



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

Colleagues Memo

TO: Mayor and Members of the Town Council

FROM: Mayor Aalfs and Councilmember Taylor

DATE: January 11, 2023

RE: Proposed Council Commitments to a post-adoption Housing Element process

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Town Council review this memo on the post-adoption Housing Element process and provide feedback to staff on next steps

BACKGROUND

In recognition of the potential penalties for not complying with the state mandate, we propose moving forward with the House Element as developed. The creation of the housing element involved many hours of effort on the part of resident volunteers, Town planning staff, and outside consultants.

The Housing Element revision a mandate imposed on us by the State. Because some of its requirements are not popular, and the bureaucratic and other standards required so much background information, the process has not been something any of us would have chosen to pursue. Because the AHHEC covered so much detailed information over such a long period of time, many residents are frustrated by the difficulty of finding specific information; it's hard to track down specific questions and answers among 18 different, multi-hour meetings.

DISCUSSION

As a complement to the Housing Element approval process, we suggest that the Council commit to a set of actions to continue public engagement, and to address the concerns that have been raised over the course of the Revision process. These concerns fall broadly into two categories: safety and follow-up. The Safety Element revision is in progress. While it broadly defines the safety concerns as part of the General Plan, we recommend committing to specific safety actions. To further bolster the Housing Element, we are recommending the following actions. To be clear, many of these actions are already underway, and the time requirements for individual action items range from relatively short (1-3 months) to very long term (several years). Our goal here is to introduce these items for discussion, so that the Council can prioritize the actions and provide direction to Staff. Many items listed here are also part of the Council Priorities

discussion; as such, they will likely be revisited in February when we initiate our conversation on updating those priorities.

These are the specific items we wanted to consider as follow-ups to the Housing Element approval:

- Safety
 - Continue implementing the recommended actions indicated by the Evacuation Capacity Study – timeframe near term
 - Currently in progress: EPC, WFPD and SMCSO engaged
 - Incorporate new fire maps – as soon as they're available
 - Grant or group buy programs (fuel reduction and home hardening) – timeframe next fiscal year
 - Especially where private incentives are not working
 - Build a coalition with similarly situated communities in WUI – timeframe near term
 - Consider lobbying County and State officials
 - Review existing efforts in other communities
 - Clarify and understand AB2045's impact on RHNA with regards to fire safety
 - Define “health and safety” considerations – timeframe next fiscal year
 - How can we implement ‘Health and Safety’ provisions to our building and planning process?
 - Implement the new Fire Code from WFPD
 - Determine what changes might be needed to the municipal code

- Follow-up on the Housing Element (HE)
 - Housing Element Information Repository – timeframe near term
 - Focus on: making the vast body of housing element information readily available
 - Collate the questions that were raised most frequently and our answers
 - Document and make searchable HE questions (FAQs)
 - Continue outreach with the public to discuss changes to the housing element within the approved framework
 - What can and what can we not change?
 - How do we substitute sites as new options become available?
 - If we want to remove a site, we need to find an alternative from the inventory or elsewhere.

- Document and maintain the full inventory of site options in the Town
 - Brief description, pros/cons of each site
 - Include all sites including noteworthy, rejected options
 - Add to the inventory as new options become available.
Commit to investigate new options where warranted.
- Goal: Continue to incorporate changes to the Housing Element to maintain Portola valley values within the state mandated framework
- General Plan (comprehensive review) – Start in FY 2023-24 (late CY 2023)
 - Focus on: maintaining the rural character of the town; safety; sustainability; infrastructure and services
 - Create a Committee of Residents to oversee the process
 - Commit to an EIR process for the General Plan
 - Goal: Create an up-to-date General Plan that incorporates Portola Valley's values