Council Priorities for 2016-17

Recognizing the opportunity to share with the community a vision for the year ahead, and a need to focus limited resources (both staff and financial), the Portola Valley Town Council states that the following shall be its priorities for 2016-17:

1. *Sustainability* – As a leader in the pursuit of a more sustainable way of life, Portola Valley will continue to adopt innovative sustainability measures, both for its residents and for town government.

2. *Community Engagement* – Portola Valley's most unique feature is the unbreakable connection between its residents and its government. Through the existing robust committee structure, Town residents have an opportunity to shape policy and plan for the community they wish to see. To that end, Portola Valley will improve two-way communications with its residents, share opportunities for residents to participate in their government, and ensure continued transparency in its public business.

3. *Quality of Life* – Portola Valley residents have historically enjoyed an unparalleled quality of life – little traffic, access to world-class recreational amenities, and the enjoyment of a rural community. In recent years, however, this quality of life has been challenged by a booming economy and external forces. The Town Council commits to pursuing all avenues to maintain and enhance the quality of life residents and employees have all grown to cherish.

4. *Infrastructure* – The literal foundation for Portola Valley's prosperity has been its infrastructure, and the extraordinary attention staff and residents alike pay to guaranteeing public facilities are built and maintained to the Town's quality standards and rural character. Critical infrastructure projects to be completed will be the focus of staff's efforts.

Based on the above statements, these projects will be the Council's priorities (in alphabetical order):

- *Affordable Housing* – As housing costs continue to skyrocket, the opportunities for those who have grown up in Portola Valley, those who have been here many years and wish to stay, and those who work in town have shrunk. The Council is committed to exploring ways to keep families whole, protecting those seniors who want to stay in the community they have called home for decades, and demonstrate the value of those who are employed here, through second units, affiliated housing, and other inventive tools.

- *Code Enforcement* – With a changing population comes the potential for a lack of understanding of the Town's rules. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of actionable code violations. The Council and staff will explore ways to strengthen the tools to deal with these increases.

- *Communications with Town Residents* – Given its location in the Silicon Valley, the Town's suite of communication tools is not reflective of the innovation we are known for. Even the simplest message to residents can be lost in older technology and competing mediums. The Town is committed to exploring ways to improve communications with its residents and serve as a portal and repository of important and useful information.

- *Community Choice Energy Support* - The County and Cities of San Mateo County, recognizing their desire to further alternative energy availability, and the buying power of hundreds of thousands of customers, has created Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE). PCE is a community choice energy program that allows consumers to buy cleaner forms of energy, reinvest in local infrastructure, and provide more affordable power. The Town is committed to PCE and the promise it brings.

- *FAA/Noise Abatement* – With the implementation of new landing approaches to SFO, and an overall increase in traffic to Bay Area airports, Portola Valley residents have suffered from a huge increase in aircraft noise impacts. The FAA has finally acquiesced to a collaborative process to address these quality of life concerns. Council and staff will work with the FAA, regional partners, and other interested parties to alleviate this impact to our quality of life.

- *LAIF (Local Agency Investment Fund) Improvement* – Municipalities are allowed to participate in a state-run investment portfolio that has been in operation for nearly 60 years. Although the fund is successful, it is not as beneficial as other vehicles. The City Council wants staff to work with the Finance Committee to explore alternative ways to invest appropriate public funds in more worthwhile instruments, particularly open space and inclusionary housing funds.

- *Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Review*– While the Town has done much to improve its long-term commitments to staff, and the State has passed powerful legislation to help communities deal with these costs, much more remains to be done. The Town's fiscal health, especially as it relates to those benefits retired employees receive, will be a priority for examination and amending.

- *Portola Road Shoulder Widening Completion* – Our roads provide multiple transportation options – roads, bicycles, horses, and pedestrians. The completion of major shoulder widening along one of our most traveled arterials will improve safety and make our roads even more accessible.

- *Springdown Vernal Pool Permitting* – With the purchase of much of the front portion of Springdown Equestrian Center, the Town added to its open space. After the equestrian center vacated the site, the Town began efforts to restore it to an open space atmosphere. Seeding the field with grasses and installing a perimeter trail were the beginning steps. The remaining work consists of transitioning a former stock pond into a vernal pool. This pool requires a number of State and Federal approvals to be fully allowable, and be integrated into the Town's plans for the site.

- *Town Center Master Planning Support* – Town Center is an envy of San Mateo County, and has become a popular destination, not only for residents, but for regional visitors. As the demands on local government and its physical space change, a Town Center Master Plan Committee has been formed to chart the future of our shared public center.