



## Item No. 9 Town of Atherton

### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – CONSENT AGENDA**

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER  
**DATE:** MAY 18, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** RECEIVE AND FILE THE 2022 CITY COUNCIL GOALS REPORT

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council receive and file the 2022 City Council Goals Report.

### **BACKGROUND | ANALYSIS**

On April 5, 2022, the City Council held a Goals Workshop to provide the Council with an opportunity to celebrate recent accomplishments, review and clarify goals for the coming year, discuss effective governing, and strengthen teamwork. The attached Report contains a summary of the results of the Workshop.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

### **POLICY FOCUS**

None.

### **GOAL ALIGNMENT**

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

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

### **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 District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

**COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL**

This item \_\_\_ has or X has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- Planning Commission (meets each month)
- Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- Transportation Committee (meets every other month)

**ATTACHMENTS**

City Council Goals Report



**Town of Atherton  
City Council Workshop  
Held April 5, 2022**

**April 2022**



## **Table of Contents**

---

<b>Workshop Report.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Workshop Overview .....	1
Opening Comments.....	3
Ice-breaker Exercise .....	4
Accomplishments.....	4
Council’s Goals.....	5
Additional Ongoing Staff Work by Goal.....	7
Governing As a Team.....	9
Governing Together.....	11
Wrap-up and Next Steps.....	11



## Workshop Report

The Town of Atherton held a City Council workshop on April 5, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The workshop provided an opportunity for Councilmembers to celebrate recent accomplishments, review and clarify goals for the coming year, discuss effective governing, and strengthen teamwork. This report contains a summary of the results of the priority setting session.

Nancy Hetrick (Vice President) and Magda Gonzalez (Special Advisor) with Management Partners facilitated the workshop.



### ***Workshop Overview***

#### **Objectives**

- Celebrate recent accomplishments
- Gain consensus on Council priorities for the coming year
- Strengthen sense of teamwork and governance

**Participants**

*City Council*

**Mayor  
Rick DeGolia**



**Vice Mayor  
Bill Widmer**



**Councilmember  
Elizabeth Lewis**



**Councilmember  
Diana Hawkins-  
Manuelian**



**Councilmember  
Bob Polito**



*Staff*

- George Rodericks, City Manager
- Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager/City Clerk
- Robert Barron III, Finance Director
- Steven McCulley, Police Chief
- Robert Ovadia, Public Works Director

**Agenda**

- Welcome and call to order by the Mayor
- Review workshop agenda, purpose, and objectives
- Ice breaker exercise
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Discuss Council priorities for the coming year
- Review roles, responsibilities, and governing as a team
- Review and discuss norms
- Wrap up and next steps

### **Workshop Ground Rules**

At the start of the workshop, the facilitator suggested several ground rules to help the group have a successful workshop.



- Respect differences
- Seek consensus
- Seek to understand
- Actively participate

### **Bike Rack**

The facilitator explained that items that were brought up but could not receive immediate attention would be added to a “bike rack.” The following item was added to the bike rack during the workshop.

- Consider holding a refresher on *Robert’s Rules of Order*

### **Workshop Preparation**

In preparation for the workshop, the facilitators held individual interviews with each Councilmember and discussed workshop objectives with the City Manager and executive team. Management Partners prepared an agenda and presentation along with other materials to guide discussions during the session.

### ***Opening Comments***

Mayor DeGolia convened the Council meeting and asked for the roll call. All Councilmembers were present. The Mayor welcomed everyone and thanked Councilmembers for attending the workshop. Mayor DeGolia then turned the session over to the facilitators.

The facilitators, Nancy and Magda, introduced themselves, and reviewed the workshop agenda, objectives, and ground rules.



### ***Ice-breaker Exercise***

The facilitators began the workshop with an ice-breaker exercise. Each Councilmember shared three words they thought described an effective Councilmember. The adjectives that were suggested are listed below.

- Articulate
- Attentive
- Awake
- Collaborative
- Dedicated
- Detail-oriented
- Good listener
- On time
- Open-minded
- Prepared
- Proactive
- Problem-solving
- Reasonable
- Responsible
- Succinct
- Thick-skinned

### ***Accomplishments***

The facilitator led the group in a review of the City's recent accomplishments. The purpose of this discussion was to recognize and celebrate successes and reflect on the progress that has been made on Council's priorities. The City Manager provided a brief update on the priorities that Council established last year. He noted ongoing initiatives and described the operating anomalies of the past year.

The facilitators asked the group what they are most proud of and what factors contributed to the successful outcomes. A summary is below.

