Authentic Atascadero

2045 General Plan

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT | AUGUST 2026

Working together to **serve,** build **community** and enhance **quality of life.**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The 2045 General Plan articulates the shared community vision for preservation, growth, and change in our community. This General Plan is a long-range policy document that guides decision-making and establishes the intent for the design and development of new projects, conservation of natural resources, promotion of economic development, improvements to mobility and infrastructure systems, expansion of public services, and enhancement of community amenities. This General Plan directs how Atascadero will look and how residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors will experience our City today and well into the future. While the Plan identifies 2045 as a horizon year, not all initiatives and goals in this Plan may be achieved by then. However, this Plan defines the interconnected actions we will pursue to create the conditions for the City we envision.

In 2002, the City adopted a plan focused on "smart growth" shaped by four guiding principles:

- Protect the natural environment.
- Improve the appearance and character of Atascadero.
- Provide a secure revenue base.
- Promote well-planned neighborhoods.

This Plan recognizes what has been achieved: new housing types, public and private reinvestments in Downtown, development focused within the Urban Services Line, and the continued consideration of hillsides and habitats. Planning for the next two to three decades will build upon these successes while accounting for the rapid technological and societal changes affecting how people work, shop, enjoy leisure time, and move in, around, and through the City. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many shifts likely to be permanent, particularly work-at-home jobs, online shopping, and home food delivery. These conditions, as well as the impacts of climate change, will guide development of Atascadero's next generation General Plan.

Initiated in 2021, this update effort focused on revisiting, refining, and updating goals, policies, and actions to reflect evolving trends, demographics, and collective ideas. Residents, business owners, and other community members participated in a robust public engagement program to ensure that all perspectives were shared and represented in the shaping of this Plan.

Historical Context

While this General Plan looks towards the future, it is also important to understand the past, Atascadero is distinguished by its unique history. The community was founded in 1913, when Edward Gardner Lewis envisioned establishing a model colony of 38 square miles that could grow to 30,000 residents. Lewis moved forward with the vision, overseeing the sale of land plots, construction of more than 100 miles of local roads, and founding of the Atascadero Mutual Water Company. Development halted abruptly in 1924 when Lewis declared bankruptcy, and the Great Depression slowed growth for decades after.

Atascadero was a planned community from the beginning, with a focus on creating a welcoming environment for residents through features such as wide, tree-lined streets and a defined civic center. The City attracted individuals and families seeking a retreat from the busier urban centers of California. Atascadero incorporated in 1979, after which a surge in population and ensuing development of residential and commercial areas shaped the community we experience today.

Throughout the mid-20th century, Atascadero continued to develop as a suburban community with a strong sense of local identity. The City's growth was influenced by its early master planning efforts and the charm of its surrounding landscapes, which attracted both new residents and visitors. Today, Atascadero is known for its blend of historical charm, community-focused living, and its scenic Central Coast setting, reflecting its origins as a thoughtfully designed, model City.

Atascadero has a historic charm that comes from many preserved sites citywide. Although most of the colony-era homes are not listed on the State or National register, 17 prominent sites are either listed or eligible for historic status, and another 17 potential historic resources are located throughout the community.

Atascadero City Hall (also known as the City Administration Building) is a key architectural landmark and symbol of the City's early vision. Designed by architect Walter D. Bliss in the Italian Renaissance style, the building is central to the City's historic identity and continues to serve as a

civic hub. Built in 1914, the Atascadero Printery is a notable example of early 20th-century industrial architecture. Originally constructed as a printing facility, it features distinctive Italian Renaissance design elements.

The Atascadero Estates Residential Historic District, established in the early 20th century, encompasses a collection of well-preserved residential properties that showcase the City's early planning and architectural styles, including Mission Revival and Craftsman. Both the Bucklin House and the Jorgens House serve as early examples of residential architecture in Atascadero. The homes feature elements of the Mission Revival style and have been well preserved.

Following the early colony years, Atascadero's growth resulted from major infrastructure investments: the construction of Highway 101, establishment of the Atascadero State Hospital (which brought many new jobs to the community), and provision of sewer service to the town center, which resulted in a near doubling of the population within the town boundaries. In 1979, Atascadero incorporated, becoming the second largest City in the County at that time.

Authentic Atascadero

The 2045 General Plan — **Authentic Atascadero** — frames the community vision for how Atascadero should grow and respond to change over the coming years and decades. As the City's overarching policy document, every land use, mobility, and infrastructure decision made by elected and appointed City officials and City staff must be consistent with the General Plan vision, goals, policies, programs, and actions.

State law requires that every City prepare and adopt a comprehensive and long-range General Plan (California Government Code Section 65300) and that the plan inform the content and application of programs and ordinances that govern land use, infrastructure investments, and generally, the spending of public monies. The General Plan and its maps, diagrams, and policies are reflected, for example, in the Zoning Ordinance and economic development strategies. Also, under California law, all specific plans, area plans, community plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision maps, and public works projects must be consistent with the General Plan.

While a General Plan can cover a variety of topics based on a community's specific needs, State law requires that it address these seven topics, or elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. An eighth topic, Environmental Justice, is only required to be addressed if a City includes "disadvantaged communities," as designated by the State. Atascadero does not have any State-identified disadvantaged communities.

The required elements must establish policy direction relating to:

- The use and development of properties citywide
- Accommodation of all modes of transportation
- The provision of parks and other open spaces to meet community needs
- The types of housing available in the community
- The use and consideration of natural resources

- The provision of public safety services and protection against natural and human-caused hazards (including noise)

The 2045 General Plan is structured around topics that emerged through an extensive community engagement process. As noted above, General Plans are required to contain a minimum of seven State-mandated elements, but municipalities have flexibility in the organization of the chapters and content to reflect local preferences and sensibilities. **Table 1-1** indicates how the General Plan chapters relate to the State-mandated elements.

