Hawthorns Area Public Access Working Group
Procedural Guide and Ground Rules
Hawthorns Area Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND CHARGE

The purpose of the Hawthorns Area Public Access Working Group (Working Group) is to provide an interactive forum for the District's regional constituency, local neighbors, and different user groups to collaborate with the District and develop a plan to introduce public access at the Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (Hawthorns Area) in a manner consistent with the vision and goals adopted by the District's Board of Directors (Board) on March 23, 2022 and the land and natural resource management parameters established by the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Report and the Public Access Framework. Feedback on public access options from the Working Group will be considered by the Planning and Natural Resources (PNR) Committee, and the PNR Committee will forward their recommendation to the full Board for review and consideration. The Board will make final policy decisions informed by input from both the Working Group and PNR to determine which options to incorporate into the final Hawthorns Area Plan and advance to the environmental review phase per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

1.2 GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The working group will work directly with the District project team to evaluate the following public access components:

- Parking area and driveway location(s)
- Trailhead location(s) and internal trail system
- Trail connections with the Town of Portola Valley's (Town's) surrounding trails and pathways
- Opportunities for regional trail connections
- Proposed trail uses within the Hawthorns Area

The working group process will establish the Hawthorns Area Public Access Conceptual Plan Alternatives that will be shared with the PNR Committee prior to distribution to the full Board for consideration. The Public Access Conceptual Plan Alternatives would undergo further refinement to facilitate selection of a Public Access Preferred Alternative by the Board, which would be compiled into the Hawthorns Area Plan and carried forward through environmental review, District project approval, final design, Town permitting, and implementation.

1.3 FORMATION AND TERM

Formation of the working group would be established by the Board and would extend until Board approval of a Public Access Preferred Alternative. This process is expected to begin in summer of 2023 and last approximately 12 months but may be extended for another 6 months as needed. Upon approval of a Public Access Preferred Alternative, the Board would determine whether the working group has fulfilled its charge and, if so deemed, direct the General Manager to dissolve the working group.

2.0 COMPOSITION

Table 1 outlines the proposed Working Group composition, which would consist of thirteen voting members (seven Ward Stakeholders and six Interest Area Representatives) as well as three non-voting members (a District Board Liaison, a Town Liaison, and a Meeting Facilitator). The Interest Area Representatives may represent a single topic area or multiple topic areas, provided that the ultimate composition of the Working Group is balanced in its representation of perspectives. In addition, Interest Area Representatives would not be currently serving as a member of the Town of

Portola Valley Town Council, Architectural & Site Control Commission, Planning Commission, or any other Town Committee that has advisory or regulatory oversight related to the project.

Table 1 – Proposed Working Group Composition

Quantity	Member	Representation	Recruitment Pathway	Voting Member
7	District Ward Stakeholders	• Represent regional perspectives balanced with both ward and local interests • Understanding of District mission	Board appointment	Yes
6	Interest Area Representatives	*May represent one or more of the following interest areas:* • Local community interests • Neighborhoods • Safe routes to schools • Local and regional trail connections • Resource conservation • Recreational uses • Interpretation/education	Application and Board selection	Yes
1	District Board Liaison	District mission and interests	Board appointment	No
1	Town Liaison	Town interests	Town appointment	No
1	Meeting Facilitator	Neutral party	Request for Proposals	No

2.1   MEMBER VACANCIES

In the event of a vacancy, the vacancy will be filled using the following process:

1. If the vacancy is a Ward Stakeholder, the Board member for that ward would select a new representative to serve on the Working Group.
2. If the vacancy is an Interest Area Representative, the Board will appoint a new member to the Working Group from the interviewee list established previously by the Board.
3. If the vacancy is the District Board Liaison, the Board will appoint a new Board Member to the Working Group.
4. If the vacancy is the Town Liaison, the Town will appoint a new member to the Working Group.

3.0   NON-VOTING MEMBER ROLES

3.1   DISTRICT BOARD LIAISON

Because the Hawthorns Area is located within Ward 6, the Board member representing Ward 6 will join the Working Group as the Board liaison to represent the District's mission and interests, provide input and answer questions based on District policy, and function as a conduit between the Board and the Working Group. To follow the progress of the group, the Board liaison would attend all Working Group meetings, complete assignments, and actively participate in

discussions but would not vote in Working Group decisions. The liaison would also provide updates to the full Board at their regularly scheduled meetings.

3.2   TOWN LIAISON

The District would work with Town staff to invite one member from the Town Council to join the Working Group as a Town liaison who would represent Town interests, provide input and answer questions based on Town policy, and communicate any updates as needed to the Town Council and other Town representatives. To follow the progress of the group, the Town liaison would attend all Working Group meetings, complete assignments, and actively participate in discussions but would not vote in Working Group decisions.

