



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
**Conservation Committee Meeting**  
**November 26, 2024**  
**7:00 PM**

**Catherine Magill**, Chair  
**Judith Murphy**, Vice Chair  
**Teresa Coleman**, Secretary  
**Nona Chiariello**, Member  
**Nancy Freire**, Member  
**Marianne Plunder**, Member  
**Megan Richards**, Member  
**Dieter Walz**, Member  
**Joerg Zimmerman**, Member

**REGULAR MEETING**

**HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSE– 765 PORTOLA RD., PORTOLA VALLEY, CA**

**REMOTE MEETING ADVISORY:** On March 1, 2023, all committees in Portola Valley will return to conducting in-person meetings. A Zoom link will be provided for members of the public to participate remotely; however, the Town cannot guarantee there will be no technical issues with the software during the meeting. For best public participation results, attending the meeting in-person is advised.

**ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Town Clerk at (650) 851-1700 or by email at [towncenter@portolavalley.net](mailto:towncenter@portolavalley.net). Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

**VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM**

**To access the meeting by computer:**

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82458146480?pwd=adwC0PeT2wEBkddgsKVyn4LUX6vzl5.1>

Meeting ID: **824 5814 6480** Passcode: **889793**

**To access the meeting by phone:**

1-669-900-6833 or 1-888-788-0099 (toll free)

1. **CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**  
*Speakers' time is limited to three minutes.*
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
  - a. October 22, 2024
4. **SITE PERMITS:**
  - a. CalWater Pump Station, Goya
5. **TREE PERMITS:**
  - a. 330 Los Alamos (report, App A)
  - b. 311 Wyndham (report, App B)
  - c. 1265 Westridge (report, App C)
  - d. 299 Mapache (report, App D)
  - e. 4 Coalmine View
  - f. 25 Buckeye

**6. OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Oversight of Town-owned properties - Updates (Committee)
  - i. Springdown – seeding?
  - ii. Frog Pond
  - iii. Ford Field and Open Space
  - iv. Town Center
  - v. Shady Trail
  - vi. Discuss adding a second CC-promoted volunteer work day in Aug/Sept to remove *Dittrichia* from Public rights-of-way
- b. Committee / Town Cooperation
  - i. Public Works (Magill)
  - ii. Trails and Paths (Coleman)
  - iii. Joint (CC/OS) subcommittee's recommendations on open space maintenance and funding (App E)
- c. Wildlife corridors / Fencing Guidelines (Plunder)
  - i. Discuss progress on Fencing Ordinance changes (App F)
- d. Hawthorns
- e. CC Routine Town Communications
  - i. Kudos (Plunder)
  - ii. Backyard Habitat (Plunder)
  - iii. Tip of the Month (Magill)
  - iv. What's Blooming Now? (Magill)

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Discuss January's Election of New Officers

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The next regularly scheduled meeting date is January 28, 2025, 7:00 PM.

**Land Acknowledgement:**

The Town of Portola Valley acknowledges the colonial history of this land we dwell upon—the unceded territory of the Ramaytush (rah-my-toosh) Ohlone, Tamien Nation, and Muwekma (mah-WEK-mah) Ohlone, who endured a human and cultural genocide that included removal from their lands and their sacred relationship to the land. Portola Valley recognizes that we profit from the commodification of land seized from indigenous peoples and now bear the ecological consequences. We seek to understand the impact of these legacies on all beings and to find ways to make repair.



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
**Conservation Committee Meeting**  
**October 22, 2024**  
**7:00 PM**  
**In-person Meeting**

**CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.

**Roll Call:**

Members present: T. Coleman, N. Freire, C. Magill, N. Chiariello, M. Plunder, D. Walz, M. Richards

Members absent: J. Murphy, J. Zimmermann

Also present: M. Hufty (Town Council member liaison)

Guests: D. Cardinal, K. Corley, D. Breen (via zoom)

**2. Oral Communications:**

None

**3. Approval of Minutes for September 24, 2024:** The minutes were *approved unanimously* (M. Richards abstained)

**4. Site Permits**

- a. 10 Redberry Ridge – site visit completed and report submitted
- b. 199 Mapache – site visit to be scheduled

**5. Tree Permits**

- a. 117 Brookside – completed
- b. 5 Valley Oak – completed
- c. 1265 Westridge – to be reported on at next meeting
- d. Insurance Company qualifications – M. Plunder stated she has spoken with J. Biggs who confirmed no one at the Town has seen any specific requirement from an insurance company requiring tree removals for policy renewals.