Table 1-1: State-Required General Plan Topics

Atascadero 2045 General Plan Chapters	State Mandated Elements								Optional Topics
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing[1]	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	Environmental Justice[2]	
Chapter 1: Introduction			*Prepared under separate cover*					*Not required in Atascadero*	■
Chapter 2: General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles									■
Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Form Element	■			■					
Chapter 4: Economic Development Element									■
Chapter 5: Housing Element									
Chapter 6: Mobility Element		■							
Chapter 7: Recreation and Open Space Element				■	■				
Chapter 8: Public Services and Infrastructure Element									■
Chapter 9: Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element						■	■		
Glossary									■

1. The State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) requires Housing Elements to be periodically reviewed, updated, and certified. The City of Atascadero Housing Element is included under separate cover.

2. The State of California requires jurisdictions to prepare an Environmental Justice Element only if they have one or more communities that are identified as "disadvantaged communities" based on CalEnviroScreen 4.0. The City of Atascadero does not have any identified disadvantaged communities as of 2024 when this General Plan was prepared.

Community Involvement

Beginning in early 2023, City staff undertook a series of community engagement activities to promote and inform the 2045 General Plan. The City was committed to designing and implementing an inclusive and dynamic engagement process to ensure robust and genuine feedback from the community, civic and City leaders, and the private sector. The following is a summary of key engagement materials and activities that took place during the process.

General Plan Update Website

The City prepared a dedicated General Plan Update website (www.atascadero2045.org) that kept the public informed and allowed people to directly submit comments. The website compiled all events, documents, and other materials associated with the project.

Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

City staff met with a range of stakeholders, civic leaders, and community groups throughout the process to discuss challenges and opportunities, alternatives, and draft policies. These meetings allowed for important discussions to occur that helped inform the process and ultimately the goals, policies, and actions included in the 2045 General Plan.

Community Engagement Series #1: Vision for the Future

In early 2023, the City hosted a series of targeted group discussions and an open house to solicit community ideas on a vision for the future of Atascadero and feedback on challenges and emerging opportunities; these conversations informed the Alternatives phase of the project. These meetings and workshops provided an opportunity for the community to learn about the process and the importance of the General Plan, and to discuss the future of Atascadero. Events in this series included informational pop-up events during concurrent community-led programming, an open house that allowed discussions based on each General Plan element, and the creation of an Existing Conditions Atlas that allowed community members to use maps to comment on specific areas throughout the City and identify opportunities, challenges, or additional questions.

Community Engagement Series #2: Alternatives

In Fall 2023, the City hosted a series of pop-up events, focus group meetings, open houses, high school student policy projects, and an online survey to solicit community ideas on a preferred land use and growth alternative for the future of Atascadero. These interactive events and activities provided community members and stakeholders with an opportunity to learn about the proposed new land use designations—called Placetypes—and areas of change (focus areas), provide feedback on growth ideas and concepts for each focus area, and discuss additional things they would improve or change in the future. Focus areas were a key part of the alternatives discussion and used throughout the planning process to inform community discussions around potential changes, investments, and key priorities.

Community 2045 General Plan Open House

The City hosted a Community Open House on the draft 2045 General Plan on October 6, 2025. The event, held at the City Hall Foyer, provided an opportunity for the community to review and provide input on the Draft General Plan Elements, preliminary zoning districts, and proposed land use regulations. The informal drop in event was a valuable opportunity for residents to meet one-on-one with City staff and the consultant team to discuss the project and provide feedback before the Draft General Plan was finalized.

City Council Study Sessions

The Atascadero City Council was actively involved in all phases of the project. In addition to their role as the legislative body for the City, the Council also functioned as an advisory committee for the General Plan Update, holding study sessions on a regular basis to consider policy strategies, review community feedback, and provide direction to City staff on key topics to study and choices for the future. Each study session was a public meeting, and the community was encouraged to attend and provide feedback.

Planning Area

In 2023, when the planning process for this General Plan began, the incorporated City boundaries encompassed about 26 square miles, less than the extent Lewis envisioned for the model colony. However, under State law, the City has the authority and ability to plan beyond its boundaries within an area referred to as its sphere of influence (SOI). Together, the incorporated City area and the sphere of influence are termed the "Planning Area," which generally coincides with the historic Atascadero Colony boundary. The 2045 General Plan Planning Area boundary (see **Figure 1-2**) covers about 32 square miles. The following is a more detailed summary of the purpose and size of each major boundary.

City Limits

The Atascadero City limits encompass approximately 26 square miles, or 16,738 acres, as of 2024. The City has land use authority over all properties within these limits, except for properties owned by the State of California, San Luis Obispo County, and public school districts.

Urban Services Line (USL)

Atascadero's Urban Services Line (USL) designates land within the City limits where services, in particular water and sewer, are provided or may be provided in the future. Due to topography, environmental, and physical constraints, rural residential development is and will remain the predominant land use development pattern outside the USL.

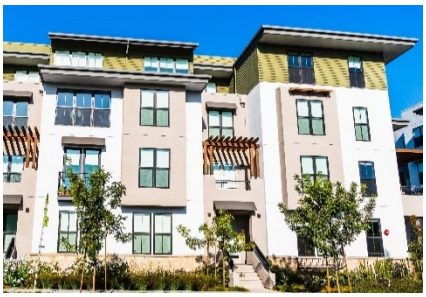
Sphere of Influence (SOI)

The SOI represents adjacent unincorporated areas that currently, or may in the future, receive City services. The San Luis Obispo County Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCo, identifies two unincorporated areas within the City's SOI, totaling approximately five square

miles, or 3,466 acres. The most significant is a property known as Eagle Ranch, abutting Atascadero's southern City boundary. Eagle Ranch contains existing colony lots (452) and is subject to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between San Luis Obispo County and the City of Atascadero that guides the future annexation and development of this area.

