TO: Mayor and Members of the Town Council
FROM: Jeremy Dennis, Town Manager
DATE: April 11, 2018
RE: Letter of Interest to Join Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance JPA

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Town Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of interest to join the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance Joint Powers Authority (JPA) (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION
The Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance (a.k.a., Commute.org) is a public agency whose mission is to reduce the number of drive alone vehicles traveling to, from or through San Mateo County. Their goal is to help residents and commuters find alternatives to driving alone that are less stressful, less costly and better the environment. The agency provides information and commute planning assistance to employees, employer programs, and city transportation demand management partnerships. Portola Valley currently participates in their carpooling incentive programs and their “Guaranteed Ride Home” program.

Commute.org acts as San Mateo County’s Transit Demand Management agency and includes 17 cities/towns and the County of San Mateo as members. Only Portola Valley, Menlo Park and Woodside do not have members on the Board. This alliance of 17 cities and the County of San Mateo, is able to deal with transportation issues through an extensive network of allies. Developing and leveraging partnerships between public agencies, private sector employers and commuters has been essential in helping Commute.org to relieve traffic congestion in San Mateo County.

Commute.org receives funding from the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Additionally, Commute.org works with employers in the county to provide a portion of the funding for the shuttle program and their activities may also assist parties in meeting what is called “TSM” obligations for receipt of Measure A sales tax funds.
To join Commute.org, Portola Valley needs to join the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance JPA. Details of the membership in the JPA include:

- No financial contributions/requirements (e.g., no dues, no mandated projects) – the JPA receives 80% of their funding from grants and 20% from private sector partners.
- Every JPA member receives a seat on the board (currently 18) – board members must be one of the elected officials from the member organization (they ask each member to appoint a board member and an alternate). There are no term limits.
- Members attend five regularly scheduled meetings per year (typically held in mid-county to San Mateo/Foster City locations).
- Supervisory Committee – nine members, appointed by the board, typically six are staff from member cities, also includes up to three “partners” (e.g., C/CAG and TA). Committee members hold a three-year term; open seats are announced and any member can nominate one of their staff to be considered.
- Finance Committee – five members, appointed by the board, three are board members (or alternates), two are Supervisory committee members.
- No obligation for member cities to sit on either committee – most cities do not; however, it is always appreciated.
- Link to current board/committee members: https://commute.org/aboutus/board-and-committees

To start the process of joining the JPA, Commute.org needs to receive a letter of interest to join from the Town Council. Once the letter is received, Commute.org will put the item on their board’s agenda to start the JPA amendment process. The JPA structure requires the majority of current member cities/towns to approve an amended JPA agreement that includes the new member(s) via council resolution. The Portola Valley Town Council would also need to approve the amended JPA agreement. Commute.org is hopeful that Woodside and Menlo Park will join concurrently with Portola Valley, but have indicated that they won’t stall our request to join if those municipalities aren’t yet ready.

NEXT STEPS
Staff will return to the Council with a Resolution to adopt the amended JPA Agreement and at that time the Council may select a member and alternate to sit on the board.

FISCAL IMPACT
None.

ATTACHMENT
1. Letter of Interest to Join Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance JPA

Approved by: Jeremy Dennis, Town Manager
April 11, 2018

Commute.org
Attn: Jeffrey Gee, Board Chair; John Ford, Executive Director
400 Oyster Point Blvd, Suite 409
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Re: Interest in Joining Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance Joint Powers Authority

Dear Chair Gee and Mr. Ford:

On behalf of the Portola Valley Town Council, I write this letter indicating Portola Valley’s interest in joining the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance (a.k.a., Commute.org) Joint Powers Authority (JPA).

The Town Council recognizes the current challenges of traffic congestion and commuting to our residents and employees who work in town. The Council would like to join the JPA to have a place at the table with the alliance of 17 member towns and cities, both to better understand these challenges and how we might contribute to effective solutions in the future.

Portola Valley has a long-standing commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and taking action to reduce our impact on the environment. The Council support the JPA’s mission to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution through programs designed to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles traveling on streets and highways in San Mateo County, with the goal of helping residents and commuters find alternatives to driving alone that are less stressful, less costly and better the environment.

We understand that there are no financial obligations or contributions required to join the JPA and that the Council must appoint one elected official as a Board member and alternate to attend the five regularly scheduled meetings per year. The Council looks forward to the Board approving our request to join the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance JPA and will agendize the Resolution to approve the amended JPA agreement, once it is available.

Sincerely,

John Richards
Mayor
Town of Portola Valley