3.3   DISTRICT PROJECT TEAM AND TOWN STAFF

District staff and consultants will coordinate, host, and facilitate the Working Group's activities in a non-voting capacity. Town staff will be welcome to attend to observe and clarify questions pertaining to Town policies and resources.

4.0   GROUND RULES

Working group members shall strive for a collaborative, constructive process with active participation of all members in discussing issues and shall honor the following ground rules to ensure open and productive discussions:

1. **Attend scheduled meetings**. Working group members shall strive to attend each scheduled meeting. Working group members who cannot attend a meeting shall call or email the Working Group Co-Chairs and District staff liaison or District Clerk at least two working days prior to the meeting. Two consecutive absences and up to three total indicate an inability to serve and may result in removal and/or replacement from the Working Group by the Board of Directors. Working group members who are unable to attend a particular meeting but would like to share their views on agendized topics have two options:

> a. They can submit written comments to District staff 24 to 48 hours before the meeting to be shared with working group members at the meeting, or

> b. They can ask another working group member to make comments on their behalf.

2. **Attend scheduled site visits**. Site visits are key to understanding the Preserve's suite of opportunities and constraints with regard to providing parking and trailhead access. Working group members shall strive to attend each site visit. No more than one site visit can be missed.

3. **Participate in meeting discussions**. Working group members will read each packet of meeting documents before the scheduled meeting and come prepared to engage in discussions.

4. **Keep an open mind and be respectful**. Working group members will keep an open mind and remain respectful of the opinions expressed by fellow working group members, the public, and information presented by the District project team.

5. **Represent stakeholder perspectives**. Working group members represent and will actively and constructively voice the interests and concerns of their respective community and/or stakeholder groups.

6. **Work together towards solutions**. Working group members will hold each other accountable to work together towards solutions for the project that meet the Board-approved project goals and objectives.

7. **Avoid sidebar conversations**. Working group members will avoid side conversations, which may detract from the meeting.

8. **Avoid repetition**. Working group members will express their points and avoid continuing to reiterate the same points. If working group members share viewpoints previously raised by another working group member, they shall note the shared opinion and avoid otherwise repeating the points to help move the process forward.

9. **Take space, make space**. Working group members will speak up to make their points and avoid dominating the conversation.

10. **Be a liaison to the public**. Working group members will be available to hear from and discuss interests and concerns about the project with members of the public. Working group members will remain alert to issues, problems, and needs expressed by the public, neighbors, and special interest groups and will raise these to the Working Group. Working group members will also strive to keep their communities informed of the work and progress of the Working Group.

11**. Provide feedback to the District's Planning and Natural Resources Committee through the Working Group Co-Chairs**. The Co-Chairs of the Working Group will present feedback from the Working Group to the PNR Committee. Although the Working Group will strive for consensus, if consensus is not reached, the Co-Chairs will present differing views, e.g., majority and minority views.

12. **Provide opportunities during meetings for members of the public in attendance to address the Working Group**. Working Group meetings and site tours will be open to the public. Working group members will remain open to hear from the public about the project.

13. **Have fun**. Enjoy the process and learn from each other.

5.0   MEETING OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Working Group shall conduct its meetings as described below.

1. **Adoption of Ground Rules and Operating Procedures.** At the first meeting, the Working Group shall review, make minor modifications as necessary, and adopt the Procedural Guide and Ground Rules.

2. **Co-Chairs.** The Working Group shall select two Co-Chairs who will be responsible for presenting feedback from the Working Group to the PNR about the project. One Co-Chair will be a resident of the Town, while the other Co-Chair would represent regional perspectives. Neither Board Liaison nor Town Liaison on the Working Group would serve as Co-Chairs. See additional responsibilities under the Co-Chair Responsibilities and Decision-Making Process sections below.

3. **Frequency.** The Working Group is expected to meet a total of five to seven times, typically gathering once every six to eight weeks. The Working Group is expected to last approximately 12 months but may be extended for another 6 months as needed. Meeting dates and times may need to change or be added due to unforeseen situations such as inclement weather conditions.

4. **Quorum**. More than half of the voting members (a quorum) of the Working Group must be present to transact business. Seven members of the thirteen voting members must be present in each meeting.

5. **Agendas and materials.** Agendas will be developed by District staff and reviewed by the Working Group Co-Chairs. Agendas and materials will be posted on the District website at least 72 hours before each meeting. One notification of the meeting schedule will be distributed to interested parties and the Portola Valley area via email. Thereafter, notifications will be sent only in the event of a schedule change.

6. **Public participation**. Members of the public may speak during public comment periods provided at each meeting, one at the beginning of the meeting and another to be held at the discretion of the Working Group Co-Chairs. A handout with rules for public participation will be available at all meetings.

