

1. **RECEIVE THE PRESENTATION FROM THE SENIOR TASK FORCE; AND
PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND DIRECTION TO STAFF**

Report: Recommendation: It is recommended that the Council receive the Senior Task Force presentation and provide feedback and direction to staff.

Description:



Item No. 1

Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

FROM: ANTHONY SUBER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER/ CITY CLERK

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2024

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE THE PRESENTATION FROM THE SENIOR TASK
FORCE; AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND DIRECTION TO
STAFF**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council receive the Senior Task Force presentation and provide feedback and direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

City Council received a report at the January 2024 Study Session discussing the Center for Age-Friendly Excellence focus groups and Senior Task Force recommendations. The Council considered recommendations from the Senior Task Force and City Council Standing Committee. That report has been included as a link in Attachment 2. Council provided direction and support for a resident led senior committee of volunteers. That group has held a series of meetings over the last year including partnering on events specific to senior issues.

The Senior Task Force has prepared a presentation. Staff is seeking Council feedback and direction to guide the next steps.

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

This Report and its contents are in alignment with the following Council Policy Goals:

- Goal Area F – Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

POLICY FOCUS

The Policy Focus for Council discussion is to provide direction on the level of staff involvement and support moving forward.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders –to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

This item has not been before a Town Committee or Commission

ATTACHMENTS

1. January 10, 2024, Staff Report – [Click Here](#)
2. Senior Task Force Presentation

Senior Task Force 2025 Vision Presentation (11/27/24)

- Joan Hagey Sanders, Jo-Ann Byrne Sockolov, Ken Frederick

Background: The all-volunteer Task Force was established in 2023 to determine IF the Town should create a specific focus on Seniors. After many focus groups, internal & external discussions and several public “Senior Focused Seminars”, our current conclusions are:
(Note: As always new information and insights will modify conclusions and proposals over time)

1) The “Senior Community” in Atherton:

- a) **Size:** ~ 25% of residents (~ 1,700) are over 65 years old & >35% are over 55 years old
- The % (and number) of seniors in Atherton is growing steadily, while the % (and number) of children is decreasing
- Currently, the actual number of seniors is greater than twice the number of children 12 and under
- b) **Segments:** The Senior Market “Community” is actually a collection of market segments that vary by:
 - 1. Age; (55->64, 65->74, 75->84 & 85+ segments have significantly different needs)
 - 2. Financial resources: Some have enough financial resources for all their needs, while others may seek services from outside agencies
 - 3. Local Connections: Those with local children/relatives/very close friends require/desire fewer outside services
 - 4. Need for “Social Connections”: Some have & seek many social connections, while others are more independent, self-reliant and have other priorities
- c) **Lifestyle:** Observations from meetings & discussions
 - Virtually all of our seniors are “busy with their life” and have a very hectic schedule
 - Thus scheduling “face to face” group meetings is problematic
 - Although “loneliness” is a real concern in many localities, it is not an obvious major issue in Atherton (Although there may be isolated seniors that are hard to identify)
- d) **Corresponding with Seniors** in Atherton:
 - Many seniors (see age segments) rely primarily on US Mail and other “non-technical” methods for communication (such as “Bulletin Boards at key locations”, word-of-mouth, etc..)
 - Although most seniors have and use computers and cell phones, they are (in general) not as active on them as younger generations & do not use as many sites as younger residents
 - Thus, they can be overwhelmed when asked to check a myriad of electronic sources for information
- e) **Other Attributes of Atherton Seniors:**
 - The Task Force is seeking more information on the items/subjects that are of critical interest to our seniors.
 - For example what social activities & educational topics are of real interest to our seniors?

2) Possible unmet needs & desires of Atherton's Senior Community:

- a) Intensive research & "networking" with local organizations, revealed that almost all identified needs already have providers – but they may not be known to our Seniors
- b) The Task Force believes that the Town should not duplicate any service/program that is local, readily available & delivers the appropriate service well
- c) Identifying any new "Unmet Needs" requires establishing a good communication & feedback system with seniors that identifies their true needs & then determines what is & what is not currently available
- d) In order to identify true unmet senior needs & provide the solutions (either by an existing source or a new program), we must:
 - 1. Know the contact details of our seniors
 - 2. Communicate effectively with them
 - 3. Deliver the service (by referral to an existing provider, or , as a last resort, by a new program)
 - 4. Collect feedback from the seniors & continue to improve the process

3) The Senior Task Force:

