



DRAFT SAFETY ELEMENT FAQ

Responses to Draft Safety Element Questions Submitted by the Emergency Preparedness, Geologic Safety, Wildfire Preparedness and Sustainability Committees

DECEMBER 23, 2022
TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

Comment Number	Question	Response
S1	What information and policies actually belong in a Safety Element? Is the SE only for immediate safety issues such as storms caused by climate change, or should it also include policies to prevent long-term climate change? Do we want to also focus on reducing GHG emissions as much as possible today to reduce the effects of even more severe climate change in the future?	California Government Code 65302 (g) identifies the topics that should be addressed in a Safety Element. Climate Adaptation is a concern to be addressed but there are other means to address this, including the preparation of a Climate Action/Adaptation Plan. GHG reduction measures are typically addressed in a Climate Action Plan, while an Adaptation Plan typically focuses on hazards exacerbated by climate change (floods, extreme weathered).
S2	Do water conservation (P-81) and GHG reduction (P-83) actually belong in the Safety element? They seem more suitable for the Sustainability Element?	Policy P-81 is intended to support Town efforts to coordinate with water suppliers during drought conditions, which are a concern due to climate change. Policy P-83 is intended to provide Town staff with a way to prioritize the development of a Climate Action Plan that focuses on understanding the Town's Greenhouse Gas Emissions and necessary steps that need to be taken to meet GHG reduction goals identified by the State.
S3	Most policies don't seem specifically related to climate change, but rather generically apply to disaster planning and hazard mitigation. For example, P-79 "Prepare the Town for post-disaster recovery through proactive planning", and many others (P-72, P-73, P-74, P-76, P-77, P-78, P-79). Should these be in other sections such as emergency management instead?	Many of the policies in the Climate Adaptation section are intended to assist the Town in anticipating new hazard conditions that could be exacerbated by climate change. Some of these policies may be emergency management related and could be moved, however in this draft, the Town felt the current location was appropriate. Based on committee review and comments if it makes more sense to move a policy to another location this can be accomplished.
S4	Some policies in this section seem very vague compared to other sections. For example, P-72 "Prioritize the needs of vulnerable populations affected disproportionately by hazards and disasters.", among others. Should the policies point to more specific actions that the Town should take?	Policies are intended to be general in nature as they are attempting to address a variety of conditions over a longer period of time. Greater specificity is usually reserved for implementation actions/programs. Through these actions, the Town can identify specific tasks to achieve the intent of a policy or ask project applicants/property owners to take specific actions when necessary.
S5	Is it appropriate that the climate description covers SMC broadly rather than PV specifically? For example, "The Coastside area experiences a marine climate...", etc	The description uses a broad description of SMC to provide context on the variety of conditions experienced. From there the descriptions do focus on conditions within Portola Valley based on readily available information from sources like Cal Adapt. If additional reputable sources/information are available and shared with the Town, this information can be added to the element if it provides value. Since the document is intended to provide the right amount of information for the reader to understand the conditions within and surrounding the Town.
S6	P-82 calls out San Francisquito Creek, which seems to be an issue for San Mateo County safety rather than PV. Does it belong in our SE? And/or should other PV creeks/issues be included?	The purpose of this policy is to recognize that San Mateo County is the responsible party regarding this watercourse and that the Town recognizes their role as a coordinating body in addressing issues along this watercourse pertaining to sea level rise. If there are other watercourses in the Town that may be impacted by sea level rise, these can be added to the policy.
S7	In A-84-1, why is there a desire to have an independent Climate Adaptation plan, rather than adapting the relevant Safety Element sections for wildfire, flooding, etc.?	A climate action plan focuses on climate mitigation and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The safety element does identify how climate change impacts hazards within the Town; however, Action 84-1 identifies the next steps for the Town to address climate change in compliance with state requirements.
