

ATHERTON  
RESIDENT  
HANDBOOK



“TO SERVE WITH HONOR,  
INTEGRITY AND  
PROFESSIONALISM”

## **Preface**

This booklet has been compiled by the employees of the Town of Atherton and members of the community in the hope that it will be a helpful reference for all residents. This publication provides information for the general well being and safety of Atherton residents.

The information contained herein is compiled as a public service to the residents of Atherton and believed to be accurate as of the date of this publication. However, neither it nor the Town of Atherton assume any responsibility for the use of the information nor warrants it to be correct.

## INTRODUCTION

Atherton is a community consisting entirely of residential property and uniquely not supported by a commercial tax base. Our Police Department is deeply committed to the service philosophies of Community Oriented Policing, Problem Solving and working in partnership with the community to do our part to enhance the quality of life.

Working in cooperation with the Town's other Departments, the Police Department supports the Town's commitment to the three "E's": **E**ngineering, **E**ducation, and **E**nforcement.

Engineering includes Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – (CPTED) continually keeping community street lights in operation, keeping our roads well repaired and free of hazards, keeping landscaping trimmed and aesthetically pleasing and maintaining the community free from the decay that attracts crime and vandals.

Education includes programs through which police officers work with our residents to protect their homes and valuables with Operation Identification, Neighborhood Watch and Home Security Checks to help identify where a home is vulnerable to intrusion. We offer our residents the unique opportunity to connect burglary and robbery alarm systems directly to the police dispatch console for the fastest possible police response to an alarm call.

Enforcement is a key component in keeping our streets safe for our residents and for those who travel through the Town each day. Keeping Atherton Police Officers highly visible in marked patrol cars and motorcycles is a deterrent to criminal activity. Monitoring the safe and uninterrupted flow of traffic in our community help us prevent more accidents on our busy thoroughfares.

We welcome you to our Town. If the Police Department can be of assistance in any way, please contact us. Thank you for choosing to live in Atherton – a community all its own.

Sincerely,

*The Atherton Police Department Staff*

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# **I. Crisis and Local Numbers**

<b>All Emergencies (Police/Fire/Medical)</b> .....	<b>9-1-1</b>
Atherton Police...Emergency from Cellular Telephone .....	323-6131
Atherton Police...Non-Emergency.....	688-6500
Fire Department...Other Emergency.....	323-2404

## **Hospitals (24 hour)**

Kaiser Hospital...Emergency .....	299-2000
Kaiser Hospital...Non-Emergency.....	299-2570
Sequoia Hospital...Emergency.....	367-5541
Sequoia Hospital...Non-Emergency.....	369-5811
Stanford Hospital...Emergency .....	723-5111
Stanford Hospital...Non-Emergency.....	723-4000

## **Lifeline**

This is an emergency service used by the elderly and by people of all ages with disabling medical problems. Participants receive a small, wearable, waterproof "call device" that signals Sequoia or Stanford Hospitals immediately. The hospital quickly notifies the designated responsible person(s). For further information, contact Sequoia Hospital 369-5811 or Stanford Hospital 723-4000.

Rape Crisis (24 hour) .....	692-7273
Domestic Violence Emergency Outreach Program (24 hour).....	312-8515
County Child Protective Services .....	1-800-632-4615
California Youth Crisis Hotline.....	1-800-843-5200
Victim/ Witness Assistance Center.....	599-7479
Teen Hotline.....	327-8336
Poison Control Center (24 hour).....	1-800-222-1222
Alcoholism Help Line.....	573-3950
Suicide Prevention – South County (24 hour).....	579-0350
HIV/AIDS Information.....	573-2385
Family Support Hotline (24 hour).....	415-441-5437

Refer to the front of your telephone book for other emergency and Community Service numbers.

## **Other Important Local Telephone Numbers**

Atherton Police Department...Non-Emergency.....	688-6500
Fire Department...Administrative .....	688-8400
Atherton Administrative Office .....	752-0500



Atherton Branch Library.....	328-2422
Atherton Building Department.....	752-0560
Comcast Cable.....	1- 800-945-2288
Bicycle Licensing (by Menlo Park Fire District).....	688-8400
California Water Service Company.....	367-6800
Department of Motor Vehicles.....	368-2837
Dog Licenses (division of Animal Control).....	363-4220
Fair Oaks Sanitary District.....	363-4100
Garbage & Recycling (Recology).....	595-3900
Hazardous Material Hotline.....	363-4718
Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E).....	1-800-743-5000
Peninsula Humane Society.....	340-8200
Voter Information.....	312-5222
Fair Oaks Sanitation District.....	363-4100
West Bay Sanitary District.....	321-0384

**Transit Information**

CalTrain (Train) and SamTrans (Buses).....	1-800-660-4287
CALTRANS (Road condition/maintenance).....	1-510-286-4444

Other information Services ..... <http://211bayarea.org>

**Atherton Police Department**  
**83 Ashfield Road**  
<http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us>

**Emergencies Only 9-1-1**  
**Emergencies from Cellular Phones 323-6131**  
**Non-Emergency and Business Calls 688-6500**

The Atherton Police Department's mission is to maintain the quality of life we enjoy and to ensure that our Town is a safe place to live, work and visit. This is accomplished through safeguarding individual liberties, building community partnerships, preventing crime and resolving those crimes which do occur. The Police Department is committed to a goal of excellence and dedication to the community it serves. Your suggestions, concerns, and questions are always welcome and appreciated.

The Police Department operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Citizens who call the Police Department talk to a dispatcher who immediately radios the reported information to officers in the field. The Police Department relies heavily on resident involvement. Residents are urged to call the department immediately whenever they see something suspicious or if they have been the victim of a crime.

Formed in 1927, the Atherton Police Department originally consisted of three officers. Through the years, the Department has grown to meet the increasing needs of the Town. Today, the Department is a modern, professional organization respected for its creative approaches to solving law enforcement problems in the community. It is a service-oriented organization, which emphasizes community participation and involvement. The Department has a pro-active philosophy emphasizing crime prevention as the most effective method of crime reduction.

**The Emergency Communications Center**

All calls to the Police Department go through the Communications Center. It is a modern facility utilizing the latest technology in order to efficiently and effectively handle emergencies, concerns and complaints. Residents with alarm systems connected to the Police Department have their alarms monitored in the Communications Center.

A state of the art computer system enables the dispatchers to access all

residents, alarms, cases, and suspect information in seconds from the computer terminal. They also are able to access the county, regional, state, Department of Motor Vehicles, and National Information Systems.

These tools enable the residents of Atherton to enjoy a low crime rate, a fast emergency response time, and an overall professional, effective, community oriented Police Department.

### **9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Number**

All emergency calls should be directed to the 9-1-1 telephone number. The calls go directly to the Atherton Police Department, which then dispatches the information to the appropriate emergency agency (for example: fire department, paramedics, etc.). Through computer technology, the caller's address and telephone number appear on the computer screen at the Police Department. This service provides the Town with faster, more accurate responses in emergency situations.

The members of the Police Department Dispatch Center are highly trained individuals who are prepared for any emergency situation. These dispatchers need to get specific information from you when you call 9-1-1. This information lets the dispatcher know what kind of response is required for the emergency (police, fire, paramedics, etc.). The dispatchers are trained to perform many tasks at once, and will often be dispatching emergency response units while they are talking to you. If they ask you to hold, it is because they are dispatching help to you.

### **Cellular Phone**

You should be aware that if you dial 9-1-1 on a cellular phone you will be connected to the California Highway Patrol. If you are in Town and need to contact the Atherton Police Department for an emergency, dial 323-6131. You can program the phone number into your cellular phone's speed dialer.

### **Atherton's Public Safety Community Outreach Group**

The Public Safety Community Outreach Group, formerly known as the Crime Prevention Task Force, is comprised of community members who work closely with the Police Department in the areas of crime prevention and safety. The group is responsible for organizing neighborhood security meetings and in general, assisting the Police Department with its continuing efforts to maintain our Town's reputation of being one of the safest communities in the state. The Public Safety Community Outreach Group has been used as a model program for

law enforcement in California.

## **Neighborhood Security Meetings**

Neighborhood Security Meetings are sponsored jointly by the Atherton Police Department and the Public Safety Outreach Group. A member will help you organize this meeting. The officer in attendance will lead a discussion of home and neighborhood crime prevention measures, the Town's disaster program, violent crimes, child abuse, self-protection, and other programs that are of interest to you and your neighbors. These meetings also enable you to meet and assist your neighbors in maintaining your neighborhood as a secure place.

