



# ATHERTONIAN

AN ATHERTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

2024 FALL EDITION



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## CITY MANAGER UPDATE

The Town of Atherton is taking bold steps toward sustainability, safety, and community well-being. Through a partnership with Peninsula Clean Energy, the Town Hall is installing new solar panels at no upfront cost, helping meet Climate Action Plan 2030 goals by switching to greener energy sources. Additionally, Atherton is tackling climate change through composting initiatives. Residents can pick up free organic compost at Holbrook Palmer Park, turning yard waste into valuable, soil-enriching material while complying with state requirements to reduce methane emissions.

On a different note, Atherton's Police Department has introduced a therapy dog, Emmy, to support mental health and foster community relations. Emmy, a goldendoodle, will assist officers, comfort victims of crime, and enhance engagement with residents.

Lastly, as winter approaches, the Town is also encouraging residents to prepare for potential storms by creating emergency plans, stocking supplies, and utilizing free sandbag services offered at Holbrook-Palmer Park. These efforts highlight Atherton's ongoing commitment to sustainability, safety, and fostering a strong, compassionate community.

For all this and more, read on in this edition of the Athertonian.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### OCTOBER

- October 25: Atherton PD + Library Halloween Event

### DECEMBER

- December 13: Annual Tree Lighting & Holiday Celebration

### SAVE THE DATE

- April 27: Earth Day - *Protect Our Species*

### FEATURED EVENT

**Council Chambers,  
80 Fair Oaks Ln**

### ADU Mixer with HIP Housing November 14 at 6 p.m.

Join us for an informative ADU Mixer, where home seekers and home providers can connect and explore the benefits of ADUs. This event will feature staff presentations, potential testimonials, and networking opportunities aimed at fostering local housing solutions. Don't miss out on this chance to engage with your community and support affordable housing initiatives!





**TOWN OF ATHERTON**  
**2023 LANDFILL DIVERSION BY MATERIAL TYPE**

In 2023, GreenWaste processed 13,679.24 tons of material at the GreenWaste San Jose Material Recovery Facility, diverting 11,954.72 tons from disposal. Our top 2023 diverted materials by ton:



91.71%



**Cardboard**  
426.15 Tons  
3.56%



**Glass**  
225.39 Tons  
1.89%



**Mixed Paper**  
148.42 Tons  
1.24%



**Plastics**  
90.61 Tons  
0.76%



**Metals**  
84.19 Tons  
0.70%



**Aluminum**  
14.75 Tons  
0.12%



**Cartons**  
1.13 Tons  
0.009%



**E-waste**  
.94 Tons  
0.008%

## FREE ORGANIC COMPOST PICK-UP

Did you know that organic waste in landfills emits 20% of California’s methane? Organic compostable materials—such as food scraps, yard trimmings and paper—produce methane when decomposing without oxygen.

Composting reduces greenhouse gas emissions by introducing oxygen, producing more organic, reusable material; its byproduct can be used as a natural fertilizer to stimulate plant growth while simultaneously improving the health of your soil.

In an effort to reach the Town’s climate goals and comply with state SB1383 requirements, Atherton offers a free organic compost pick-up at Holbrook Palmer Park, located across from the historic water tower before you reach the Jennings Pavilion Parking Lot. Please bring your own containers, shovels and gloves to collect the FREE compost.

The organic compost is the product of Atherton’s green bin, turning yard waste into a productive material that promotes healthy soils while capturing and storing short-lived climate pollutants.

The pile will be regularly restocked by GreenWaste with their highest quality product. This effort is part of the town’s commitment to procuring 552 tons of compost under the state’s **SB 1383 requirement**.

By 2030, the Town of Atherton aims to reduce our waste by 35% from 2005 levels. And by 2040, we aim to reduce our waste by 90% of 2005 levels.

Learn more about composting and the Town’s Climate Action Plan here: [Atherton.News/Reduce-Your-Waste](https://www.atherton.org/news/reduce-your-waste)

## SOLAR POWER IS COMING TO TOWN CENTER

In partnership with Peninsula Clean Energy, Town Hall is receiving new solar panels at no upfront cost!

