



## Planning & Transportation Commission Staff Report

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

**Meeting Date: March 29, 2023**  
**Report #: 2303-1146**

### **TITLE**

Review 2022-2023 Work Plan and Discuss Drafting the 2023-2024 PTC Work Plan

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Commission review the 2022-2023 Work Plan (Attachment A), receive staff's presentation on the plan status, and provide direction for staff to return in late April/early May 2023 with an updated work plan for 2023-2024.

### **BACKGROUND/ PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

On April 27, 2022, the PTC adopted its 2022-23 Work Plan. This was submitted to the City Council with the work plans of other boards and commissions in the Council packet of June 1, 2022. The work plan from 2022-2023 is attached to this report (Attachment A). The work plan notes impacts, timelines, resources needed, measures of success, and indicates priority (high or lower) and whether the projects were state-mandated or council directed. The work plan established 18 projects/goals for 2022. Of the 18 projects/goals, 15 were noted as either State-mandated or Council-directed, or both. The 18 topic areas were, in order:

The Council recently reconfirmed its priorities for 2023, which include:

1. Economic Recovery & Transition
2. Climate Change & Natural Environment - Protection & Adaptation
3. Housing for Social & Economic Balance
4. Community Health & Safety

The Council adopted a number of objectives for each priority that may be viewed online: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/content/public/departments/city-clerk/city-council/city-council-priorities/february-2023-status-update.pdf>. The Planning & Development Services department and Office of Transportation have many assignments from that list and others not presented on the Council's list that staff can speak to at the meeting.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Environmental Review The subject project is not subject to review according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Thus, no CEQA review has been performed.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: 2022-23 PTC Work Plan as Adopted by PTC

### **AUTHOR/TITLE:**

Amy French, Chief Planning Official



## Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC)

### 2022-2023 Workplan Overview

Date approved by PTC: 4/27/2022

**Staff Liaison:** Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS)

**Lead Department:** Planning and Development Services (PDS); ; Office of Transportation (OOT)

#### About the Commission

The Planning & Transportation Commission's work plan covers April 2022 - April 2023. The members and chairs are listed below. Members serve 4 year terms. At this time, the PTC has 7 members and no vacancies. For more information about Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) please visit our webpage, go to <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/boards/ptc/default.asp>

#### Current Commissioners

- Ed Lauing (Chair)
- Doria Summa (Vice Chair)
- Bryna Chang
- Bart Hechtman
- Keith Reckdahl
- Giselle Roohparvar
- Carolyn Templeton

#### Mission Statement

The Planning & Transportation Commission advises the City Council, Planning Director, and Transportation Director on land use and transportation matters, including the Comprehensive Plan, zoning, transportation programs, and related matters. The Commission's primary responsibilities include:

- Preparing and making recommendations to the City Council on the City's Comprehensive Plan and applying the Comprehensive Plan to proposed development, public facilities, and transportation in Palo Alto;
- Considering and making recommendations to the City Council on zoning map and zoning ordinance changes; any changes to Title 18 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code must be reviewed by the PTC and the City Council;
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on subdivisions and Site and Design Reviews, on appeals on variances and use permits;
- Considering other policies and programs affecting development and land use in Palo Alto for final City Council action;
- Reviewing and making recommendations on individual projects as described in the Municipal Code, and Open Space development;
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on transportation, parking, and other related mobility issues;
- Ensuring robust community engagement and dialogue regarding planning, land use, and transportation and providing recommendations to the City Council regarding these matters and incorporating the public discussion. The PTC hearings provide a forum for public comment and public interaction.

#### Prior Year Accomplishments

With a few exceptions, all items on the 2021-2022 PTC work plan were addressed by the Commission. This includes considering ordinances, providing feedback during study sessions, and recommending policy direction for a variety of topics The plan can be found here (<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/historic-resources-board/2021/ptc-work-plan-2021.pdf>). Accomplishments include considering changes to wireless standards, recommendations regarding ADUs, reviewing the scope for retail recovery work, NVCAP, and the Housing Element.



# Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) 2022-2023 Workplan

**Staff Liaison:** Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS)

**Lead Department:** Planning and Development Services (PDS); Office of Transportation (OOT)

**Item 2**

Attachment A 2022-23 PTC Work

Plan

## PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The Planning and Transportation Commission must review and provide recommendations on certain changes to the Palo Alto Municipal Code, specifically those in Title 18 and affecting planning policy, as well as General Plan changes and General Plan administration. The PTC also reviews items as referred from the City Council, and considers certain development application. This workplan includes execution of those duties and special projects that seek to further the administration and implementation of the General Plan.

### PROJECT/GOAL 1 :

Study session to discuss traffic safety, with an emphasis on identifying areas of concerns and collisions between motorists and cyclists as well as between motorists and pedestrians. The PTC wants to discuss available data regarding safety and provide an opportunity for the public to engage in this important topic as well.

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Opportunity to investigate an area of considerable public concern.	The study session can occur anytime in the next 12 month period, with a preference for as soon as staff and resources can be available.	Office of Transportation staff would prepare the staff report, presentation, and be a key facilitator of the discussion. The Police Department may need to provide additional data/information.	Substantive and informative discussion.	No
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists is important. Reducing and/or eliminating injury and death resulting from collisions is an important priority for many residents. A public dialogue at the PTC is welcomed by those concerned members of the public.		The challenges in this area are addressed through existing committees and active projects. The work continues even if a study session is not held.		No

### PROJECT/GOAL 2:

Retail Recovery, the Future of Retail, and Retail Preservation: This project consists of several interrelated and overlapping topics and council assignments. They are grouped here in recognition that each assignment impacts the other assignment. Currently, PDS is preparing a high-level study on how the City might, from a land use standpoint, aid the recovery of retail uses hampered by the pandemic and prepare for the future of retail. In addition, the PTC will consider and make recommendations to Council regarding a temporary ordinance that changed conditional use permit thresholds. Finally, there is an outstanding Council referral to evaluate the retail preservation ordinance. While the City pursues the hiring of an economic development staff person and a contract with a firm to develop an economic development strategy, the PTC suggests this bod of work occur later in the year, so that these efforts are aligned and done in coordination with broader economic development efforts.

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Overall, this project aims to ensure a strong climate for retail businesses in Palo Alto that can allow Palo Altans to meet their daily needs and have a high quality of life.	The high level review of trends and best practices in retail is currently underway. The review of CUP thresholds is currently underway due to the time-sensitivity of the project. Other efforts will remain paused until the additional staff and consultant resources are on board.	Staff, consultants, and participation from local retail community.	These interrelated projects may result in the development of new ordinances and/or broader policy recommendations to the City Council.	Yes - Council assigned.
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The recovery from the pandemic as well as any shifts in retail trends that will endure beyond the pandemic are occurring and can benefit from further and refined action by the City.		While this is an impactful body of work, the need to get it right and coordinate with existing and new resources outweighs the need to quickly pursue the work.		

