



# City of Palo Alto

## City Council Staff Report

(ID # 5782)

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**Report Type: Action Items**

**Meeting Date: 5/18/2015**

**Summary Title: Advisory Committee for Comp. Plan Update**

**Title: Composition and Purpose of an Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Plan Update**

**From: City Manager**

**Lead Department: Planning and Community Environment**

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the formation of a citizens' advisory committee representing diverse interests to assist with the Comprehensive Plan Update, and direct the City Manager to solicit applications and appoint members of the committee consistent with purpose and parameters in Attachment A.

### **Executive Summary**

The City is currently working on updating its Comprehensive Plan, "*Embracing the New Century, Palo Alto 1998-2010*" and on April 27, 2015, the City Council requested that the City Manager appoint a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to assist with evaluation of community input received via an "open source" process and preparation of a revised draft plan for City Council review. **The City Council also requested an opportunity to review and approve the charter or purpose of the committee and its composition of various stakeholder representatives.**

The CAC would be a means of ensuring consistent and well-informed participation throughout the update. As such, the role of the CAC will be to:

- Participate in eliciting broad community input on the plan and advising staff on the synthesis of this input into revised plan language; and
- Review elements of the Comprehensive Plan and make recommendations on proposed changes.

To avoid duplication, it's envisioned that the CAC would replace the Leadership Group formed in 2014 for the purpose of soliciting public input, and that members of the Leadership Group could apply for the new CAC.

Staff would solicit applications for the CAC at the upcoming May 30<sup>th</sup> Summit. The City Manager would then select individuals for the CAC and the group would convene for its first meeting in early July. The CAC’s initial tasks could include assisting staff with assimilation of the community input received on May 30<sup>th</sup> for a report to the City Council.

**Background**

When the City Council “restarted” the Comprehensive Plan Update process in early 2014, a Leadership Group of community representatives was appointed by the City Manager to assist with community engagement. The Leadership Group has helped to plan the May 30 Summit and it was envisioned that they would continue to assist in planning community work sessions that will follow the summit. These work sessions will be topical meetings scheduled well in advance and open to all interested parties. There will be concurrent opportunities for on-line input, which would be used by attendees at the meetings to ensure the plan that is ultimately adopted reflects the community’s collective vision for Palo Alto in 2030.

This strategy of “open sourcing” community input originally excluded the familiar strategy of using an appointed advisory committee, but on April 27, 2015, the City Council directed staff to incorporate an appointed committee into the process, pointing out that a committee consisting of a diverse group of stakeholders can assist staff with the evaluation and synthesis of input received through the “open data” process. Also, with an appointed committee, there will be more consistent attendance at work sessions by a diverse group of stakeholders, since appointed committees involve a dedicated group of meeting attendees who participate on a regular basis and are designed to be balanced in terms of the interests they represent. Please see CMR#5669 from April 27, 2015 for more information about the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

Members of the Council have pointed to the success of the last Comprehensive Plan advisory committee, the CPAC, and to the success of committees associated with the coordinated area plan for the SOFA area, and the Housing Element Update in 2014. The summary below provides some background on these processes:

<b>Title of the Committee:</b>	CPAC
<b>Purpose of the Committee:</b>	Prepare an overall vision statement for the Comprehensive Plan and identify all policy areas to be addressed; subsequently review draft background reports and an administrative draft of the plan.
<b>Date Convened/Approx. Duration:</b>	January 1993 / Plan Adoption in 1998
<b>Summary of Membership Composition:</b>	38 member committee consisting of 28 community members, 10 alternates, and nine representatives of Boards and Commissions. Community members were “selected at large to represent the entire community.”

<b>Comments:</b>	The committee was was not expected to reach consensus on major issues, but was charged with drafting majority and minority opinions. Meetings were professionally facilitated.
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Source: Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan p. I-5 & October 18, 1992 Staff Report

<b>Title of the Committee:</b>	SOFA Working Group
<b>Purpose of the Committee:</b>	Discuss planning issues, evaluate alternatives, refine the Plan concepts and listen to public comments; explore different strategies for key issues, develop a single plan concept with major policies “representing the shared vision of the group,” and review the draft plan, providing a recommendation to the City Council.
<b>Date Convened/Approx. Duration:</b>	September 1997 / Initial work completed June 1998 /Continued to advise through Phase I Plan Adoption March 2000 & Phase 2 Plan Adoption December 2003
<b>Summary of Membership Composition:</b>	14 members and 4 alternates including “neighborhood residents, business owners, and representatives of a broad range of Citywide and regional planning interests.”
<b>Comments:</b>	A technical advisory group of city staff was also appointed to provide technical information and planning and policy analysis.