WPC1	A-44-2 Explore the feasibility of other vegetation management strategies, including: a. Elimination of use of fire-hazardous plants. B. Use of non-prolific landscaping species. C. Requiring project proponents in hillside areas to evaluate and upgrade as necessary fire flows and water supplies to hillside areas. Question: Why is the word "explore" used in this action item? We currently have a great understanding about the vegetation management strategies mentioned in items (a) and (b).	This action uses the word explore, since the Town does not currently have any policies or requirements in place. By using the term explore the Town can use a vetting process to develop these requirements. While town residents may have an understanding, Town policies and regulations must be developed in a legally binding process. This action aims to create them under that process.
WPC2	P-48 Maintain and adequately fund fuel breaks and other fire defense improvements on public property and require similar measures for private property in compliance with fire safe regulations where possible. Question: Why is the term "where possible" added at the end of this policy? Is there something specific that the author had in mind?	The use of where possible, ensures the Town can apply this policy in the appropriate locations. In some instances, this policy may not be possible to implement due to conflicting requirements from other agencies (the County, neighboring City, etc...).
WPC3	P-53 Educate residents and property owners on proper water shut off procedures during a hazard incident or evacuation order. Question: We would like to understand the history of this policy. Are there currently "proper water shut off procedures" that are recognized by the town? Does this just pertain to wildfire evacuation or all types of evacuations?	The intent of the policy is to highlight the need to educate residents on proper water shutoff procedures to ensure water pressure is maintained during an emergency event. This issue came to light for many communities in Sonoma County during wildfire incidents where water pressure was lost impacting firefighting capabilities. The purpose of the policy is to develop the appropriate procedures vetted by the Town that can be used by property owners during any type of event.

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WPC4	P-62 Require non-combustible roofs and exterior siding in all fire hazard areas. Question: We would like to understand the history of this policy. Is this for new homes or also remodeling projects? What types of roofing and siding products are you trying to describe? When you refer to ‘all fire hazard areas,’ does this mean all properties?	This policy was added to meet a Cal FIRE requirement. This policy would apply to new developments, redevelopments, and major remodels within the Town. The language of the policy is not intended to be pre-scriptive and instead provide the Town with flexibility to accommodate new materials and techniques that may be developed in the future. The role of a general plan is to provide guidance on future decisions and not dictate the types of materials used. Typically, specifications for materials and products are provided in development standards, codes, and/or design guidelines.
WPC5	A-65-1 Assess structures along slopes to determine if setbacks should be increased to protect structures in wildfire prone areas. Question: This action is part of P-65, which discusses new developments in fire-prone hillside areas. When A-65-1 refers to “Assess structures,” are you referring to existing structures or the plans for new structures? If you are referring to existing structures, when and under what circumstances will these assessments occur?	This action is intended to assess new structures being proposed, however at a later date the Town can opt to assess the locations of existing structures in relation to slopes. The decision to do this analysis would typically involve direction or concurrence from Town Council.
WPC6	How many PV homes have been upgraded or built to Chapter 7A standards via the permit process?	The Town does not keep this data in this form at this time. It could be developed with additional information about exactly what is requested. Order of magnitude, the Town processes about eight new homes per year and the requirements have been in effect for new houses since 2010.
WPC7	Is there a list of chapter 7a property addresses?	All new houses constructed since 2010 have complied with Chapter 7a. The Town does not have a list of specific properties at this time but could develop one if it was useful for implementation of programs
WPC8	In the HE, there is a chart of housing units by year built. How are remodeled homes counted in that analysis?	This comment pertains to the Housing Element, which is outside the scope of the safety element update. This comment will be forwarded to the Housing Element team for review.
GSC-G1	Where and when will all questions from all the safety committees be publicly available, whether or not they received written responses from the Town?	This document includes responses to all questions the Town received from the EPC, Geologic Safety Committee, Sustainability Committee and WPC. It is posted on the Town website and has been emailed to members of the four committees.
GSC-G2	Where on the town website are all the safety committee comments that were submitted last spring posted?	The comments received in meetings when the Committees reviewed the memos were not compiled into a document and were therefore not posted on the Town website.
GSC-G3	Questions on the Safety Element approval process: a. Who will write the detailed final content of the Safety Element? b. Can specific Town Committees which have relevant knowledge and responsibility be included in the process to determine the final content?	The content provided is considered the draft Safety Element. Based on comments and feedback provided, Town Staff and the Town’s consultant will make the necessary revisions and provide a final element for review and approval by the Planning Commission and Town Council. Sharing the element with the commission in October 2022 is part of the process to determine the final content. Feedback and input from responding committees will help in determining the final content of the element that is adopted by the Town.
