TO: Portola Valley Town Council

FROM: Dr. Robert Bauer, Clerk - Board of Trustees, Portola Valley School District (PVSD)

DATE: August 26, 2026

SUBJECT: PVSD Strategic Intentions on Access, Safety, and Conservation

I am submitting this formal statement on behalf of the Portola Valley School District (PVSD) Board of Trustees to inform the Town Council of our strategic intentions regarding the Hawthorns property development. There is a critical need for both of our agencies to take unified action to resolve Hawthorns access without the implementation of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) Access Options 9 or 10.

The Safety Risks

Options 9 and 10 create a significant and unacceptable safety risk for 4th through 8th-grade students attending Corte Madera School (CMS).

- **Creation of Unsafe Routes:** Superintendent Zarea conservatively estimates that either of these options would cause over 36,000 student crossings of the Hawthorns access road per year. With available parking at the nearby Corte Madera School during all prime hours for hikers, it is completely unnecessary for MidPen to create high risk encounters of Portola Valley children with automobiles. This establishes a *prima facie* unsafe route to school for conservatively 40% of our CMS 4th-8th grade students 180 days per year.
- **Alpine Trail Relocation:** Option 9 compounds these dangers with the unsafe relocation of the Alpine Trail behind the parking lot taking children out of sight from Alpine Road further compromising their safety.

A Viable Alternative: Parking at CMS

We strongly urge the Council not to accept the FAQs provided by Midpen in your packet as factually accurate; They are at best misleading and, in some instances, demonstrably false.

The student crossings on Alpine Road proposed in Options 9 and 10 are unnecessary because a viable alternative exists: The Portola Valley School District provides parking access to at least 50 cars at Corte Madera School, less than ¼ mile from the Hawthorns property.

- CMS parking is available all day to Hawthorn visitors 185 days a year.
- During the remaining 180 weekdays when school is in session, parking is available after 4:30 PM when the majority of hikers are likely to visit.

Let me stress that both Options 9 and 10 are unacceptable to the District. A safe alternative must become MidPen's plan of record, be it utilization of CMS parking, access to the Historic

Area off Los Trancos Road that records show contemplates visitor access in the future, or expanded, comprehensive Windy Hill open-space-complex parking.

Conservation Easement Violations

The Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) is currently allowing MidPen to flagrantly violate the property's binding conservation easement. These include allowing building in restricted development zones, as well as prohibited grading and tree removal. PVSD is fully prepared to use its resources to ensure that POST enforces the legal requirements of the Hawthorns Conservation Easement.

Call to Action: Formation of a Town Council Committee & Joint Task Force

To address these pressing issues, PVSD formally requests that the Town form a Hawthorns sub-Committee by appointing two Council Members to study and address these issues alongside the school district's committee.

- **Replicate Past Success:** Just as Portola Valley did for the Windy Hill open space consideration in the past, we propose creating a Joint Agency Task Force between the Town Council Committee and the PVSD Superintendent's Ad Hoc Committee (which consists of two PVSD Trustees). We are prepared to use our legal resources to support this joint effort.
- **Show Unified Leadership:** The Town Manager and the PVSD Superintendent already share a strong working relationship on this matter. Let us elected officials demonstrate a cohesive approach by our two agencies that provides a workable solution for our community and its children.

Timeline and Our Commitment

We need decisive action to engage MidPen and POST in the coming months before Midpen's CEQA public hearings begin in 2027.

PVSD is fully prepared to take appropriate legal steps to protect the safety of Portola Valley children, secure an alternative access solution, and compel POST to enforce the conservation easement. For your information and consideration, our Superintendent has shared with your Town Manager our legal counsel's formal response to 11 detailed questions posed by the School Board regarding the current Midpen plan for Hawthorns.

While we are prepared to act independently to protect our students by ensuring that the Alpine Road route to Corte Madera School remains safe, we strongly prefer to join together with the Town Council to reach a collaborative, unified solution.

Thank you for your consideration and partnership.