Should you wish to host a Neighborhood Security Meeting in your home, telephone the Police Department's non-emergency number at 688-6500.

## **If You Are A Victim Of A Violent Crime:**

CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY BY DIALING 9-1-1. The average emergency response time is 3 minutes or less. Be sure to give your exact location (for example, upstairs bedroom, family room, backyard, etc.) to facilitate the officers providing assistance as quickly as possible.

People are sometimes hesitant to call the police after being the victim of a violent crime. The Atherton Police Department is trained to provide a wide variety of support services in addition to pursuing enforcement and apprehension activities. Officers have the ability to facilitate a number of community services that provide specific counseling, assistance, and support.

## **If You Are A Victim Of A Property Crime:**

If you return home and suspect someone has entered, DO NOT GO INTO THE HOUSE! Go to a neighbor's home or use your cell phone and call the police immediately. Stay out of your home until directed otherwise by the police.

When a crime has been committed, NEVER enter the immediate area where suspects may have been as you may contaminate the area before the police have been able to view the scene and collect evidence. Stay at a safe location and allow the police to do their job. The police will let you know when it is safe to return home.

## **Police Services**

Citizen participation in the various police services is the critical element required for program success and maintenance of the low crime rate we enjoy. The following is a description of the services provided by the Police Department. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of these programs. There are no fees for these services.

### **Residential Burglary/Fire Alarm Information**

The Atherton Police Department is always concerned with the community's reaction to the crime rate in today's society. Throughout the country, people are taking steps to provide themselves with a greater degree of protection. Residential alarms are, by far, the best security investment. Therefore, the Police Department provides residents with information and recommendations concerning effective and efficient residential alarm systems.

A list defining some "alarm terminology" is available at the Police Department to assist you in understanding and selecting the alarm system best suited for your needs. The Atherton Police Department encourages you to connect your alarm directly to the Police Station. The Police Department does not charge a fee for this service. A list of alarm companies currently licensed to install alarms in Atherton is available at the police station.

It is recommended that you contact at least three of the listed alarm companies for estimates and references, or contact your existing alarm company for an estimate on modifications. Only the companies listed have licenses to install alarms in Atherton. This listing should not be considered as an endorsement or recommendation by the Town.

Remember that alarm systems are only a supplement to other crime prevention measures, such as locking all doors and windows, reporting all suspicious people and cars, and attending neighborhood security meetings.

### **Home Security Program**

While Atherton continues to maintain a reduced burglary rate, it is important that all citizens remain aware of the potential problems. The key to eventual victory over burglars will come only with total community involvement. For that reason, all residents who have not already taken advantage of the Home Security Program are urged to do so. Upon request, an officer will visit your home and conduct a security inspection and make suggestions to ensure the protection of your home. Alarm signs that can be posted outside your home that advise you are directly connected to the Atherton Police Department can be purchased for a nominal fee. These signs can be wall or spike mounted.

Telephone the Police Department's non-emergency number, 688-6500 and ask for this service.

### **Vacation Check**

Upon your request, the Atherton Police Department will provide a personal check of your residence during business or vacation trips if the property will be vacant. For further information, telephone the Police Department's non-emergency number at 688-6500.

### **Spot Check**

As a service to residents who feel special attention is required for their security for a brief period, the Police Department will periodically do a "drive by" check of your property. People find this service valuable when they are home alone, have lost the keys to their house, have received suspicious telephone calls, when there are neighborhood/employee problems, or when there have been publicized absences from home.

### **Resident Key File**

As a voluntary service provided by the Police Department, the Communications Center maintains a file with keys to residents' homes. This enables the residents to come to the Police Department and obtain a key (with proper I.D.), should they lock themselves out of their house, as well as providing safe and secure storage for emergency keys. It also enables officers to gain entry into homes without force and possible damage to property should there be an emergency in the home.

Should you wish to have your house key on file, please bring a spare set of keys to the police station. The keys will be filed in the Communications Center, which is located in a secure area. Should you wish to retrieve your keys, please bring proper identification.

### **Solicitors**

Persons or companies wishing to solicit in the Town of Atherton are governed and restricted by Town Ordinance. This ordinance requires solicitors to apply for a solicitor permit, which is not issued until an application is approved, and a background check is completed by the Chief of Police.

Individuals are restricted to soliciting on Monday through Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and are required to display their solicitor's permit. Religious organizations are exempt from the need to obtain a permit. Many religious

groups will notify the Police Department when they are going to be in the Atherton area.

### **Fingerprinting Children**

One of the Atherton Police Department's prevention programs includes the fingerprinting of children. While this service does not reduce the parent's need for close supervision of children, it can be helpful should a child become missing or abducted.

Children may be fingerprinted through various programs in the community or schools. Parents should retain the fingerprints in a safe location along with close-up recent photographs of their children clearly detailing their faces. These should be kept for ready access should they be needed.

### **Traffic and Pedestrian Safety**

Atherton's rural environment, wandering streets, and beautiful scenery encourage walking, jogging, and driving on Town streets from early morning hours through late evening hours. Extra care needs to be taken by vehicular and non-vehicular traffic to prevent serious collisions.

Residents are also encouraged to carry a cell phone and use caution when walking, jogging, or biking on Atherton streets. Remember to always bike with the traffic and walk/jog against it. During hours of darkness, it is recommended that bright or reflective clothing be worn, and a flashlight or similar illuminator be utilized. The use of radio/tape headsets worn by walkers, joggers, and bicyclists is considered to be an extremely dangerous practice. Headsets and ear plugs worn by motorists and bicyclists is a violation of the California Vehicle Code.

Both adults and children are encouraged to take a friend when walking, jogging, or biking. This "buddy system" discourages any potential assailants from striking, as well as enables a person to summon help should there be a collision. Carrying some sort of identification is highly recommended.

All drivers are asked to cooperate in driving safely and slowly on Atherton streets.

### **Special Services**

Residents may request an officer or officers to direct traffic and parking or provide special security at residential gatherings. The officers, who are off

duty, sign up to work these events. The Police Department cannot guarantee officers for every event, therefore the earlier you request this service the more likely an officer will be available. There is an hourly charge for this service with a two-hour minimum.

### **Parking in Atherton**

Unless otherwise posted, passenger vehicle parking on the street for less than seventy-two (72) hours is unrestricted in Atherton. Parking is restricted for campers, large vans, boats, trucks, trailers, commercial vehicles, etc. (see Miscellaneous Regulation Section).

### **Atherton Police Activities League (P.A.L.)**

The Atherton Police Activities League (referred to as Atherton P.A.L.) is a non-profit organization directed by a Board of Directors comprised of volunteers from the Police Department.

Although there are several P.A.L.'s and associations in the area, the Atherton P.A.L. is the only organization that is sponsored by the Atherton Police Department and endorsed by the Atherton Town Council. This organization is funded by tax-deductible 501(C)(3) donations from the community, collected through an annual mailing solicitation in the fall. The Atherton P.A.L. does NOT conduct any door-to-door or telephone solicitations.

The Atherton P.A.L. was formed to bridge the gap between youth and the police. During the past several decades, P.A.L. activities have expanded and changed relative to the issues confronting youth in society. Currently, the P.A.L. conducts a variety of programs for the youth in Atherton and Atherton schools, including classroom presentations on a variety of subjects.

For more information on the P.A.L. or its programs, call the Police Department.

### **Rapid Notify - Emergency Notification System**

Using the Rapid Notify System, the Police Department can pre-record an urgent or emergency message that simultaneously telephones residents with critical information. Typically, this system is used to convey disaster, public safety information, and warnings related to crime trends in a particular neighborhood.



## **Defibrillators**

The Atherton Police Department was the first police department on the West Coast and only the second in the nation to deploy defibrillators in its fleet of police vehicles to treat victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

The device automatically analyzes the patient's heart rhythm and determines if a shock is required. Although this device is completely automatic, all police officers go through an intense course on first aid, CPR, and the theory and application therapy as prescribed by the San Mateo County Department of Health, Emergency and Medical Services Council.

## **Child Abduction Safety Tips**

There is growing concern of children being abducted by strangers. Any time there is a large number of children in a community, the threat of child abduction becomes a constant concern to parents. All adults and children in the community must assist the police in helping to prevent child abduction by calling the police immediately anytime they see a person loitering around children or are made aware of a situation where a child is/or has been confronted by someone soliciting unnecessary information such as where they live, go to school, play sports, etc., or tries to entice them to accompany them. Abductors may be young or old, well dressed or sloppy, look perfectly normal or appear psychologically disturbed. There is no "look" to an abductor. They may park and sit in a car near an area where children frequent, or they may be seen frequenting a park or "observing" at other child activities.