GSC-G4	Should we pause initiating major housing projects until the Safety Element and the Housing Element are both approved?	The use of a moratorium is a process that would have to be enacted by the Town Council and approved by the State. A moratorium requires specific findings to place a pause on development activities. This type of action is under the purview of the Town Council and not a decision that staff can make on their own.
GSC-G5	What is the best way to include in the Safety Element a policy that requires all geologic/geotechnical mapping, data, and reports, both existing and future, be: (1) regularly indexed (by year, location, and type of report), (2) readily available to the public in digital form (i.e., scanned), and (3) incorporated into the Town’s Geographic Information System database and maps?	Action A11-1 addresses some of these requirements. The Town will review this action and make the necessary revisions to address this concern. If all requested revisions cannot be made due to lack of funding or staff capabilities, Town staff can develop a recommendation to present to Town Council for their review and concurrence.
GSC-G6	What is the best way to add new policies and actions to the Safety Element for development and implementation of strategies to manage multiple, simultaneous hazards (e.g., major earthquake accompanied by severe ground shaking—causing structural damage, broken utility lines and water pipes, and broken pavement on evacuation routes—followed by residential fires and slope failure)?	Cascading hazards are a major concern for all Town departments. The development of policies and actions typically focus on key ways to prevent specific hazard conditions. If the GSC has a specific policy to address cascading hazards and interactions, Town staff would be happy to review this. While this is not common practice in a General Plan Safety Element, Committees are welcome to provide suggestions about how this can be done and how to assess the likelihood of whether and where this would occur. This type of analysis is typically included in the Town’s Emergency Operations Plan.

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GSC-G7	<p>For Safety Element references to the 2017 Portola Valley Geologic Map and 2017 Ground Movement Potential Map:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shouldn't the Safety Element refer to the most recent and best available maps instead of the static 2017 maps? b. Shouldn't both maps be evaluated annually for potential revisions and updated maps be readily accessible on the Town's website? 	<p>The 2017 maps are the latest adopted versions of these maps, with periodic, site specific amendments when new information becomes available and individual property owners go through a Map Modification application. The Town Geologist keeps track of these amendments and incorporates them into future analysis and recommendations. Until an updated version has been adopted by the Town, this is the best available information.</p> <p>The decision to annually evaluate and update the maps requires Town Council approval since it affects annual budgeting and staff capacity. This feedback will be provided to Town Council to make an informed decision and the timing and frequency of this activity by Town staff. The Geologic Safety Committee has the ability to make annual evaluation of maps part of its annual work plan and to make recommendations to the Town Council.</p>
GSC-G8	<p>Do all the policies and actions that pertain to "development" or "proposed development" also include major additions to existing structures?</p>	<p>Typically major remodels would be covered under these policies if the proposed action meets the Town's definition for this type of activity. For example, the Town has a definition of when major additions and remodels are required to comply with Chapter 7A (Wildland Urban Interface) building code requirements.</p>
GSC-G9	<p>Define the term "qualifying subdivision", which is only used in Policy P-3, p. 13.</p>	<p>The Municipal Code defines a subdivision as follows:</p> <p>17.08.110 - Subdivision. The provisions of this title shall apply to the subdivision or other division of land for any purpose whatsoever within the town. For the purposes of this title, the division of land shall mean the division of any parcel or portion thereof into two or more lots, plots, sites or parcels for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of sale, transfer, lease, of all or any part thereof or for building development. It includes subdivision and resubdivision and other divisions of land and, when appropriate to the context, relates to the process of dividing land or to the land or territory divided.</p> <p>(Ord. 1967-71 § 1 (7621.2), 1967)</p> <p>This is the definition that is applied to policy P-3.</p>
GSC-P1	<p>Referring to Policy P-1, p. 13: "Consider all faults shown on the Town's Geologic Map and Ground Movement Potential Map, adopted by Resolution 2746-2017 during the review of development applications. Required setbacks for buildings for human occupancy illustrated on the Ground Movement Potential Map (Figure 3) should be adhered to and reflected in the Town's zoning ordinance."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shouldn't this policy refer not only to the 2017 maps but also to future revisions superseding the 2017 maps, as approved by the Town Council? 	<p>The Town may opt to add language to the policy including all future map revision or upon the adoption of a new map, the Safety Element policy can be updated with the appropriate map name and date.</p>