Source: SOFA I plan, page 4; SOFA II plan, page 1.

<b>Title of the Committee:</b>	Housing Element Community Panel
<b>Purpose of the Committee:</b>	Assist planning staff with preparation, adoption and certification of the City’s 2015-2023 Housing Element by the January 2015 deadline. Assist with policy discussions and community outreach, provide a recommendation to the City Council’s Regional Housing Mandate Committee.
<b>Date Convened/Approx. Duration:</b>	March 2014 / Plan Adoption November 2014
<b>Summary of Membership Composition:</b>	18 members including one Planning Commissioner, one Human Relations Commissioner, one School Board member, one PTA member, three Palo Alto residential neighborhood association (PAN) representatives from various neighborhoods, one representative from Palo Alto for Sensible Zoning, one local business representative, one representative from a senior citizen organization and one person with disabilities, one local real estate representative, one League of Women Voters Housing Team representative, one Palo Alto Housing Corporation Board member, one mixed use housing developer with Palo Alto experience, one

	housing advocate and City resident, and one housing expert.
<b>Comments:</b>	The committee operated mostly by consensus, but did take several votes in the course of their work. Meetings were chaired by staff.

Source: [http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/advance/housing\\_element\\_update\\_2015\\_2023.asp](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/advance/housing_element_update_2015_2023.asp) accessed April 28, 2015

## Discussion

At its April 27, 2015 meeting, the City Council discussed the ongoing Comprehensive Plan Update, its vision statement and goals, and an initial review of the update process ahead. A key part of this discussion was the possible establishment of an advisory committee for the update. At the conclusion of this session the Council requested staff return with recommendations for a working group that would be **appointed by the City Manager based on stakeholder categories approved by the City Council.**

The proposed charter or purpose for the CAC included in Attachment A was developed following a review of prior successful planning efforts and recognizing that -- like the 2014 Housing Element Community Panel -- the CAC will be able to build on an existing plan with many good qualities. The CAC would also have the benefit of Planning and Transportation Commission recommendations and City Council direction on major policy issues.

A membership of 20 people is suggested (three would be ex officio and non-voting), and the City Manager would appoint replacements if/as needed during the process, rather than appointing “alternates” at the time of CAC formation. (This would ensure continued representation of all stakeholder groups/perspectives.)

In appointing community members, the City Manager would seek a mix of members in terms of their familiarity with the City’s planning processes, a mix of ages and cultural backgrounds, and a mix of long-time residents and more recent arrivals. While neighborhood representatives would be appointed “at large” to represent the interests of the entire City, residents would be sought from a variety of Palo Alto neighborhoods. Renters and the business community would be represented in addition to home owners, and interest/expertise would also be sought related to the topics of:

- Affordable housing
- Natural resource conservation
- Community health
- Environmental sustainability
- Real estate/development
- Transportation and mobility
- Architecture and urban design
- Business and economics

Members would also be sought to represent the interests of seniors, the disabled, Palo Alto parents and youth, and a variety perspectives on the challenges facing our community. (Please see Attachment A for a summary of the CAC's suggested role and composition.)

The Committee would be a Brown Act committee. Staff hopes to begin accepting applications for the committee at the Summit.

### **Timeline**

If the City Council approves the staff recommendation, application forms will be disseminated at the May 30 Summit and accepted until the close of business on June 15, 2015. The first meeting of the committee will be in early July, 2015 at a time and place to be determined and the committee will meet at least monthly thereafter until a revised draft plan is prepared.

### **Resource Impact**

Establishment of a citizens committee will assist staff with preparation of the Comprehensive Plan Update, but may add some time to the overall planning process. While it is not possible to associate a dollar figure with the additional time, a longer process is likely to require additional consultant support.

### **Environmental Review**

The recommended action is not a "project" requiring review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

#### **Attachments:**

- A: Draft Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) (DOCX)



**Invitation to Apply to the Palo Alto  
Comprehensive Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee**

***Applications are due by close of business on June 15, 2015***

The City Manager invites individuals to apply to be part of a Citizens Advisory Committee that will assist with completion of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Background**

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary tool for guiding preservation and development in Palo Alto. It builds on shared community values and aspirations to guide preservation and manage growth and change. The City has been working to update its current Comprehensive Plan since 2008 and the City Council has requested that the City Manager appoint a Citizens Advisory Committee to assist with completion of this effort. The Comprehensive Plan does not require wholesale revision, but requires updating to reflect changes and accomplishments since 1998, and to address new challenges that have arisen.