- a) Started with > ten volunteers, but the extensive time commitment has led to attrition to now only three active members (Several others do join the meetings at times, and we invite others & need to expand our number of volunteers)
- b) We will "streamline" the volunteer's time requirement & clarify the "Roles & Responsibilities" in order to recruit more volunteers & effectively serve our seniors
- c) The "Stakeholders" in serving our seniors are:
 - 1. The Seniors themselves
 - 2. The Task Force
 - 3. The Town
 - 4. San Mateo County Library
 - 5. Others?
 - i.e., the existing & any new community service providers in our area (Little House, etc.)
 - Other vendors & suppliers of services to seniors & their families
- d) Senior Seminars in 2024:
 - As well as many smaller "coffee conversations" with other committees and various stakeholders, the Task Force & Town staff have sponsored two larger seminars:
 - 1. **May 9: Initial Senior Seminar** (an initial "trial" seminar)
 - Topics: Security Tips for Seniors, Avoiding & Surviving Falling, Geriatric Medicine
 - Attendees: ~ 35 in person & ~ 25 on Zoom
 - Costs: Town: Staff time for meeting support
 - Police Department: Paid for Bulk Postcard mailing
 - Task Force: Organized agenda, speakers and purchased refreshments

2. **October 23: Brain Healthy Aging & Memory Seminar** (sponsored by Kensington Place)
 - Topic: Senior Memory Topics
 - Attendees: ~ 30 in person, others on Zoom
 - Costs: Town: Staff time for meeting support
Task Force: Publicity and support as appropriate
Kensington Place: Organized agenda, speakers, mailing costs and refreshments

Note: Both seminars were well received and highly rated by those that attended

- The Memory Seminar had the advantage of a much lower level of effort for the Town & Task Force; but such “vendor-sponsored” Seminars are limited to their business model topics
- The Town/Task Force sponsored Seminars should probably be limited to topics that are not available as standard presentations by vendors.

4) The **Key Stakeholders** & their **proposed role**:

a) The **San Mateo Library System** (& Atherton Library in particular):

Proposed Role: Provide a “Senior Communications Center in the Library & sponsor key educational programs.

1. The library is currently considering establishing a “Senior Information Center”
 2. It already has a range of educational sessions focused on Seniors that are held across the entire library system & at times in Atherton
- The challenge is how to move forward with the “Information Center” and how to better coordinate & publicize their Senior educational programs to Athertonians

b) The **Atherton Town Staff**: (Internally or via outside contractors)

Proposed Role: Administratively support the 2025 Senior Support Vision

- It will primarily require database (names, addresses, contact details, etc.) management, mailings and very limited procurement of services & products for specific Senior Programs & Seminars

c) The **Senior Task Force**:

Role: Work closely with the designated staff at the library & town to:

1. Support & publicize the Library’s Senior Initiative
2. Identify and propose initiatives that serve a currently “Unmet Need” of Atherton’s seniors (Again, if there is an existing service available in the library system, or elsewhere locally) the Task Force will publicize it & not duplicate it

5) The **2025 Senior Task Force Proposed Plan**: (i.e. Our “ask” of the library & Town)

a) **The Library**:

1. **Senior Information Center**:

Create a “Senior Information Center” in the Atherton Library as an initial model in San Mateo County

- Potentially based on the Senior Centers established by Alain Kleiman in Edison NJ
 2. Continue & expand the **“Older Adults Programs & Services”** presently offered by the library;
 - a. Recent programs have been:
 - Tech Skill Building
 - Draw Together Silver Series
 - Gem Painting
 - Safe Driver Course
 - Author Talks
 - Mahjong
 - Maker (print Holiday cards, etc.)
 - Memoir (writing workshops)
 - Balance (avoiding falling)
 - b. The Task Force recommends that they assist the library in identifying, sourcing and publicizing these Programs & Services for Atherton seniors
- b) **The Town of Atherton:** (Via Staff or outside contractors)
 1. Create and manage the database of all stakeholders: residents, vendors, suppliers, etc.
 2. Coordinate the “outreach”, communications & particularly the mailings

And, the financial request for 2025:

3. **Create an administrative mechanism for the Task Force to obtain outside services that have been authorized “in principle & budget” by the Council, but NOT finally approved until the Town staff authorized the expenditure**
 - **For example, the Task Force may recommend collecting & analyzing data in order to make recommendations for special seminars and programs, such as:**
 - a. **A key issue may be acquiring a list of seniors in Atherton (including addresses, e-mails, etc.**
 - **Such lists are available through various vendors**
 - b. **There may be technical training/hands on training seminars that are not offered by the library or other traditional organizations that would greatly benefit our seniors**
 - **Rather than go through the lengthy process of gaining Town Council approval for each small, unforeseen requirement, we recommend that the Council pre-approve a nominal amount as funds that can be expended IF (& only if):**
 1. **The Task Force makes a comprehensive proposal**
 - &**
 2. **The Town Manager approve the proposal**
 - **The requested amount is \$10,000, but it will only be spent IF proposals are accepted and approved by the Town Manager**