

**From:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** FW: PVNU Letter to Planning Commission for 061621 Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:57:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [2021.06.16.PlanningCommissionLetter.pdf](#)

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**From:** Rita Comes <[ravrita@gmail.com](mailto:ravrita@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 11:16 AM  
**To:** Laura Russell <[lrussell@portolavalley.net](mailto:lrussell@portolavalley.net)>; Jeremy Dennis <[jdennis@portolavalley.net](mailto:jdennis@portolavalley.net)>; Sharon Hanlon <[shanlon@portolavalley.net](mailto:shanlon@portolavalley.net)>  
**Subject:** PVNU Letter to Planning Commission for 061621 Meeting

Laura,

I am sending you this letter on behalf of Portola Valley Neighbors United for the June 16th Planning meeting. Please distribute the letter to the other Planning Commissioners and the Town Attorney. Please also include this letter in the digest for the community.

Thank you,

Rita Comes Whitney  
Portola Valley Neighbors United



# Portola Valley Neighbors United

June 15, 2021

Portola Valley Planning Commission  
Town of Portola Valley  
765 Portola Road  
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Re: Amendment to the Municipal Code, June 16, 2021 Meeting Agenda Item 1

Dear Planning Commissioners:

We wrote to the Planning Department on March 31, 2021 suggesting that the non-conforming status of the WFPD property at 135 Portola Road be resolved with a straightforward, appropriate, and obvious solution: rezone the property to Administrative-Professional (A-P), making the parcel's zoning consistent with the property's longstanding use, with the zoning of the Fire District's administrative offices at 808 Portola Road, and with the zoning of similar properties in its immediate vicinity.

Despite our request for a reply to our suggestion and inquiry, we did not receive a response from the Planning Department. Our March 31 email is included as an attachment.

As you know, and as is apparent in the attached zoning map, R-1 residential zones make up large swaths of Portola Valley. They comprise more than 330 residential properties. A-P zones are limited to commercial and administrative districts. They include the offices of the WFPD at 808 Portola Road (red circles on attached map) and the property immediately across the street from the WFPD property at 135 Portola Road (orange circles).

The arguments in favor of rezoning to A-P are straightforward:

- Public buildings, including fire stations, are among the principal uses of the A-P zone.
- The immediate neighborhood of 135 Portola Road includes an A-P zone.
- A-P is consistent with uses by WFPD at other locations. In particular, WFPD administrative offices at 808 Portola Road are in an A-P zone.
- Rezoning to A-P would avoid secondary consequences for the more than 330 properties that are in R-1 zones.

In contrast, adding fire stations as an allowed conditional use in the R-1 zone, as the Planning Department is proposing:

- Would contravene the precedent established for the Fire District's administrative building at 808 Portola Road;
- Is more expansive than necessary; and
- May render the R-1 zone a "mixed use" zone subject to additional State mandates regarding the permitting and development of multifamily housing and ADUs by ministerial review.

In light of these arguments and concerns, we respectfully request the Planning Commission to weigh and provide public answers to the following questions:



## Portola Valley Neighbors United

1. What are the arguments against rezoning the property at 135 Portola Road to A-P?
2. Would the proposed amendment make the R-1 zone a “mixed use” zone?
3. What are the consequences of changing the R-1 zone to a mixed use zone?
4. Is the R-1 zone currently subject to the State mandates regarding the permitting and development of multifamily dwellings and ADUs in mixed use zones by ministerial approval?
5. Would the proposed amendment expose properties in the R-1 zone to State mandates that do not now apply to the R-1 zone?
6. Staff Reports indicate that notification of the proposal was sent via mail to residents within 1000’ of Station #8. Was notification also sent via mail to the other residents of R-1 zones, all of whom would be affected by this change?
7. How many properties in R-1 zones received written notification of the proposed zoning change?
8. Can you confirm our count of over 330 properties in R-1 zones?

Sincerely,

Rita Comes Whitney  
Portola Valley Neighbors United

cc: Laura Russell, Director, Portola Valley Planning and Building Department  
Cara Silver, Portola Valley Town Attorney  
Jeremy Dennis, Portola Valley Town Manager



## Portola Valley Neighbors United

From: Rita Comes  
Date: March 31, 2021 at 1:42:55 PM PDT  
To: Laura Russell  
Subject: PVNU Zoning Code Question/Suggestion

Hi Laura,

We understand that the Planning Commission has asked the Planning and Building Department to consider alternative approaches to resolve the non-conforming status of Fire Station #8 in its current R-1 zoning district.