Plan				
PROJECT/GOAL 3: Study Session(s) Regarding Neighborhood Planning - The PTC will discuss approaches to neighborhood planning, and the pros/cons and overall effectiveness of various approaches to neighborhood planning. Considering the Housing Element plans for 6,000+ housing units, if successfully implemented, the Element will likely produce new neighborhoods in Palo Alto and/or significantly change the demand for public facilities and other services in existing neighborhoods. As the City prepares to adopt and then implement the Housing Element update, the PTC wants to explore how the City might approach the subsequent neighborhood planning.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Researching and discussing how to plan for the future of Palo Alto neighborhoods.	There is no deadline for this project.	Staff time to research and prepare a staff report.	Successful conversation and possible identification of an approach (or approaches) to neighborhood planning to guide the City's future.	No
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Not urgent.		It would be timely to undertake this study session after the Housing Element has been submitted to HCD for consideration.		No
PROJECT/GOAL 4: Study session regarding projects and efforts to enhance California Avenue, both the business district and surrounding Mayfield neighborhood. This study session might include efforts to study a permanent street closure, retail recovery efforts, efforts to adjust parking requirements in the Cal Ave area, etc. Based on the study session additional information may be requested or actions taken. A goal is to ensure the projects are working together comprehensively and synergistically.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Comprehensive and synergistic approach to projects in the Cal Ave area that yields co-benefits and maximizes coordination.	This is not a time sensitive item. An appropriate time may be as/after the scope for Cal Ave permanent closure study is prepared.	Staff from PDS and OOT will need to collaborate to prepare for the session, as well as Public Works regarding public works construction projects. Additional coordination with the County (developing housing in the area) is also desirable.	An informative and robust dialogue.	Mixed - Some items have been referred to PTC by Council, though a comprehensive study session has not specifically referred.
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Certain projects in the area are materializing (Public Safety building is under construction, for example) and further policy changes are on the horizon (street closure consideration).		This study session should occur at a time that provides time for coordination among the city departments and other agencies.		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL 5: Updating Wireless Ordinance & Wireless Objective Standards – This work product continues work that was renewed after the joint PTC, ARB, and City Council session.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Updated wireless ordinance and standards that meet the needs of the City and its residents.	Underway. Anticipated to PTC in spring/summer 2022.	Staff and consultant resources, including outside counsel, are assigned.	Updated wireless and objective standards adopted by Council.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
While not urgent, the sooner new standards are developed and adopted, the sooner they can be implemented.		While new standards are not currently in place, existing policy does meet some of the community's needs.		
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<b>PROJECT/GOAL 6:</b> Downtown In-Lieu Parking - Council instituted a temporary moratorium on the downtown parking in-lieu program. Staff will present PTC with information regarding the impacts of this policy so that the PTC can recommend either reviving the program, modifying it, or ending the program.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Development of a long term policy will provide clarity to property owners and potential developers.	Spring 2022	Staff resources have been assigned.	Adoption of a permanent ban and/or reinstatement of the in-lieu program.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The moratorium on the in-lieu program expires this year and so PTC must make a timely recommendation to Council.		N/A		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 7:</b> Conditional Use Permit Thresholds - In 2021 Council passed a temporary ordinance to lower the threshold for conditional use permits for some uses in Palo Alto. PTC will consider the impacts of these changes and recommend making them permanent, end them, or a variety of adjustments in between.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Permanent adjustments to CUP thresholds and/or reversion to previous standards.	Project is underway and will be considered by the PTC on 3-30-2021	Needed resources (staff) have been assigned.	A successful project will result in an recommendation regarding ordinance changes to the City Council. The goal of this body of work is to increase the presence and viability of active ground floor uses throughout Palo Alto.	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
PTC members reflected that the item has a sense of urgency based on community members' expressed concerns. While the session occurring imminently is not necessary, the topic is a high concern and priority for the community and PTC.		This project could be divided into the CUP thresholds/updated definitions and a more comprehensive referral about retail overall (part of the Council motion on this ordinance) and a closer look at certain definitions and other development standards for retail. The portion related to the temporary ordinance could advance separately from the more comprehensive analysis.		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 8:</b> North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan - Staff continue to develop Council's preferred concept plan into a draft plan and to study the concept plan.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
A transit oriented neighborhood.	Underway; will return to PTC later in 2022	Additional consultant resources will be requested.	An adopted area plan.	Yes
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Per grant requirements, the project must be completed by the end of 2023.		N/A		Yes