Child abductions are horrendous crimes, which devastate the family, friends and community in which they occur. Preventing abductions is the responsibility of every member of the community.

## **Tips for Preventing Child Abduction**

### **• Parents should advise their children to:**

- 1) Be aware of surroundings and people who may be watching you. Always use the "buddy system", never walk, bike ride or play at a park or school alone.
- 2) Periodically alter habitual routes and times.
- 3) If confronted, scream, run, kick, fight and make a scene. Run to the nearest area or house with adults present.
- 4) Avoid isolated parts of the parks, schools or community centers.
- 5) If plans change, call parents immediately and notify them of

whereabouts.

**• Parents always:**

- 1) Insist a responsible adult remains with your child after school, sports games or other activities until picked up by a designated person.
- 2) Get to know "significant" adults involved with your children in their various activities.
- 3) Know where children are at all times and when to expect them home.

**• All Community Members:**

- 1) Call the police anytime you observe suspicious persons or events.
- 2) Obtain a license plate, or partial license plate, if a vehicle is involved.
- 3) Obtain a description of the individual's dress, size, face and hair.
- 4) Observe missing children posters and call police if a possible abducted child is observed.

The Atherton Police Department maintains a state of the art computer system to help in the recovery of abducted children. The T.R.A.K. (Technology to Recover Abducted Kids) system quickly creates and distributes flyers to assist in the recovery of an abducted child.

### **III. Self-Protection**

#### **Self-Protection at Home**

Strangers should be kept outside. Always ask for identification from police officers, salespersons, and repair people before opening the door. If you are in doubt at all, please call the Police Department. Anonymous telephone calls made repeatedly could be someone checking to see if you are at home. **Immediately report to the police if you suspect someone is inside your home...do not go in!** If you see or hear suspicious sounds, activities, automobiles or unusual people around your neighborhood, please contact the police. Additionally, with the exception of religious organizations, solicitors are required to register with the Police Department. **DO NOT open your door to a stranger.**

#### **Self-Protection While Driving**

Keep doors locked at all times. Windows should be rolled up or, if necessary,

only open the one that is closest to you. Keep your purse or other valuables out of sight (under the seat or in the glove compartment). Intersections and stop lights are favorite places for "would be attackers". Keep your car in gear, if threatened, blow your horn and drive away. Never pick up a hitchhiker. Should you have car trouble, raise the hood and stay inside with the doors locked. If strangers stop, ask them to report your predicament to the nearest service station, police department, or the California Highway Patrol. **DO NOT get in a car with any stranger.**

### **Carjacking Prevention Tips**

- Always be aware of your surroundings. Be alert for any suspicious activity near your vehicle. Retreat to Safety.
- If possible, park in a busy, well-lighted, attended parking lot. If you must leave a key, leave only the ignition key.
- Separate your car keys from other personal keys. Never leave a spare key hidden under the vehicle.
- Enter and exit your vehicle as quickly as possible. Carjackers usually strike when the driver is entering or leaving the vehicle. Hold your keys in your hand.
- When driving keep the vehicle doors locked, windows rolled all the way up, and sun roof closed.
- Stay alert at red lights and stop signs. Be aware of anyone approaching your vehicle and what they are carrying in their hands, such as a weapon, bat, hammer, etc.
- Avoid being "boxed in" by other vehicles. Leave yourself enough space to maneuver away from a threatening situation.
- If a carjacker threatens you with a gun, knife, or other weapon, give up your vehicle. Report the carjacking immediately to the police or the California Highway Patrol.
- Carjackers often target rental vehicles because they believe tourists who carry a lot of money drive them. They also know most tourists won't return for a court case.
- Try to keep any valuables out of sight and not on the front seat. A criminal will smash the passenger window and grab the valuables. "Smash and grabs" occur when the vehicle is parked or being driven.
- Be aware of diversions or distractions. Often one criminal will try to sell something or panhandle while a second thief enters the vehicle or steals a purse from the passenger side. Keep your car doors locked!

## **Harassment by Another Driver**

If you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station or business for help and use your cell phone to call for assistance. If you are being forced to the curb, continue driving. Whatever the case, honk your horn to attract attention. Write down the license number and description of the car and driver, and report it to the police immediately. Don't allow yourself to get involved in any type of road rage incident.

## **Self-Protection Tips While Walking**

Do not walk alone in the dark in parks or vacant lots. If possible, carry a cellular phone. If you are carrying a purse, keep a firm grip on it, and DON'T let it dangle. If you feel you are being followed on foot, cross the street and vary direction. If the harassment persists, go to a lighted place and call the police. If you feel you are being followed by someone in a car, walk in the other direction, take the license number and call the police. When you return home, have your key ready to open the door without delay. Always leave an outside light on in preparation for your safe return.

## **Mace/Pepper Spray**

Recent legislation has legalized certain chemical protection sprays for citizens purchase. These chemical sprays, often referred to as "Mace", or more recently "Pepper Spray", can be a very effective weapon for self-protection. Proper training and practice are necessary to prevent being affected by your own spray, but properly used, these chemical sprays can stop individuals from completing assaults, robberies, sexual assaults, or other violent crimes.

Citizens interested in obtaining training and certification for carrying "Pepper Spray" can contact a local supplier.

# **IV. Fire Protection**

**Emergency 9-1-1**

**Administration Only 688-8400**

**Emergency from Cellular Phone 323-6131**

All of Atherton is included in the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, which was formed in 1916. Serving Atherton, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, and Sequoia areas, the district is governed by an elected five member Board of Directors.

There are six fire stations strategically placed throughout the service area. The district has a headquarters/fire station complex at 300 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park. Mutual aid agreements exist with the Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Woodside Fire Departments.

## **V. Atherton Disaster Plan**

We have been advised by County, State, and Federal Disaster Officials that in the event of a major disaster, in all probability, the Town will have to rely on its own resources for a minimum of 72 hours. In light of Atherton’s limited staffing, its rural atmosphere with large parcels of land where homes often are not visible from the streets, and the predicted interruptions in normal channels of communication, the following plan was formulated as an interim way (until more assistance arrives) for residents to help themselves and their neighbors. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures: you and your neighbors’ survival may depend on them.

### **DISASTER INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Broadcasting Information**

Disaster officials may be broadcasting instructions, damage reports and other information on local radio broadcasting station KCEA (89.1 FM). It is possible that normal radio, TV, and telephone communications will be knocked out immediately following a major disaster. Therefore, you must have a battery operated FM radio on hand.

It is imperative that you stay home and turn on your radio in order to receive the information and instructions necessary for the safety of you and your family. Parents of school children will be notified of conditions at the local schools on the radio.

#### **First Aid Instructions and Emergency Procedures**

For detailed instructions and information regarding first aid, standard emergency procedures and preparation for emergencies (what food and supplies to stock, how to turn off gas, electricity, etc.) visit [WWW.SMCREADY.ORG](http://WWW.SMCREADY.ORG). There is an informative video to watch: “How To Get Ready For the Unexpected”.

## **VI. Disaster Preparedness**

### **BEFORE A DISASTER**

How well you, your family and your home survive a disaster often depends upon how well you prepare beforehand. Develop a family and neighborhood Disaster Plan that includes emergency communication equipment, a supply kit(s), and a home evacuation plan.

### **Communication/Reunification**

Your family may not all be together when a disaster strikes. Decide on an out-of-state friend or relative to be your family's emergency contact, should normal communication lines in the local area go out of service. All of your family members should contact this person to check in after a disaster.

### **Meeting Places**

If your family is not together when a disaster strikes, have a pre-designated location picked so the members of your family know where to meet. You should meet right outside of your home in the event of a sudden emergency, like a fire. Also, choose an out-of-town meeting place in case of an evacuation.

### **\*Remember to practice your plan!**

The following checklist will help you get started:

- Develop your family and neighborhood Disaster Plan.
- Prepare an emergency kit of food, water and supplies including a flashlight, a portable battery-operated radio and/or TV, batteries, medicines, first aid kit, money, and clothing. Look into purchasing a home generator for power.
- Know the danger spots – near windows, mirrors, hanging objects, fireplaces and tall, unsecured furniture.
- Conduct practice drills so you and your family know the safe locations in your home.