Under our zoning ordinance, the fire station would qualify as a principal use in the Administrative-Professional (A-P) zone. The A-P zone currently includes parcels immediately across Portola Road from Fire Station #8. Rezoning the fire station's parcel at 135 Portola Road from R-1 to A-P would resolve its non-conforming status, would make the fire station's zoning consistent with that of its immediate neighbors, and would obviate any need to expand the scope of currently permitted uses within the R-1 zone.

In our opinion, rezoning 135 Portola Road from R-1 to A-P is a more prudent and preferable means to resolve the fire station's non-conforming use.

Please advise if there is any reason not to rezone 135 Portola Road to A-P status. If the Planning and Building Department does not believe this would be an appropriate and preferable resolution of the fire station's non-conforming use, please explain why.

We look forward to your prompt reply and hope to share it with the Town's residents in advance of any further consideration of this issue by the Planning Commission.

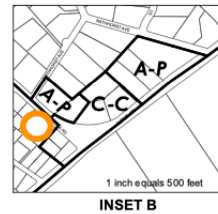
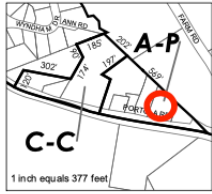
Thank you for your time and stay safe,

Rita Comes Whitney  
Portola Valley Neighbors United

# ZONING MAP

## FOR THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

- WFPD Administrative Offices
- WFPD Station #8

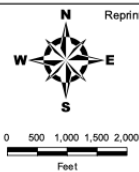


	Ordinance No.	Date	Ordinance No.	Date
<b>Adopted:</b>	1967-80	7/12/67		
<b>Amended:</b>	1969-97	9/24/69	1989-246	9/22/89
	1973-119	2/14/73	1990-251	4/11/90
	1973-126	1/9/74	1990-253	7/11/90
	1976-147	10/13/76	1995-283	4/21/95
	1979-171	4/11/79	1996-287	4/10/96
	1981-181	3/11/81	1998-305	1/14/98
	1981-182	4/8/81	2003-347	2/26/03
	1983-247	7/20/83		



### Legend

- RE/1A Zoning Boundary & Designation
- Special Building Setback Lines - S



PROJECTION: CALIFORNIA STATE PLANE COORDINATES, ZONE III, NAD83 DATUM, UNITS IN FEET, PUBLISHED: OCTOBER, 2004

Reprinted July 2007

**From:** [Bob Schultz](#)  
**To:** [Laura Russell](#); [Dylan Parker](#); [Town Center](#)  
**Cc:** [Suzanne Yamada](#)  
**Subject:** Comments regarding Station 8 for the 6/16 Planning Commission hearing  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:37:25 PM  
**Attachments:** [Planning Commission 2 letter.pdf](#)

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Dear Laura and Dylan,

Please accept and forward our comments (pdf, attached) regarding Station 8 to the Planning Commission for the 6/16 meeting.

Thank you,  
Bob and Suzanne

14 June 2021

Dear Planning Commissioners:

We have spent two years working with Staff and the WFPD to ensure that their improvements do not adversely affect the enjoyment of our home and its property value. This has been a long and stressful process, and together we have gone through many concerns: parking, ring road, Sheriff's station, lighting, drainage, tree removal, landscaping, noise, privacy, etc.

We feel that the project has finally reached a point where the neighbors' concerns have been addressed. We are supportive of the current plan and Staff's recommendations, and ask that Planning Commission approve them without changes.

We strongly favor Staff and ASCC's recommendations for parking in the front. We would strongly oppose any parking or increased intensity of use in the rear and side since it would impact the rural nature and single family character of the surrounding homes, and exacerbate the existing flooding issues in the side corner.

We also strongly favor Staff's wording of "Fire Stations" for the text amendment. We purchased our home knowing the Fire Station's R-1 parcel does not permit high-traffic facilities like libraries or community centers, or dangerous ones like police stations. These broader uses are inconsistent with the zone's primary residential use.

We feel the current landscaping plan needs improvement and look forward to reviewing the new plan with the ASCC. With such extensive expansion and tree removal—16 significant trees—a robust landscaping plan with plantings of adequate number and maturity are needed to offset the impact to screening, natural habitat, and carbon footprint.

We thank Staff and the WFPD for working with us to address our concerns and we support the project as currently presented to the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

Bob and Suzanne Schultz  
145 Portola Road

**From:** [Laura Russell](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 2:27:13 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Town Center <TownCenter@portolavalley.net>  
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 9:52 AM  
To: Laura Russell <lrussell@portolavalley.net>; Carol Borck <CBorck@portolavalley.net>  
Subject: FW: Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]

-----Original Message-----

From: Janet Refvem <jkrefvem@gmail.com>  
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 2:02 AM  
To: Town Center <TownCenter@portolavalley.net>  
Subject: Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]

It would seem that you could advocate for an alternative to removal of the mature redwood that is such an asset to our view along Portola Road.

