



TOWN of PORTOLA VALLEY

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Code of Ethics and Values

Adopted by the Town Council: February 28th, 2024

Portola Valley is guided by a General Plan that which places the highest premium on engaged and appreciated community volunteers and professional staff. Our government can and has served as a model for other jurisdictions. This Code of Ethics and Values serves to reinforce positive dialogue between our government officials, staff, volunteers, and the entire community, helping to ensure we can meet our community's challenges.

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. This Code of Ethics and Values promotes the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the town's government. All elected and appointed officials, staff, volunteers, and others who participate in the town's government are expected to embrace this Code, and practice its nine core values in their work. We encourage that all members of the community that live and work in our Town also embrace these values.

1. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be ethical.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I am trustworthy, acting with integrity and moral courage.
- b. I am truthful, I do what I say I will do, and I am dependable.
- c. I make impartial decisions free of bribes, unlawful gifts, narrow political interests, or financial and personal interests that impair my independence of judgment or action.
- d. I am fair, evaluating benefits and burdens according to consistent and equitable criteria.
- e. I extend equal opportunities and due process to all parties in matters under consideration. If I engage in private meetings and discussions, I do so without making voting decisions.
- f. I show respect for people, confidences, and information designated as "confidential."
- g. I use my title(s) only when conducting official town business, for information purposes, or as an indication of background and expertise, carefully considering

whether I am exceeding or appearing to exceed my authority.

2. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be respectful and gracious.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I listen carefully to the views of others and refrain from interrupting others during discussions of town business.
- b. I am succinct and direct in expressing my views, respecting the time of all participants.
- c. I honor the public comment section of public meetings, allowing issues to be asserted in a transparent and open manner and will follow the guidelines described in "[Public Comments during Town Council Meetings](#)".
- d. I act in a constructive manner when receiving input from staff or members of the public in public meetings.
- e. I treat staff respectfully and refrain from disparaging others, particularly in relationships of unequal power, in public or in private. I do not tolerate disrespectful behavior in others.

3. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be fiscally responsible.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I make decisions after prudent consideration of their financial impact, considering the long- term financial needs of the Town, especially its financial stability.
- b. I demonstrate concern for the proper use of town assets (e.g., personnel, time, property, equipment, funds) and follow established procedures.

4. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be professional.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I apply my knowledge and expertise to my assigned activities in a consistent and productive manner.
- b. I approach my job and work-related relationships with a positive attitude.
- c. I keep my professional knowledge and skills current and growing.

5. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be service-oriented.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I provide friendly, receptive, and courteous service to everyone.
- b. I am attuned to, and care about, the needs and issues of residents, public officials, and staff.
- c. I am interested, engaged, and responsive in my interactions with constituents.

6. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be organized.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I act in an efficient manner, making decisions and recommendations based upon research and facts, taking into consideration short and long-term goals.
- b. I follow through in a responsible way, keeping others informed, and providing a timeline when possible.
- c. I am respectful of established town processes and guidelines.
- d. I recognize that I am part of a team and will shoulder my share of responsibilities in representing the Town.
- e. With respect to Council liaisons and committee members, I will make my best effort to attend all meetings of committees to which I am assigned.

7. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be communicative.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I convey the town's care for and commitment to its residents.
- b. I communicate in various ways that I am approachable, open-minded and willing to participate in dialog.
- c. I engage in effective two-way communication by listening carefully, asking questions, and determining an appropriate response that adds value to conversations.
- d. I use my knowledge and expertise to clarify complex issues.

8. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be collaborative.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I act in a cooperative manner with groups and other individuals, working together in a spirit of tolerance and understanding.
- b. I work towards consensus building and gain value from diverse opinions.
- c. I accomplish the goals and responsibilities of my individual position, while respecting my role as a member of a team.

- d. In the course of serving the Town, I consider the broader regional and state-wide implications of the Town's decisions.

9. As a Representative of the Town of Portola Valley, I will be open-minded.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I listen to both sides of a controversy with respect, impartiality and diligence.
- b. I exhibit a proactive, innovative approach to setting goals and conducting the Town's business.
- c. I display a style that maintains consistent standards, but is also sensitive to the need for compromise, "thinking outside the box," and improving existing paradigms when necessary.
- d. I promote intelligent and thoughtful innovation to forward the town's general plan, policies and services.

Because our residents seek public confidence in the town's services and public trust of its decision-makers, our decisions and our work shall meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement by following this Code.