**6. Old Business**

- a. Oversight of Town-owned properties
  - i. Springdown – An updated plant species list has been developed for Springdown and will be added to the Open Space vision statement document. The recent clearing/clean up activities did not include the Conservation subcommittee (M. Plunder to follow up with the Fire department)

- ii. Frog Pond – no update.
- iii. Ford Field and Open Space – no update
- iv. Town Center – a lot of pruning has occurred near the restroom area (Town staff and the Fire department coordinated); the Conservation subcommittee was not involved in these discussions. M. Richards will follow up with Justin to determine how this clearing, etc. occurred.
- v. Shady Trail – no update

b. Committee/Town Cooperation

- i. Public Works – no update
- ii Trails and Paths – Town hike will be held on Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- iii. Wildfire Preparedness –
  - 1. N. Chiariello reported the efforts of the subcommittee last year on dittrichia removal had a noticeable effect on this year’s infestation (almost no dittrichia observed in the identified areas). An infestation of large dittrichia plants was observed (and removed) at Corte Madera school in the prior construction area, demonstrating how construction disturbances are connected to dittrichia infestations.
  - 2. Dittrichia as a fire hazard - It was suggested a flyer be developed highlighting the problems of dittrichia infestations, including the potential for fire risk

**Action Item:** dittrichia subcommittee (M. Plunder, M. Richards) to work on developing a dittrichia flyer

- 3. M. Plunder will serve as the Committee liaison for 2025 (replacing N. Chiariello)
- iv. Dittrichia recommendations document – *unanimously approved*. To be forwarded to ASCC.

c. Fencing Guidelines/Wildlife corridors – the subcommittee is taking a staged approach and will initially look at existing permit requirements with a focus on protecting existing wildlife corridors.

d. Hawthorns –Mid Pen was presented with the preliminary plans from the public access working group.

e. CC Routine Town Communications

- i. Kudos - none
- ii. Backyard habitat – several possible recipients have been identified. C. Magill will join M. Plunder as the subcommittee.
- iii. Tip of the Month (C. Magill) – invasive shot hole borer
- iv. What’s Blooming Now? (C. Magill) – berries (snowberries)

**7. New Business**

- a. Invasive plant list for Conservation Committee website – Subcommittee formed (T. Coleman, M. Plunder, M. Richards) to develop the process with the Town to have a list developed for the website. C. Magill will forward historical “tip of the month” posts dealing with invasives to the subcommittee.
- b. Open Space proposal to link subcommittees for maintenance of town-owned open spaces – Proposed subcommittee members are G. Nielson and N. Chiariello from Open Space and N. Freire and J. Murphy from Conservation

**Adjournment:** 8:10 pm

**Date & Time of Next Meeting:** Tuesday November 26, 2024 at 7:00 pm

## Appendix A

### Tree removal request 330 Alamos Road

Three members of the Conservation Committee (Nona Chiariello, Marianne Plunder, and Dieter Walz) visited the property located at 330 Alamos on November 3, 2024. The purpose was to respond to a tree removal request submitted to the Town by the property owner, Dion Monstavicus. We met Dion in person; no Arborist's report exists, but two tree service companies had previously sent representatives look at the tree.

The tree is a *Quercus lobata* (Valley Oak). Its diameter is approximately 5ft or 190" in circumference, far above our Significant Tree Ordinance limit. This is a true heritage tree, one of the largest ones we have in Town, and the greater area. It grew several hundred years before Dion's home was built near it.

The oak has several very large limbs reaching outward, mostly horizontally. The largest of these is on the south side; if it was a tree on its own, it would be a significant tree by a comfortable margin. A few years ago, Dion had three steel poles installed to take its load, cantilevered out from the trunk. Per his description, two of the poles were installed with a small angle toward the main trunk. Slow shifting in the ground has not only reduced that angle, but it may be even in the opposite direction. The net result is a measurable shift from verticality.

