



CITY OF  
**PALO  
ALTO**

# Planning & Transportation Commission Action Agenda: May 10, 2023

Council Chambers & Hybrid  
6:00 PM

## Call to Order / Roll Call

6:04 pm

Chair Summa welcomed everyone to the regular meeting of the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC).

Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, conducted the roll call and announced all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Reckdahl.

## Oral Communications

The public may speak to any item not on the agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,2</sup>

Chair Summa invited members of the public to share their comments with the Commission on any item not on the Agenda.

Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, announced there were no public speakers.

## Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

The Chair or Commission majority may modify the agenda order to improve meeting management.

Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, stated there were no changes from Staff.

## City Official Reports

### 1. Directors Report, Meeting Schedule and Assignments

Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, stated the PTC liaison to the Council for May was Vice-Chair Chang. On May 15, 2023, the Council would be discussing the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance and on May 22, 2023, Council would discuss Senate Bill (SB) 9 Ordinance as well as the Firearms Ordinance. For the upcoming May 31, 2023, PTC meeting, the Rental Registry and the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) were going to be discussed. In June, PTC would discuss a housing project at 800 San Antonio Road, a transportation item about Crescent Park traffic calming, and then one other item if available. In July, the PTC would

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1 discuss the Parklet Program and proposed changes to Title 18 as well as a project at 2109  
2 Middlefield/Ellsworth.

3 Commissioner Hechtman requested Staff share the outcome of the Yale Road Parcel Map that  
4 the PTC considered and made a recommendation to Council.

5 Ms. French commented Council denied the application for the lot split.

6 Vice-Chair Chang added the Council agreed with the reasoning that was discussed at the PTC  
7 and the Council did discuss other vehicles that may allow the applicants to achieve their desired  
8 outcome.

9 Mr. Rafael Rius, Senior Transportation Engineer, updated that Staff was working on its internal  
10 review of the evaluation for the alternatives for Lincoln and Middlefield. Staff evaluation and  
11 the study was to be published on the City's website within one to two weeks. With respect to  
12 the safety improvement project for the railroad crossing at Churchill and Alma, the winning bid  
13 was to be presented to Council for approval on June 5, 2023. With respect to the Caltrans  
14 maintenance project on El Camino Real, due to the recent storms, Caltrans exhausted its  
15 budget for the repairs and were currently seeking funding to complete the project.

16 Commissioner Templeton agreed more work was needed on El Camino Real, especially the  
17 section between Oregon and Charleston. She invited Staff to share anyways the Commission or  
18 the public could encourage Caltrans to prioritize Palo Alto's section of El Camino Real.

19 Mr. Rius encouraged everyone to submit a service request on the Caltrans' website for  
20 dangerous potholes.

21 Commissioner Templeton suggested that the link be included in the next City Newsletter.

22 Mr. Rius agreed.

23 Mr. Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official, noted he spoke with the District 4 Division Chief  
24 and they agreed that due to the heavy storms the funding was exhausted. They were currently  
25 working through an administrative process to allocate more funding. Mr. Kamhi informed them  
26 that if there was anything the City could do to let the Office of Transportation know.

27 Commissioner Templeton mentioned Santa Clara County was declared a disaster area by  
28 Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) during the storm emergency and  
29 encouraged folks to seek funding through that avenue.

30 Vice-Chair Chang asked if the public commenters who submitted comments about Lincoln and  
31 Middlefield will be notified when the report is published.

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1 Mr. Rius commented Staff was creating an email list and those commenters will be added to  
2 the list. He added once the report was published, a community meeting was going to be held as  
3 well.

4 Chair Summa announced Commissioner Reckdahl had joined the meeting.

## 5 **Action Items**

6 Public Comment is Permitted. Applicants/Appellant Teams: Fifteen (15) minutes, plus three (3) minutes rebuttal.  
7 All others: Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

8           2. Recommend to the City Council that the proposed 2024-2028 Capital Improvement  
9           Projects (CIPs) listed in Attachment B are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan  
10           2030 policies and programs.