The Solar PV Systems are financed through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE). With a PPA model, Peninsula Clean Energy arranges for the installation, operations and maintenance of the Solar PV System, and the Town pays an agreed upon price per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for power generated throughout the system's life, which provides a more cost effective rate than the Town currently pays. First brought to Council in February 2022, the project initiated construction with PCE's contractor in September 2024.

The Town's Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2030 emission reduction goals rely heavily on leveraging Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) through a switch to greener energy sources. In 2016, Atherton made the switch to PCE's 100% carbon free and renewable electric service plan for all local municipal, or government facilities. The Town is proud to support projects that affirm an ongoing commitment to a sustainable and resilient future through investments in energy conservation, clean energy programs and local renewable power supply.



## SOUNDS OF THE SUMMER RECAP

Thank you to all who joined us in a season of fun with Sounds of Summer in Holbrook-Palmer Park!

Our community gathered to enjoy two nights of sunset movies—with free popcorn and cotton candy—and danced the night away to talented musical acts:

- Audriix on June 20
- Take 2 Dance Band on July 11
- Lucky Devils Band on August 10

This event series was made possible with the hard work from the City Manager's Office, our park maintenance staff, and the support of our sponsors at Pacific Peninsula Group, Pacific Peninsula Architecture, Pacific Peninsula Custom Group, Greenwaste and Peninsula Clean Energy. See you next summer!

# ATHERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES THERAPY DOG, EMMY

Atherton Community,

We are pleased to announce a new and exciting addition to our Police Department: a goldendoodle therapy dog, Emmy. Sergeant Jon Fong has been selected to be Emmy's specially trained handler and Emmy will become a member of the Fong family. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to community well-being and mental health support for our police department team, students, victims/witnesses of crime and residents.

Emmy is a specially trained therapy dog who will work alongside our officers to provide comfort and emotional support to those in need. Whether it's helping victims of crime, reducing stress in high-pressure situations, or simply bringing a smile to someone's face, Emmy is here to make a positive impact. This innovative program is made possible by our partnership with Hearts 4 Heroes ([hearts4heroesusa.com](http://hearts4heroesusa.com)) and with the Atherton Police Activities League.

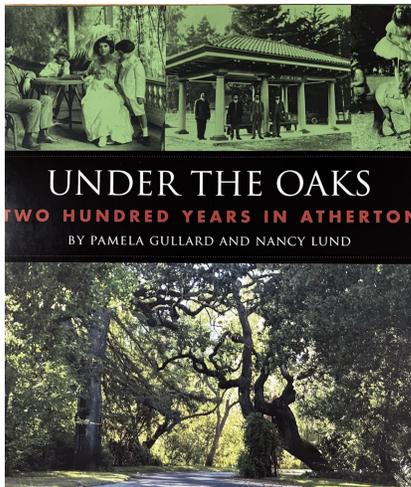
Our therapy dog program aims to:

- Support Victims and Witnesses: Emmy will provide emotional support to crime victims and witnesses during interviews and court proceedings.
- Enhance Community Relations: Emmy will participate in community events, school visits and public engagements, helping to foster positive interactions between the police and the community.
- Promote Mental Health: Emmy will assist our officers in managing stress and improving overall mental well-being within the department.



We believe that Emmy will enhance our efforts to serve and protect the community with compassion and empathy. Thank you for your continued support as we strive to make Atherton a safer, more caring place for everyone. If you have any questions or would like more information about the therapy dog program, please do not hesitate to contact us at (650) 688-6500.

Sincerely,  
Steven D McCulley  
*Chief of Police*



## HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Looking for an interesting and unique gift for the holidays or any history lover? The Atherton Heritage Association's beautiful 10 x 10 full color book "Under the Oaks, 200 Years in Atherton," provides a rich visual story of the town's early and modern history, including hundreds of photographs, paintings and drawings.

Available for purchase at the Atherton Heritage Association in the Historic Town Hall! Visit on Tuesdays from 10 AM - 1 PM or contact us at: (650) 752-0536.