7. **Motions for a vote**. If a vote is needed, motions for a vote may be made by any voting member of the Working Group. All motions must be seconded by a different member of the Working Group.

8. **Facilitation.** A facilitator and District staff will work together to facilitate the meetings. The Co-Chairs will assist with running the meeting and ensuring order, flow, and adherence to the Working Group Purpose and Charge as well as Procedural Guide and Ground Rules. Meetings will be run by the Co-Chairs, or in the absence of the Co-Chairs by District staff, consistent with the Procedural Guide and Ground Rules and general rules of professional courtesy.

9. **Meeting summaries.** The facilitator and District staff will prepare meeting summaries, which will include recommendations made by the Working Group. With the exception of the last summary prepared after the last Working Group meeting, meeting summaries from Working Group meetings are approved at the following meeting of the Working Group, transmitted to the Board, and made available on the District website. The last summary that follows the dissolution of the Working Group would be provided to the Working Group, Board liaison and Town liaison by email to review and would be then approved by the PNR or Board.

6.0   CO-CHAIR SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The Co-Chairs will alternate facilitating Working Group meeting operating procedures, such as stepping through the agenda, calling for votes, calling for public comment, and calling for respect towards their fellow working group members as appropriate. When one Co-Chair is leading the meeting, the other will serve as a secondary facilitator and support as needed. Both Co-Chairs should be present at all Working Group meetings; however, in the event one is unable to attend, another working group member will be selected by the group to serve as secondary Co-Chair. In addition to the regular Working Group meetings, Co-Chairs will attend meetings with District staff to prepare for and debrief each meeting. The Co-Chairs will assist with the preparation of the meeting summary(ies) that document the Working Group's final discussion and recommendations.

7.0   DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The Working Group shall strive for making decisions and recommendations through a consensus-based process, as described below. Throughout the process, when the Working Group is ready to make a formal vote, the Co-Chairs have the responsibility to ensure that the interaction remains orderly.

7.1   PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING CONSENSUS PRIOR TO OFFICIAL VOTING

The Working Group shall strive for full member participation in discussing issues in order to make decisions through a consensus-based process. Consensus is defined as general agreement by all members of the Working Group present at the meeting when a decision item is on the meeting agenda.

Prior to conducting an official or formal vote on items, the Working Group will first hold informal voting to test the level of support for a proposal by employing a tool called the Gradients of Agreement. The intent is to determine what, if anything, may be modified or proposed to gain a higher level of consensus prior to official voting. The Gradients of Agreement are a mechanism for testing the level of agreement on a proposal that expands on the traditional "yes" or "no" voting. The Gradients of Agreement are typically described as follows:

1	I can say an unqualified "yes" to the recommendation.
2	I find the proposal acceptable. It appears to be the best of the available options at this time.
3	I can live with the proposal, although I am not especially enthusiastic about it.
4	I do not fully agree with the proposal, but I am willing to stand aside, remain neutral, so the process can move forward.

| 5 | I do not fully agree with the proposal. I have some suggestions and I would like the working group to do more work to see if we can reach a higher level of agreement. |
| 6 | I do not agree with the proposal, and I will work actively to oppose it. |

Values from 1 to 4 on the Gradients of Agreement are considered supportive of a proposal. Full consensus is reached if all members are between a 1 and 4 on the Gradients of Agreement scale. Majority consensus is reached if a simple majority of all members are between 1 and 4 on the Gradients of Agreement scale.

During the informal voting process, the Working Group may discuss and deliberate each proposal and offer potential modifications or alternatives to gain a higher level of consensus. During this process, the Working Group may also determine if any proposals, alternatives, or modifications require additional study by staff, at which point informal voting will pause and resume at a subsequent meeting once staff complete the additional work. The informal voting process ends when a Co-Chair calls for a formal vote (see Section 7.2); this typically occurs after the first or second round of informal voting, when there is a clear majority and no requests for alternatives or modifications have been raised. If there are no signs of members changing their level of support despite alternatives or modifications, a Co-Chair will call for a formal vote after three rounds of informal voting, regardless of the level of consensus reached.

7.2   OFFICIAL VOTING

Official voting will employ the Gradients of Agreement described above. After attempting to seek consensus through the aforementioned informal voting process, a Co-Chair may call for a formal vote. A simple majority of the quorum present is needed for a proposal to pass and be recommended to the PNR Committee. A consensus is desired, but not necessary, for the official vote.

Final voting results will then be forwarded to the PNR Committee.

7.3   WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group will provide recommendations to the PNR Committee. The meeting summaries shall include the results of each of the proposals voted on by the Working Group. The total results for each of the proposals receiving votes from the members of the Working Group shall be presented to the PNR Committee. The PNR Committee will then make recommendations to the full Board, who will make final policy decisions.