Town Council Meeting Comments August 26, 2026

Good evening Members of the Portola Valley Town Council and staff, I am Roberta Zarea, Superintendent of Portola Valley School District.

I'm speaking to you on behalf of the PVSD board, families, and students to express our serious safety concerns regarding the Midpen's Hawthorns area access plan proposals under consideration. Simply put, the options currently on the table are not acceptable to our district because they directly compromise the safety of our students, approximately 100 or so who travel that route daily.

As a school district, we are legally required to ensure the safety of our children traveling to and from school. Operating *in loco parentis*, we carry both a strict duty of care and a moral responsibility to protect these students every step of the way. As you may know, PVSD and the Town co-fund the afternoon crossing guard at Alpine and Portola Road. Adding another crossing guard is neither possible, practical, nor economically feasible.

I have commissioned an ad hoc committee of our School Board Trustees to research this topic extensively and advocate directly on behalf of our students. Additionally, the district has consulted with a land use attorney, and I have already shared their full legal report with the Town Manager for review.

We want to solve this together. The district is fully committed to working in partnership with the Town Council to protect Portola Valley's children. As a side note, we always strive to be good neighbors: one way we actively support our community is by opening the Corte Madera School parking lot on weekends, throughout the summer, and after school hours for local trail users—an access point that we believe renders a new parking lot at Hawthorns entirely unnecessary.

Let's keep working together to find a solution that puts the safety of our children first. Thank you.