## STORM WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

While fall and winter bring fun festivities, intense storm weather is also common through the season. In order to keep yourself and your loved ones safe, plan ahead for potential winter storms with these preparedness tips and community support resources.

- Create an emergency plan for your household. Keep your home stocked with at least a one week supply of water, batteries, first aid supplies, blankets, medication and food . Prepare a “Go-bag” of essentials, including extra prescription medication, that you can easily grab in case of an evacuation or emergency.
- Sign up to receive alerts, public safety updates and notices of road closures with SMC Alert at [SMCGov.org/CEO/SMC-Alert](https://www.smcgov.org/CEO/SMC-Alert). You can find your local zone for evacuations and updates at [Community.ZoneHaven.com](https://www.Community.ZoneHaven.com) or [GetReadyAtherton.org](https://www.GetReadyAtherton.org).
- Stock up on sand bags. In the event of a flood, prevent water from entering your home by placing sandbags over floor drains, in front of doorways and vents. The Town offers a free self-service sandbag station at Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Avenue, in the rear parking lot, with a limit of 10 sandbags per residence. Supplies are free and available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Build a community safety network. Look up your neighborhood’s Area Number at [GetReadyAtherton.org](https://www.GetReadyAtherton.org) to connect with your area’s Area Coordinator and find your pre-assigned gathering spot. Exchange contact information with your neighbors and take note of anyone in your area that may need extra help during a disaster.

The Town of Atherton is also investing in emergency preparedness. Public Works has a \$12,000 budget and ADAPT has an \$11,000 budget for emergency supplies and equipment.

If you have any questions, contact Atherton's Public Works Department at (650) 752-0570.



Visit the Town’s Winter Storm Preparedness page via the QR code for more information.

## HOW WILL YOU CALL FOR HELP?

Atherton Disaster and Preparedness Team’s (ADAPT) latest initiative, the Emergency Cache Program, will help make our community even more resilient should a disaster strike.

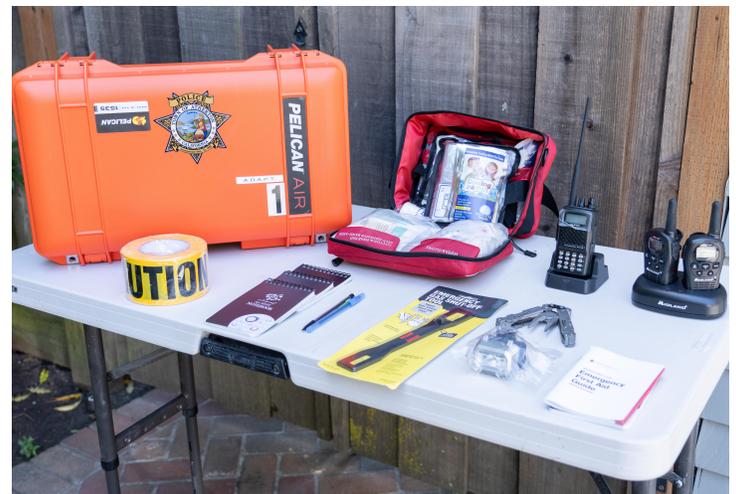
As you prepare for a potential natural disaster, two factors are important to consider. One, emergency services will be quickly overwhelmed thus relatively unavailable. Second, conventional services—including telecommunications—stand to be compromised and also may be unavailable. This begs the question: if you are confronting a dire situation in the aftermath of a major disaster, how will you call for help?

The Emergency Cache Program places emergency supplies throughout our community that can benefit everyone if conventional resources and services are compromised. The emergency caches contain various materials, with an emphasis on first aid and radio communications. The first aid supplies can assist with non-life threatening medical needs, while the radios virtually guarantee that all of our neighborhoods can communicate with Atherton’s Emergency Operations Center, the team at Town Hall that will be central to coordinating resources and services during an emergency.

Each emergency cache will be managed by a steward and be assigned to one of Atherton’s 22 emergency assembly points, places residents can go during a major emergency in order to receive help. ADAPT is seeking stewards for areas 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, and 12.

To familiarize yourself with Atherton’s assembly points, please visit [GetReadyAtherton.org/EAPS](https://www.GetReadyAtherton.org/EAPS).