The "Big Moves"

The 2045 General Plan process involved extensive community and decision-maker discussions regarding future growth and evolving community character. This engagement process (summarized above) helped inform the goals, policies, actions, and programs included in this General Plan. While each chapter discusses specific topics, the community and City Council identified a series "Big Moves" that establish the overarching focus of the 2045 General Plan. The Big Moves represent key land use objectives and strategies that will help advance the Vision and Guiding Principles (see **Chapter 2**) and define how the community grows and evolves into the future.



Big Move A

Create a Mix of Housing

This 2045 General Plan identifies ways to support future community needs and choices by expanding the types, formats, and affordability of new housing in Atascadero.

Key Policy Considerations

- Allow higher-density residential and mixed-use projects within Downtown and along key stretches of El Camino Real and Morro Road that are accessible to a range of community services, amenities, and activities.
- Consider development incentives for projects that provide needed workforce housing near areas of employment.
- Encourage incremental infill housing in traditionally single-family areas that maintains the character and neighborhood scale (second units, duplexes, cottage clusters).

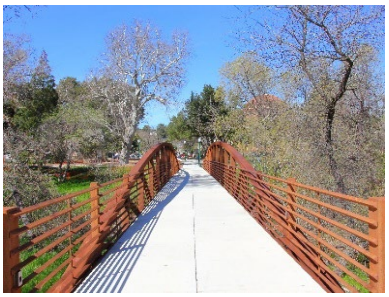
Big Move B

Attract New Industries and Higher Wage Jobs

The 2045 General Plan identifies ways to cultivate a successful, resilient, and diverse business environment that supports existing and new businesses, attracts innovative and emerging industries, and increases higher wage jobs in Atascadero.

Key Policy Considerations

- Encourage business investment through targeted regulatory incentives and infrastructure prioritization (onsite parking reductions, infrastructure upgrades).
- Actively market Atascadero as a business-friendly City, and engage technology, research and development, and similar industries to locate in the City.
- Provide opportunities for flexible building uses and conversion of spaces within key commercial and mixed-use areas.



Big Move C

Improve Mobility, Access, and Safety

The 2045 General Plan identifies ways to create and maintain a circulation network that provides safe, efficient, and convenient mobility choices.

Key Policy Considerations

- Enhance multi-modal street design and amenities along El Camino Real and Morro Road to encourage and accommodate more walking and biking.
- Create a network of emergency routes for wildfire-prone areas that provide safe evacuation for residents and efficient entry for first responders.
- Prioritize key collector streets for multi-modal improvements to enhance mobility options.

Big Move D

Address Public Infrastructure Needs

The 2045 General Plan identifies ways to maintain adequate and efficient backbone infrastructure to support current and future community, business, and development needs in Atascadero.

Key Policy Considerations

- Expand telecommunications infrastructure and public utilities to and within key employment areas.
- Implement streetscape improvements along El Camino Real and Morro Road near major planned residential and employment nodes to incentivize new development.
- Develop fiscal strategies for maintaining and expanding key infrastructure.

Big Move E

Ensure Fiscal Sustainability

The 2045 General Plan identifies ways to balance new public investment and private development to maintain sustainable and resilient fiscal resources for the City.

Key Policy Considerations

- Prioritize public investments that have a positive influence on long-term economic growth, including focusing infrastructure improvements within employment-generating areas.
- Use financing mechanisms that attract new development that contributes to near-term investment and long-term infrastructure maintenance.
- Acknowledge the fiscal implications of different land use types and the necessity of maintaining a balanced land use mix to mitigate fiscal vulnerabilities during variable market cycles.

General Plan Chapters

The 2045 General Plan is organized into the following chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Describes the context of Atascadero and the 2045 General Plan process, including the extensive community outreach and feedback that informed goals, policies, actions, and programs going forward. It also identifies the Planning Area, provides an overview of general plan requirements, presents the "Big Moves," and summarizes the approach, structure, and key components of the 2045 General Plan.

Chapter 2: General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

Presents the community's vision for Atascadero and guiding principles that will shape the vision.

Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Form Element

Fulfills the State requirements for the Land Use Element and identifies policies to preserve and foster community character when exploring opportunities for growth. This chapter outlines goals and policies for development citywide, as well as for unique areas within Atascadero.

Chapter 4: Economic Development Element

Represents a topic emphasized by community members and City leaders, but it is not required by State law. This chapter provides policies to diversify the economic base and expand employment opportunities by attracting new businesses and supporting existing businesses.

Chapter 5: Housing Element

Fulfills State requirements and certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in January 2021 as part of the 6th Cycle Housing Element update process. Adopted by the City Council in November 2020, the City of Atascadero 2021-2028 Housing Element is a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for promoting the production of safe, decent, and affordable housing for residents. In accordance with State law, Housing Elements are updated every eight years and thus is on a different update cycle than this General Plan

Chapter 6: Mobility Element

Fulfills State requirements for the Circulation Element and outlines policies to balance all modes of travel throughout Atascadero, with an emphasis on multi-modal transportation along major corridors, strategies to improve circulation at key intersections and freeway overpasses, and identifying opportunities for expanded bicycle routes and pedestrian connections and trails.

Chapter 7: Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element

Fulfills State requirements for the Conservation and Open Space Elements, which focus on resource preservation, park space, and recreation resources.

Chapter 8: Public Services and Infrastructure Element

Addresses topics required for the Safety and Circulation Elements, including water supply, storage, and delivery, wastewater collection and treatment, flood control and stormwater management, solid waste management, energy, and telecommunications.

Chapter 9: Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element

Fulfills State requirements for the Safety and Noise Elements. This chapter establishes goals and policies regarding adequate emergency services and response systems, encompassing both preventative and proactive practices. It also outlines policies to protect the community from wildland fire hazards, noise, hazardous materials, adverse effects of climate change, and geological events.

Key Terms

Each chapter contains goals, policies, and actions crafted to achieve the community's vision.