This problem originates from the main root system on that side of the tree. It has died over perhaps 1/3 of the trunk circumference as is visible at ground level. The reason is most likely the lack of water on account of the concrete covering the patio and thus its roots. This in turn made the cambium fail just above and along the trunk; sunburn was probably aiding this process because of lack of sufficient cooling by the sap. The protective bark has now detached and was lost in that area, which also compromises the health of this large limb.

While inspecting the tree we noticed several locations where honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) were entering and exiting the tree. Dion said that they had nests there for many years. This presents some challenges doing any kind of tree work. An experienced beekeeper should try to remove them. The next two months are when colony strength is at a minimum for the year and average temperatures are lowest thereby minimizing these associated challenges.

We asked Dion what his preference of action would be? He said that he and his family love the tree. They especially enjoy the afternoon shade it provides for the home, as well as its dramatic aesthetic appearance. He volunteered that he grew up here for most of his early years and lived there for a long time enjoying this magnificent oak. He now would like to reduce safety risk.

### Summary and recommendation

After some further discussion we agreed that a prudent next step would be a partial reduction of the tree's size. Especially the removal of the limb with the support poles, all the way back to the main trunk. This would also allow inspection of the integrity of the underlying wood thus exposed. The placement of two metal markers along the trunk with good separation would

allow monitoring of the vertical stability going forward. If at any time, the owner and his arborist determine that the tree has a risk of failure which the owner Dion considers too great, then removal is ok at any point.

Note, the Valley Oak is a deciduous species and will shed its leaves during the next about 4 to 6 weeks. Any of the tree work outlined above is best performed when in dormancy. The energy stored in the leaves is then safely stored away in the root system, ready to support new growth in another spring.

While we were on the property, we noticed several other beautiful locally native significant oaks. They all show having been professionally maintained for many years.

Submitted by  
Conservation Committee

## Appendix B

### 311 Wyndham Drive – Tree Removal Response

Three members of the Conservation Committee (Nona Chiariello, Marianne Plunder, and Dieter Walz) visited the property located on 311 Wyndham Drive. The reason was a tree removal request by the owners Jonathon Gould and Cindy Paine, who were present during our visit. We had access to an arborist's report.

The owners showed us a cluster of Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) located in their backyard, about 20+ft from their home, and about 5+ft from a concrete covered patio between the house and the tree.

There are still residuals left of an old growth Sequoia that was cut at least 80 years ago, perhaps longer. The cluster of "trees" under review are really genetically the same as the original tree. They are the result of stump sprouting usually resulting in what is referred to as a Fairy Ring (that may have originally had more members). These present "trees" are then second growth "trees"; all are then really one tree, part of the original tree. Each one's size significantly exceeds the size covered by our Significant Tree Ordinance.

The owners also had us view the tree from the front or road side of the property. It shows one of the "trees" leaning by what the arborist claims to be about 3 degrees. This appears to be the result of the plant reaching after more light.

We found the arborist's report to be thorough and properly representative of this tree (complex). We respectfully disagree with the conclusion that there is an eminent imminent risk for the leaning part of the tree being toppled in a strong wind storm. The root system is very extensive and has weathered many a major weather event, even under water saturated soil conditions.

However, we also noticed (as is referenced in the arborist's report) that there is extensive damage to the concrete covered patio due to uplifting by said tree's extensive surface root system. Some of the individual concrete sections are vertically offset by as much as 2" to 3". This is presently a serious risk for tripping. The owners said that it had already been replaced at least once before.

Moreover, the uplifting has also broken the foundation of the home (per owner observation), as well as a visible brick wall above it.

This will require very costly mitigation. And all these structural damages will get repeated in the future. There is no structural remedy that will keep the tree in check in the future.

For all of these reasons the Committee supports the request for removal of the tree, even though it is a magnificent tree, covered by our ordinance, and is located in an area where *S. sempervirens* is native. We noticed there are quite a few other Redwoods in the back part

of the property near a fence, some in clusters too. Once said tree is removed, one will not miss them in this local environment.