GSC-P2	<p>Referring to Policy P-3, p. 13: "Qualifying subdivisions, including structures for human occupancy and other critical structures within an Earthquake Fault Zone shown on current maps published by the California Geological Survey, ...should prepare a site-specific fault investigation report by a certified engineering geologist for Town review and approval. Also, any proposed new living space within a fault setback (consistent with the Pf Zone illustrated on the Town Movement Potential Map) should be supported by a fault investigation..."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. What oversight is triggered if an entity that is not building a qualifying subdivision applies for new construction or substantial remodeling in the Pf Z one (Pf = primary fault rupture zone)? 	<p>As written policy P-3 applies to any construction that includes structures for human occupancy or other critical structures. The way the language is written there is very little if any construction that would not have some form of oversight by the Town.</p>
GSC-P3	<p>Referring to Policy P-3, p. 13 (above) with Actions A-3-1 through A-3-5: "Design and construct new Town and utility infrastructure (either public or private) that cross [es] active fault traces in a manner which recognizes the hazard of fault movement...", "Equip water, gas, and electric lines that cross active fault traces with shut-off devices and flexibility which utilize the best available technology for quick shutoff...", "Develop a Utilities Resilience Program that examines all existing utility lines that cross active fault traces...", "Encourage utility companies to institute an orderly program for installing shutoff devices on these lines...", and "In consultation with Cal Water and WFPD, establish and maintain adequate emergency water supplies in areas served by water lines that cross active fault traces."</p>	<p>The language written applies to the subdivision of land (which may not include immediate construction of structures), the construction of structures for human occupancy and other critical structures where human occupancy may not occur. As written the policy applies to new and existing structures, properties proposed for subdivision, and the placement of infrastructure.</p> <p>Staff welcomes recommendations about how it could be revised to be more direct in what it applies to.</p>

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	<p>This critically important section on the safety of structures and resilience of infrastructure is currently applied only to “qualifying subdivisions.” [Under the current Draft Housing Element, these provisions will apply only to the proposed housing sites at the Sequoias and Christ Church.]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shouldn’t this section apply to all proposed development, including major additions to existing buildings, and to all infrastructure, existing and proposed? What is the best way to add policies and actions for these protections to the Safety Element so they apply universally within the Town? 	
GSC-P4	<p>Referring to p. 17: “... the California Geological Survey (see Figure 5) has mapped areas based on their potential for earthquake-induced landslides, which may require further investigation prior to development.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What data sources beside the California Geological Survey map were used to construct the landslide susceptibility map (Figure 5, p. 18) and the choice of eight landslide susceptibility classes? The California Geological Survey map delineates zones of required investigation. Why is the sentence quoted above phrased “may require further investigation” instead of “shall require further investigation”? How are the eight classes of landslide susceptibility in Figure 5 linked to the risk classifications for structures, occupancies, and land uses in Table 3? 	<p>Figure 5 Landslide Susceptibility Map</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The data for this map comes directly from the California Geologic Survey. CGS identified the landslide susceptibility categories based on the methodology established when the mapping was completed. For more information refer to the following: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/publications/ms58 Figure 5 does not identify zones of required investigation. According to the CGS the map “is intended to provide infrastructure owners, emergency planners and the public with a general overview of where landslides are more likely. The map does not include information on landslide triggering events, such as rainstorms or earthquake shaking, nor does it address susceptibility to shallow landslides such as debris flows. This map is not appropriate for evaluation of landslide potential at any specific site. They are not related. The landslide susceptibility classes indicate that based on the data reviewed by CGS there is the potential for a deep-seated landslide of varying degrees within the State. The higher the susceptibility the greater the need to analyze site conditions to determine the potential risk. While Table 3 identifies the varying risk categories based on use types and risk tolerances. The presence of a landslide would be a factor in determining the level of acceptable risk for a project. <p>By using this map, the Town can quickly determine if certain properties need to take a closer look at site conditions to determine if landslide hazards exist or could exist based on the project proposed.</p>