If you have any questions about this program, please contact ADAPT at [Info@GetReadyAtherton.org](mailto:Info@GetReadyAtherton.org).





## HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

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The Housing Element and Zoning Code updates moved through the Planning Commission this summer at their regularly scheduled meetings in July and August. The package of changes include the environmental review, updates to the Town's General Plan, including the Housing Element, and revisions to the Town's Municipal Code to align with state law and introduce new multifamily development standards.

The Housing Element package was heard by the City Council at their September 18, October 2 and October 16 meetings. Visit the Town's website for updates. Once the package is approved by the City Council, the Town will submit the updated Housing Element to the state for review. Ideally, this will result in certification of the Town's Housing Element. However, the State could respond with additional requirements.

## HONORING JENNIFER FREW: 24 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE TOWN

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After 24 years with the Town, Jennifer Frew will be retiring effective October 4, 2024. As Training Manager/Asst. to the Police Department Chief, Jennifer served 6 police chiefs during her tenure.

Prior to Atherton, she served with Mountain View Police Department for two years and Palo Alto PD for five years.

Some of her roles included: management of the hiring and training of all police personnel; human resource functions for evaluations, personnel action forms, workers' compensation and confidential reports; writing staff reports, memos and proclamations; managing HP Park and its contracts.

Jennifer served as the budget coordinator and PAL Coordinator involved in Shop With A Cop, Coffee With A Cop, Selby Lane Toy Drive, Bike Rodeo and the annual scholarships for high school seniors attending an Atherton school. To date, PAL has given out over \$300,000 to our youth for college opportunities.

The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) monitors all mandated training for sworn and non-sworn personnel. Since her time here, the police department has received 100% compliance with POST, thanks to Jennifer's hard work to make sure mandatory training is accomplished, while proactively planning essential and desirable courses for succession planning and career development. Her willingness to help residents, knowing so many of them by name and

taking the time to call to check in makes her shoes very big to fill.

As Jennifer prepares to embark on this exciting new chapter of her life, the Town would like to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for her years of dedicated service. Her contributions to the Atherton police family have been invaluable, and her impact will be felt long after her retirement. Her hard work, commitment, and "can do" attitude have been an inspiration to us all. We will miss her expertise, organizational skills, multi-tasking and the laughter brought to work. Thank you for everything you have done to make our workplace better. We wish Jennifer all the best in her retirement and hope it is filled with joy, relaxation, good health and new adventures.

The Town will honor her with a reading of her Proclamation on December 4, 2024 at 6 PM in the Council Chambers. Please join us as we take the time to honor her contributions.



## WELCOME NEW HIRES!



### **CHRISTABEL SORIA MENDOZA** **MANAGEMENT ANALYST I, CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**

The Town is thrilled to welcome Christabel Soria Mendoza (she/her) as our new Management Analyst in the City Manager's Office! Christabel earned a B.S. in City & Regional Planning from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, with a Minor in Ethnic Studies. She joins the team after working in the Atherton Planning Department, where she reviewed and approved development projects and supported data needs for reports and the housing element.

In her current role, Christabel focuses on sustainability, public information, emergency preparedness and community engagement, while also serving as the staff liaison to the Environmental Programs Committee and the Refuse & Recycling Subcommittee.

Christabel's expertise in housing and transportation policy, as well as bilingual outreach, complements her passion for equitable city planning. She is excited to deepen her understanding of city management by collaborating with different departments. Outside of work, Christabel enjoys traveling, staying active and spending time with her family.



### **AIDAN CARNAHAN** **SENIOR SYSTEMS ANALYST, IT**

We are excited to welcome Aidan Patrick Carnahan (he/him) to the Town of Atherton team! Aidan joins us as the sole contact for all IT-related needs, bringing with him a BBA in Information Technology Management from Boise State University. With experience in networking, cloud engineering, data analytics and scripting, Aidan is eager to apply his skills to enhance the Town's technology systems and make a positive impact on the Atherton community.

Coming from a background in Biotech, Aidan is excited to dive into the world of government IT and explore how his work can improve day-to-day operations. Outside of work, Aidan enjoys a variety of hobbies, including music, skateboarding, hiking and building Lego sets.