- Decide how your family will reunite if separated during a disaster.
- Choose an out-of-state friend or relative that family members can call after the disaster to report their whereabouts and conditions.
- Learn first aid and CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation).
- Learn how to shut off gas, water and electricity in case the lines are damaged. SAFETY NOTE: Do not attempt to relight the gas pilot. Call the utility company.
- Check chimneys, roofs, walls and foundations for stability.
- Make sure your home is bolted to its foundation.
- Secure your water heater and major appliances as well as tall heavy furniture, hanging plants, mirrors, TV's, and picture frames (especially those over beds).
- Keep breakables, heavy objects, flammable or hazardous liquids (paints, pest sprays and cleaning products) in secured cabinets or on lower shelves.
- Organize your neighborhood to be self-sufficient after a disaster.
- Eliminate hazards. Make it as easy as possible to get under a sturdy table or desk for protection.
- Anchor special equipment such as telephones and life support systems. Fasten tanks of gas, such as oxygen, to the wall.
- Keep a list of medications, allergies, special equipment, names and numbers of doctors, pharmacists and family members. Make sure you have this list with you at all times.
- Keep an extra pair of eyeglasses and medication with emergency supplies.

- Keep walking aids near you at all times. Have extra walking aids in different rooms of the house.
- Put a security light in each room. These lights plug into any outlet and light up automatically if there is a loss of electricity. They continue operating automatically for four to six hours, and they can be turned off by hand in an emergency.
- Make sure you have a whistle to signal for help.
- Keep extra batteries for hearing aids with your emergency supplies. Remember to replace them regularly.
- Keep emergency supplies at your bedside.
- Find two people you trust who will check on you after a disaster. Tell them your special needs. Show them how to operate any equipment you use. Show them where your emergency supplies are kept. Give them a spare house key.

### **AFTER A DISASTER**

- Prepare to be self-sufficient for at least three days.
- Turn on your portable radio for instructions and news reports. For your own safety, cooperate fully with public safety officials and instructions.
- If you evacuate, leave a message at your home telling family members and others where you can be found.

Unless there is an immediate, life-threatening emergency, do not attempt to use the telephone.

- Check for gas and water leaks, broken electrical wiring or sewage lines. If there is damage, turn the utility off at the source. Immediately report gas leaks to your utility company.
- Check for downed power lines; warn others to stay away.



- Check your building for cracks and damage, including the roof, chimneys and foundation.
- Do not use your vehicle unless there is an emergency. Keep the streets clear for emergency vehicles.
- Stay calm and lend a hand to others.

**The following are suggested items to have stored at home:**

- Food. Enough for 72 hours (preferably one week). A manual can opener.
- Water. Enough so each person has a gallon a day for 72 hours (preferably one week). Store in airtight containers and replace every six months. Store disinfectants such as iodine tablets or chlorine bleach (eight drops per gallon) to purify water, if necessary.
- First aid kit. Make sure it's well-stocked, especially with bandages, disinfectants and personal hygiene.
- Fire extinguisher. Your fire extinguisher should be suitable for all types of fires. (Type: ABC). Teach all family members how to use it. Check it each year.
- Flashlights with extra batteries. Keep flashlights beside your bed and in several other locations. DO NOT use matches or candles after an earthquake until you are certain there are no gas leaks.
- Portable radio with extra batteries. Most telephones will be out of order or limited to emergency use. The radio will be your best source of information.
- Battery operated TV.
- Extra blankets, clothing, shoes, and money.

- Alternate cooking source. Store a barbecue or camping stove for outdoor camping. **CAUTION:** Ensure there are no gas leaks before you use any kind of fire as a cooking source and do not use charcoal indoors.
- Special items. Have at least a week's supply of medications, disinfectants, and food for infants and those with special needs.
- Tools. Have an adjustable or pipe wrench for turning off gas and water.
- Personal hygiene supplies.

### **Tips for Pet Owners**

- Store enough food and water to last for 72 hours (preferably for one week). Prepare a shelter or evacuation kit for your pet, including an unbreakable dish, veterinarian records, a restraint( leash or pet carrier) and medications with instructions.
- Keep your pet's ID tag up-to date.
- Do not try to hold onto your pet. Animals will instinctively protect themselves and hide where they are safe. If you get in their way, even the nicest pets can turn on you.
- Be patient with your pets. They get stressed just like people and need time to readjust. They may disappear for some time, but they generally show up again when things have calmed down.
- If you have outdoor pets, you should keep them indoors.
- If you must evacuate your home, leave your pets secured in a safe place. Pets will not be allowed at shelters. Be sure to leave plenty of clean water and food. If possible, visit your pet daily until you can return home.
- If you are not home during an earthquake or other disaster and your animal should run away, you should check with a neighbor before calling your local animal shelter.

## **EVACUATION PLAN AND FIRE/FLOOD SIREN NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

### *For the Atherton Walsh Road Neighborhood*

In the event of a fire or flood, there is a warning siren installed at the Cal Water facility on Reservoir Road. The siren can be activated by the Fire or Police Department to advise residents that an evacuation should take place.

Tone 1- **Continuous Siren** = Fire

Tone 2 - **Intermittent Siren** = Dam Breach/Flood

Emergency Evacuation Routes:

1. The main evacuation route for the area is Walsh Road to Alameda.
2. The main secondary automobile route in an emergency will be the road through the water company connecting to Moore Road. The water company has to open the gate at the entrance of the road for this to be passable.
3. There is a pedestrian only exit by using the horse tunnel under Highway 280.

### **More Resources**

**[WWW.READY.GOV](http://WWW.READY.GOV)**

**[WWW.SMCREADY.ORG](http://WWW.SMCREADY.ORG)**

**[WWW.FEMA.GOV](http://WWW.FEMA.GOV)**

## VII. Atherton History

This area of abundant live oaks, mild climate, and accessible fish and game was once the traveling ground of the small tribe of Costano Indians. It came under Spanish rule in 1769. Land in the region belonged to the Roman Catholic Church except for portions set aside for the King's cattle.

In 1835, the largest of the 18 ranchos in San Mateo County was granted to the heirs of Don Luis Arguello, the first native California Governor. The 32,240 acres of the Arguello ranch extended from San Mateo to San Francisquito Creek, from the bay to Canada Road. It was later named Rancho de las Pulgas (the Fleas).

Mexican rule ended legally with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. California became a state in 1850. A new county, San Mateo, was established in 1856.

Faxon Dean Atherton (1815-1877), a native of Massachusetts, had spent several years in Chile in the Hide and Tallow trade before arriving in Monterey in 1836. He traveled the Peninsula area and much of California for three years, as a clerk for a Santa Barbara trade merchant, and kept a remarkable diary. While in Valparaiso, Chile, he married into a prominent Chilean family, and six of his seven children were born there. He became wealthy and, together with his close friend, Thomas Larkin, made many farsighted investments in California land and commerce. He was to become prominent in lumbering, building railroads, and banking.

Atherton moved his family to San Francisco in 1860. He bought 611 acres on El Camino Real and was the first to establish a fashionable country home in the area. His house, "Valparaiso Park", which was rather plain by the architectural standards of the time, was located near the center of his tract, bounded by what are now Atherton and Valparaiso Avenues. Five of his children, whose names were later given to streets, established homes nearby. Elena first married Frank Macondry and later married her neighbor, Percy Selby; Alejandra married Major Lawrence Rathbone (their home would now be on the Menlo School campus); Florence married Edward L. Eyre; Faxon Jr. married Jennie Selby; George married the famed novelist Gertrude Atherton.

Fair Oaks, as the community was called, was a flag stop on the Pacific and Atlantic Railroad (later Southern Pacific). The railroad station, now Atherton's, served the families of the large estates that were being established in the latter half of the 19th century.

Thomas Selby, a San Francisco mayor, built his "Fair Oaks" in 1865. Joseph Donohoe, a partner of William Ralston and John T. Doyle, built in the latter 1860's along Middlefield Road, where Menlo-Atherton High School now stands. Edward E. Eyre built his large home in 1876; Senator Charles Felton built "Felton Gables" also in that year. These estates were summer homes since the roads, which were muddy and usually impassable in the winter, made it difficult to open the homes all year, even if the owners had wished to do so.

James C. Flood, who had been a saloon keeper in San Francisco, and had made a huge fortune speculating in mining stocks, bought hundreds of acres along Middlefield Road in 1876. At the age of 45, his income was \$250,000 a month. Determined to outdo present and future neighbors, he built the six-story Linden Towers, using priceless, exotic materials. Flood lived there only a few years; he died in Europe in 1889. The main house, "Built To Last Forever", was razed in 1938, and the gate house was razed in 1956. This area is now divided into acre lots called Lindenwood.