### **Tree-removal request: 1265 Westridge Drive**

On Oct 24, 2024 three members of the Conservation Committee (Nona Chiariello, Marianne Plunder, and Dieter Walz) visited 1265 Westridge Drive to evaluate the tree removal request submitted by owner Sivaram Krishnan. We examined the trees in question, toured the property with Sivaram, discussed significant habitat features of the property, and reviewed an arborist's report.

1265 Westridge is a match made in heaven—a property with nearly a hundred magnificent Coast Redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*), most of significant size, and owners who love those trees. The property also has more than 30 Coast live oaks. Portola Valley is fortunate that this property has owners who want to keep its wooded areas intact.

#### **Trees to remove**

Some of the property's redwoods are too close to the house and are causing structural damage that cannot be safely mitigated by cutting roots. Any attempt to do so would have short-lived benefits, at best. Removal of the trees described in the permit application will benefit other trees that are slightly farther from the house. **Therefore we support the owners' request to remove 8 significant Coast Redwoods; the arborist took the same position.**

In addition, we recommend removal of several Coast Redwoods north of the driveway that are subdominant and are heavily shaded by canopy trees. We noted three such trees with Sivaram. These trees are near or below the threshold of significant size, they are leaning to gain access to light, and they compete with branches of adjacent redwoods. Removing these smaller trees will allow their taller neighbors to form stronger branches. We also recommend cutting a rootsprout trunk that is dead and leans away from its parent tree.

#### **Fuel Mitigation**

The owners received instructions from WFPD to limb up trees and remove ladder fuels. They went above and beyond the requirements, however, perhaps because of a misunderstanding. The redwoods have been limbed up to about 30 feet whereas the specific wording from WFPD was to "Remove lower limbs of trees to a height of at least 6-10 feet above grade (or 1/3 the height of the tree if the tree is less than 30' tall)." The lowermost remaining branches will elongate over time and droop, but will remain safely elevated above grade. They should not be limbed up any higher.

#### **Corte Madera Creek and riparian corridor**

This property is bounded on the south by Corte Madera Creek. As is common along Corte Madera, the creek bank has a lower bench and an upper bench. This area is exempted from fuel mitigation requirements (Section 5.g.2 of WFPD Fuel Mitigation Ordinance 24-01, <https://www.woodsidefire.org/home/showpublisheddocument/1228/638501569824270000>):

"....Exceptions to the fuel mitigation requirements will be made for very specific sensitive habitat locations, marsh lands, creek banks, and a minimum of 50 feet from any riparian corridor."

The upper bench of the creek bank is secured by a gabion wall; we suspect that this gabion qualifies as the “top-of-bank”. We were concerned to see a chain link fence along the top of the gabion wall. The fence predates the current owner and is inconsistent with the fence ordinance (<https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/547/635393271701670000>) which states that a fence must be set back from the top of bank by 20 feet.

Removal of the fence would improve the habitat value of the property and would allow the owner to steward the lower bench of the creek bank, remove invasive French Broom (*Genista monspessulana*) and plant some native riparian shrubs. If the owners wanted to do this, they should check with the Town first regarding removal of the fence. Some examples of showy native shrubs that would do well in this riparian environment are:

- Carpenteria californica* (Bush anemone)
- Berberis aquifolium* (Oregon grape)
- Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *ilicifolia* (Hollyleaf cherry)
- Holodiscus discolor* (Ocean spray)
- Philadelphus lewisii* (Mock orange)
- Physocarpus capitatus* (Pacific ninebark)
- Rubus parviflorus* (Thimbleberry)
- Rosa californica* (Woods’ rose)
- Ribes speciosum* (Fuschia-flowered gooseberry)
- Cornus sericea* (American dogwood)

### **Landscaping next to the driveway on the north side**

This is a semi-shady area because it is on the south side of an array of redwoods, and is ideal habitat for a number of showy, native perennials. First, however, there are three Cotoneasters about 5 to 6 feet from the driveway that should be removed. The following are garden-quality native perennials that do well adjacent to redwoods:

