



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: April 25, 2023

Subject: Los Altos Commissions

Prepared by: Anthony Carnesecca, Assistant to the City Manager

Reviewed by: Jon Maginot, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

1. Commission Recommendations
2. City Council Study Session Agenda Report 3/28/23
3. City Council Retreat Agenda Report 2/21/23

Initiated by:

City Council

Previous Council Consideration:

February 21, 2023 & March 28, 2023

Fiscal Impact:

None

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

- How does the Council wish to adjust the City of Los Altos Commissions?

Summary:

- City Council provided feedback on Commissions during the City Council Retreat on February 21, 2023.
- City staff met with Commission Chairs and liaisons to discuss their roles.
- City Council provided feedback during the City Council Study Session on March 28, 2023 and directed staff to return with the proposed changes.

Staff Recommendation:

- Staff recommends the City Council discuss the recommendations in this report and direct staff to return to the next council meeting with final changes as appropriate.

City Manager

GE

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JD



Subject: Los Altos Commissions

Purpose

Provide direction on the meeting frequency, membership, and powers and duties of various Los Altos Commissions.

Background

The City of Los Altos has guidelines for the 11 commissions regarding their scope of work, number of commissioners, and frequency of commission meetings within Los Altos Municipal Code Section 2.08.

During the City Council retreat on February 21, 2023, the council received a presentation from staff highlighting that Los Altos, when compared to other cities in the county, has more commissions, with more members, that meet more frequently than is average. Additionally, commissions in other cities have membership and meeting frequency based on the workplan or powers and duties of the commission, as opposed to a standard for meetings and member composition.

The primary focus area for potential changes to commissions is in the establishment of powers and duties in the municipal code and the creation of work plans that align with council priorities, budget, and available resources. Currently, many Los Altos Commissions have powers and duties that lack definition and work plans that are not aligned with council direction or available budget.

At the direction of City Council, staff met with individual Commission Chairs and liaisons to discuss the role of the commission, the work plan, the meeting frequency, and member composition. These meetings were intended to receive direct feedback on areas that have worked well, areas that could be improved, and potential changes that could be incorporated to improve the effectiveness of the commissions and city staff.

After the meetings, it became evident that the commissions who had the most well-defined roles, either through work plans or powers and duties in the Municipal Code, were positioned the best to continue their roles, even when changes were applied, without decreasing effectiveness.

At the conclusion of these meetings, staff created three categories for recommendations on the commissions.

The first category was the commissions that do not require changes to their powers and duties to meet the expectations of the City Council. This category includes the Planning, Senior, and Youth Commissions, which are operating in line with their objectives, and have an appropriate meeting



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frequency and member composition, and well-defined powers and duties or work plans to meet the direction of the City Council.

The second category was commissions where changes were recommended, and the Commission Chair agreed further discussion was not necessary. The Historical Commission Chair agreed that adjustments to decrease meeting frequency and number of commission members would not impact the deliverables required by council. The City Council requested staff further define the powers and duties, and those recommendations are included in this report.

At the Study Session on March 28th, the City Council agreed with the recommendations on these four commissions, covering both categories.

The final category includes the remaining commissions that did not have their powers and duties clearly defined, have work plans that are not in line with Council goals, budget, and resources, and/or role confusion between the commissions and staff. These commissions were the Complete Streets, Environmental, Financial, Library, Parks and Recreation, and Public Arts Commissions.

The City Council discussed each of the commissions during the Study Session on March 28, 2023 and provided direction, feedback, or general thoughts. Based on this discussion, staff is making recommendations for changes to membership, meeting frequency, and powers and duties of each of these commission.

Discussion/Analysis

After reviewing the meeting frequency, member composition, and powers and duties in peer cities, feedback from Commission Chairs, and direction from the City Council Retreat and the City Council Study Session, staff proposes the following changes to Los Altos City Commissions:



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Commission	Meetings Current	Meetings Proposed	Membership Current	Membership Proposed	Proposed Changes to Powers and Duties**
Complete Streets	12	8	7	5	Yes
Environmental	12	6	7	5	Yes
Financial	12	8	7	5	No
Historical	12	4	7	6	Yes
Library	12	6	7 (2 LAH)	5 (1 LAH)	Yes
Parks, Recreation, Arts, and Cultural	12	10	7	7	Yes
Planning	24	24	7	7	No
Senior	12	12	7 (2 LAH)	7 (2 LAH)	No
Youth	12	12	11	11	No

* Recommended consolidation to Parks and Recreation Commission and Public Arts Commission to one commission: Parks, Recreation, Arts, and Cultural Commission

**Please see attachment for specific recommended changes to Powers and Duties

For any commission moving to five members, staff recommends that all current members on the commission(s) will continue to serve through the end of their term and are eligible for reappointment. Commissions with membership greater than what is established by these changes will not complete recruitments until their membership falls below the new standard.

Staff Recommendation:

- Staff recommends the City Council discuss the recommendations in this report and direct staff to return to the next council meeting with final changes as appropriate.