There was no urban or village section during this era. Menlo Park was a village for estate and railroad workers. When Menlo Park had a short-lived incorporation, from 1874 to 1876, the area called Fair Oaks was included. Real estate was advertised for sale in the 1870's and 1880's; the name Faxon Acres was used for a time.

In 1923, Menlo Park tried to persuade Fair Oaks-Atherton to agree to mutual incorporation. The Fair Oaks men bolted the meeting presumably because they wished to preserve their residential town of large lots. On August 20, 1923, an hour and twenty minutes ahead of Menlo Park, the Fair Oaks representatives arrived at the county seat with incorporation papers. The process was completed on September 12, 1923.

The name "Atherton" was selected because "Fair Oaks" had been pre-empted by a Sacramento County town. A Board of Trustees was established and regular meetings were held.

For half a century or more, the Town was a community of San Franciscan's summer homes. By the late 1920's it had become, in general, a town of year-round residences, although some summer homes still do exist. Up to 1923, there was little tendency to break up land into small lots, but in the following decades the gradual division of large estates took place. Today a minimum of a one-acre lot is required in most areas of the town.

## **VIII. Atherton Today**

### **The People**

The population of the Town has been relatively stable for decades. The 2010 Census counted approximately 6,914 persons, a decline from the 1970 level of 8,350.

### **The Community**

Atherton is a residential community of approximately 2,500 homes. Commercial and industrial uses are not allowed in the guidelines of the Atherton General Plan. This philosophy dates back to the original "race to incorporate" in 1923 when Atherton leaders fought off an annexation attempt by commercial minded Menlo Park community members. Some schools, parks, a watershed, and a private country club have been allowed to continue operations under the close supervision of the Town to ensure that those uses do not conflict with the residential nature of the town.

### **Town Administrative Office**

The Town Administrative Building is located at 91 Ashfield Road. This building houses the offices of the Town Manager, City Clerk, and Finance Department. The Building and Public Works Departments are located across the street on Dinkelspiel Lane.

Weekday office hours are 8:00 AM to 12:00 NOON and 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

The main Town telephone number is 752-0500, the Building Department/Permit Center is 752-0560 and the Public Works is 752-0570. The fax number is 688-6539.

The Town Offices are closed weekends and holidays.

Permit Center Hours – 8:00 am – 11:00 am and 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

## **Council Chambers**

The City Council Chambers at 94 Ashfield Road was built in 1928. It is directly across the street from the Police Department and the Town Administrative offices. The City Council, Planning Commission, and General Plan Committee, as well as other civic groups, Town Commissions and Committees, utilize this facility for public meetings.

## **Atherton Post Office**

The Atherton Branch Post Office is located in the Town Administrative Building. It is open weekdays 8:30 AM to 12:00 NOON and 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Services include package mailing, stamp purchases, certified and registered letters, and money orders (cash only).

## **Atherton Branch: San Mateo County Free Library**

Through cooperation between the County of San Mateo and the Town of Atherton, Atherton residents have the opportunity to use the Atherton Branch of the San Mateo County Library system.

The Atherton Branch Library is operated by the County from a building owned and maintained by the Town. The branch contains periodicals, newspapers, reference volumes, and a children's area. Books, movies and other materials throughout the county library system may be obtained through the Atherton branch.

County staff includes a librarian, a children's librarian, and several others. For scheduled hours and days, telephone the Library at 328-2422.

Reading Park is located immediately adjacent to the library building.

## **Holbrook Palmer Park**

Holbrook Palmer Park came into being through the generosity of Mrs. Olive Holbrook Palmer, who willed her home, "Elmwood", to the Town for use as a recreational park. The property had originally been purchased by Mrs. Palmer's father, Mr. Charles Holbrook, and consists of twenty-two acres between El Camino Real and Middlefield Road at 150 Watkins Avenue.

At the present time, there are four main facilities: the Holbrook Palmer House, Jennings Pavilion, the Carriage House, and a children's daycare facility.

The Park offers a number of recreational, cultural and social activities to Atherton residents. Six tennis courts are available for residents. Tennis memberships may be purchased on an annual basis.

## **Streets and Highways**

Atherton has more than 50 miles of streets within the Town limits. With the exception of one small area, there are few sidewalks, as streets are kept rural in appearance. Street construction, repairs, and maintenance are the responsibility of the Public Works Department. El Camino Real, which bisects the Town, is a state highway and falls under the jurisdiction of CalTrans. The Town maintains the median islands.

The Town is part owner of the parking lot at the railroad station. Parking is free to residents in the Resident Parking Lot.

## **Street Lighting**

Street lighting in Atherton is partly Town owned and partly PG&E owned. All lights are maintained by PG&E under contract with the Town. Outages should be reported to the Public Works Department at 752-0570. After hours, please leave a message on the voicemail system.



## **Tips on Being a Good Citizen and Neighbor**

### 1. Help Keep Our Water Clean.

- ❖ It is illegal to dump any toxic substance, such as motor oil or paint, in street drains.
- ❖ Dumping of toxic materials, dirt, leaves, or debris in the Atherton Drainage Channel or other natural drainage ways is also prohibited.

### 2. Help Keep Our Neighborhoods Free of Visual Blight

- ❖ Please put out recycling bins only on the night before scheduled pick-ups and retrieve them as soon as possible (within 24 hours).
- ❖ Please abate weed growth on the sides and rear of your property, as well as in the front. Tall, dry grass creates a fire hazard, as well as being unsightly.
- ❖ If you notice abandoned grocery carts, please telephone the Public Works Department at 752-0570.

## **IX. Town Government**

### **City Council and Mayor**

Policies of land use and service levels are set by the City Council. The Council is a five-citizen elected governing body at large, on a non-partisan basis, which serves four-year staggered terms. The Council annually selects one of its members as Mayor and one as Vice Mayor. There are regular public monthly meetings, plus occasional public study sessions and special meetings.

Council members appoint the City Manager and City Attorney, and approve appointments of members to the Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Audit Committee, Arts Committee, and General Plan Committee. The Council also creates sub committees to advise on various subjects. The Council passes ordinances; grants permits, licenses, and franchises; sets fees for municipal services; and may buy, lease, or hold real and personal property for the Town.

The Atherton City Council normally meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers, 94 Ashfield Road. Residents of the Town are encouraged to attend the Council meetings. There is always a portion of each session allocated for public comment on topics which are not included in the formal agenda.

### **Planning Commission**

The five members of the Planning Commission are appointed by the City Council. They may serve two consecutive four-year terms. Commissioners decide on variances and conditional use permits as outlined in the Town's Municipal Code. The Commission also makes recommendations to the City Council on the subdivision of land and amendments to the zoning regulations. Appeal of Planning Commission decisions are made to the City Council.

Vacancies on the Commission are advertised in local newspapers, and interested applicants are encouraged to submit their names to the City Clerk at the Town Administrative Office. The Planning Commission normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:00 PM in the Town Hall.

The Building and Zoning Official serves as staff to the Planning Commission with assistance from the City Manager. Reviews of the General Plan, such as updating the Housing Element to state standards, pass through the Planning Commission prior to Council adoption.

### **Park and Recreation Commission**

The Park and Recreation Commission recommends policy for the Town's two parks: Holbrook Palmer Park and the Reading Park (adjacent to the library). Members are appointed in the same manner as the Planning Commissioners and serve four-year terms. Vacancies on the Commission are advertised in local newspapers, and interested applicants are encouraged to submit their names to the City Clerk at the Town Administrative Office. The Park and Recreation Commission normally meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at Holbrook Palmer Park.

### **Atherton General Plan Committee**

The General Plan Committee advises the City Council and Planning Commission on planning matters, reviews the General Plan and makes recommendations to the Town Council, Planning Commission and Town Staff regarding the operation of the ordinances and policies in the community.

The Committee consists of two Council members, two Planning Commissioners and up to four residents ("public members") who are not members of the City Council or Planning Commission.

The public members are appointed by the Council for no more than one two-year term. The Council members are selected by the Mayor, with Council approval. The Planning Commission members are selected by the Chair of the Planning Commission, with the approval of the Planning Commission.

Regular meetings are scheduled on the first Wednesday of the month on a quarterly basis (more often, if needed), beginning at 6:00 PM at Town Hall, 94 Ashfield Road.

### **Atherton Arts Committee**

The Atherton Arts Committee is dedicated to promoting art awareness, facilitating communication, enhancing life-long learning, and recognizing cultural diversity within the community. It consists of up to ten members, appointed by the City Council for indefinite terms. The Committee meets on the fourth Friday of each month, 11:00 AM at the Town Administrative Offices.