11 Ms. Chitra Moitra, Long Range Planner, reported the goal of the meeting was to have PTC  
12 review the new CIPs, suggest any improvements or additions to the CIPs to increase efficiency  
13 and communicate the findings through a letter to Council via the Finance Committee. She  
14 emphasized the discussion was to be focused on the new CIPs only and that it was not the  
15 annual Comprehensive Plan Implementation Program review. Each year City departments  
16 identify new CIPs and this year they identified 22 new CIPs. The CIPs are linked to a primary  
17 Comprehensive Plan Element and the CIPs must be consistent with the individual Goals,  
18 Policies, or Programs of the Comprehensive Plan. Attachment A of the Staff Report listed the  
19 new CIPs, the element they were associated with, what Board and Commission approval was  
20 needed and what type of environmental review was required. The 2024 Capital Budget Book  
21 included a total of 199 CIPs with 177 having already been reviewed by the PTC in previous  
22 years. Of the 22 new CIPs, 16 fell within the Community Services and Facilities Element, 2 in the  
23 Natural Environmental Element, 2 in the Transportation Element, 1 in the Safety Element and 1  
24 in Business and Economics. The new CIPs were the HomeKey shelter, two-grade separation  
25 projects, four facility improvement/equipment replacements, four parks and outdoor  
26 improvements and three utility improvements.

27 Chair Summa invited Commissioners to ask clarifying questions of Staff.

28 Commissioner Hechtman noticed there were four Lucie Stern projects. He asked why the  
29 projects were not lumped together as one from Public Works and one from Community  
30 Services.

31 Ms. Holly Boyd, Assistant Director for Public Works Engineering, commented typically the City  
32 does not issue four projects for one facility at one time. However, given the scope of the  
33 projects, the project was separated to help with tracking.

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1 Commissioner Hechtman wondered why so many of the new CIPs fell within the Community  
2 Services and Facilities Element.

3 Ms. Moitra answered it was a coincidence.

4 Ms. Boyd added that some of the projects were previously planned but were removed during  
5 the pandemic years due to funding. Other projects were separated from previous years'  
6 projects to allow for separate tracking.

7 Commissioner Hechtman asked if the grade separation project were new projects or were they  
8 being considered new because they were being separated from the larger grade separation  
9 project that was already approved.

10 Mr. Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official, answered they are not new and explained they  
11 are a split of a prior singular grade separation project. The new projects have different  
12 timelines, different scopes and will have different funding. The reason to split them out was to  
13 allow them to move forward without being held up by the other projects.

14 Vice-Chair Chang asked why there was such a large number of CIPs proposed.

15 Mr. Paul Harper, Budget Manager, answered it was a combination of projects being split and  
16 differed projects from prior years being added.

17 Vice-Chair Chang referred to CIP FD-2700, Cardiac Monitor Replacement and asked should that  
18 CIP be completed sooner than Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.

19 Mr. Harper explained the equipment is on a replacement schedule and in 2027 they will  
20 become outdated. He noted that Staff will update the language to clarify that the equipment is  
21 safe to use until then.

22 Vice-Chair Chang asked if the Lucie Stern Theater will be closed for an extended period.

23 Ms. Boyd answered Staff was coordinating with the various departments to have the projects  
24 done at the same time to eliminate multiple closures.

25 Mr. Daren Anderson, Community Services Manager, concurred Staff was working with Staff at  
26 the theater to minimize closure times.

27 Vice-Chair Chang mentioned the Foothills Restroom Replacement CIP included three different  
28 restrooms and she asked about the timing.

29 Mr. Anderson explained the design for all three restrooms would happen together and  
30 construction would be staggered for each restroom annually through 2027, 2028, and 2029.

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1 Vice-Chair Chang said for CIP Number 19, Meadow/Charleston Road Rail Grade Separation, the  
2 proposed \$115 million was for design only. She asked if Staff was anticipating that there would  
3 be no construction at that crossing for the next 5 years.

4 Mr. Kamhi answered Staff was not anticipating construction to begin within that 5 years. The  
5 proposed CIP was on an aggressive schedule and assumed the City would receive outside  
6 funding.

7 Vice-Chair Chang referenced CIP Number 21, IT Data Center Upgrade and asked if the one  
8 million allocated was for studying the flexibility of changing the data center space requirements  
9 only.

10 Mr. Harper believed the one million was for studying and reconfiguration of the space.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl understood the typical process was to have the new CIPs listed in the  
12 fifth year of the CIP plan and then every year they are rolled up. He noticed many of the new  
13 projects were being proposed early in the CIP plan and asked why that was.