GSC-P5	<p>For the eight classes of landslide susceptibility used on the map in Figure 5 (p. 18):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which ones trigger geotechnical investigation? How do they correspond to the California Geological Survey’s landslide zones of required investigation? How do they correspond to the Town’s categories for areas with significant potential for downslope movement on the Ground Movement Potential map? 	<p>Figure 5 is intended to identify if a location has certain indicators that lead to landslide susceptibility and does not indicate if a geotechnical investigation is required. The requirement for investigation will be based on information from the Town’s Ground Movement Potential Map and adherence to policies P-10 and P-11.</p> <p>The zones identified in Figure 5 do not correspond to CGS zones of required investigation for earthquake induced landslides. The landslide susceptibility zones in Figure 5 may overlap with locations identified in the Town’s Ground Movement Potential Map, however the Town’s map provides and greater amount of detail and will play a key role in determining which locations in the Town will be required to investigate landslide hazards.</p> <p>For additional information, refer to the response to GSC P4</p>
GSC-P6	<p>Referring to Policy P-11, p. 17: “Require geologic and soil reports for all new development in areas of identified landslides or other zones of geologic hazard susceptibility, or when deemed necessary by the town geologist.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn’t this policy apply to all parcels proposed for development, not just those on landslides? Why is this policy only listed under the Land sliding topic? 	<p>All developments are already required to provide geotechnical investigations under the California Building Code and this policy is intended to highlight the additional scrutiny required regarding landslides and other geologic instability conditions within the Town. This policy may be applied to other geologic hazards. The placement of the policy in this section was intended to connect the use of Figure 4 – Ground Movement Potential Map and the necessity to analyze site conditions associated with this map together.</p>
GSC-P7	<p>For Action A-11 -1, p. 17: “Continue to file, reference, and index geologic/geotechnical mapping and data within the Town’s Geographic Information System.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shouldn’t all geologic/geotechnical mapping, data, and reports be readily available to the public in digital (i.e., scanned) form, through the Town’s website? Why is this action only listed under the Landsliding topic? 	<p>The Town has geotechnical reports for projects that are made available to the public upon request. Mapping is maintained by the Town Geologist. To make all geologic mapping/data/reports readily available to the public in digital form is a policy decision that requires Town Council review and approval due to budgetary and staff capacity considerations.</p>
GSC-P8	<p>Referring to Policies P-12 and P-13, p. 17: “Locate structures for human habitation and most public utilities so as to minimize disturbances from potential landslides...”, and “Where roads or utility lines are proposed to cross landslide areas..., they should be permitted only if special</p>	<p>Policies P-12 and P-13 can be modified to address existing and new construction. Typically, these policies would apply when a new development or major remodel is proposed by an applicant. For existing development, the Town would need to identify areas where these conditions occur, determine the priority for improvement, assess the costs for improvement and identify how the improvements would be paid for. An action can be created under these policies to undertake this effort if desired.</p>

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	design and construction techniques can be employed to assure that acceptable risk levels will be met.” a. What is the best way to include these policies in the Safety Element so they can apply universally within Town, to existing as well as to new construction? b. Why are these policies only listed under the Land sliding topic?	Policies are listed under landsliding as it seemed the most appropriate location. Wording can be incorporated to expand on the types of hazards these policies would apply to.
GSC-P9	Referring to Footnote 18: Jones-Tillson & Associates, “Master Storm Drainage Report for the Town of Portola Valley,” unpublished report, Town Hall, Town of Portola Valley, Portola Valley, California, 1970: a. Have the drainage inadequacies identified in the 1970 Master Storm Drainage Report been remedied? b. Has this report been updated in the last 50 years?	Steps have been taken to correct some of the drainage issues within the Town, especially as new development occurs. However, the Town has not updated this plan since its original preparation. To better address flooding issues within the Town the following was added to the element: Policy P-19 Minimize injury, loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption caused by flooding and inundation hazards Action A-19-1 Evaluate the Portola Valley Master Storm Drainage Report to identify areas of the Town’s drainage system that may require update or modification. This policy and action are intended to prioritize greater understanding of drainage issues and identify solutions to reduce or eliminate flood hazards in parts of the community.