Please save the redwood to Maintain the beauty of the main corridor through our town.

Janet Refvem, resident for over fifty years Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Laura Russell](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Firehouse vs. Redwood  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 2:26:29 PM

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**From:** Town Center <[TownCenter@portolavalley.net](mailto:TownCenter@portolavalley.net)>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 14, 2021 9:56 AM  
**To:** Laura Russell <[lrussell@portolavalley.net](mailto:lrussell@portolavalley.net)>  
**Subject:** FW: Firehouse vs. Redwood

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**From:** Pamela Dorrell <[pamela\\_dorrell@yahoo.com](mailto:pamela_dorrell@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 14, 2021 9:09 AM  
**To:** Town Center <[TownCenter@portolavalley.net](mailto:TownCenter@portolavalley.net)>  
**Subject:** Firehouse vs. Redwood

It is sadly funny that the year after we lost so many redwoods to the lightning fire and when embers still burn in the hearts of many just waiting to spring to life this summer that the firehouse itself is looking to take out one of these treasures.

Surely a tree should be the last inch sought for a parking space. Such an excision can not be undone. Take out a bit of grass, regret it; you can reverse it in an afternoon. Realize you have just made our lovely, rural town look like it has a strip mall because you have removed the trees, and we are stuck with it. That's not coming back in any of our lifetimes.

Portola Valley retains its cache as a desirable place to live because it is beautiful and natural. Alpine and Portola Road are our welcoming front gardens, our first impression to visitors, the face of Portola Valley. It is deeply wrong to allow the natural beauty to be stripped from that face — foolish when one thinks about how important this view is for setting the tone of our town as a place of special value. If you make our town ugly, all of us suffer in multiple ways.

Instead of thinking about cutting trees, the town should be thinking how to further enhance our wild beauty to maintain our home values vis a vis our neighboring towns. We don't want an eyesore. What efforts will be made to shield the new firehouse from the view from the road? This is an opportunity to not only not destroy a bit of majestic wilderness but to make the town better, more beautiful. What steps are being taken to ensure our community is improving at every chance?

As the rest of the region becomes ever more overbuilt, our natural beauty will become an even greater treasure. But not if it is gone, chipped away tree by tree, natural corner by natural corner, vista by vista. Do not cut down the redwood. It is against all our interests.

Pamela Dorrell  
69 Vista Verde

**From:** [Laura Russell](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 2:21:20 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Town Center <TownCenter@portolavalley.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 7:28 AM  
To: Laura Russell <lrussell@portolavalley.net>  
Subject: FW: Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Page Hufty <hufty@mac.com>  
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 9:09 PM  
To: Town Center <TownCenter@portolavalley.net>  
Subject: Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]

Dear Friends,

Please leave the redwood trees at the Fire Station for the town's future as a thoughtful community. We all know better!

You surely know the reasons.

Best wishes,

Mary Hufty

"I believe man would do well to watch where he treads, as he is the only creature that leaves indelible footsteps that keep running uncontrollably without him."  
Eleanor Torrey West

**From:** [Eugene Chaput](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan Chaput](#)  
**Subject:** NO Expanded Zoning Changes  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 2:10:40 PM

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As a 50 year residents of Portola Valley, agree completely with the recommendations made to the PV Planning Commission by PVNU (copy follows). Pls put our submission request against expanding the rezoning in the Planning and Town Council files.

Sue and Gene Chaput  
358 Alamos Road, Portola Valley, Ca 94028  
(415) 613-0014

## **Does renovation of our fire station require a change in our zoning code to allow “public buildings” in R-1 residential zones?**

**June 15, 2021.** On June 16, 2021, the Planning Commission will hear a revised zoning amendment proposal that would allow fire stations in R-1 zones. Read our **June 15 Letter** to the Planning Commission arguing that rezoning the property to Administrative-Professional is a better solution and seeking clarification on a number of important questions, such as whether the proposed ordinance change would subject what are currently single-family residential areas to state mandates for multifamily housing. Follow the link below to learn more about zoning issues and the original proposal.

ZoningMap\_WFPD\_Properties.jpg

**March 2021.** On March 17, 2021, the Planning Commission heard an application by the Woodside Fire Protection District to renovate, upgrade and expand its existing fire station on Portola Road. The station is located in an R-1 zoning district and has been for nearly 50 years. Because the fire station’s long-standing use does not literally fall within the permitted uses in the R-1 zoning district, the Planning Department proposed amending the Municipal Code to add “public buildings” as a permitted conditional use in the R-1 residential zone.