- A **goal** is an overall statement of community desires and consists of a broad statement of purpose or direction. For each goal in the 2045 General Plan, associated and more definitive policy statements follow.
- A **policy** provides more specific guidance to the City Council, Planning Commission, other City commissions and boards, and City staff in their review of development proposals and other actions taken.
- Implementation **actions** further articulate how the City will achieve its goals and policies.

Implementation Categories

The 2045 General Plan is implemented in a variety of ways. Each policy and action include one or more of the abbreviations below to identify how they will be implemented. Many policies are implemented through City legislative or regulatory actions, while others require either new research or community partnerships. This approach of tracking how each policy is implemented allows City decision-makers and staff, business and property owners, residents, and the entire Atascadero community to actively monitor General Plan implementation progress.

Development Review [DR]

Many General Plan policies are implemented through regulations based on the City's "police power" to protect public health, safety, and welfare. City ordinances also create a development review process that provides for review of individual project proposals and authorizes the City to approve, conditionally approve, or deny projects based on their consistency with the General

Plan. The following plans, ordinances, and procedures are commonly used by the City to implement the General Plan:

- Specific Plans
- Zoning Code
- Objective Design Standards
- Design Guidelines
- Subdivision Code
- Building Code
- Development Review Process
- Annexation Requirements

Master Plans [MP]

The City has adopted master plans, strategies, and programs for various City services and facilities, types of development, and geographic areas. These are prepared to provide more specific direction for decision-makers, staff, and the public about policy and program decisions in the future. They are not elements or components of the General Plan; rather, they are tools that implement the General Plan. Specific General Plan implementation programs call for the annual or periodic review of many of these master plans, strategies, and programs, in addition to adoption of new ones.

Financing and Budgeting [FB]

The development, maintenance, and operation of public facilities such as parks and civic buildings require financial resources derived from various sources. Programming of City capital projects and their funding, as outlined in the Capital Improvement Projects list, is updated annually. The following revenue sources used by or available to the City will continue to support the development, maintenance, and operation of public facilities and services:

- Property Tax Revenue
- Sales Tax Revenue
- User Fees
- Development Impact and Linkage Fees
- Community Facilities and Special Assessment Districts
- Municipal Bonds
- Special Taxes
- Regional Agency, State, and Federal Grants
- Other Regional Agency, State, and Federal Funding

Studies and Reports [SR]

The City conducts studies and produces reports to collect and evaluate information related to specific issues. These studies and reports are undertaken at the direction of the City Council as needed or are prepared annually to report on the status and implementation of the General Plan.

Services and Operations [SO]

The City provides a broad range of services to its residents, businesses, and visitors, and manages and operates its facilities to meet community needs. How the City provides services and carries out its operations influence the effectiveness of General Plan implementation.

Agency Coordination [AC]

The City must coordinate with numerous local, regional, State, and Federal agencies to implement the General Plan. These agencies provide services, facilities, or funding, and administer regulations that directly or indirectly affect many issues addressed in the General Plan. The following is a partial list of public agencies that may play a role in implementing the General Plan:

- Adjacent jurisdictions, including San Luis Obispo County, with which Atascadero shares certain municipal services and facilities
- Local water provider
- Regional agencies such as SLO Council of Governments
- State agencies such as Caltrans, General Services, State Parks, the State Lands Commission, The Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal agencies such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the U.S. Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency

Partnerships with the Private Sector [PA]

The City may coordinate its activities with private sector efforts to improve public service delivery, manage public sector assets, or leverage private sector investment. By exploring new partnerships with the private sector, the City can use its technical, management, and financial resources in creative ways to achieve the goals of the General Plan.

Public Information and Education [PI]

A critical City function is providing information to residents and the business community about the policies and programs being carried out to achieve community goals. This is done either digitally (City website, email blasts, social media) or through physical materials (mailers, newspaper ads).

User Groups

The 2045 General Plan is intended for use by a variety of individuals and organizations, including residents, businesses, developers, City staff, the City Council, and appointed boards and commissions.

Residents

For Atascadero residents, the General Plan indicates: 1) the overall uses that are permitted in various Atascadero neighborhoods and districts, 2) the long-range plans and changes that may affect different areas of the community, 3) the programs and services the City will develop or refine to improve quality of life, and 4) the policies the City will use to evaluate future development applications. Sections of the General Plan of most interest to residents include the Vision and Guiding Principles (see **Chapter 2**), Land Use and Community Form Element (see **Chapter 3**), Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**), Recreation and Open Space Element (see **Chapter 7**), and Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element (see **Chapter 9**).

Businesses

For Atascadero businesses, the General Plan outlines the actions the City will take in support of local business and to expand and diversify the local economy. General Plan sections of most interest to businesses include the Vision and Guiding Principles (see **Chapter 2**), Land Use and Community Form Element (see **Chapter 3**), Economic Development Element (see **Chapter 4**), Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**), and Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element (see **Chapter 9**).