EPC1	Who will decide on the detailed final content of the Safety Element?	Based on comments and feedback provided, Town Staff and the Town’s consultant will make the necessary revisions and provide a final element for review and approval by the Planning Commission and Town Council. Feedback and input from responding committees will help in determining the final content of the element that is adopted by the Town.
EPC2	Will there be any possibility that there can be discussion on this final selection process especially with the Town Committees who have significant knowledge and responsibility in this area?	The content provided is considered the draft Safety Element. Based on comments and feedback provided by Town Committees, Town Staff and the Town’s consultant will make the necessary revisions and provide a final element for review and approval by the Planning Commission and Town Council. Sharing the element with the commission in October 2022 is part of the process to determine the final content. Feedback and input from responding committees will help in determining the final content of the element that is adopted by the Town.
EPC3	In the interim time before the safety element is finalized, how will major housing review be done? Should we have a temporary time out for initiating major housing projects, until the safety element is approved?	The Town will follow the current protocols and processes that have been used to review housing projects since the last safety element adoption. The use of a moratorium to take a temporary time out is a process that would have to be enacted by the Town Council and approved by the State. A moratorium requires specific findings to place a pause on development activities. This type of action is under the purview of the Town Council and not a decision that staff can make on their own.
EPC4	What are the options for encouraging compliance with new safety standards? Are there enforcement mechanisms for the different situations: new construction, major remodel, minor remodel, and residences regardless of construction?	Once adopted the policies and actions in the Safety Element would apply to all properties in the Town. Enforcement of these policies and actions may require the creation of additional regulations, ordinances, and/or development protocols. Some enforcement may occur through the development review process, while some may occur through code enforcement activities, either by Town staff or Woodside Fire Protection District. Upon adoption, Town staff will begin identifying an implementation program that identifies the necessary actions to ensure compliance in the most appropriate ways.
EPC5	How will new data, especially new fire maps, be incorporated into the safety element? How will maps be revised? Will there be a process similar to updating the geologic safety map?	As new data becomes available, the Town will incorporate this information into the element where appropriate. The Town expects new wildfire mapping/information to become available in 2023. If this information becomes available after element adoption, Town staff will conduct an update to the element to insert this new information to ensure the element is timely and relevant. That update would include public meetings, review by the Planning Commission, and adoption by the Town Council.
EPC6	Will there be regulations for external fire sprinklers that require onsite water? Currently some residents are installing systems that could drain the public water supply.	This type of requirement is not considered a standard practice that is included in a General Plan Safety Element. Typically, this type of requirement would be included in an update to the Town’s Development Code or Fire Code. Committees are welcome to make suggestions.
EPC7	How do we distinguish between what experts recommend vs require, if we want to find a balance between costs and benefits? Non-combustible roofs are an example where we backed off to allow ignition-resistant.	With expert analysis, knowledge of best practices, and public input, Town staff makes recommendations to the Town Council. The Town Council considers this input and ultimately weighs the costs and benefits when they make their policy decisions. In the event the council learns new information, they may modify policy.
EPC8	How do we balance conservation values with fire safety when we make regulations? It seems like there is a tendency to clear cut but there are good examples of well-maintained landscaping that provides a high degree of fire safety while maintaining a beautiful environment.	The Woodside Fire Protection District (WFPD) is the ultimate authority on what is considered adequate brush clearance. Town staff will coordinate with WFPD on their recommendations for adequate brush clearance on properties since they are the Local Responsible Agency. Feedback on new proposed regulations regarding brush clearance is welcome and appropriate at the time WFPD is proposing new or revised standards. The Town will likely consider these policy tradeoffs when the Design Guidelines (for single family homes) are updated, which is expected in 2023.
