

**Town of Atherton  
Center for Age-Friendly Excellence Standing Committee  
Standing Committee & Task Force Recommendations**

**Focus Group Summary:**

The following list is representative of the summary of major categories discussed during the Town of Atherton Task Force and Standing Committee related to the Center for Age-Friendly Excellence (CAFE) focus groups facilitated by Cynthia Nakayama, Deputy Director Center for Age-Friendly Excellence. The goal of the project was to identify the unmet needs of older adults within the Town and recommend programs or initiatives to assist them.

**Major Topic Areas Included:**

Below is a list of the major categories uncovered in the focus groups. Within each of these is a brief explanation of what the focus group discussed and reasonable projects or initiatives the Task Force identified for recommendation to the City Council.

**Transportation & Mobility**

Results identified that transportation services for Seniors / Older Adults unable to drive themselves was a desire. These services enable elderly residents to attend community events, activities, and access essential services. Task Force Members identified a variety of existing ridesharing and community transportation services that are available for residents. The Town can consider including this information on a Town webpage designated for Senior / Older Adult and partner with the Atherton Library to install an information area for Senior / Older Adults. The Task Force also suggested that Town staff could consider hosting bi-annual or quarterly in-person information sessions hosted at Town Center with resources, programs, and service-providers related to Senior / Older Adults.

*Potential Initiatives / Projects:*

- Communicate to residents existing services for transportation, such as Ride PVI – [www.lpvi.org](http://www.lpvi.org). The service is available for medical and pharmacy appointments, grocery shopping, senior center visits, and religious centers.

**Social Participation & Inclusion, Community Connectivity**

There is a need to develop programming and activities that cater to the interests and abilities for Senior / Older adults. In addition, developing programs and activities that are intergenerational is a desire to broaden the sense of community engagement. Additional outcomes from the focus groups suggested there is a need for technological assistance and resources as well as increased opportunities to meet and connect in person.

*Potential Initiatives / Projects:*

- Foster physical spaces where people can naturally gather.
- Potential collaboration with the library or local schools to provide programs to assist with online access/resources for seniors, including those with visual impairments and training workshops or programs.
- The Town has upgraded its current website to ensure that it is Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant. This compliance applies to visual, auditory, speech, cognitive, language, and other disabilities.

General Communication & Information [Lead by the Town]

The Task Force noted that current communication methods used by the Town may miss a portion of Senior / Older Adult population that don't utilize the current channels used by the Town. The Task Force expressed a need to incorporate communication methods that will accommodate intergeneration groups is essential.

*Potential Initiatives / Projects:*

- Incorporating localized communication channels such as the local newspapers to a greater degree.
- Develop a reoccurring section within the quarterly Athertonian newsletter to share news, information, and resources specifically for older adults.
- Develop resource center display at the Atherton Library
  - Peninsula Volunteers, Inc (Little House, Rosener House, Meals of Wheels, Ride PVI) | Sequoia Healthcare District – Sequoia Strong: Adults 50+ [www.seqhd.org/sequoia-strong-adults-50](http://www.seqhd.org/sequoia-strong-adults-50) (Health Services, Community Support, Fitness & Sport, Social Engagement, and Independent Living)
  - Develop a quarterly or bi-annual Senior day hosted at Town center to engage residents and connect them with service providers and programs specifically meeting their needs.
  - Staff has enhanced our use of physical message boards located at Town Center and will increase that presence.

Housing

Focus Group participants noted a community resistance to building more dense housing options. Participants acknowledged that alternative housing options would allow for more accessibility and noted that the ongoing Housing Element Update process should include a focus on older residents, including availability of affordable and accessible housing, and support for residents to maintain their homes.

*Current / Ongoing Projects:*

- The 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update process is underway and will include analysis and assessments across varying income levels and within the Housing Needs Data Report

includes a section dedicated to assessing the needs of seniors. The Housing Element Update is a working document that is undergoing a variety of revisions.

- The Town has prepared a variety of resources related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and will be revising Town Ordinances related to these structures in late 2023. The Planning and Building Departments have FAQ's available to discuss the process of planning and building ADU's.

- **Infrastructure & Facilities**

Outcomes of the focus group indicated a desire for improvements to social gathering locations including facilities at Holbrook-Palmer Park. There was commentary on a desire to see improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. This would include sidewalk infrastructure, walking and biking pathways that are essential for senior/older adults to safely navigate through Town.

*Potential Initiatives / Projects:*

There are several capital projects in the works related to pedestrian and bicycle safety including;

- Selby Lane Bicycle Lane Improvement Project Bike Lane
- Traffic Safety Improvement Project & Maintenance (street striping and signage installation)
- El Camino Real Complete Streets Gap Project
- Class III Pavement Markings
- Watkins Avenue Pedestrian Improvements/ Middlefield

Community Support | Health Services

Focus groups identified unmet needs related to technical resources and training needs. These needs align with general information related to support programs available for the 55+ community. Focus groups results indicated a general concern for resources related to health and wellness.

*Potential Initiatives / Projects:*

- The Atherton Task Force discussed developing bi-annual or quarterly resource workshops hosted at Town Center. This would be a staff lead initiative invited local service providers to educate the 55 + community and address needs across several categories including enhanced and alternative communication activities, increase in community gatherings, and education related to senior rights. Designing re-occurring events will address the unmet needs that address community-building.
- Focus Group results and assessments indicated that partnering with neighboring agencies to collaborate on existing services could aid in addressing needs beyond the Town's resources.
- The Task Force concurred with the 55+ community desire for health and wellness access that includes physical activity. The activity could be in individual or group settings furthering the community-building component and enhancing quality of life goals. Task Force members proposed exercise equipment specifically for seniors at Holbrook-Palmer Park.

- Task Force members suggested a resident led committee focused entirely on addressing unmet needs of the 55+ community and identifying the varying needs that exist within each sub age category, ages 55-64, 65-74, 75-79, and 80+.

### Emergency Preparedness & Safety

Outcomes of the focus group addressed concerns over burglaries within Town. Atherton Police Department (APD) personnel expressed concern for the physical safety and preparedness of the 55 + community and their susceptibility to being targets for cyber-crimes. The Menlo Park Fire Protection District (MPFPD) provided commentary noting first responders have three primary concerns facing Atherton residents. The first is gaining access to Atherton properties timely without causing damage to doors, windows etc. The next two concerns were for residents having available social support services and the proper support in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

#### *Current / Ongoing Projects:*

- ADAPT has begun the process of connecting with community members via parties / gatherings and will continue those efforts in the Summer of 2024. ADAPT has been active in connecting with residents during regular meetings and have polled participants on their interest in home checks in case of emergency. That information will be maintained at the assembly points for ADAPT members to conduct those home checks during emergencies.

#### *Potential Initiatives / Projects:*

- The Atherton Police Department prepares monthly reports related to criminal activity, calls for service, response times for low, medium and high priority calls and other police related activities. APD reports on home/vacation checks, Holbrook-Palmer Park patrols, and School incidents.
- MPFPD and APD have discussed collaborative initiatives to gather access to resident homes quickly, such as getting gate codes or access to lock boxes.
- The Police Department hosts community meetings to inform and educate residents on things related to car and home protection. The latest meeting took place on November 2, 2023. These community forums are also prime opportunities to educate and inform residents and best practices related to theft deterred measures, cyber-crime awareness, and collaborative conversations with A.D.A.P.T. related to emergency preparedness activities and efforts.
- To address the preparedness of older adults in an emergency distributing 72-hour emergency