



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Planning & Transportation Commission Staff Report

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

Meeting Date: February 8, 2023

TITLE

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning and Transportation Commission hold elections for offices of Chair and Vice Chair, or select an alternative date for elections, as discussed below.

BACKGROUND

Section 2.1 of the Bylaws of the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) states:

“The offices of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall be filled by election of members of the Commission from among their members, and persons so elected shall serve for a term of one year or until their successors are elected. The election shall be held at the end of the first regular Commission meeting conducted on or after January 1 of each calendar year, or on an alternative date certain established by the Commission at such meeting. In the event that either office becomes vacant during the regular term, the Commission shall elect a member to serve the remainder of the term.”

There is no express procedure for Chair and Vice Chair elections. Where the PTC’s bylaws and procedural rules are silent, the presiding officer may decide questions of procedure, though any commissioner may appeal a decision to the commission as a whole. The process for the most recent past election practices is summarized below:

1. Nominations for Chair are made from the floor. Commissioners may nominate anyone, including themselves. A second is required for the nomination.
2. The nominee states whether they will accept the nomination.
3. The Commissioners who moved and seconded the nomination make a brief statement on why they support the nomination.
4. Nominees may also make a brief statement regarding their candidacy.
5. Other Commissioners may give comments or ask questions to the nominees.
6. The PTC will take a vote after all nominations have been made, seconded, and the nominees have stated whether they will accept.

7. Four votes are required for confirmation.
8. The entire process is repeated for Vice Chair election.

Following the City Council's adoption of the Board and Commission Handbook, which establishes April 1 as the date on which PTC terms commence, some commissioners have suggested that elections for PTC officers should be delayed to April of each year. The current Bylaws allow for such a delay by a vote of the Commission, in which case current officers would continue to serve until a successor is elected.

This year, however, a vote to delay elections would be somewhat complicated because the office of Chair is currently vacant. Therefore, even if the PTC chooses to set an alternative date for the 2023 officer elections, the PTC bylaws would require an election to fill the vacated position of Chair until that alternative date. If the current Vice-Chair is elected to fill this position, an additional election would be necessary to fill the newly vacated office of Vice-Chair.

AUTHOR/TITLE:

Amy French, Chief Planning Official

Report #: 2301-0861