EPC9	P-13. who defines acceptable risk levels?	Typically, acceptable risk levels are determined by key Town staff (Building Official, City Engineer, Fire Marshal, etc...) Table 3 is used by Town staff as a guide for this type of determination as well. Acceptable risk is also determined through development of policy in terms of what should be regulated and to what level. This decision making is done by Town Council.
EPC10	P-38. Who decides what is an acceptable level of risk and by what criteria	Typically, acceptable risk levels are determined by key Town staff (Building Official, City Engineer, Fire Marshal, etc...) Table 3 is used by Town staff as a guide for this type of determination as well. Acceptable risk is also determined through development of policy in terms of what should be regulated and to what level. This decision making is done by Town Council.

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EPC11	P-47. How would this be enforced?	This type of policy is usually enforced through Code Enforcement activities and fire threat assessments by the Town and Woodside Fire Protection District.
EPC12	P-58. How will that be done?	The State identifies the criteria that needs to be met to become a Fire Risk Reduction Community. Communities that meet this designation include agencies located in a state responsibility area or a very high fire hazard severity zone...that meet best practices for local fire planning."
EPC13	Page 44 P-73. Has anyone discussed this with CERT?	This action has not been discussed with individual CERT members, but Town staff believe it would be a good use of these resources and support the overall mission of the Town and FEMA.
EPC14	Page 48 A-88-1. Does this include bushes that have been planned by residents along their road for privacy purposes?	Specific vegetation management activities would be overseen by Woodside Fire Protection District and may include thinning of vegetation along public rights of way. If residents have planted vegetation in the public right of way, then it may be thinned in adherence to this action. Thinning activities along private roadways would be required to comply with Policy P-47.
EPC15	I am also interested in the question of who decides what is too safe. In other words, should the town Council have the last say or not.	Determinations of safety may be decided by key Town staff (Building Official, City Engineer, Fire Marshal, etc...) or policy makers like the Town Council depending on the scope and complexity of the issue.
EPC16	On page 32: MORITZ MAP - "In previous versions of the Safety Element, the Town has used a Fuel Hazards Map prepared by Moritz Arboricultural Consulting in 2008 to, according to the currently adopted Safety Element, "provide guidance for reducing the fire threat from vegetation throughout the Town." (See Figure 10 for Moritz Map). The map identified eleven vegetation associations and assigned a rating of potential fire behavior and level of risk to each association. While the map is not as up to date as when it was prepared in 2009, it can still provide insight into the existing vegetative conditions within the Town and should be used to assist with decision making on development projects until new mapping is available (including both new Cal Fire maps and WFPD hazard and fuels work expected to be completed in 2022). In conjunction with Cal Fire and WFPD mapping, the Moritz Map should be used to determine potential concerns for new developments, redevelopments, and major modifications to structures within the Town. A. Why are the yellow highlighted areas above not included in the Policies and implementation actions of the safety element? B. What specific development activities will be changed in Town areas that become designated as High and Very High FHSZ considering the Towns present new construction fire standards in place throughout the town? Why are we delaying formally identifying the Moritz map VHFHSZ on the town map considering what is Highlighted in yellow above in the written safety element? Do we risk losing FEMA support if we suffer a fire because we submitted the old outdated 2008 CALFIRE data in the LHMP, which we knew understated the fire risk in Portola Valley as compared to what Woodside did?	The Moritz map is not a regulatory map in the same way the Cal Fire map is. Under state law any area within a City/County located in the State Responsibility Area or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Local Responsibility Area) must apply Chapter 7a requirements and California Fire Safe Regulations to development. Since the City adopted Chapter 7A fire requirements town wide (instead of limiting it to just Very High and High) and further adopted the Home Hardening Ordinance, which goes above and beyond Chapter 7a and also applies town wide, any development must comply with these requirements. The inclusion of the Moritz Map is for informational purposes and to assist Town staff in understanding the "on the ground" conditions as they were in 2009. Using the vegetation categories identified on the map will allow Town staff to request that further detailed studies are conducted on development sites to verify conditions and ensure staff fully understands the vegetation types that may expose existing and new development to potential fire hazards. Upon receipt of updated information from Cal FIRE and WFPD, the Town will incorporate that date into the element and determine if the Moritz Map still applies or has value.