After preliminary review, three commissioners favored accepting the broadly worded change. One commissioner questioned the necessity for an amendment that broadly encompasses any “public building” as opposed to a narrower exception for fire stations. The Planning

Commission asked the Planning and Building Department to consider alternative approaches to resolve the non-conforming status of Fire Station #8 in its current R-1 zoning district.

Under our zoning ordinance, the fire station would qualify as a principal use in the Administrative-Professional (A-P) zone. The A-P zone currently includes parcels immediately across Portola Road from Fire Station #8. Rezoning the fire station's parcel at 135 Portola Road from R-1 to A-P would resolve its non-conforming status, would make the fire station's zoning consistent with that of its immediate neighbors, and would obviate any need to expand the scope of currently permitted uses within the R-1 zone.

PVNU believes rezoning 135 Portola Road from R-1 to A-P is a more prudent and preferable means to resolve the fire station's non-conforming use.

PVNU has asked the Building and Planning Department whether there is any reason not to rezone 135 Portola Road to A-P status, and are awaiting its response.

**From:** [Liz Babb](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** Against a re-zoned fire department  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 8:15:46 PM  
**Attachments:** [PastedGraphic-3.tiff](#)

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Dear Laura -

I wanted to let you know that as a resident of the Woodside Highlands area of Portola Valley, I am against amending the R-1 residential zoning district to allow fire stations as a conditional use. I would much prefer to see the precedent already established for the Fire District's administrative offices followed. Rezone the Station #8 parcel to Administrative-Professional (A-P). It's much cleaner and doesn't put R-1 properties at risk of unintended consequences.

Thank you for your review/attention to my opinion. And thank you for all you do for the town.

Liz Babb  
190 Trinity Lane

P.S. While I feel the above is the high priority, I am also against 18 parking spots! So unnecessary when there is a ton of parking across the street and outside of the hardware store.

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Liz Babb  
Personal [email: lizbabb123@icloud.com](mailto:lizbabb123@icloud.com)



**From:** [Sterling Matlock](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Cc:** [Kathie Christie](#)  
**Subject:** Owners of 155 Portola Road (next to the station #8 fire house) comments for 6/16/2021 Planning Commission meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 8:32:16 PM

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Hello,

We strongly oppose ANY REZONING-- particularly R-1, that would change the existing Station #8 conditional use permit---that has been in place for decades.

There seems to be NO JUSTIFICATION for proposed zoning change... We have a RIGHT TO PROTECT OUR PROPERTY VALUE being next door to Station #8. Several local Realtors have advised us that the unanswered question of proposed zone change would adversely affect our property value of upwards of 20%! And, while we accept the current remodelling and expansion, we do NOT want to open the door to more and varied future development.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Matlock & Kathie Christie

**From:** [Laura Russell](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Hearing, Fire Station 8 CUP application  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 8:24:12 AM

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**From:** Betsy Morgenthaler <betsyjm@me.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 6:26 PM  
**To:** Town Center <TownCenter@portolavalley.net>  
**Cc:** Laura Russell <lrussell@portolavalley.net>  
**Subject:** Public Hearing, Fire Station 8 CUP application

To: Chair Craig Taylor, Vice Chair Knopf-Sill  
& Planning Commission members Goulden, Hasko, and Targ  
From: Betsy Morgenthaler  
Date: Tuesday June 15, 2021  
Subject: Fire Station 8 CUP application

Between the surreal 2020 summer-fall and our coming fire season, I want to acknowledge our community leadership. Making sane, thoughtful decisions under pressure is not easy. Thank you for hanging in there, for staying open, not rushing to judgment before the research is complete. And to the firefighters who continue to show up when we're hunkered down or heading the opposite direction, there will never be enough thanks.

Since previous meetings addressing Station 8's CUP application, I've several open questions.

1) So far the public has listened to a couple design options. It's either this or it's that - we slide Station 8 to the back or bring it forward to the street. The trade-off makes immediate neighbors more or less happy, or it costs one majestic redwood to meet the axe, the ground pave over bringing strip-parking to the Portola Road Corridor. Is there no third way?

2) Parking considerations

The 8am shift change occurs every 48 hours, an hour when Fire Stations do not typically receive visitors, the addition of 5 + 5 places do double duty as 5 visitor spots. If there were a design resolution that could incorporate into the building envelope the equipment otherwise going to a floating storage unit in the parking lot, then you might consider parking for ~10 instead of 18.

3) Regarding a planning proposal that would tweak the Muni code Fire Station designation to become more inclusive as a "Public Building", when little is known about Public Buildings in R-1 neighborhoods: Absent fuller understanding, allowing the Code to remain as it is, a designation that applies to the Fire Station alone, sidesteps unintended consequences.