### **Atherton Audit Committee**

The City Council authorized the creation of the Audit Committee at their regular meeting on May 17, 2000. The Audit Committee provides oversight of the annual audit, makes recommendations to the City Council on matters related to the annual audit, and provides guidance to Town Staff on financial controls throughout the year. The seven members of the Audit Committee are appointed by the City Council, and includes two Council Members who serve on the Finance Committee, and five residents of the Town. Meetings are held quarterly in the Meeting Room of the Town Administrative Offices.

### **Transportation Committee**

This committee consists of seven (7) members including two (2) Council Members and five appointed members. (Committee expanded from five to seven members, approved at the April 15, 2009 Council Meeting)

The meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every other month at 6:00 p.m in the City Council Chambers, 94 Ashfield Road.

## **Posting Places**

All notices of new ordinances, public hearings, and agendas for Town meetings are posted, as provided by law, on the official bulletin boards of the Town. These boards are located at:

- ❖ Town Administrative Offices, 91 Ashfield Road
- ❖ Town Hall, 94 Ashfield Road
- ❖ Atherton Branch of the San Mateo County Library,  
2 Dinkelspiel Lane
- ❖ Atherton Train Station
- ❖ Corner of Selby Lane and Atherton Avenue
- ❖ Corner of Greenoaks Drive and Rosewood Drive

Agendas are also posted on the Town website: [www.ci.atherton.ca.us](http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us)

## **X. City Manager**

### **City Manager**

Administrative responsibility is placed in the Office of the City Manager. This position also serves as Director of Civil Defense. The City Manager is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the City Council. The City Manager also serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town.

The City Manager is responsible for enforcement of all Town laws and ordinances, and is also responsible for directing all Town operations, except the City Attorney. The City Manager represents the Town in both internal and external negotiations and working relationships with other governments. The City Manager recommends to the Council adoption of policies and ordinances which are deemed necessary; keeps the City Council advised of financial conditions of the Town; prepares the annual operating and capital budgets; serves as purchasing officer; and exercises general supervision over all public buildings, parks, streets, and all other public property under control of the Town.

## **XI. Planning, Zoning and Variance Processes**

### **Planning**

The City Council sets specific limits on construction, such as the distances structures are set back from the property lines, building height and floor area. The Planning Commission meets at 6:00 pm on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The Building and Zoning Official may be contacted at 752-0523.

### **Zoning**

Zoning regulations, dating back to 1928, specify that Atherton lots must be one acre in size, with only a few neighborhoods where smaller lots are allowed. Each lot may have a single family residential unit which does not exceed 34 feet in height and which is set back from the street and neighboring property approximately 60 feet. Accessory structures must be in the rear yard and at least 10 feet from the property lines. All new utilities must be placed underground. Homes as well as accessory structures built close to property lines must be screened with landscaping.

The Council has established a secondary process to allow the granting of specific minor exceptions in the areas that they feel have the least impact on the community by the granting of Conditional Use Permits. In Atherton, for example, swimming pools, athletic courts, and arbors may be located closer to the front property line than other Accessory Structures after a Conditional Use Permit has been granted by the Planning Commission.

### **Building Permit Issuance**

Most construction requires the issuance of a Building Permit. The Building and Zoning Official is responsible for enforcing the construction regulations set forth by the City Council. To insure the standards of the Town are met, the issuance of a Building Permit requires two approvals – Planning and Building.

If the Building Permit application meets all of the zoning requirements, it is then reviewed for conformance with the Uniform Building Codes. This involves a thorough review of the plans for compliance with structural, electrical, plumbing and fire safety. This process is normally conducted with the architect or designer.

## **Construction Approvals**

Residents are encouraged to contact the Town regarding any type of construction prior to commencement. Permits are required for many minor types of structures, including trellises and storage sheds, and may be issued over the counter in many instances. When hiring contractors, be sure they are properly licensed with both the State and the Town. The contractors' State License Board can be contacted in San Francisco at 1-800-321-2752.

## **Granting Variances**

Exceptions to the requirements of the Zoning regulations may be possible through the variance process. Variances are granted only for the following: special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, or the strict application of the zoning ordinance deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification. Improvements, such as buildings, are not taken into consideration.

A Public Hearing is held before the Planning Commission where all property owners who live within 500 feet of any portion of the property in question are notified of the variance request. The State established this process to prohibit the arbitrary granting of variances.

## **XII. Miscellaneous Regulations**

*All permits and licenses may be obtained at the  
Town Administrative Office.*

### **Accessory Dwelling Units**

An accessory dwelling unit may be permitted in conjunction with the main residence. This second unit cannot exceed 600 square feet in size and must be located within the required setback from the main dwelling. Other restrictions that apply must be met prior to the issuance of a conditional use permit by the Town.

### **Animal Control**

Every dog must have an up-to-date anti-rabies vaccination.

All dogs over the age of four months must be licensed. New residents have sixty days to acquire a license. Telephone 363-4220 for specific information.

Animals may not be in public without being licensed and under the control of the owner, by the utilization of a leash (cats exempted). Animals may not trespass on private property. Habitual barking is prohibited. Neglect of any animal is prohibited. Possession of more than three dogs over four months of age is prohibited.

### **Burglar Alarms**

All companies installing alarms in Atherton must obtain a business license.

All audible alarms must automatically turn off within ten minutes of activation. Audible alarms which sound like sirens are prohibited.

### **Commercial Vehicles**

Any commercial vehicle is prohibited from parking on a street longer than thirty minutes between 2:00 AM and 4:00 AM.

Vehicles are prohibited from parking upon the public right-of-way for the principal purpose of displaying the vehicle for sale.

### **Drainage**

Drainage of storm waters is the responsibility of the property owners. The Town maintains certain drainage structures that are part of the street system and the Atherton Channel Drainage District. All other drainage structures are privately maintained unless specific dedication and acceptance is made by the Town. All natural drainage ways, roadside swales( a valley-like intersection of two slopes in a piece of land) and driveway culverts are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain clear of vegetation or obstructions that would impede or block the flow of water.

### **Encroachment into the Right-of-Way**

Improvements between the edge of the pavement and the property line are allowed only after the issuance of an encroachment permit. These permits are needed to insure that all drainage is not obstructed and stationary improvements are located safely. Permits are not normally issued for planting. As a general rule, in the first three feet off the edge of the pavement, no planting over six inches in height is permitted. The next three feet can be used for low

plants, those less than three feet tall. The first six feet off the edge of pavement is also to be kept free of rocks and logs. The remaining portion of the street right-of-way, beyond the first six feet from the edge of the pavement can contain logs, trees, gate entry pads, and mail boxes. No parts of trees should be allowed to interfere with safe sight distances or visibility at corners adjacent to intersections. With the exception of ingress and egress for driveways, paving of the right-of-way is not allowed.

### **Fences**

Fence heights are generally limited to six feet, except along certain roadways and within thirty feet of property lines at intersections. Building permits are required for all fences that border streets.

### **Fireworks**

The sale, possession and use of fireworks of any kind within the Town is prohibited.

### **Firearms**

It is prohibited for anyone to discharge any gun, weapon, pellet gun, BB gun, firearm, firecracker, bomb or firework which throws or projects bullets or missiles of any kind. Also, persons under the age of 16 years cannot possess any firearm, gun or any instrument that throws or projects bullets or missiles on public property. This includes paint ball guns.

### **Garage Sales**

All residents are required to obtain a garage sale permit from the Police Department prior to such a sale.

Garage sale permits will not be issued to anyone who has had a garage sale in the prior twelve months, or who has taken property on consignment for the sale.

There are regulations which govern the hours during which the sale can be conducted and the size, location and number of signs allowed for advertising the sale.

### **Handbills/Throwaway Newspapers**

It is prohibited to distribute commercial or business handbills, newspapers,



circulars, etc. by any person after a written request by a resident to that person or company to discontinue the delivery of the material. The distributor is required to print in a conspicuous place on the material the name, address, and telephone number of the publisher or distributor.

### **Heritage Trees**

A Heritage Tree is a tree with a circumference of 48" or more when measured 48" above natural grade and located in the Tree Preservation Area, or a native oak species measuring 48" or more in circumference located anywhere on the lot. The following trees are not classified as Heritage Trees: Acacia baileyana, Acacia decurrens, Acacia melanoxylon and Ailanthus altissima. The "Tree Preservation Area" means the area outside of the allowable buildable area of the lot for the main residence. Permits are required to remove a Heritage Tree. Contact the Town Arborist at 752-0526 for tree removal requests.