- Aquilegia Formosa* (Crimson Columbine)
- Carpenteria californica* (Bush Anemone)
- Cynoglossum grande* (Hound's Tongue)
- Heuchera micrantha* (Alumroot)
- Garrya elliptica* (Coast Silktassel Bush)
- Rhamnus californica* (Coffee Berry)
- Ribes malvaceum* (Chaparral Current)
- Ribes sanguineum* (Pink Flowering Current)
- Prunus ilicifolia* (Hollyleaf Cherry)
- Venegasia carpesioides* (Canyon Sunflower)
- Iris douglasiana* (Douglas’ Iris)
- Cercis occidentalis* (Western Redbud) (this is deciduous, a sunny spot will be best)

## Appendix D

### **Preliminary Conservation Committee Comments**

**Address: 199 Mapache Drive, Portola Valley**

**Committee members at site visit: Teresa Coleman, Marianne Plunder, Megan Richards. The homeowner Greg Fair was also present.**

**Date of visit: 10/28/2024**

#### **Tree protection and removal**

The most significant conservation committee review on this site relates to tree preservation and removal. The project plans propose grading by hand to remove up to 1 foot of topsoil beneath a grove of large trees whose roots were deeply buried by prior construction. The arborist's report discusses and approves of this work with a requirement that the arborist be present to observe the work. We have no issue with this planned grade restoration work on the West side of the house, but recommend that the arborist's requirements be reflected on the plans.

As indicated by the tree protection guidelines included on page 6 of the arborist Bob Peralta's report, the plans should include a tree and vegetation protection plan.

It is currently difficult to reconcile the arborist's tree numbers with the tree locations shown on the plan; it is unclear which tree is which. The arborist's tree numbers should be clearly reflected on the plans, including sheet C4.0.

The plans also propose other grading on site to improve drainage and to reduce the risk of flooding. The arborist's review appears incomplete in these other locations and we are concerned that as designed, proposed grading and drainage improvements will have significant impacts to the roots of existing trees. Our concerns are specifically for trees located outside of the limits of topsoil removal, and we recommend that the grading and construction impacts be reviewed more closely in these areas by the project arborist--ideally after tree numbers and their protection zones have been added to the plans. The arborist should recommend additional protection measures and/or removal as necessary.

Examples of our concerns include:

- Plans show up to 2 feet of cut within the root zone of tree 46, a 16" oak off the north-east corner of the house which was observed to be in poor condition during our site visit.
- On the south side of the house, where two trees are proposed to be removed, the concrete v-ditch encroaches within 1.5 feet of the trunk of one 16" and one 24" tree, and is concerningly close to others as well. The proposed grading in this area also results in up to 1 foot of cut and fill within the drip lines and adjacent to the trunks of existing trees. There is also a proposed drain pipe that will require trenching through tree roots. We do not oppose the removal of the two trees referenced on the plans; however we recommend careful consideration be given to the design to ensure the remaining trees whose roots are currently anchoring and stabilizing the hill can be safely preserved.

**Invasives**

Disturbance by construction will make the site vulnerable to invasives, including any weed seeds brought in by heavy equipment. *Dittrichia* may be a problem, therefore the property should be monitored carefully for *Dittrichia* and it should be eliminated before seeding during construction and for a few years following.

**Submitted by Marianne Plunder**

## Appendix E

**To:** Mayor and Members of the Town Council

**From:** Joint subcommittee appointed by Conservation and Open Space

**Date:** November 11, 2024

**Subject:** Recommendations on open space maintenance and funding

We are a joint subcommittee appointed by the Open Space Committee and the Conservation Committee to re-examine maintenance needs of town-owned open spaces and to consider the appropriate use of the 2% Utility Users Tax (UUT) in light of the town's financial challenges. Keeping in mind that the 2% UUT is restricted to "open space purposes only"<sup>1</sup> and that those purposes include maintenance of open space,<sup>2</sup> we offer four recommendations. To meet the Council's decision schedule, we submit our recommendations prior to committee review.<sup>3</sup>