4) Our Fire Station sits just outside our commercial zone boundary, and somewhat awkwardly in an R-1 residential area. As part and parcel of this application, there's an opportunity to remedy that. We have already dedicated significant Town resources to grapple with this application, there's unlikely to be a better time.

5) In recent weeks as I pass the Fire Station, I have stopped to say I love this particular tree. There are personal reasons why this Redwood speaks to me, though one is shared by all. In the last decade, science has amassed evidence of a significant trait of Redwoods. Think of a fire-fighting ally we have overplayed: Smoky the Bear. Now envision a climate change counterforce, and you can't do better than a Redwood.

Redwoods are virtually fireproof plus the greatest climate change warrior we know. While we discuss its fate, this Redwood keeps on fixing carbon. It's mass and longevity make it the best living organism we have at carbon sequestration. As long as it stands before our Fire Station, this Redwood is a powerful symbol with a powerful message for our kids and the community. It is all about sustainability. My sincere hope is we allow it to go on living its best life, while we work a little longer and more creatively to do the same.

*"The expedient thing and the right thing are seldom the same thing." Charlie Brower*



Sincerely,  
Betsy Morgenthaler

Photo by Dan Quinn



**From:** [Thomas](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#); [Laura Russell](#)  
**Subject:** communication regarding tonight's Planning Commission meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 11:13:32 AM

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Planning Commission (c/o Laura Russel):

Please do the following:

- Enter this email into the record for the Planning Commission meeting later today.
- Read this aloud during the meeting's Oral Communications segment or as part of discussion of agenda item 1, "Review of an application for a Municipal Code Text Amendment ..."
- Forward this email to the Town Council and the ASCC.

It seems prudent for the Commission and Town not to rush to change zoning and other provisions regarding single-family residential areas. Indeed, a prudent course of action could be to work to halt current momentum regarding assumptions, programs, and mandates regarding housing.

The current momentum reflects thinking that seems outdated.

Bases for new thinking include the following.

- Knowledge of wildfire risks.
- Knowledge of lack of certainty about the feasibility of evacuations.
- Experiences regarding the reliability of supplies of electricity and water.
- Increased proclivities by large (especially, hi-tech) employers to develop housing and community facilities.
- Changing policies regarding the extent to which employees need to work from employer-established offices.
- Knowledge of problems implementing projects that rely on "transit corridor" transportation.

Current thinking and progress also suffer from incomprehensibility and complexity of housing-oriented terminology, supposed goals, mandates, and so forth.

Additionally, Town efforts may develop new insight based on relooking at housing and safety policies.

I suggest that a more prudent – than specifically rushing into the rezoning proposal regarding much residential property and generally continuing current courses of action regarding "housing" – course of action would be to advocate for a halt to state and regional (and any Town) mandates and a reasoned rethinking of what really needs achieving and how to achieve such effectively.

- Tom

Thomas J. Buckholtz  
Portola Valley resident  
[Thomas.J.Buckholtz@gmail.com](mailto:Thomas.J.Buckholtz@gmail.com)

**From:** [Pete Chargin](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** Input on planning commission item  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 11:30:33 AM

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I would like to voice my opinion regarding an item on this month's agenda.

Item: Review of a Proposal to Expand the Existing Fire Station including an Amendment to the Municipal Code to Allow Fire Stations within the R-1 Zoning Districts (pate 3)

I have been a resident of Portola Valley for more than 25 years now, and I love our town.

I am fully in support of moving forward on the fire station remodel. Thank you for your efforts to move this forward.

I do not want areas that are zoned R-1 to become, or to even potentially become, a "mixed-use" zoning district. Let's keep R-1 zoning to what it is meant to be: single family dwellings.

Please simply expand the A-P zone that is located directly across the street from Fire Station 8 to include the fire station. This is a more limited and simple solution compared to a change in the meaning of our R-1 zoning, which would affect hundreds of families within our town.

Thank you very much, and thanks to everyone on the town council, our committees, and staff for your continued service to our town.

pete

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Peter Chargin  
mobile: +1 (650) 219-3757  
Email: [petechargin@gmail.com](mailto:petechargin@gmail.com)

[LinkedIn profile](#)

**From:** [Bob Turcott](#)  
**To:** [Sharon Hanlon](#); [Dylan Parker](#); [Laura Russell](#)  
**Subject:** Letter to Planning Commission  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 11:41:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [PlanningCommissionLetter\\_Turcott\\_06162021.pdf](#)

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Hi Laura and Sharon,

Please distribute the attached letter to the following:

- Planning Commissioners
- Town Council members
- Ad Hoc Committee on Wildfire Preparedness members
- Cara Silver, Town Attorney
- Laura Russell, Director, Planning and Building Dept