### **Home Occupations**

Home Occupations are allowed only if they generate infrequent outside traffic. No employees may work in the home, no signs may be posted, and Atherton addresses may not be used in advertising. Approval by the City Manager is required.

### **Landscape Screening**

Landscape screening is required for new construction or additions to the main building over 18" above grade. Landscape screening is also required for an accessory structure that exceeds 6' in height and is less than 25' from a property line or an accessory structure that exceeds 10' in height and is less than 35' from a property line. Requiring landscape screening where appropriate is designed to reduce the impact of structures on neighborhoods and to provide for the maintenance of individual privacy of homes to a reasonable degree.

### **Noise Control**

## **ATHERTON NOISE AND CONSTRUCTION ORDINANCE SUMMARY**

#### **Construction and Delivery Activities By Anyone**

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Monday through Friday)	Allowed
ALL OTHER TIMES (including holidays)	Not Allowed

**By Residents / Property Owners:** Personally Operating Hand and Power

### Tools

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Sat., Sun., & Holiday	Allowed
ALL OTHER TIMES	Not Allowed

**Noise General Limitations:** Applies to noises emanating from any property, public or private, beyond the property line. Measurements made at any location on the receiving property.

7:00 AM – 10:00 PM	60 DBA
10:00 PM – 7:00 AM	50 DBA

**Exceptions to Noise Limitations:** Loud and raucous noise (amplified music or "any other form").

AT ALL TIMES	Not Allowed
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**Power Equipment:** Leaf blowers, vacuums, power mowers, rototillers, etc.

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM Monday through Friday	Allowed
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday	Allowed
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM Sunday	Allowed
ALL OTHER TIMES	Must adhere to general noise ordinance

**Heavy Duty Equipment:** Wood chippers, chainsaws, stump removers, etc.

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday	Allowed
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### Social Gatherings

10:00 AM – 12:00 AM Friday & Saturday	Not exceed 75 DBA
10:00 AM – 8:00 PM Sunday & Holidays	Not exceed 75 DBA
ALL OTHER TIMES	Must adhere to general noise ordinance

### Animals

Incessant for 5 minutes	Violation
Intermittent for 30 minutes	Violation

### Nuisance Abatement Program

The following are examples of public nuisances to report:

- > Nuisances located in the public right-of-way, telephone the Public Works Department at 752-0570.
- > Nuisances located on private property, telephone the Building Department

at 752-0560.

- The existence of dead or dangerous trees, or the unauthorized removal of a Heritage Tree, telephone the Public Works Department at 752-0570.
- The dumping of trash or petroleum products in the right-of-way, telephone the Public Works Department at 752-0570.
- The existence of a dangerous building or abandoned cars on private property, telephone the Building Department at 752-0560.
- The existence of graffiti on signs, fences or posters in the public right-of-way, telephone the Public Works Department at 752-0570.
- The existence of excessive construction noise before 8:00 AM or after 5:00 PM on weekdays, or excessive construction noise on weekends, telephone the police department at 688-6500.
- The existence of overgrown trees or vegetation along the edge of the street, creating a hazard for motorist or pedestrians, telephone the Public Works Department at 752-0570.

### **Parking Vehicles, Trailers, Boats, etc.**

Parking or leaving any vehicle on a public street or highway for seventy-two or more consecutive hours is prohibited.

The regular or permanent storage or parking on any public street, right-of-way, alley or driveway of house campers, house cars, buses, trucks over 1-1/2 ton, commercial vehicles, disabled, dismantled, or junked vehicles or parts thereof, trailer coaches, tractors, boats, and boat or horse trailers is prohibited. Regular or permanent storage or parking on any private property is not permitted unless the vehicle is not visible from either the street or adjoining property. Permanent storage is defined as a period of more than forty-eight hours or any period of time on ten successive days.

Tents, trailers and vehicles used for living are not permitted as accessory structures.

### **Parking Strip Maintenance and Planting**

For appearance, good drainage and safety, the area between the edge of the street pavement and the property line should be kept free of undesirable ground

cover, shrubbery, and overgrowth of ivy and weeds. Homeowners must ensure that this area is maintained in a safe condition free of deep holes, ruts, rocks, logs, or other hazards. The owner must prune shrubs and trees so that street traffic signs are kept visible to motorists and street lighting is not obscured.

Any planting on a parking strip should first be approved by City officials. Only certain trees may be used, and ground cover should be planted so as not to impede vehicle or pedestrian traffic or the flow of drainage water.

In general, no pavement, poured concrete, asphalt or similar material shall be used in any right-of-way except for ingress and egress to the property. For further information, contact the Public Works Department at 752-0570.

### **Satellite Dishes / Antennas**

There is a maximum height of thirty-four feet for antennas attached to a dwelling. In all other cases seventeen feet is the maximum height.

### **Signs**

Persons, firms, or corporations are prohibited from posting any cards, banners, handbills, signs, posters, advertisements, or notices of any kind on a public lamp post, pole, bridge, wall, fence or tree, or within any public right-of-way.

Any sign posted on private property must comply with specific provisions set forth in Chapter 15.36 of the Town's Municipal Code.

### **Solicitors**

Persons are prohibited from soliciting or canvassing in the Town of Atherton, unless such person has applied for and received a solicitor's permit from the Chief of Police. (Religious groups are exempt but are requested to notify the Town of their activity.)

The Police Department is required to investigate the applicant and the applicant's employer. The issuance of a permit is prohibited if either has been convicted of a felony crime within the previous five years.

### **Swimming Pools**

It is requested that every pool having a depth in excess of twenty-four inches of water be completely surrounded by a fence or a wall six feet high with no openings, holes or gaps larger than four inches in any dimension. All gates or

doors in the fence or wall must have self-closing and self-latching devices to keep them secure at all times.

Pools, pumps, filters or similar equipment may not be operated after 8:00 PM or before 8:00 AM.

Inflatable pool covers require a use permit.

### **Trees**

It is the responsibility of owners/residents to discover dead or dangerous trees located on their property. If the tree appears to be a hazard to others or an obstruction to public travel, the owner, at his own expense, shall cut down and remove such tree. The maintenance of trees located in the right-of-way is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.

The Town recommends that homeowners group together to reduce the maintenance cost of tree care by specialists.

### **Weed Abatement**

Owners/residents are required to remove rubbish, weeds, or other dangerous or injurious material to neighboring properties, or to the health and welfare of residents in the vicinity. This includes sidewalks, parking areas, streets, abutting or adjoining buildings, grounds, or lots.

The City Council may declare such material, if not removed by the resident, a public nuisance. The Town of Atherton can then proceed to have such materials removed at the homeowner's expense and place a lien upon the parcel for the expenses incurred.

## **XIII. Community Organizations**

### **Atherton Civic Interest League**

The Civic Interest League was formed to promote the general welfare of the Town and its residents. Membership is open to any resident of Atherton who pays the annual membership fee. The League sponsors an annual Town Meeting and periodically issues a newsletter that keeps residents informed of civic affairs. Past League projects have been in the areas of beautification, civic awareness, cultural awareness, educational awareness, and general safety areas.

## **Atherton Dames**

The Atherton Dames is an auxiliary to the Holbrook Palmer Foundation and is open to women in the community who are members of the Foundation. The Dames sponsor a number of traditional events. The telephone number is 752-0536. Both the Dames and the Foundation have historically worked to raise funds for special projects in the Park.

## **Atherton Heritage Association**

The Atherton Heritage Association, located in Town Hall, is the guardian of the Town's history. Through educational programs, displays of historical artifacts, documents and pictures, and a systematic cataloguing of important structures, this committee is dedicated to reminding us of our past. Membership is open to all interested residents. For further information, telephone the Town Administrative Office at 752-0500.

## **Atherton Police Foundation (APF)**

The Atherton Police Foundation (APF) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) group formed in 2011 that provides funding to purchase equipment and underwrite the costs of projects and activities to improve public safety that the Town neither funds nor cannot fund in a timely manner. The APF receives gifts and donations of money, goods, services and equipment to benefit the police department.

## **Atherton Tree Committee**

The Atherton Tree Committee serves as an advisory committee to the Town Council. The Tree Committee advocates the preservation, planting and maintenance of Atherton's valuable trees. The Tree Committee assists with the annual Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Awards. Membership is open to all residents.