14 Mr. Anderson explained it was typical of the City to move CIPs where they need to be and less  
15 urgent projects were placed in the out years of the plan.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl reiterated that new projects could be inserted anywhere in the plan.

17 Mr. Anderson confirmed that was correct.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl invited Staff to explain the process when projects are handled by  
19 multiple departments.

20 Mr. Anderson remarked with respect to projects that are covered by Public Works and Parks,  
21 the departments discuss the project and decide which department would be the managing  
22 department of that particular CIP. That generally applied to all projects covered by multiple  
23 departments.

24 Ms. Boyd noted for flooding, Public Works typically handled those issues but Public Works  
25 worked closely with the Office of Transportation as well.

26 Commissioner Reckdahl mentioned there was major flooding at El Camino Real and University  
27 during the storms. That section of the road was controlled by Caltrans but the City owned the  
28 storm drains.

29 Ms. Boyd concurred that is correct but Caltrans also controls the pump station. At the beginning  
30 of the storm season, there was a short at the pump station and Caltrans fixed that. Public  
31 Works did coordinate that work with Caltrans to try to eliminate the closure of lanes.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if that work was a local CIP or did the City interact with Caltrans  
2 and Caltrans would do the work.

3 Ms. Boyd clarified it was Caltrans responsibility to maintain the pump station and the City could  
4 not access the facility.

5 Commissioner Templeton appreciated Commissioner Reckdahl's questions. She stated the  
6 community needed to understand what facilities are managed by another agency and that  
7 those agencies must be held accountable. It was the City's job to advocate to those agencies  
8 when safety was compromised and she encouraged Staff to consider setting aside funding for  
9 that advocacy. She asked if there was any funding allocated for the Palo Alto portion of road  
10 safety and bicycle lane improvements for El Camino Real.

11 Mr. Kamhi requested further clarification.

12 Commissioner Templeton explained that Staff has indicated that the City must provide funding  
13 to improve the width and safety features of the sidewalks along El Camino Real.

14 Mr. Kamhi answered any improvements requested by the City of Caltrans that went above and  
15 beyond their plan required City funding. The City currently did not have plans developed for El  
16 Camino Real. Any new infrastructure along El Camino Real funded by the City required a  
17 planning process that included community input, community engagement and Council  
18 approval. Caltrans was considering incorporating bike lanes in their repaving project and that  
19 project was fully funded by Caltrans.

20 Commissioner Templeton stated that there are items that can be done to improve the safety  
21 along El Camino Real that required City funding and community engagement.

22 Mr. Kamhi noted Caltrans asked the City what its plans were for El Camino Real in the year 2019  
23 and now they were not seeking new proposals.

24 Commissioner Templeton agreed but commented other rumors were floating around about the  
25 Caltrans repaving project. She emphasized there was a strong need for safety improvements  
26 along El Camino Real as it was a crossing for many school children. She mentioned the storm  
27 drain at Oregon and El Camino stuck out and caused many flat tires for bicyclists. She asked if  
28 the City had any plans to fund the repair of that drain.

29 Mr. Kamhi clarified the City was pursuing safety improvement projects at specific intersections  
30 along El Camino Real.

31 Ms. Boyd said she would follow up on who was responsible for the storm drain because El  
32 Camino was managed by State, Page Mill and Oregon were managed by Santa Clara County,

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1 and storm drains were managed by the City. She shared the grates would all be adjusted during  
2 the Caltrans repaving project.

3 Commissioner Templeton commented if that drain could be fixed that would be a huge win for  
4 the City. She referenced CIP Number 15, Rinconada Pool Family Changing Room and asked how  
5 confident was the City that the project would be completed by FY 2024.

6 Ms. Boyd answered the project was a top priority of the Community Services Department. The  
7 design would happen in FY 2024 and funding would be made available in FY 2025.

8 Commissioner Templeton asked if there was funding available for a temporary solution.

9 Mr. Anderson answered there was no opportunity for a temporary solution.

10 Commissioner Templeton inquired what happens if a special needs person would like to visit  
11 the pool.

12 Mr. Anderson answered all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requests are considered on a  
13 case-by-case basis and accommodations are made when feasible.