Thank you,  
Bob Turcott

June 16, 2021

Portola Valley Planning Commission  
Town of Portola Valley  
765 Portola Road  
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Re: Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Municipal Code Amendment for Compliance with State Law  
June 2, 2021 Meeting Agenda Item 1

*“To the comments about restricting the ADUs in the Very High and High Hazard Zone that CalFire put out, I think we have addressed that in our earlier ordinance and the changes that got rolled here. My understanding in looking at those maps is that the Very High does map closely, not absolutely perfectly, with the limitations we’ve put on, **and that the High designation is not very prevalent in Portola Valley. So I think we’ve done a good job addressing that.**”*

- Planning Commissioner discussing ADU Code Amendment, 6/2/2021

Dear Commissioners:

I failed you.

Despite my best efforts, as apparent by their comments during the 6/2/2021 meeting, some Commissioners still have a mistaken understanding of what areas in town have been deemed to be High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, how large these areas are, and which areas have been excluded from ADU development by Portola Valley’s emergency vehicle access exception.

Please refer to the map, below. The area shown in red was deemed by CalFire to be a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. According to statements by Town Staff and Attorney, this approximately corresponds to the area that is excluded by the emergency vehicle access exception, discussed in the context of municipal code amendment by the Commission on 6/2/2021.

Note the tan areas in the map. These areas were deemed by CalFire to be High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. These are not excluded by the Town’s emergency vehicle access exception.

ABAG takes these hazards seriously. According to the ABAG Executive Director’s letter to the Town on January 19, 2021, “The Blueprint Growth Geographies not only exclude CAL FIRE designated ‘Very High’ fire severity areas, but they also exclude ‘High’ fire severity areas in unincorporated communities as well as county-designated wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas where applicable.”

As I noted in my comments to the Commission on 5/5/2021, High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones comprise approximately 65% of Portola Valley’s area. As I noted in my comments to the Commission on 5/5/2021 and 5/19/2021, the canyon network that defines central Portola Valley makes central Portola Valley a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

As acknowledged by the Town Attorney, State law recognizes the local responsibility and authority of the Town to exclude application of the state-wide ADU mandates when appropriate to protect public safety.

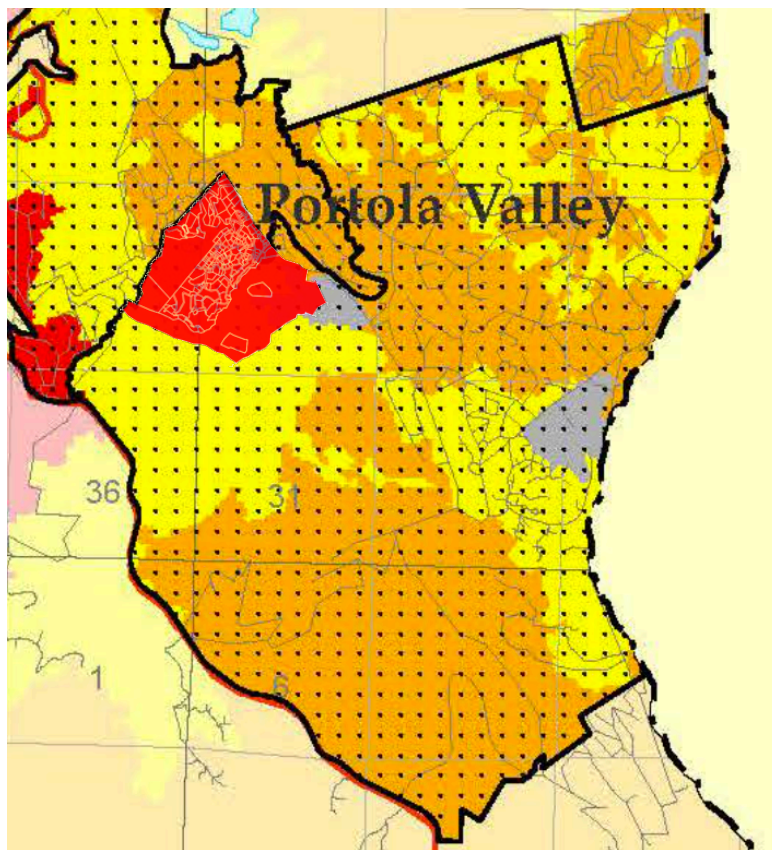
By failing to exclude, for reasons of public safety, both High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, the Planning Commission failed to meet even the minimum safety standards recommended by ABAG.

I urge you to reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Robert Turcott

cc: Don Bullard, Woodside Fire Protection District  
Portola Valley Town Council  
Portola Valley Ad Hoc Wildfire Preparedness Committee  
Cara Silver, Portola Valley Town Attorney  
Laura Russell, Director, Portola Valley Planning and Building Department



Composite Cal Fire maps showing High (tan) and Very High (red) Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Portola Valley.

