

## **Town of Portola Valley 2017-18 Council Priorities**

1. **Rural Character of the Town** – As land values increase, there is increased pressure by some new or potential residents to reconsider aspects of the Town’s zoning code and Design Guidelines. Rural characteristics such as unimpeded views, buildings subservient to the land, and minimal signage and infrastructure can be more challenging to preserve under this pressure.

Staff has already initiated efforts around rural character protection. Staff held a joint training session with the Planning Commission (PC) and the ASCC to elicit feedback from commissioners on challenges to rural character, as well as feedback and support related to general plan, zoning code, and Design Guideline interpretation and application. Staff is drafting a ‘welcome packet’ for residents describing Portola Valley’s identity and ethos, while providing information on how to serve the community.<sup>1</sup> Staff has also designed a space at Town Center to remind residents of the Town’s General Plan and what it means to protect and enhance the current physical space of the community.

Expected projects include:

- Update to the Lighting Ordinance, updates to the Design Guidelines, and an Outdoor Lighting FAQ
- Implementation of the Planning Department’s new staff report layout
- Creation of pre-application materials about conditions of approval and findings that will be part of future ASCC and PC staff reports
- Redesign and addition of new materials to the Employee Handbook to ensure staff’s positive role in preserving the rural character of the Town
- Increased code enforcement/deployment of the Accela “app” to simplify reporting of code enforcement issues
- Analysis of approved houses and their floor area for 1995-2005
- Continued training for PC/ASCC

<sup>1</sup> The draft welcome packet will be incorporated into the larger communications efforts later this year.

2. Fiscal Health of the Town – The Town’s new financial team is in its first full year of providing budgetary, fiscal, and accounting services. During that time, the financial team has reviewed the current policies and procedures from budget forecasting and production of the budget book, to providing the Council with valuable, topical information on the fiscal status of the Town. There are a number of opportunities to improve revenue projection, internal budget control, budget creation, and monitoring of actual costs that would bring simplicity, transparency and centralization to the financial operations of the Town.

Expected projects include:

- Creation of department-based budgets
- Purchase of new Budget software and the creation of a new “look and feel” for the budget book
- Planning for cost recovery, including a user fee study for planning and building fees
- Development of a Capital Projects Budget
- Further re-investment of the Town’s reserves into better return vehicles
- Changes to OPEB and CalPers retirement

3. Resident Resiliency – Although Portola Valley is relatively close to the Silicon Valley, in many ways we are an isolated community. The community benefits from this separation – the rural character of the town, the connection to nature, and the separation from a variety of challenges unique to cities.

However, this isolation does create challenges. The community’s remote location, along with its affluence, makes it an attractive target for burglaries, and resources sometimes are not immediately available as they may be in an urban environment. There are only a few ways in and out of town, and an earthquake or fire could make it difficult to escape or connect with the “outside world”. In the face of a natural disaster, much of the burden will be on volunteers and residents, along with Town government, to be prepared and remain resilient.

Expected projects include:

- Negotiate a new contract with the Sheriff’s Office
- Build and strengthen community through events, outreach and regular meetings with Town staff

- Engaging the new communications role which will have responsibilities in communications, emergency preparedness and sustainability
- Review of pedestrian crossings and exploration of opportunities to enhance and improve safety issues
- Work with County 911 Communications to develop innovative ways for residents to share public safety concerns through the new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system
- Increase awareness and recruitment for Town Committees
- Update of the Ground Movement Map
- Implementation of the neighborhood watch sign program
- Create internship program to support trail maintenance
- Working to incorporate emergency preparedness into neighborhood watch programming
- Partner with Woodside Fire Protection District to increase outreach on self-preparedness

4. Long-Term Climate Resiliency and Adaptation – The Town has a long standing commitment to sustainability long before the term was in use. Since its incorporation in 1964, the Town has implemented myriad efforts to ensure protection of open space, view sheds, scenic corridors, and the night sky from light pollution; required subservience of the built environment to the natural environment; passed landscaping rules to protect water resources; and built a Town campus to the highest environmental standards. These are just a few of the many initiatives that have made Portola Valley a leader in environmental issues.

Climate change presents challenges to all communities, and Portola Valley is no exception. Higher temperatures may put the community at a higher risk of fire danger, and increased interactions with wild animals. Changes in energy consumption and sources will put pressures on the built environment and the vehicles, tools, and appliances we use every day. Adaptation to climate change must be incorporated into the ongoing sustainability and resiliency efforts already underway. Not only are these efforts critical for the Town itself, they will also affect those “downstream” from Portola Valley.

Expected projects include:

- Update of the Sustainability Element, particularly in relation to climate change adaptation
- Develop a Climate Action Plan for 2030

- Further support for Peninsula Clean Energy
- Creation of fuel switching programs
- Implementation of the Green Building ordinance
- Ongoing review and adaptation to future drought issues
- Draft of a Livestock Ordinance to support local efforts
- Examination of opportunities with other communities to pool resources on sustainability issues
- Allying the Town with ongoing local, regional and state efforts to demonstrate commitment to the Paris Accords and climate change-related advocacy and effort