Developers

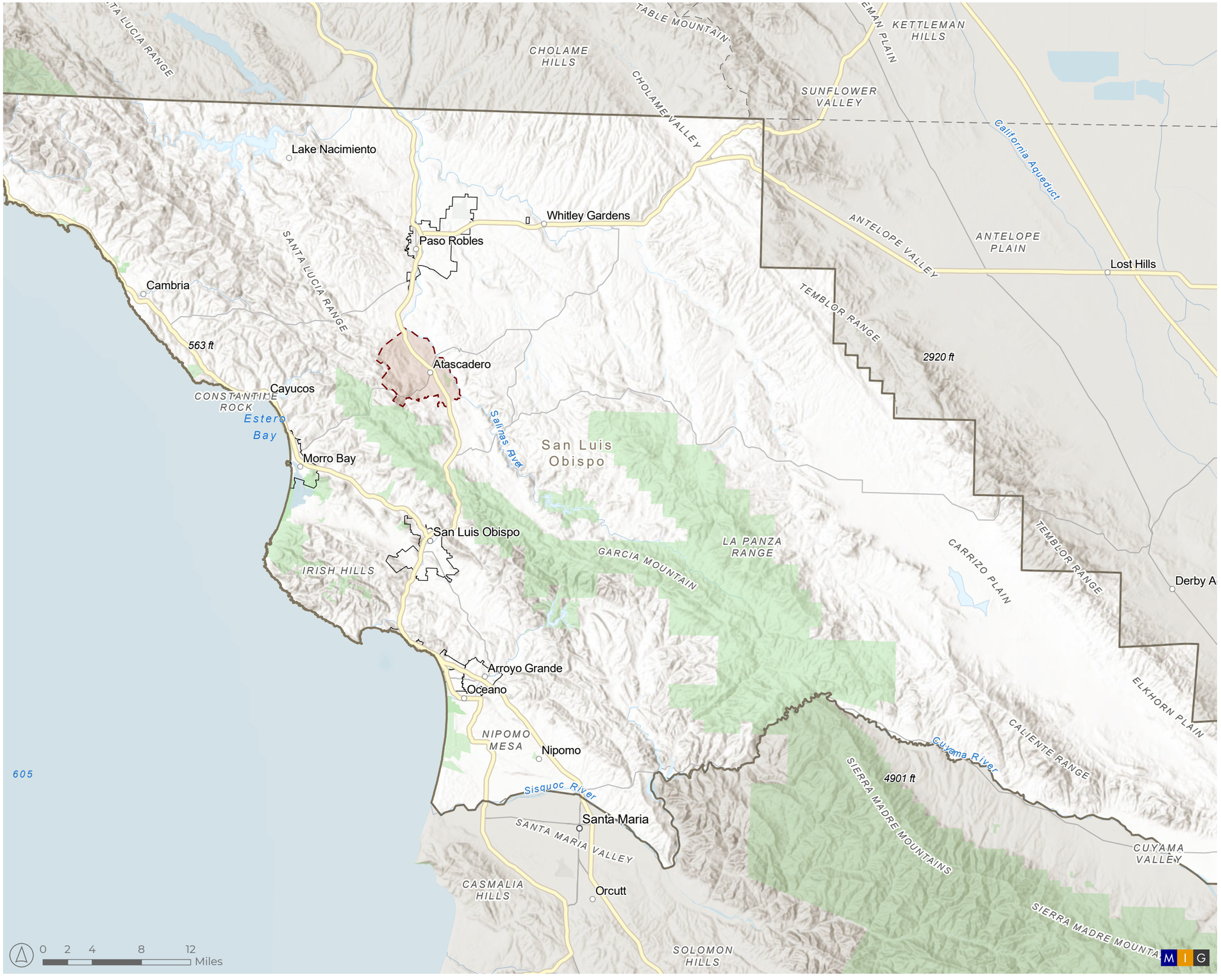
For developers looking to build in and contribute in a positive manner to Atascadero, the General Plan provides an overview of the Atascadero community, summarizes its vision, and outlines the overarching policies and expectations for development. Developers should review all elements of the General Plan to gain an understanding of challenges and opportunities related to land use and economic development. Other applicable documents, such as specific plans and the Zoning Ordinance, should also be reviewed to gain a complete perspective on the City's regulatory documents and processes.

City Staff

City staff uses the General Plan to make decisions related to programs and services, capital improvement projects, and land use and development applications. The Plan also provides the goal and policy framework for City staff to make land use recommendations to the City Council, Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions. In addition, the General Plan provides a detailed implementation program that identifies actions to be completed by City staff. The implementation programs can be used as a guide to establish annual work programs and budgets.

City Council, Boards, and Commissions

For the City Council and appointed boards and commissions, the General Plan guides policy and development decisions and actions on capital improvement projects. Future land use and development decisions and infrastructure improvements must be consistent with the General Plan.