### **ELIZABETH DALBY** **CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Town is pleased to introduce its newest Code Enforcement Officer, Elizabeth Dalby. Elizabeth was previously employed by the City of Fairfield where she was a Code Enforcement Officer, and later promoted to the position of Police Support Supervisor of the Code Enforcement Unit. While in Fairfield, Elizabeth completed courses to become a Certified Code Enforcement Officer in the state of California.

During her tenure in Fairfield, Elizabeth participated heavily in community engagement activities, including presenting at Neighborhood Watch meetings, Resident Police Academies, Shop With a Cop and other outreach events benefitting local youth and community members. Additionally, Elizabeth championed the establishment of the City's Fire Life Safety Task Force, which used resources from separate departments to combat complex cases effectively and cohesively.

When not at work, Elizabeth enjoys spending time with her daughter Mia, her fiancée Tom, and the rest of her extended family and friends, cooking, traveling, attending concerts, shopping, working out or taking in a sporting event.

Elizabeth has a commitment to public service, with an emphasis in community preservation, and looks forward to assisting her new department and the residents of Atherton in these pursuits.



## PUBLIC WORKS: ATHERTON CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS

### IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING DRAINAGE CHANNELS CLEAR

Maintaining the drainage channel or waterway behind your property is crucial for preventing flooding and ensuring the health of the local ecosystem. Overgrown vegetation, trees and debris can lead to significant issues during heavy rains or storms.

### FLOOD PREVENTION

Keeping drainage channels clear can help prevent flooding. When vegetation, branches and debris build up in these waterways, they can block the natural flow of water. During periods of heavy rainfall, this blockage can force water to overflow and cause a flood. Regular maintenance, including trimming back overgrown plants and removing fallen branches, can significantly reduce this risk.

### PROTECTING LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS

Clear drainage systems not only protect individual properties but also contribute to the overall health of local ecosystems. Waterways are home to local wildlife, including fish, birds and amphibians. When these channels are clogged with debris or invasive plant species, the natural balance is disrupted, negatively impacting the wildlife that depend on these habitats. By keeping these areas clear, property owners help maintain biodiversity and support a thriving ecosystem.

### REDUCING POLLUTION

Trash and debris in drainage channels can lead to pollution, which can have harmful effects on both the environment and human health. When rainwater carries litter, chemicals and organic waste into waterways, it can contaminate local water supplies and harm aquatic life. Regularly cleaning these areas ensures that harmful pollutants do not build up and enter the ecosystem, safeguarding both water quality and local wildlife.

### EASY MAINTENANCE TIPS

1. Maintain the health of your drainage channel or waterway by considering the following practices:
2. Schedule seasonal inspections to identify any overgrowth or debris that needs to be addressed.
3. Keep plants and trees trimmed back to allow for sufficient water flow.
4. Remove trash, fallen branches and other debris promptly to prevent blockages.
5. If you notice significant problems beyond your control, report them to local authorities for assistance.

By taking proactive steps to prevent flooding, protect local ecosystems and reduce pollution, property owners can contribute to a safer and healthier environment for themselves and their community.

# PUBLIC WORKS: RIGHT OF WAY MAINTENANCE & ENFORCEMENT

## RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE

Atherton residents are responsible for ensuring that their vegetation, such as trees, hedges and shrubs, do not interfere with the public right-of-way. We invite our community to learn why this is important and how you can stay compliant with the Atherton Municipal Code (AMC).

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY?

The public right-of-way (ROW) refers to streets and pathways that are designated for public use. In areas without sidewalks, the right-of-way is commonly known as the (approximately 10-foot) area between your fence line and the improved portion of the street (asphalt or gutter). These areas must remain clear to ensure that pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles can move through the neighborhood safely. Overgrown vegetation and obstructions such as stumps, large stones and pinecones can create hazards and limit visibility, potentially causing accidents or injuries.