Plan				
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 9:</b> Housing Element Update - The Council will consider the housing sites soon. The PTC will consider the programs and policies for the Housing Element and make a recommendation to Council. In addition, the environmental review and necessary public hearings and public comment periods will commence. Ultimately the Element will be submitted to the State in early 2023.				
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Compliant housing element.	Policies & Programs to come to PTC in Spring 2022.	Staff and consultant resources have been assigned and procured.	Compliant Housing Element that meets the needs of current and future Palo Altans.	Yes - State Mandated Policy Development
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
This process must be completed in 2022 to meet state requirements.		N/A		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 10:</b> SB 9 Permanent Ordinance - The Council adopted an interim ordinance to prepare the city for upcoming SB 9 applications due to the state law being effective January 1, 2022. The PTC will consider a permanent ordinance and make a recommendation to City Council.				
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Local application of SB 9 that limits disruption to Palo Alto's development pattern.	Summer/Fall 2022	Staff resources need to be assigned in PDS; the City Attorney's Office also provides significant support for this project.	An adopted and implementable ordinance.	State Mandated
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
The sooner the City can define and refine local implementation of SB 9, the better the program will serve our community.		The interim ordinance provides necessary measures to implement the ordinance.		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 11:</b> Commercial Parking Pilot - PTC will receive an update regarding outreach efforts underway, the progress towards releasing and RFI/RFP to secure additional information or services to advance commercial parking.				
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Feedback from PTC on this project.	Ongoing updates throughout the year.	Staff and consultant resources are allocated and procured.	Feedback from PTC and continued engagement from the public. Overall, learning and insight provided by the pilot.	Yes - Council
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Ongoing project.		Ongoing project.		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 12:</b> PTC will receive an update regarding options for improving the City's parking programs. This includes a Roadmap for Residential Parking Permit Program improvements and commercial parking improvements.				
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Improved parking operations.	Ongoing.	Ongoing.	Feedback from PTC and continued engagement from the public.	Yes
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
The staff work behind the project continues; proposed updates help advance the work. Additionally, the public welcomes opportunities to engage w/the PTC on this topic.		This project represents a large body of ongoing work to manage parking supply and parking policy.		Yes

<b>PROJECT/GOAL 13:</b>		Parking Data Portal - PTC will receive an update regarding parking availability data. The new license plate reader technology allows for regular collection and reporting of parking availability.		
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
This project will provide more knowledge of parking use and occupancy.	Summer 2022	Resources have been allocated.	Data published on website	Yes - Council
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Publishing information on the website is the next step as information has been .		N/A as the project is underway and we are currently awaiting data outputs to analyze and understand.		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 14:</b>		On-Demand Shuttle Program - Update and informational on grant-awarded project for implementing and delivering on-demand shuttle service in Palo Alto.		
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Shuttle program to provide service, understanding, and insight into future shuttle programs.	Will come to PTC Fall/Winter 2022	Grant money has been awarded for the project. Further service providers are being procured.	Feedback, knowledge, and insight.	Council accepted grant award.
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Grant project to be executed w/in prescribed timeline.		Must unfold as resources are procured.		No
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 15:</b>		Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Update - The Council has asked the PTC to revise the ADU ordinance. In addition, the state Housing and Community Development Department has provided feedback to the City's ordinance. Council will provide direction on the HCD requested updates, and then PTC will consider a revised ordinance—combining previous PTC changes and the HCD changes as well.		
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
ADU ordinance that furthers ADU production in Palo Alto.	The item will return to PTC after the State's Housing and Community Development provides further guidance on needed refinements.	Some projects may need to conclude for sufficient staffing to be available to advance this project.	Adopted ADU ordinance.	Yes - Council and State
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Compliance with state law is necessary to prevent invalidation of the local ordinance. Swift action following HCD response is recommended.		Additional areas of local preference, that are compliant with state law, can be refined at the City's discretion.		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 16:</b>		Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update - A citywide evaluation of the bicycle network and pedestrian network. The plan will identify opportunities to enhance and connect the network.		
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Updated bike and ped transportation plan that meets the needs of current and future Palo Altans.	TBD	Consultant resources are being procured.	Updated bike and ped plan.	Yes - Council
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
N/A		Update is timely, but not mandated by any state laws.		No



PROJECT/GOAL 17: Cal Ave Subscription In-Lieu Program - Council referred to the PTC the development of measures to alleviate parking requirements on businesses in the California Avenue area, by establishing a subscription parking in-lieu fee program for that area.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Improved ability for commercial spaces--especially retail--to host new uses.	Winter 2022	Staffing resources must be identified to manage development of the policy.	Successful subscription in lieu program launched.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Cal Ave may continue to struggle to attract new commercial uses w/o some type of relief.		The high demands on limited staff may hamper advancement of this item in light of other priorities.		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL 18: California Avenue & Ramona Street Closures - Planning, design, and study of potential for permanent closures.				
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Evaluating the potential designs, pros, and cons of closing a portion of these streets to vehicle traffic.	Early 2023	Funds for consultant resources must be appropriated and a consultant procured.	Recommendation made to Council.	Yes - Council
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The study and subsequent recommendation/decision are needed for local businesses to plan effectively.		The temporary closure can continue while the study takes place.		Yes - Council