**Citizens Advisory Committee**

The CAC will consist of 17 community members appointed by the City Manager to represent a diversity of interests, as well as 3 ex officio (non-voting) members representing the Planning & Transportation Commission, the Palo Alto Unified School District, and Stanford University.

The CAC will review Comprehensive Plan sections, City Council input and direction, recommendations of the Planning & Transportation Commission, and public input received during and in advance of the meetings. The CAC will assist staff with the evaluation of "open sourced" public input and with synthesizing all materials and inputs as they review plan language (goals/policies/programs) and proposed revisions. Members of the CAC will be asked to review materials provided in advance of meetings, and will be primarily engaged in reviewing and commenting on (rather than writing) draft plan language.

**Term**

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will be subject to the Brown Act, California's Open Meeting Law, and will hold regular, noticed and agenda'd public meetings. The CAC is expected to meet at least monthly, starting on July \_\_, 2015 and extending at least until April or May of 2016. The use of ad hoc subcommittees will be extremely limited. The CAC will meet periodically with the City Council in joint sessions, and will ultimately make a recommendation on adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Qualifications**

In anticipation of broad interest in this committee, candidates will be selected to ensure the group

is representative of a diversity of community members including neighborhood, technical, and business perspectives. While all neighborhood representatives will be appointed “at large” to represent the interests of the entire City, members will be appointed to ensure participation by residents from a variety of Palo Alto neighborhoods across the City.

Members will also be appointed to represent the interests of homeowners, renters, seniors, the disabled, businesses, Palo Alto parents and youth. Non-residents may be members if needed to represent these interests or others desired as part of the group, which shall include those with interest/expertise related to the topics of:

- Affordable housing
- Natural resource conservation
- Community health
- Environmental sustainability
- Real estate/development
- Transportation and mobility
- Architecture and urban design
- Business & economics

The City Manager will select candidates needed to ensure the desired diversity of interests and expertise, and who meet the following additional qualifications:

- Live or work in Palo Alto
- Have established connections and networks in the community, such as membership in an existing community organization, professional organization and/or local association, or have special expertise in one of the topics listed above
- Has energy and good ideas about the future of Palo Alto and a willingness to meet on a monthly basis
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively and effectively in a diverse group environment.

Applicants who are not appointed to the CAC are nonetheless welcome to attend the CAC’s regular meetings and provide their input; they will also be considered for appointment if the City Manager needs to appoint a replacement for a member who resigns or who fails to attend at least 75% of the meetings.



Comprehensive Plan Update Community Advisory Committee Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Palo Alto Resident?  YES  NO

If yes, in what neighborhood do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any relatives or members of your household who are employed by the City of Palo Alto, who are currently serving on the City Council, or who are Board Members or Commissioners?

YES  NO

Would you be able to attend the first CAC meeting on July \_\_, 2015 and are you available and committed to attend monthly meetings through mid-2016?  YES  NO

Check any that apply to you:

- Member of the Comprehensive Plan Leadership Group \_\_\_\_
- Parent of School Aged Child or Student in Palo Alto Schools \_\_\_\_
- Experience with Issues Relevant to Seniors or the Disabled \_\_\_\_
- Member of Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN) \_\_\_\_
- Member of Palo Altans for Sensible Zoning (PASZ) \_\_\_\_
- Member of Palo Alto Forward \_\_\_\_
- Member of Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce \_\_\_\_
- Member of other local business/neighborhood/community organization (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Foreign Language speaker (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Owner of a Palo Alto business \_\_\_\_

Employee of a Palo Alto business \_\_\_\_

Homeowner \_\_\_\_

Renter \_\_\_\_

Affordable housing experience \_\_\_\_

Natural resource conservation experience \_\_\_\_

Community health experience \_\_\_\_

Environmental sustainability experience \_\_\_\_

Real estate/development experience \_\_\_\_

Transportation and mobility experience \_\_\_\_

Architecture/Urban Design experience \_\_\_\_

Business & economics experience \_\_\_\_

(Continues on Reverse)

May 5, 2015 DRAFT

Please describe your involvement/experience in community activities, volunteer work, civic organizations, and how you have connected with others in the community:

Why are you interested in serving on the Citizens Advisory Committee?

How did you learn about the Citizens Advisory Committee: (check all that apply)

- May 30 Summit     Email from the City     Palo Alto Weekly     Social Media  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 15, 2015**

**Submit to:**

Department of Planning and Community Environment

Attention: Consuelo Hernandez

250 Hamilton Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> floor

Palo Alto, CA 94301

[Consuelo.hernandez@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Consuelo.hernandez@cityofpaloalto.org)