- The Police Department is very responsive and accessible in community
  - Communication is timelier
  - There is an opportunity to provide safety tips
- The new Town Center has been a transformative experience; it is a big deal
- The Town's response to the housing issue has been very thorough
- Library
- Leadership of staff
- Information and communication are timely, at our fingertips
  - There many modes of communication being used, which helps with resident outreach and relations
  - (We still want to improve on the email list)
- Increased resident involvement on various committees
- Increased trust by residents in the information coming from the Town
- There is more collaboration and trust among Councilmembers



### ***Council's Goals***

The facilitator led a discussion about the Council's established goals. The purpose was to determine the highest priorities for the next year and determine whether ongoing items should continue. The seven goals, as revised during the workshop, are listed below.

**Goal A: Maintain Fiscal Responsibility.** *Maintain a balanced budget with adequate reserves; responsibly manage long term liability; and increase and maintain transparency.*

**Goal B: Preserve Small Town Character and Quality of Life.** *Maintain focus to identify initiatives to mitigate impacts of regional and state impacts.*

**Goal C: Maximize Use of Town Center/Library.** *Engage the community to understand desired uses.*

**Goal D: Manage Circulation and Improve Safety.** *Provide stewardship and leadership to maintain mobility and improve accessibility and safety for bicycles and pedestrians.*

**Goal E: Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency.** *Pursue opportunities for increased engagement and public outreach.*

**Goal F: Be a Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, Well-Planned City.** *Be proactive and anticipate future needs.*

**Goal G: Emergency Preparedness – Be Prepared.** *Partner with key stakeholders and empower residents to prepare for emergencies.*

The facilitator began by presenting the potential priorities identified during the Council interviews. They are listed below.

- Complete Town Center; plan for opening and public uses
- Pay off/refinance long-term debt
- Address pension and OPEB planning

- Public safety (address burglaries; ADAPT Program)
- Traffic mitigation
- Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan implementation
- Infrastructure in the park
- Completion of the Housing element

The facilitator led the group through a review of the seven existing goals and corresponding strategies. The group reviewed, discussed, and clarified each item. The outcome of the discussion is provided below.

**Goal A: Maintain Fiscal Responsibility**

- Proactively address OPEB and PERS costs
- Create a plan to set aside funds for Town facility maintenance and replacement costs
- Actively manage long-term liabilities

**Goal B: Preserve Small Town Character and Quality of Life**

- Maintain a proactive Police Department with strong focus on crime prevention, security, and traffic safety and compliance
- Implement Park Master Plan
- Update the Town's General Plan; complete the Housing Element Update
- Stay abreast of regional projects that may impact the Town
- Implement Drainage Master Plan
- Monitor SB9 – the California HOME Act

**Goal C: Maximize Use of Town Center/Library**

- Plan for Town Center opening
- Complete the Town Center and Library
- Develop and implement Use Plan for the Town Center
- Identify expenditure priorities for library funds
- Renovate the historic train station to become a train museum

**Goal D: Manage Circulation and Improve Safety**

- Implement Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan
- Improve safety of Caltrain crossings
- Implement traffic mitigation measures

**Goal E: Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency**

- Hold community events that celebrate community involvement
- Engage the public through meetings on a variety of topics (public safety, general plan, housing, etc.)
- Enhance use of OpenGov Transparency Portal
- Continue to improve data gathering and reporting on police activity

- Expand communication network to all residents
- Plan for the Town’s Centennial/100 Year Anniversary Celebration

**Goal F: Be a Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, Well-Planned City**

- Enhance collaboration and partnerships with regional agencies
- Environmental programs (e.g., Climate Action Plan, Reach Codes)

**Goal G: Emergency Preparedness – Be Prepared**

- Expand support for ADAPT
- Ensure reliable emergency communication systems
- Identify and engage the community in emergency communications



***Additional Ongoing Staff Work by Goal***

In addition to the priorities and strategies identified by the City Council, staff are monitoring and reporting on other projects and high profile work under each of the Council’s goals, which are listed below. At the request of Council, the full set of additional ongoing workplan items are provided below.

**Goal A: Maintain Fiscal Responsibility**

- Determine appropriate levels for the Town’s 15% emergency reserve and 20% operating reserve
- Pursue options for benefit assessment districts when appropriate
- Update the Town’s business license tax ordinance
- Pursue revenue alternatives, as identified

**Goal B: Preserve Small Town Character and Quality of Life**

- Hold joint meetings with stakeholder agencies as needed to address regional impacts

- Identify various stakeholders in the provision of telecommunication services to the community
- Inspect telecommunication field facilities and identify visual and safety concerns; connect with stakeholders to remedy
- Develop and promote a regular public report for tracking and reporting on crime in Town
- Monitor and evaluate the results of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology
- Ensure appropriate training of police officers
- Identify high priority bike/pedestrian projects and develop a funding plan
- Identify high-priority road improvement projects and develop a funding plan

**Goal C: Maximize Use of Town Center/Library**

- Identify expenditure priorities for library funds

**Goal D: Manage Circulation and Improve Safety**

- Facilitate the implementation of Quad Gates at the Watkins Rail Crossing
- Review feedback from the Neighborhood Traffic Management Community Outreach effort