14 Commissioner Templeton was excited to see the project moving forward and encouraged Staff  
15 to consider a temporary solution.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the City was responsible for the maintenance of County  
17 managed roads.

18 Ms. Boyd remarked the County was responsible for the maintenance of their roads.

19 Chair Summa invited members of the public to share their comments with the Commission.

20 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, announced there were no public speakers.

21 Vice-Chair Chang inquired if the City was pursuing electric vehicles for the replacement of City-  
22 owned vehicles.

23 Mr. Harper mentioned the Finance Committee discussed in FY 2024 to increase funding to  
24 replace all of the vehicles, where feasible, with an electric vehicle. The Finance Committee  
25 decided to add \$400,000 from the General Fund in FY 2024 and then reconsider the  
26 replacements in future years.

27 Vice-Chair Chang asked if the current proposal to replace 28 vehicles included a budget for  
28 electric vehicles.

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1 Mr. Harper answered that proposal did not include funding for electric vehicles. He noted the  
2 direction was to seek Council approval to move in the direction of increasing the funding before  
3 setting aside the dollars.

4 MOTION

5 Commissioner Hechtman moved the Staff recommendation that the PTC recommend to the  
6 City Council that the proposed 2024 to 2028 Capital Improvement Projects, listed in Attachment  
7 B to the Staff Report, are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan 2030 Policy and Programs;  
8 and that Chair Summa sign the Conformance Letter.

9 SECOND

10 Vice-Chair Chang seconded.

11 VOTE

12 Ms. Dao conducted a roll call vote and announced the motion passed 7-0.

13 MOTION PASSED 7(Akin, Chang, Hechtman, Lu, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) -0

14 **Commission Action:** Motion by Hechtman, seconded by Chang. Pass 7-0

15 3. Amendment to PTC By-Laws Regarding Timing of Elections and Potential Election of  
16 Chair and Vice-Chair.

17 Chair Summa commented that because the By-Laws were out of alignment with the Boards,  
18 Commission and Committee Handbook (BCC Handbook), the current Chair and Vice-Chair were  
19 elected before the new PTC Members were appointed. Vice-Chair Chang and herself believed  
20 that if there was an overwhelming desire to do a revote for Chair and Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair  
21 and herself would step down and a new election would take place.

22 Commissioner Templeton stated she was not interested in re-voting for the Chair and Vice-  
23 Chair.

24 Chair Summa announced there was consensus among the Commission not to do a re-vote for  
25 Chair and Vice-Chair. She inquired if the Commission must take a vote to realign the By-Laws to  
26 match the BCC Handbook.

27 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, answered yes, a vote was needed to change the month  
28 of when elections are held to April.

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1 Commissioner Templeton suggested the language be changed to the first meeting after new  
2 Members are appointed. She asked why a specific month should be chosen.

3 Ms. French explained sometimes Members resign from their position mid-term and with that  
4 language that would retrigger another election.

5 Vice-Chair Chang understood that the moment there is a vacancy, City Council is required to fill  
6 that vacancy quickly. With that said, she did not understand the process when a vacancy  
7 happens and Council is delayed in finding a replacement.

8 Mr. Albert Yang, City Attorney, shared that the By-Laws state that if the Chair or Vice-Chair  
9 resigns then there would be a reelection. Also, officers are required to hold their positions until  
10 a replacement is elected. If the Chair leaves off cycle and Council is delayed, PTC would hold an  
11 election for a new Chair and those officers would hold those positions for the remainder of the  
12 cycle. The current language in the By-Laws was used to allow PTC the flexibility to delay  
13 elections if Council was delayed.

14 Commissioner Hechtman thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair for offering to step down if there  
15 was consensus to hold another election. With that said, he did not support having another  
16 election unless one if the new Members wished to have one. He shared he had the same idea  
17 Commissioner Templeton had but acknowledged there are off-cycle appointments and could  
18 not figure out language to reflect that scenario. He said he was comfortable with the proposed  
19 April 15<sup>th</sup> date.

20 Commissioner Lu echoed Commissioner Hechtman's appreciation of the Chair and Vice-Chair  
21 offering to step down. Though he did not have a strong preference, he suggested the language  
22 read whenever two or more Commissioners are appointed within one month. Then an election  
23 for Chair and Vice-Chair would be held.