AUTHENTIC Atascadero OUR CITY, OUR PLAN

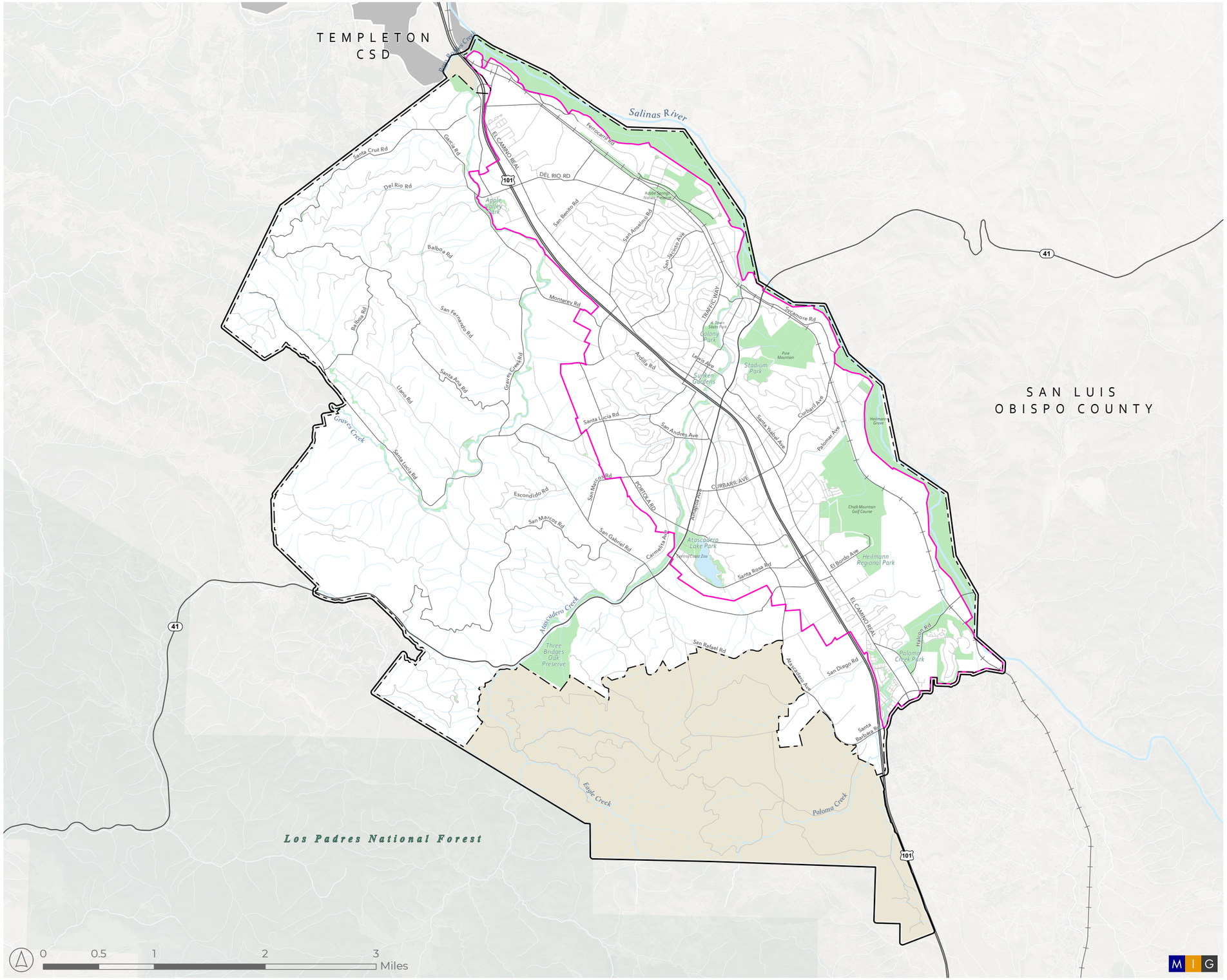
Figure 1-1

Regional Context

Basemap Features

- Atascadero City Limit
- San Luis Obispo County
- San Luis Obispo County Cities
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Rivers + Waterbodies

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.



AUTHENTIC Atascadero OUR CITY, OUR PLAN

Figure 1-2

Planning Area

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

Chapter 2: General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles form the General Plan foundation. The Vision Statement expresses the collective community philosophy that will shape Atascadero through 2045 and beyond. The vision does not describe an end statement; rather, it defines the framework for decision making moving forward. The principles further articulate the vision by focusing on the specific growth, change, and preservation frameworks for decisions. These represent the highest-level policy direction of this General Plan. All goals, policies, strategies, and actions have been crafted to be consistent with the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

Vision Statement

To prioritize goals and actions in the 2045 General Plan, the City developed an overarching Vision Statement based on extensive community ideas and feedback received during the General Plan update process. This Vision Statement shown below reflects the ideas, thoughts, and desires heard from residents, local business and property owners, elected and appointed officials, and other members of the Atascadero community. The statement expresses a bold vision for Atascadero, both as a goal and lens through which long-term planning decisions will be made.

2045 General Plan Vision Statement

Atascadero provides opportunities for all residents and business owners to thrive. Our community-focused culture pursues investments and land use strategies that create a diversity of housing types, support local businesses, improve all mobility modes, and respect our natural environment. Collective community actions improve conditions for current and future generations.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are rooted in community voices heard during initial engagement activities and City Council's strategic planning initiatives. They will both guide the goals, policies, strategies, and programs in this General Plan and future decisions the City will make related to implementation of this plan. These principles, organized into five topical categories, essentially provide the decision-making lens for City officials, staff, and decision-makers.

Guiding Principles – Our Places

- Respect Atascadero's semi-rural character as the community evolves.
- Facilitate vibrant public spaces that encourage community connections. Support City parks, trails, and facilities that provide access to a variety of recreation experiences.
- Promote investments in downtown that support the needs of local businesses and residents and provide a quality experience for visitors.
- Encourage synergistic commercial and residential uses along the El Camino Real and Morro Road corridors to support long-term viability of commercial spaces.

Guiding Principles – Our People

- Support a culture that is welcoming, inclusive, and based on mutual respect.
- Create and maintain opportunities for people of all income levels and ages to live, work, raise families, and retire in Atascadero.
- Target growth to serve community needs and enhance the quality of life.

Guiding Principles – Our Economy

- Incentivize a mix of business and revenue streams that support a resilient economy.
- Diversify Atascadero's employment opportunities to address the needs of an evolving workforce and attract jobs for all skill levels and income ranges.

Guiding Principles – Our Infrastructure

- Facilitate safe, convenient, and comfortable connections for people of all abilities and in different stages of life.
- Support and maintain efficient and sustainable infrastructure systems.
- Organize public service systems so that all neighborhoods and business districts have access to public services and emergency response.
- Plan and prepare for community safety and resiliency from evolving climate threats, natural, and human-caused hazards.

Guiding Principles – Our Natural Environment

- Integrate Atascadero's natural, historical, and cultural landscapes and resources into planning decisions.

Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Form Element

Introduction

Nestled between the Salinas River to the east and oak-covered hillsides of the Santa Lucia Mountains to the west, Atascadero is a vibrant community with a rich history and rural community form. While Atascadero's nascent land use pattern was established by and built to conform to the 1913 Colony Plan, over 100 years of development, evolving community needs, and external influences—most notably the 1954 construction of Highway 101 through the middle of Atascadero—have resulted in a community largely organized around two major corridors: El Camino Real and Highway 41. Businesses predominate along the corridors, with single-family residential neighborhoods extending east and west. This Land Use and Community Form Element accounts for the City's history of growth and development but is intentionally forward thinking about how Atascadero can evolve into a more mixed-use and job-rich community, supported by a range of new housing types, businesses formats, walkable neighborhoods, and a dynamic and active Downtown.

Grounded on the community vision (see **Chapter 2**) this chapter establishes the framework for short- and long-term decisions about land use and development patterns. The primary objective is to accommodate moderate growth that respects established neighborhoods, historical assets, and natural landscapes.