**Goal E: Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency**

- Update the Town's event list and budget for them
- Expand the use of CivicSend/News Flashes
- Expand the use of SeeClickFix
- Hold community engagement meetings on a variety of topics
- Continue the Zoom option for public meetings

**Goal F: Be a Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, Well-Planned City**

- Review priorities incorporated in the Climate Action Plan (CAP)
- Identify CAP measures from priority review and implement them
- Review adoption of local Reach Codes
- Reach out to community groups and regional partners for community presentation and awareness
- Identify state budget and community metrics and communicate the Town's achievements using the metrics

**Goal G: Emergency Preparedness – Be Prepared**

- Engage the Fire District to expand communication system
- Use and educate the community on "Purple Air" and other similar air quality monitors

- Educate the community about Public Safety Power Shut Offs (PSPS) and wildfire emergencies
- Educate the community about the use of ZoneHaven for community engagement in emergency communications



### ***Governing As a Team***

Following a short break, the group reconvened to reflect on what it means to govern as team and the roles and responsibilities of Council and City staff. The facilitators provided a refresher on best practices that make councils work well and reviewed the importance of effective governance.

The facilitator referred to the article, *Attributes of Exceptional Councils*, from the Institute for Local Government (ILG) and discussed attributes of high-performing Councils. Six attributes of high-performing Councils are provided below.

- | <b>Attributes of High-Performing Councils</b>                                      |
|--|
| ➤ Commit to <b>true partnerships</b> among Councilmembers, City Manager, and staff |
| ➤ Have <b>clear roles</b> and responsibilities that are understood and adhered     |
| ➤ Demonstrate <b>civility and respect</b> for all                                  |
| ➤ Routinely conduct <b>effective meetings</b>                                      |
| ➤ Hold themselves and the City Manager <b>accountable</b>                          |
| ➤ Have members who practice <b>continuous learning and improvement</b>             |

## **Getting the Most out of the Team**

The next segment of the workshop focused on the needs of the Councilmembers and City Manager. Council reflected on what they need from the City Manager, as well as from each other. The City Manager then shared what he needs from Council to be successful. A summary of this discussion is provided below.

### **What does Council need from the City Manager?**

Councilmembers noted they are receiving the support they need from the City Manager. The items listed below are examples of how the City Manager currently supports them. They are pleased and want him to continue to do what he has been doing.

- Provide up-to-date information
- Offer access through one-on-one meetings
- Answer clarifying questions before meetings
- Summarize issues that may arise during Council meetings
- Be available
- Have a methodical approach
- Have a clear distinction between policy and execution
- Follow through

### **What do Councilmembers need from each other?**

- Councilmembers should be more succinct. When you agree with the discussion there is no reason to restate it.
- As Council shifts to the hybrid meeting model, there is an opportunity to better manage order of business for public comments and input.

### **What the City Manager needs from Council**

- Continue to hold one-on-one meetings with Councilmembers
- Restate and summarize directions during Council meetings to ensure clarity, especially on complicated issues
- Understand that individual perspectives and opinions might be different than Council direction
- Provide direction, even if there is no formal action on an item and the direction is that the City Manager should gather more information
- Run meetings effectively, especially with the transition away from Zoom
  - Will need to evaluate hybrid meetings
  - Be mindful of the dialogue with public

## ***Governing Together***

Councilmembers spent the next segment of the workshop reflecting on how they govern effectively together. The group reviewed and discussed the 10 behavioral norms that were established in 2016 and updated in 2021. All existing Council norms were confirmed, and one new norm was added. The norms that were agreed upon are listed below.

- Assume good intent
- Show mutual respect
- Be trustworthy
- Listen with intention; strive to make others feel heard
- Seek clarification with both staff and colleagues
- Focus on the issue, not the person
- Disagree agreeably and maintain decorum at the dais
- When debate is over and a vote is taken, we move on
- Envision the future and make progress on long-term goals
- Inspire public confidence in our city government
- **NEW:** Be succinct; no need to restate the same reason for a vote that has already been stated

The group then reflected on procedural norms, which dictate how Council operates as a governing body. As the Council shifts from operating during the pandemic to back to in-person meetings, Council has the opportunity to review meeting procedures and governing best practices.

The facilitator asked the group what general practices are working well and what gets in the way of holding effective meetings. Council agreed that Zoom meetings work well and could be used for certain meetings. The group also concurred that once a vote is taken, the meeting should move forward. Council also discussed the importance of sharing the understanding that individual direction can be different from Council direction.

## ***Wrap-up and Next Steps***

To conclude the workshop, Nancy explained that Management Partners would prepare this summary report. Councilmembers expressed their gratitude to staff for their hard work and dedication.

