review period; where the Council has initiated an update, Council amendments are referred to the PTC for a 90 day review period. In both cases, once this review period is complete, the City Council may ultimately adopt an update to the Comprehensive Plan at a noticed public hearing (former Gov. Code Section 65514).

This process is similar to the one under current State law, which provides that the Planning Commission shall make a recommendation to the City Council on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, for adoption by the City Council. Under current State law, however, the Planning Commission has only 45 days after council referral to submit its report. As explained above, the prior law incorporated into the Municipal Code provides the PTC with a review period of up to 90 days.

As noted above, staff anticipates that the City Council will refer the draft Comprehensive Plan Update to the PTC on June 12, 2017, and that the Council's referral would be effective (and the PTC's review period would start), when the document is transmitted to the PTC on or before June 30, 2017.

At earlier meetings, some Commissioners supported creating subcommittees to conduct its review of the Comprehensive Plan Update, and some suggested that there would be insufficient time to conduct an in depth review. Planning staff believes that the Commission can add value to the draft Comprehensive Plan Update by focusing on key issues and questions. Objectives and options for structuring the PTC's review are presented below.

#### Suggested Objectives for the PTC's 90-Day Review

The Commission's review will result in a motion or series of motions recommending sections of the Comprehensive Plan (and the Final EIR) to the City Council for adoption. Like the Council's motions, it's expected that the Commission's motions will include bullet points identifying specific changes or adjustments that are recommended to the draft plan. Staff does not anticipate developing tracked changes versions of the documents.

Suggested objectives of the Commissions review are:

- To recommend needed adjustments to policies and programs, including the Implementation Plan, to better address major policy issues.
- To identify any inconsistencies or redundancies between the elements for clarification or elimination in order to make the document more useable for the PTC and the public.
- To familiarize Commissioners with the content of the draft document thereby facilitating the Commission’s review of proposed actions (e.g. proposed projects and ordinances).

Suggested Approach to the PTC’s Review

Some Commissioners have voiced support for subcommittees to facilitate their review, and some have suggested that a higher level of review, without subcommittees may be the only thing feasible in the time allotted. Some have also suggested that the draft Land Use & Community Design Element is the element requiring the most time and attention. Based on this input, staff has suggested two options:

- Option 1 would involve six meetings of the full Commission (two for Land Use and Transportation) and use of a subcommittee focused on the Land Use & Transportation Elements; and
- Option 2 would involve six meetings of the full Commission (two for Land Use and Transportation) and no subcommittee.

A schedule for each option is provided below.

Month	Option 1: LU Subcommittee	Option 2: No Subcommittee
June	6/30 – Start of 90 days	6/30 – Start of 90 days
<b>July</b> July 12 (Week 1)	<b>7/12 PTC Hearing Comp Plan Orientation</b>	<b>7/12 PTC Hearing Comp Plan Orientation</b>
July 18 (Week 2)	July 18 <i>LU &amp; Transp. Subcommittee</i>	
July 26 (Week 3)	<b>7/26 PTC Hearing LU &amp; Transp (1 of 2)</b>	<b>7/26 PTC Hearing LU &amp; Transp (1 of 2)</b>
(Week 4)		
<b>August</b> Aug 1 (Week 1)	Aug 1 (optional meeting) <i>LU &amp; Transp. Subcommittee</i>	

Aug 9 (Week 2)	<b>8/ 9 PTC Hearing LU &amp; Transp (2 of 2)</b>	<b>8/9 PTC Hearing LU &amp; Transp (2 of 2)</b>
(Week 3)		
	8/18 Staff transmits Final EIR to PTC	8/18 Staff transmits Final EIR to PTC
Aug 30 (Week 4)	<b>8/30 PTC Hearing Safety &amp; NE &amp; CSF</b>	<b>8/30 PTC Hearing Safety &amp; NE &amp; CSF</b>
<b>Sept Week 1</b>		
Sept 13 (Week 2)	<b>9/13 PTC Hearing BE, Intro, Governance, Implementation</b>	<b>9/13 PTC Hearing BE, Intro, Governance, Implementation</b>
(Week 3)		
Sept 27 (Week 4)	<b>9/27 PTC Hearing Recommendation to Council</b>	<b>9/27 PTC Hearing Recommendation to Council</b>

*Source: Planning & Community Environment, June 2017*

### Environmental Review

The Commission will receive the Final EIR for the Comprehensive Plan Update in August, and will be asked to recommend certification by the City Council pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City.

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