Integral to the vision is preservation of the qualities that distinguish the community. Residents consistently tout the balance Atascadero achieves between accommodating rural lifestyles and providing places more suburban in nature. This General Plan continues to implement the Urban Services Line (see **Figure 1-2**).

Land Use and Community Form Priorities

To ensure Atascadero has the right mix of land uses, range of housing types, job-rich commercial and mixed-use districts, a thriving economy, and vibrant Downtown, this General Plan addresses the following land use and community attributes.

Atascadero's Authentic Character

Atascadero is a unique place. The community values Atascadero's special character, with a strong will to preserve these features when exploring opportunities for growth. The people make Atascadero the supportive, family-oriented community that it is, and the General Plan needs to promote areas to gather, recreate, socialize, and conduct business as the community grows and evolves.

Rural Residential Focus

Atascadero's predominant land use, in terms of total acreage, consists of large lot homesites with a rural character, encompassing over 9,000 acres (just over 41 percent of the City). Most of these homesites lie west of Highway 101, beyond the Urban Services Line, and extend to the northern and southern edges of the City limits. Terrain and the absence of sewer service will continue to limit growth west of Highway 101.

Commercial Corridors

Commercial businesses extend over seven miles along El Camino Real and Morro Road south of El Camino. Industrial uses are concentrated along the northeastern fringe of the City, along Traffic Way and the Salinas River. No other areas of Atascadero are suitable for business activity based on topography and infrastructure limitations, so land use decisions will need to account for the City's strategic job growth objectives and provide space for desired local businesses.

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is a continuing concern voiced by the community, both locally and throughout the region. The type and size of housing has made it challenging for younger residents and first-time home buyers to find housing that they can afford. Regional desirability and the increasing ease of remote work resulted in people moving to Atascadero from the Los Angeles and Bay Area regions, tightening the housing market. Expanding the range of housing types and

affordability in Atascadero has become more critical to meet the needs of long-time residents. Higher density, multi-family, and accessory dwelling unit (ADU) projects all represent ways to increase the supply of affordable housing for the local workforce.

Jobs-Housing Balance

In 2024, Atascadero had a job-to-housing ratio of 0.77, indicating substantially more households than jobs in the City. Over 10,700 Atascadero residents were employed outside of the City in 2019, while 6,000 employees traveled to Atascadero for work. The jobs-to-housing imbalance has persisted over time, with one reason being that the land area available to support large-scale employment centers is limited. However, evolving technologies and the ways that business is conducted mean that limited space can be used more efficiently. The City's economic development strategy focuses on attracting a greater diversity of businesses that create new jobs for residents, as well as placemaking to support commercial synergy and vitality. Land use policy in this element supports this objective.

Strategic, Targeted, and Managed Growth

The City is committed to accommodating and planning for future growth through higher allowed housing densities and expanded opportunities for job-generating businesses, all within the Urban Services Line. Areas targeted for change and growth are close to the Downtown and along El Camino Real and Morro Road, creating a synergy of focused land uses at key nodes along the each corridor. This element supports these two key City objectives, and any public infrastructure improvements needed to support this growth will occur in line with these objectives.

- Moving toward a 1.0 jobs/housing ratio, meaning local employment opportunities will increase. This objective aims to achieve a balance between the number of available jobs and the number of workforce residents within a community, potentially resulting in enhanced economic vitality, improved quality of life and affordability, and reduced commutes and vehicle miles traveled. These initiatives will limit environmental impacts associated with growth.
- Focusing new housing production on the creation of higher-density development, thereby diversifying the housing stock and accommodating households of all income levels. This includes a combination of traditional multi-family style development, missing middle style development, and incremental neighborhood infill development to create a range of housing types and settings.

Land use policy will allow for approximately 4,800 new jobs and 4,500 new dwelling units relative to the 2024 baseline. Planned residential density increases could increase Atascadero's population by approximately 7,800 people. The forecasted growth included in this General Plan is shown on **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: General Plan Forecasted Growth			
Type	**Baseline** (2024)	**General Plan Horizon Year** (2045)	**Net Change** (2024 – 2045)
Dwelling Units (total)	12,660	15,550	+2,890
Single-Units	*9,786*	*9,991*	*+205*
Multi-Units	*2,874*	*5,559*	*+2,685*
Population[1]	30,683	37,279	+6,596
Employees	9,729	12,914	+3,185
Jobs/Housing Ratio[2]	0.77	0.83	+0.06

1. Population includes the city's population (29,365) and group quarters (1,318) at Atascadero State Hospital.

2. Jobs/Housing Ratio is an equation used to determine how many jobs are available in a community relative to the number of dwelling units (homes). The policy approach assumes that a "balanced community" has a 1.0 ratio (or 1:1), which strives to match the number of local jobs to the number of available housing units. This approach does not require residents to work in town; rather, it looks to provide the opportunity for residents to have jobs within the community.

Maintaining the historic Colony land use pattern and rural character of Atascadero is of utmost importance to residents. This will be achieved using Placetypes to guide and accommodate Atascadero's desired growth through 2045. Placetypes, or land use classifications, illustrate the type, character, and density/intensity of development envisioned. This will ensure compatibility with Atascadero's established character while creating a vision for growth.

Placetypes and Land Use Plan

To identify existing and planned land uses throughout the Planning Area, this General Plan uses a designator system consisting of "Placetypes." Each Placetype category defines both the primary uses of land allowed and the character of those uses. Placetypes are broad enough to provide flexibility in implementation and clear enough to provide sufficient direction to carry out the General Plan. While most of the Placetypes reflect existing and long-established development types such as Rural Residential, Commercial, and Industrial, three new Placetypes are established as part of this General Plan: High Density Multi-Family, Mixed Use, and Innovation/Flex.

Table 3-2 summarizes each Placetype, including generally allowed uses, development intensities, and corresponding zoning districts. The extent to which properties may be developed or redeveloped over time is expressed in terms of density (ranges) for residential uses and intensity (maximums) for nonresidential development.