1. We recommend allocating \$65,000 from the 2% UUT this year to maintain the primary town-owned open spaces<sup>4</sup> and areas that have been designated for "open space purposes" by the Town Council.<sup>5</sup> We recommend this amount in order to provide for the following routine maintenance<sup>6</sup> this year:
  - a. four mowings at Spring Down
  - b. two mowings at Ford Field, Frog Pond, and Frog Pond/Alpine Road Remnant
  - c. 5 - 6 days of weeding at Spring Down by a contractor such as Go Native, Inc.
  - d. routine maintenance at Shady Trail and Triangle Park
  - e. maintenance of trails within town-owned open space parcels (~4 miles of trails)
2. We recommend against applying the 2% UUT to trail maintenance outside town-owned open spaces without first completing a comprehensive discussion that involves the Trails and Paths Committee, Town staff, and neighborhood groups that already work together on trail maintenance.<sup>7</sup> We note that:
  - a. About 22 miles of trails, or roughly half the total length of trails<sup>8</sup> in Portola Valley (not including Windy Hill trails) are in road rights-of-way. The rights-of-way are managed for multiple goals such as safe transit, utility corridors, evacuation

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Town\\_of\\_Portola\\_Valley\\_Open\\_Space\\_Appropriations,\\_Measure\\_R\\_\(November\\_2009\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Town_of_Portola_Valley_Open_Space_Appropriations,_Measure_R_(November_2009))

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/13036/637045996424270000> red pages 53-67

<sup>3</sup> Review by the Open Space Committee will be on Nov. 12, and by the Conservation Committee on Nov. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Map of open spaces in Portola Valley, including the principal town-owned parcels: Ford Field, Frog Pond, Shady Trail, Spring Down, Triangle Park <https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showdocument?id=2747>

<sup>5</sup> This includes the Alpine Road Remnant, which was designated for open space purposes by the Council in 2021: <https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/14723/637611825576800000> pages 2948-49.

<sup>6</sup> We thank Recreational Facilities Coordinator Justin Bixby for providing a breakdown of mowing costs and weeding costs. Justin has managed mowing and weeding for years in a cost-conscious way. He hires contractors who know the Town's parcels and priorities. Against the exodus of many town staff, Justin Bixby and Scott Weber stand out as staff members who have remained and whose experience and institutional memory are vital to the Town and provide significant cost-savings.

<sup>7</sup> We thank Gary Hanning of the Trails and Paths Committee for an overview of seasonal trail maintenance, trail repairs, capital improvements, and trail work by Town staff and volunteers.

<sup>8</sup> We thank Dave Evans for sharing detailed data on trail segment lengths, which we used together with his trail map (<https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/18321/638494781326030000>) to categorize ~44 miles of unpaved trails in Portola Valley (not including those in Windy Hill).

safety, and recreation. Open space considerations are primarily about views to adjoining land and scenic horizons.

- b. Roughly two fifths (~18 miles) of trails are easements to the town on private property or informal neighborhood trails. Multiple groups are already involved in maintenance of these trails.<sup>9</sup>
3. We recommend stronger partnerships, coordination, and outreach in order to make the best use of maintenance dollars, specifically:
    - a. Creating a standing joint subcommittee from Open Space and Conservation to help ensure that maintenance priorities are identified by Conservation and evaluated by Open Space, providing checks and balances.
    - b. Closer coordination between the joint subcommittee and Justin Bixby to aid the success of weeding and mowing—where timing is everything!—and extend opportunities for checks and balances.
    - c. Outreach to neighbor groups of each open space to provide additional volunteer contributions, similar to the efforts at Frog Pond organized by PV Ranch. Examples include: horse-grazing days at Spring Down; student weeders at “poppy corner” in Triangle Park; an adopt-a-trail program.
  4. We recommend a return to annual reports to the Town Council by town committees so as to increase awareness of on-the-ground committee work that serves the Town and saves it money. Examples of projects and workdays by the Conservation Committee include:
    - a. For >20 years,<sup>10</sup> an annual town-wide “Broom pull” in the road rights-of-way<sup>11</sup>
    - b. Removal of *Dittrichia* (stinkwort) from all principal open space areas<sup>12</sup>
    - c. Spring Down weeding and seeding<sup>13</sup>
    - d. Surveys by botanists to compile plant lists for Spring Down<sup>14</sup> and Frog Pond<sup>15</sup>
    - e. Eradication of an invasive tree, *Ailanthus altissima*, on Ford Field, Spring Down

We hope these recommendations help the Council create a budget that sustains the Town’s core open spaces, honors the will of voters, and is sound and balanced.