## **Friends of the Atherton Community Library (FACL)**

The members of FACL adopted as their purpose "To encourage a closer association between the Atherton Community Library and the citizens of the area it serves". The Friends exist to support the programs, services, and projects that enrich the FACL through payment of annual nominal dues. Contact the library at 328-2422 for further information.

## **Holbrook Palmer Park Foundation**

The Holbrook Palmer Park Foundation was formed in 1965 by the community to "receive, administer, and expend funds for charitable, scientific, educational, and literary purposes in connection with the park". Membership in the Foundation is open to all residents of Atherton by payment of annual dues.

The Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership. For further information telephone 752-0536.

## **Homeowners' Associations**

There are several home associations within the Town. The two largest are the Lindenwood Homeowners' Association and the Lloyd Park Homeowners' Association. Membership in these groups is open to any resident living within these boundaries. For further information, telephone the City Clerk's Office at 752-0529.

## **XIV. Services**

### **Garbage/Recycling**

Recology handles garbage pick-up. Telephone 595-3900 to arrange for special pickups or other questions. Please remember to bring in your emptied garbage cans within 24 hours of pick-up.

### **Sanitation**

West Bay Sanitation District - 321-0384

Fair Oaks Sanitation District - 363-4100

### **Mosquito Abatement**

Atherton is included in the San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District. Should you notice a particularly heavy mosquito infestation, telephone the Mosquito Abatement District at 344-8592.

### **Water**

California Water Service - 367-6800

### **Electric**

PG&E – 1-800-743-5000

## **XV. Education**

### **Public Schools**

There are nine Atherton schools for students to attend. If you are unsure which school your child should attend, telephone any of the school district offices and inquire.

### **Elementary**

<b>Las Lomas Elementary School District</b>	<b>854-6311</b>
Las Lomas School 299 Alameda de las Pulgas, Atherton	854-5900
La Entrada School 2200 Sharon Road Menlo Park	854-3962
<b>Menlo Park City Elementary School District</b>	<b>321-7140</b>
<b>Laurel School</b> 95 Edge Road Atherton	324-1086
<b>Encinal School</b> 195 Encinal Avenue Atherton	326-5164
<b>Oak Knoll School</b> 1895 Oak Knoll Avenue Menlo Park	854-4433
<b>Hillview School</b> 1100 Elder Avenue Menlo Park	326-4341
<b>Redwood City Elementary School District</b>	<b>423-2200</b>
<b>Selby Lane School</b> 170 Selby Lane Atherton	368-3996



**Kennedy Intermediate School** 365-4611  
Goodwin & Connecticut Streets  
Redwood City

### **High School**

**Sequoia Union High School District** **369-1411**

**Menlo-Atherton High School** 322-5311  
555 Middlefield Road  
Atherton

**Woodside High School** 367-9755  
199 Churchill Avenue  
Woodside

### **Private Schools**

**Menlo School** 688-3865  
50 Valparaiso Avenue  
Atherton

**Sacred Heart Lower/  
Sacred Heart Middle School** 322-9931  
50 Emilie Avenue  
Atherton

**Sacred Heart Preparatory School** 322-1866  
150 Valparaiso Avenue  
Atherton

**Menlo College** 543-3753  
1000 El Camino Real  
Atherton

## **XVI. Voting**

### **The Atherton Voter**

Any United States citizen who is at least 18 years of age on or before election day, a resident, and not in prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony, may register to vote. To register to vote in a specific election, a voter must register at least 15 days prior to the election.

In Atherton, Voter Registration Forms may be obtained at the Atherton Library, Town Administrative Offices, Menlo School, Menlo College, Menlo-Atherton High School and Sacred Heart Preparatory School.

Any change to name, address, or party affiliation will require registering again.

If you are unsure about your voting status, you may telephone the County Election Office directly at 312-5222.

### **Elections**

The County Clerk maintains a list of registered voters and carries out the duties of the Election Officer for state and countywide elections. The City Clerk performs the duties of the Election Officer for Atherton's local issues, including election of members of the City Council.

Regular municipal elections are held in conjunction with County, State, and National elections on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Special elections are held from time to time as determined by the TOWN Council. Registered voters receive, in the mail, a sample ballot and the address of their polling place. Polling locations are open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

Atherton is represented by the 21st State Assembly District, the 11th State Senate District and the 14th U.S. Congressional District. These Districts may change every ten years after the official U.S. Census.

### **Absentee Voting**

Any registered voter may vote by absentee (vote by mail) ballot. Applications must be made by completing the application on the back cover of your Sample Ballot Pamphlet, or by sending a written request to: Registration & Elections Division, 40 Tower Road, San Mateo, CA 94402, Attn: Absentee Unit.

Effective January 1, 2002, California's Election Law allows any registered voter to become a Permanent Absent Voter.

For more information on absentee voting, or to obtain an application form to become a Permanent Absent Voter, contact the County Elections Department at 312-5222, or visit [www.shapethefuture.org](http://www.shapethefuture.org).

## **Nominations**

Town and special district offices are all nonpartisan. There is no primary number of candidates may be nominated for any local office. A qualified voter may file a petition for an office with the signatures of at least 20 registered voters within the jurisdiction of the office.

## **How to Contact and Address Elected Officials**

### **The President**

The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
Form of Address:  
Dear Mr. President,  
Yours very truly,

### **U.S. Senators**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
The Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Form of Address:  
Dear Senator (Last Name),  
Yours very truly,

### **U.S. Representatives**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20525  
Form of Address:  
Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name),  
Yours very truly,

**Governor**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Form of Address:

Dear Governor (Last Name),  
Respectfully yours,

**State Senators**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
California State Senate  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Form of Address:

Dear Senator (Last Name),  
Yours very truly,

**State Assemblymen**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Form of Address:

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name),  
Yours very truly,

**San Mateo County Board of Supervisors**

The Honorable (Full Name)  
County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors  
County Government Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063

Form of Address:

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name),  
Yours very truly,

**Atherton City Council**

The Honorable Mayor (Full Name)  
Town Administrative Office  
91 Ashfield Road  
Atherton, CA 94027

Form of Address:

Dear Mayor (Last Name)  
Yours very truly,

The Honorable Councilmember (Full  
Name)  
Town Administrative Office  
91 Ashfield Road  
Atherton, CA 94027

Form of Address:

Dear Councilmember (Last Name)  
Yours very truly,

## **To All Residents**

To provide the best possible service to the citizens of Atherton, the Police Department maintains confidential information about each residence. This voluntary information includes the resident's name, telephone number, alarm information and a list of "responsible" persons. This information assists us in providing quick and efficient service when needed, and enables us to contact a person responsible for the residence when the owner is not available.

Every resident should complete the Resident Information and Responsible Information form (shown on pages 55-56) and found on the Town website at [www.ci.atherton.ca.us](http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us). If you have an alarm, please fill in the Alarm Information section of the form. To provide efficient and effective service in emergency situations, it is critical that we have this information.

The Public Safety Community Outreach Group sincerely appreciates your continued participation and support of the Atherton Police Crime Prevention Programs. It is because of your active support and involvement that Atherton is one of the safest communities in which to own a home in the Bay Area.

**ATHERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**RESIDENT INFORMATION**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ WORK NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
CELL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ PAGER NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**RESPONSIBLE INFORMATION**

NAME #1 \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ ALT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
DOES THIS PERSON HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR HOME, AND ARE THEY WILL-  
ING TO RESPOND IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY?     YES     \_\_\_NO

NAME #2 \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ ALT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
DOES THIS PERSON HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR HOME, AND ARE THEY WILL-  
ING TO RESPOND IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY?     YES     \_\_\_NO

NAME #3 \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ ALT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
DOES THIS PERSON HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR HOME, AND ARE THEY WILL-  
ING TO RESPOND IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY?     YES     \_\_\_NO

## ALARM INFORMATION

ALARM CO \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

RESET CODE \_\_\_\_\_ RESET TIME \_\_\_\_\_

TURN OFF LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

IS YOUR ALARM CONNECTED DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE? \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO

ALARM ACCOUNT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

DOGS ON PROPERTY \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO DOG NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

ARE DOGS FRIENDLY \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO \_\_\_\_\_

NIGHT LIGHTS \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

GUNS IN RESIDENCE \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO

IS THERE A KEY ON FILE AT THE ATHERTON POLICE DEPT.?? \_\_\_YES\_\_\_NO

GATE CODE (IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_







**ADVERTISING PAGE FOR JEFF**

LAST REVISION TO HANDBOOK - 2012

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**91 Ashfield Road**  
Atherton, CA 94027

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