The ROW is public property. While the property owner does not own the ROW, it is their responsibility to maintain it. Please note that it is illegal to block vehicles from parking in front of your property. California Vehicle Code (CVC) permits vehicles to park up to 72 hours on any ROW if the vehicle is legally registered and operational.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY?

1. Overgrown branches and shrubs can cover street signs, traffic signals and oncoming traffic. Blockages such as boulders and/or stumps are safety hazards and may also force pedestrians, including those with disabilities or children, to walk on the street rather than the sidewalk, which increases the risk of accidents.
2. The AMC requires property owners to maintain their vegetation and ROW. Failing to do so may result in citations, fines or even the municipality stepping in to trim vegetation at the owner's expense.
3. Well-maintained vegetation contributes to the overall appearance of the neighborhood. Properly trimmed shrubs, trees and hedges enhance curb appeal and can positively impact property values.
4. Keeping your vegetation in check ensures that our community can enjoy clear and safe access to public spaces without any obstructions.

## UNDERSTANDING THE REQUIREMENTS

Stay in compliance with local laws and maintain a safe environment by following these guidelines for managing vegetation and eliminating obstructions on the ROW:

1. Your trees and shrubs should be pruned so they do not block any portion of the sidewalk. Branches should be kept at least eight feet above walkways to allow for safe pedestrian passage.
2. Vegetation should not interfere with the view of street signs or visibility at intersections. Along streets, tree branches should be trimmed to at least 14 feet above the road to accommodate large vehicles, such as buses or emergency vehicles.
3. If your property is located near an intersection, make sure vegetation does not block the view for drivers. Keep shrubs low and tree branches trimmed to ensure visibility for both drivers and pedestrians.
4. If your tree branches extend over the property line into neighboring properties or public spaces, it is your responsibility to keep them trimmed. Overhanging branches can pose a hazard, especially during storms.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T COMPLY?

If you do not take action to keep the ROW in front of your property clear of vegetation and obstructions, the Town may send you a courtesy violation notice. If the problem persists, the Town may charge you with a fine or arrange for vegetation trimming at your expense. Additionally, should an accident occur because of blocked pathways or obscured visibility, you may be held liable. (AMC 12.06 & AMC 12.10)

### WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY

Maintaining your property's vegetation isn't just a legal responsibility, it's a way to contribute to the safety and beauty of our community. Let's all do our part to keep sidewalks, streets and public spaces clear and enjoyable for everyone.

If you have any questions about your responsibilities or need more information, please contact the Atherton Public Works Department by phone at 650-752-0541 or by email at [rovadia@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:rovadia@ci.atherton.ca.us) or contact the Code Enforcement Division by phone at 650-752-0553.

Thank you for helping to keep our neighborhood safe, beautiful and accessible!

## SENIOR TASK FORCE

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### Residents 55+ The Town is seeking your input!

Join the newly formed Senior Task Force to provide guidance on the creation of new initiatives and programming, such as technology support classes and workshops on wellness and aging.

Email [asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us) for more information.

## LIBRARY AND FRIENDS

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*YOU'RE INVITED!*

### LIBRARY HOT COCOA BOOK EXCHANGE

**November 16, 2024, 1-3 PM, Atherton Library**

The Friends of Atherton Library welcome the community to enjoy free hot cocoa, while exchanging books with your neighbors. You're welcome to bring a book to share or simply bring yourself to take a book. Come join us for this fun and cozy event!



## ATHERTON ARTS FOUNDATION

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*On Display at City Hall:*

### The People and Places of Bhutan

The Atherton Arts Foundation is pleased to announce a photographic exhibit, "The People and Places of Bhutan," currently on display in Atherton City Hall.

This exhibit documents the uniqueness of Bhutan, as photographed by Jerry Barrack in April 2006, shortly after rural portions of the country outside of Thimphu, its capital and largest city, were opened to tourism.

This exhibit features 20 images, primarily focusing on portraits, with images from a traditional festival, the rural countryside and Buddhist temples.



**TOWN OF ATHERTON**  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS



**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
 OCTOBER 16, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.



**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**  
 NOVEMBER 6, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.



**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
 NOVEMBER 20, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.



**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**  
 DECEMBER 4, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**STAY IN TOUCH**



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