Respectfully,

Joint Subcommittee from the Conservation Committee and Open Space Committee:

Nona Chiariello

Nancy Freire

Judith Murphy

Gary Nielsen

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Trails and Paths Committee members on horseback prune trees to ensure clearance for horses.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.almanacnews.com/morgue/2004/2004\\_04\\_07.zbroom.shtml](https://www.almanacnews.com/morgue/2004/2004_04_07.zbroom.shtml)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.portolavalley.net/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/32560/20?curm=3&cury=2024>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/18786/638646903250200000> pages 9-12

<sup>13</sup> For example, <https://pvforum.us/g/main/topic/105757341#msg190715>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/18786/638646903250200000> pages 5-8

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.calflora.org/app/ipl?bloom=t&vrid=svy3632>



**Town of Portola Valley**  
 Planning & Building Department  
 765 Portola Road  
 Portola valley, CA 94028  
 (650) 851-1700  
 Fax: (650) 851-4677

**FENCE REGULATIONS SUMMARY**  
 Zoning Ordinance 2005-360

**Proposed additions from Conservation subcommittee in RED, Nov 2024**

Zoning District	<1 acre districts	1 acre districts	2+ acre districts
<b>Fence Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic fences permitted on all property lines</li> <li>• Domestic fences in riparian corridors to be set back 20' from the top of the creek bank</li> <li>• Double fencing not permitted in setbacks</li> <li>• <b>Only wildlife-friendly fencing is permitted in or across existing wildlife corridors</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic fences to be set back at least 25' from the front property line and permitted on all other property lines</li> <li>• Horse fences permitted on all property lines</li> <li>• Fences not permitted on slopes exceeding 20%</li> <li>• Fences in riparian corridors to be set back 20' from the top of the creek bank</li> <li>• Double fencing not permitted in setbacks</li> <li>• <b>Only wildlife-friendly fencing is permitted in or across existing wildlife corridors</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic fences not permitted in required yards</li> <li>• Horse fences permitted on all property lines</li> <li>• Fences not permitted on slopes exceeding 20%</li> <li>• Fences in riparian corridors to be set back 20' from the top of the creek bank</li> <li>• Double fencing not permitted in setbacks</li> <li>• <b>Only wildlife-friendly fencing is permitted in or across existing wildlife corridors</b></li> </ul>
<b>Height</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4' in front yards</li> <li>• 6' in side and rear yards</li> <li>• 4' in side yards along streets</li> <li>• <b>Wildlife-friendly fences are max 40" high</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4' for all horse fences</li> <li>• 4' in front yards and 6' in side and rear yards for domestic fences</li> <li>• 4' in side yards along streets</li> <li>• 4' when adjacent to public trails and paths</li> <li>• <b>Wildlife-friendly fences are max 40" high</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4' for all horse fences</li> <li>• <b>Wildlife-friendly fences are max 40" high</b></li> </ul>
<b>50% Opacity Limit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fences in front yards and fences in side yards along streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All horse fences</li> <li>• Fences in front yards</li> <li>• Fences adjacent to public trails and paths</li> <li>• Fences in side yards along streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All horse fences</li> </ul>

**Opacity, continued:**

- Fence members not to exceed a 6" width when viewed perpendicular to the plane of the fence for fences subject to an opacity limit.
- Retaining walls are exempt from opacity limits.

**Color Reflectivity:**

Fence colors not to exceed 40% reflectivity, except for naturally weathered wood.

**Horse Fence Standards:**

- No more than three horizontal wood members, each not to exceed 6" in width or no more than four horizontal wood or wire members, each wood member not to exceed 4.5" in width.
- The cross sections of posts must not exceed 6" x 6"; such posts not to exceed 4' in height and generally spaced no closer than 5' apart.
- 6" x 6" wire mesh may be attached to a horse fence but shall not exceed the height of the horse fence.
- Opacity not to exceed 50%.
- Height not to exceed 4'.
- Gates attached to horse fences must conform to the height and opacity standards for horse fences and be of a similar design.