**From:** [Susan Coffman](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** Fire Station expansion (WFPD #8)  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 1:25:28 PM

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Dear Mr. Parker,

My neighbor has informed me that the planning commission may be asked to change already approved parking plans for the station. I am writing today to say I hope the commission and the ASCC will not deviate from providing in front parking at the fire station. This part of Portola Road is decidedly commercial in nature with the gas station and repair shop right next door to the fire station, and in front parking makes sense since that is less disruptive for neighboring residences.

(It is unfortunate that redwood trees were planted rather indiscriminately a number of years ago without realizing the amount of damage their root structures can cause.)

Susan Coffman  
239 Echo Ln, Portola Valley, CA 94028



**From:** [Teresa](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#); [ctaylor@portolavalley.net](mailto:ctaylor@portolavalley.net)  
**Subject:** Planning Commission Meeting Tonight: comment  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 3:14:59 PM

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Hello:

Please note that I am not in favor of taking down any redwood trees on the Fire Department site.

There must be another solution that does not require the loss of such magnificent trees.

thank you

Teresa Godfrey

20 Tynan Way

Portola Valley

**From:** [Dan Quinn](#)  
**To:** [Town Center](#)  
**Cc:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** Planning Commission [DO NOT EDIT SUBJECT]  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 4:47:50 PM

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Re: Fire Station Zoning

I support the proposal by Rita Comes Whitney of PVNU, that the Fire Station zoning be changed to A-P. This is consistent with the longstanding use of that location, and the Town General Plan, which acknowledges that space for a fire station, not residential.

Keep the R-1 zoning as it is now.

Dan Quinn  
10 Bear Paw  
Portola Valley

**From:** [Charles Thom](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** Comments to the Planning Commission regarding Fire Department Parking  
**Date:** Monday, June 14, 2021 3:08:41 PM

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Attention: Planning Commissioners

I'll come right to the point. Please approve the Fire Department's request before you to locate parking in the front of the Fire Department. The ASCC has twice made their view of the parking situation clear. At their first meeting they all expressed opposition to the idea to put parking in the rear next to adjacent neighbors. At their second meeting they unanimously approved the plan to put parking in front. Please follow their lead and approve parking in front of the Station.

Don't succumb to people who can't bear to cut down a tree or those that think parking will despoil the scenic view along that commercial section of a Portola Road. They would have you locate parking to the rear and destroy our privacy and property values and that would not be fair. After all they don't live next to the Fire Department. If they did, they would almost certainly be trying to save their property values and their privacy too.

If necessary, put yourself in our position too - would you still be unwilling to sacrifice one tree if you knew that saving it would allow a parking lot to sprout adjacent to the most private area of your property? Or would you be willing to pay us directly for the loss of value to our property when we sell it?

Our property is on a flag lot and very small, about one-quarter of an acre. Its value is already degraded simply by proximity to our good neighbor the Fire Station. Putting a parking lot next to our most private area would potentially cost us up to a quarter of its value. Surely, it wouldn't be fair to ask one husband and wife in Portola Valley to bear such a severe penalty just to save a tree. Really, parking in front is perfectly appropriate to this neighborhood of commercial buildings and next to the gas station. It will be appealingly landscaped and will not be an inappropriate downgrade to the local scenery. Once again, I ask you to vote to allow parking in front of Station 8.

Thank you for listening.  
Charles Thom  
237 Echo Lane

**From:** [Loni Austin](#)  
**To:** [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** Firestation / Station 8 Planning Commission hearing  
**Date:** Sunday, June 13, 2021 11:52:15 PM

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Hello PV Planning commission,

I have written in the past and want to reiterate my opposition to locating the parking for the remodeled Station 8 anywhere other than in front of the fire station. In keeping with the rural feel of the town and the reason we chose to live here, the residents on Echo Lane don't want to feel while we are sitting in our yards or gardening like we are living in Palo Alto. The parking in front of the station would be consistent with the parking across the street at the office complex on Portola Road and aesthetically will make a front parking lot at the station feel very cohesive. In addition, we do not support the building being a "public building." We are in opposition to it being used for anything other than the proposed plans and recommendations from the 5/10 ASCC meeting and development should be limited to fire station use.

Thank you.