24 Commissioner Templeton mentioned the new Commissioners had the privilege of working with  
25 the Commission before being asked to vote for Chair and Vice-Chair. For herself, she was asked  
26 to vote for a Chair and Vice-Chair at her first meeting and that was stressful. She encouraged  
27 the Commission to consider that when thinking about changing the election dates.

28 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the Commission can call for an election at any time.

29 Chair Summa mentioned it was typically done on an annual basis unless there is a need to do it.

30 Mr. Yang clarified the PTC can vote to differ the election to a later date at the meeting specified  
31 in the BBC Handbook but aside from that, there was no process to have an election in the  
32 middle of the cycle.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl summarized the PTC could not hold an election if it was not satisfied  
2 with the Chair and Vice-Chair it elected.

3 Mr. Yang requested additional time to research it.

4 Vice-Chair Chang commented that new Members take office on April 1<sup>st</sup> and by using the April  
5 15<sup>th</sup> date the new Members attend at least one meeting before having to vote. If PTC wished to  
6 use April 1<sup>st</sup> as the election date, PTC had the option to differ the election to a later time. She  
7 said she did not have a strong preference for the date but wanted to make sure there was not a  
8 lame-duck situation.

9 Chair Summa supported April 15<sup>th</sup> because it was Staff's preference and the Commission had  
10 the flexibility to delay it further.

11 Commissioner Akin preferred a simple option and recommended PTC stay with a date certain  
12 with the option to differ the election to a future meeting.

13 Commissioner Hechtman explained if two Commissioners term out and one was an officer, at  
14 the first PTC meeting in April the Commission must hold an election. If neither was an officer  
15 then the election could be deferred. With that said, he supported the April 1<sup>st</sup> date because it  
16 gave the Commission more flexibility. With respect to new Commissioners voting in an election  
17 of officers at their first meeting, he recalled that happened to him but there were two  
18 Commissioners nominated for Chair and he abstained from the vote.

19 Commissioner Templeton commented if the Chair and Vice-Chair were absent on the same  
20 date, a temporary Chair would be chosen to run the meeting. She did not believe the  
21 Commission would have a situation where its compelled to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

22 Chair Summa said that based on the discussion she supported April 1<sup>st</sup> as the new election date.

23 Mr. Yang interjected that there was no procedure for a recall of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

24 MOTION

25 Commissioner Hechtman moved that the PTC amend Section 2.1 of its By-Laws to replace the  
26 January 1<sup>st</sup> date with April 1<sup>st</sup>.

27 Chair Summa invited members of the public to share their comments with the Commission.

28 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, announced there were no public speakers.

29 SECOND

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1 Commissioner Lu seconded.

2 VOTE

3 Ms. Dao conducted the roll call vote and announced the motion passed 7-0.

4 MOTION PASSED 7(Akin, Chang, Hechtman, Lu, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) – 0

5 **Commission Action:** Motion by Hechtman, seconded by Lu. Pass 7-0

## 6 **Approval of Minutes**

7 Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

8 4. Approval of Planning & Transportation Commission Draft Verbatim Minutes of March  
9 29, 2023

10 MOTION

11 Commissioner Hechtman moved approval of the minutes as revised.

12 SECOND

13 Commissioner Reckdahl seconded.

14 VOTE

15 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, conducted a roll call vote and announced the  
16 motion passed 5-0-2.

17 MOTION PASSED 5(Chang, Hechtman, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) -0 -2(Akin, Lu abstain)

18 **Commission Action:** Motion by Hechtman, seconded by Reckdahl. Pass 5-0-2 (Akin and Lu  
19 abstain)

## 20 **Committee Items**

21 None

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1 **Commissioner Questions, Comments or Announcements**

2 Commissioner Hechtman shared he liked having the full Commission back in Chambers and  
3 asked if Staff members would be joining the Commission in Chambers at future meetings.

4 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, explained no policy stated Staff must be in person  
5 except for the Staff liaison. Some Staff are paid overtime for attending late-night meetings and  
6 predicted only management would be attending in person.

7 Commissioner Templeton added that having contractors participate via Zoom saved the City  
8 money.

9 Chair Summa adjourned the meeting.

10 **Adjournment**

11 7:36 pm

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