**Entryway Features:** Entryway features, including gates, must be setback one-half of the required front yard in districts requiring a minimum parcel area of 1 acre or more.

**Permits and ASCC Review:** Permits will be required for most fences. Permits will not be required when a fence is no more than 2 feet in height and 20 feet in total length.

Staff to review and act on most applications. ASCC to review applications and existing fences when:

- (1) Referred from town planning staff;
- (2) A property undergoes ASCC review and there is a substantial modification to an existing residence or site improvements of the property;
- (3) The proposed fence cannot conform to the regulations given the conditions on the parcel; or,
- (4) The fence will be located in the M-R or O-A districts. Specific requirements for these districts will be determined on a case-by-case basis with input from the Conservation Committee.

**Repairs or Replacement to an Existing Fence:** When a portion of a fence exceeding twenty five percent of the total length of fencing within required yards is damaged or voluntarily removed, any replacement fencing of that portion shall conform to the fence regulations pursuant to a fence permit.



**ORDINANCE NO. 2005- 360**  
**ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
**AMENDING TITLE 18 [ZONING] OF THE PORTOLA VALLEY MUNICIPAL CODE**  
**BY AMENDING CHAPTERS 18.04 [DEFINITIONS] AND SECTION 18.42.040**  
**[EXCEPTIONS TO REQUIREMENTS - FENCES AND WALLS] OF CHAPTER 18.42**  
**[ACCESSORY STRUCTURES], ADDING CHAPTER 18.43 [FENCES] AND**  
**REPEALING SECTION 18.54.020.C. [MEASUREMENT OF HEIGHT]**

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley wishes to revise its Zoning Ordinance to include new provision.? for fences.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Town Council of the Town of Portola valley ("Town") does **ORDAIN** as follows:

1. Amendment of Code. Chapter 18.04 [Definitions] of Title 18 [Zoning] of the Town's Municipal Code is hereby amended to add the following Sections:

**18.04.075 Building envelope.** "Building envelope" is the three-dimensional space on a parcel within which buildings and most other structures are required to be confined and which is defined by zoning ordinance regulations governing building setbacks and building heights.

**18.04.129 Domestic fence.** "Domestic fence" is a fence that is not a horse fence as defined in Section 18.04.215.

**18.04.155 Fence.** "Fence" is a structure made of wire, wood, metal, masonry or other man-made material, or combination thereof, including gates and posts, typically used as a screen, enclosure, retaining wall, or entryway feature, for a parcel of land or portion thereof.

**18.04.156 Fence opacity.** "Fence opacity" is the surface area of a fence that is impenetrable to light when viewed perpendicularly to the plane of the fence.

**18.04.215 Horse fence.** "Horse fence" is a fence that complies with the horse fence standards set forth in Section 18.43.060.

**18.04.315 Wildlife-friendly fencing.** "Wildlife-friendly fencing" is a fence that allows wildlife to safely pass over and under it. Top wire or rail max 40"; lowest rail min 16" above ground with minimized turns and no sources of lighting.

**18.04.320 Wildlife corridor.** "Wildlife corridor" is a strip of land that allows unimpeded movement for wildlife species between fragmented habitat areas and provides important sources of food and cover. Vegetation in a wildlife corridor provides continuity with adjacent habitat. The minimum width of a wildlife corridor is 6 feet.

**18.04.555 Yard, required.** "Required yard" means an open space required by Subsections 18.52.010 A., B. or C. located between a parcel line and a building envelope.

2. Amendment of Code. Section 18.42.040 [Exceptions to Requirements — Fences and walls.] of Chapter 18.42 [Accessory Structures] of Title 18 [Zoning] of the Town of Portola Valley Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

**18.42.040 Exceptions to Requirements — Fences.** Fences may be located within required yard areas subject to the provisions set forth in Chapter 18.43.

***Remaining sections of Fence Ordinance unchanged***