Loni and Brent Austin  
235 Echo Lane

**From:** [Town Center](#)  
**To:** [Laura Russell](#); [Dylan Parker](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 135 Portola Road  
**Date:** Monday, June 14, 2021 1:57:58 PM

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**From:** Judith Murphy <jammurr123@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 14, 2021 1:49 PM  
**To:** Town Center <TownCenter@portolavalley.net>  
**Subject:** 135 Portola Road

[Revised Comments from Conservation Committee re renovation of Fire Station #8.](#) Our previous reports with more details about vegetation are available elsewhere. This is focused on our priority items.

To: Planning Commission  
From: Conservation Committee  
Re: Fire Station #8 Remodel  
June 11, 2021

Conservation Committee is fully supportive of the building improvements requested by the Fire Department. They are a valued and important part of the Town and their need for more and better sleeping and office spaces and Homeland Security required protection for a 3<sup>rd</sup> engine is obvious. However, we have major problems with the landscaping plans. When evaluating landscape plans we routinely pragmatically allow removal of trees and shrubs we would normally protect because they are in the building footprint or essential hardscape areas. In this project, non-essential hardscaping is proposed with a disproportionate cost to the vegetation, habitat and public facing appearance. If space were adequate, these would be nice additions, but the lot is tight, the neighbors are close and it is on the scenic corridor.

### **PARKING**

18 parking spaces are now requested. This number has grown since original plans were submitted.

- 5 will be used only for change of shift - an hour every other day around 8 am. Why can they not use the visitor parking spaces? Much empty parking is available at that hour in nearby commercial lots. The loss of this magnificent redwood seems too large a price to pay for 2-3 parking spaces.
- 2 are for chippers. Is there not anywhere else the 2 chippers can be stored? A large, empty parking lot is part of a lightly used renovated fire station on Jefferson in RWC.
- 4 are for visitors – 2 of them ADA. One rarely sees a visitor in their parking lot.

The neighbors have every right to expect adequate – even generous – visual screening. This does not necessarily equate to no parking spaces in the rear.

### **DRIVEWAY AROUND THE FRONT.**

Requested for 2 reasons – both for occasionally visiting engines from other stations. They prefer not to have to back up into the out driveway or use one of the 3 existing drive through bays which would

require that 1 of our engines do the small out and in again circle. Is this need so great it justifies wiping out all the landscaping along this entire frontage?

Nearby commercial lots have parking along Alpine and Portola Road, but they have been required to provide wide vegetative buffers or grade changes to minimize their impact. The exceptions to this are properties whose unattractive parking predates the Town's incorporation. The current proposal has less of a buffer from the street than the Café Deli or Roberts. The Town should do all it can from having this blight spread down our main road.

### **HERITAGE REDWOOD**

In 2013 the Town adopted Redwood Guidelines.

#### ***III. REMOVAL OF EXISTING REDWOODS***

*The Conservation Committee is tasked with reviewing the removal of significant trees in the Town of Portola Valley. Significant redwoods are any tree with a trunk or multiple trunks with a total circumference of 54 inches or a diameter greater than 17.2 inches. The Committee would need a compelling safety reason to approve the removal of redwoods growing in appropriate planting locations. They are an iconic part of our landscape and heritage and are to be treasured.*

We continue to steadfastly adhere to these guidelines where removal is for more optional aspects of development.

We have readily allowed removal of redwoods in areas we would normally protect if they are in the building footprint or the areas of required hardscaping – driveways, fire engine turnarounds, etc. We understand the need to remove multiple redwoods in the rear of the lot. Tree # 6 is the largest on the lot, is more than 3 times the size of redwood we consider heritage and worth protecting, and is front and center on the public side of the lot. We strongly oppose removal of this redwood tree.

### **SCENIC CORRIDOR**

The subject property is within the “Primary Vista Corridor Boundary” of the Alpine Scenic Corridor Plan. The plan states, *“the development of individual properties, building construction and planting should be designed to be compatible with and retain the natural and rural appearance of the area.” “Commercial development, Nathorst Triangle; needs continual attention re: planting, signs, lights, colors and traffic control.”* While the building itself adheres closely to these guidelines, the landscaping plan ignores them. Planting predominantly native planting materials in a lush back corner of the lot while making a paved over wasteland of the entire frontage does not begin to comply with the spirit of the Plan. The Scenic corridor is not merely to provide a view of the western hills; it is also to provide a pleasant experience as one drives the main roads.

The original plans drawn by CJW reflected their deep understanding of Town guidelines and preserved the native plant garden and huge redwood along the frontage. Concerns of neighbors altered those plans, but while CJW was speaking with the neighbors, no one was at the table requesting compromises for the general public, the scenic corridor, the trees or native plant garden.

Conservation committee respectfully requests that the Planning Commission approves only 10 of the requested 18 parking spaces and does not allow the non-critical drive through driveway. At a minimum, we request a plan that will preserve heritage redwood #6.

Submitted by Judith Murphy, Chair