EPC17	The new fire maps Woodside Fire is working on with a third party are supposed to be ready in 2023. Can something be done to speed up the process to get the new maps into the new safety element?	The Town has no control over the timing of these maps, but anticipates they will be incorporated into the element, once available.
EPC18	When WFPD completes a validated Fire Hazard Severity zone mapping for Portola Valley, will this immediately be used to update the Towns Fire Hazard Severity zone mapping? If not immediately what delay to incorporate is expected and why?	The maps prepared by WFPD will be incorporated into the Safety Element once they have been adopted by the WFPD Board of Directors and the Portola Valley Town Council.
EPC19	In this delay period from today to when the new mapping incorporating WFPD's mapping information is completed, do you expect there be building plans that will be approved that would not have been allowed in the new updated mapping, and how significant do you expect the amount of "grandfathered" housing to be?	Rough estimate, the Town sees about eight new homes per year and is striving for about 11 ADUs per year in the coming years. We don't know if the WFPD's mapping and associated recommendations will change the requirements for these types of units. In terms of housing proposed under the Housing Element, the housing sites were individually vetted through the Housing Element Update process. The timing of the applications for those projects is not known.
EPC20	The latest Safety Element utilizes the 2008 CalFire Map instead of the 2008 Moritz Map in spite of the fact that the Moritz Map has been in the Safety Element since 2010. a. Who made the decision to authorize this change? b. Who approved this change? c. Under what authority were a. and b. above done?	The inclusion of the Cal Fire Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map is a requirement under California Government Code Section 65302 (g) 3. Omission of this map and information would put the Town's element out of compliance with state requirements. Also note that the Safety Element includes the Moritz map as well as some recent updated analysis performed by Zeke Lunder.

Comment Number	Question	Response
EPC21	<p>As backup, at the Joint Committee meeting on October 26, the Chair of the EPC asked Laura Russell what regulations required the use of the CalFire map instead of the Moritz Map. A few days later, Laura sent the following response:</p> <p>“At the joint committee meeting on the 26th you asked for the reference that says that we are required to analyze the Cal Fire VHFHSZ map. Please see California Government Code 65302(g)(3)(A)(i).”</p> <p>The full text of the code is below:</p> <p>“(3) Upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2014, the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to address the risk of fire for land classified as state responsibility areas, as defined in Section 4102 of the Public Resources Code, and land classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, as defined in Section 51177. This review shall consider the advice included in the Office of Planning and Research’s most recent publication of “Fire Hazard Planning, General Plan Technical Advice Series” and shall also include all of the following:</p> <p>A) Information regarding fire hazards, <i>including, but not limited to</i>, all of the following:</p> <p>(i) Fire hazard severity zone maps available from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.”</p> <p>Thus, the regulations do not preclude the use of the Moritz Map and since it is almost universally accepted as a better map than the 2008 CalFire map, it would appear that the Moritz Map should take precedence over the CalFire map.</p>	<p>The inclusion of the Moritz Map has no bearing on compliance with state requirements under California Government Code Section 65302 (g) 3. Both maps can play a role in assisting Town staff, residents, and property owners with understanding the potential fire threats and regulatory requirements. However, the Moritz Map is not a regulatory map in the same way the Cal Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map is. Properties within the Cal Fire Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone are required to comply with Chapter 7a and California Fire Safe Regulation requirements. This was superseded by the Town’s adoption of building code amendments (the Home Hardening Ordinance) which applies Chapter 7a requirements to all properties in Town. Regardless of location and vegetation class (as defined on the Moritz Map) all properties must adhere to Chapter 7a requirements.</p> <p>If at a future date the Town opted to formalize the use of the Moritz Map as a regulatory tool, Town Council would have to adopt it in the same way the Home Hardening Ordinance was adopted. However, Town staff is anticipating updated maps from the Woodside Fire Protection District, which will provide greater detail and analysis of the vegetation types and potential fire threat levels within the Town that will be relied upon for future decision-making regarding wildfire risks.</p>