Density reflects how many units may be built per acre of land (dwelling units per acre). Intensity is analyzed using a floor-area ratio (FAR) metric for analysis purposes, which measures the building square footage on a property relative to the size of that property. Density and intensity

do not control building height, setbacks, required open space area, or other development parameters. The Zoning Code establishes how density and intensity are implemented citywide through development standards and other provisions.

The General Plan Land Use Plan (see **Figure 3-1**) illustrates the planned distribution, location, and extent of future land uses within Atascadero and the sphere of influence. Beyond what is required by State law, each Placetype is further described to inspire the general character, desired building types, and streetscape elements.

Table 3-2: Placetypes

Placetype	Density and Intensity	Primary Use(s)	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Character
RURAL RESIDENTIAL One home on a lot generally greater than one acre in size, depending on slope conditions	0.1 – 1 unit per gross acre	Residential	Residential Rural – 2.5-10 acres Residential Suburban: 1.5-2.5 acres	
SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL One home on a lot generally one-acre or less in size	1 – 4 unit per gross or net acre *(zone district dependent)*	Residential	Residential Single Family – 1 acre Residential Single Family – 0.5 acre Residential Small Lot Single Family	
LOW DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and cottage clusters	5 – 12 units per net acre	Residential	Low Density Multi-Family Residential	

Table 3-2: Placetypes

Placetype	Density and Intensity	Primary Use(s)	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Character
MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage clusters, townhomes, and mobile home parks	13 – 24 units per net acre	Residential	Medium Density Multi-Family Residential	
HIGH DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY Apartments and condominiums	25 – 36 units per net acre	Residential	High Density Multi-Family Residential	
MIXED USE Combined commercial and residential uses on a project site	20 – 36 units per net acre 1.0 FAR	Residential Commercial Civic and Institutional	Mixed Use – Commercial 1 Mixed Use – Commercial 2 Mixed Use – Office	

Table 3-2: Placetypes

Placetype	Density and Intensity	Primary Use(s)	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Character
DOWNTOWN MIXED USE Mix of civic, dining, shopping, recreation, residential, entertainment, and other pedestrian-oriented uses	20 – 45 units per net acre 3.0 FAR	Residential Commercial Civic and Institutional	Downtown Commercial Downtown Office	
COMMERCIAL Retail stores, offices, restaurants, entertainment, and service uses	0.6 FAR	Commercial	Commercial Commercial Service	
INNOVATION/FLEX Research and development, light manufacturing, creative industries, and dining	0.6 FAR	Commercial Light Industrial	Commercial Innovation	

Table 3-2: Placetypes

Placetype	Density and Intensity	Primary Use(s)	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Character
INDUSTRIAL Manufacturing, materials processing, assembly, and limited storage	0.8 FAR	Industrial and Warehousing Transportation and Utilities	Industrial	
PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC Government facilities, public schools, and private utilities	0.8 FAR	Civic and Institutional	Public	
CONSERVATION/PARKS/OPEN SPACE Parks and recreation and community-serving uses, habitat preserves, rivers and creeks, other protected lands	Not applicable	Conservation Parks and Recreation Open Space	Recreation – Parks Conservation/ Parks/OS Conservation/ Parks/OS	

Table 3-2: Placetypes

Placetype	Density and Intensity	Primary Use(s)	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Character
AGRICULTURE Livestock, crop production, and one home on a lot one acre or larger in size, depending on slope conditions	0.1-0.4 units per gross acre	Agriculture Residential	Agriculture	

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

General Location

Rural Residential is the prevalent Placetype outside the Urban Services Line. Within the Urban Services Line, Rural Residential is concentrated west of Highway 101 and east of El Camino Real north from San Benito Road and east from the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor.

Character and Typical Development

Rural Residential neighborhoods are well established and rural in nature. Development is characterized by large lots (1.5 to 10+ acres) and large setbacks, single-family detached homes, vacant land, and livestock.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

The road network in Rural Residential areas supports low traffic volumes and is primarily composed of winding, tree-lined local streets, some of which have no outlet.

Defining Features

- Steep topography
- Ample private outdoor space
- Dependent on onsite wastewater facilities

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

General Location

Single-Family Residential is the prevalent Placetype within the Urban Services Line, outside the Downtown core and commercial corridors. This Placetype buffers the Rural Residential Placetype from other, more intensive residential and commercial uses.

Character and Typical Development

Single-Family Residential neighborhoods are well established and suburban in nature. Development is characterized by medium to large lots (less than or equal to one acre) occupied by single-family detached homes. Additional characteristics include irregular block shapes, curvilinear streets, absence of streetlights, and limited or no sidewalks. The smaller lot size zone within this designation allow opportunities for missing middle and gentle density style infill development.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

The road network in Single-Family Residential areas supports low traffic volumes and is primarily composed of narrow local streets. Key connections from Single-Family Residential neighborhoods to major corridors/destinations include San Anselmo Road, San Jacinto Avenue, Curbaril Avenue, Portola Road, and Santa Lucia Road.

Defining Features

- Private outdoor space
- Proximity to nearby parks, recreation opportunities, shopping, and public facilities

LOW DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY

General Location

Low Density Multi-Family neighborhoods are concentrated adjacent to more urban uses, positioned between the Mixed Use and Single-Family Residential Placetypes.

Character and Typical Development

Low Density Multi-Family neighborhoods continue to grow in Atascadero, providing a mix of housing types and affordability. Development in this Placetype is urban in nature and characterized by detached and attached multi-unit development (cottage cluster, duplex, triplex, fourplex, multiplex with 5+ units). Additional characteristics include irregular block shapes, streets that run parallel and/or connect to major corridors, on-street parking, and sidewalks.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

The road network in Low Density Multi-Family areas supports low traffic volumes and is primarily composed of local streets. Key connections from Low Density Multi-Family neighborhoods to major corridors/destinations include San Benito Road, Rosario Avenue, Curbaril Avenue, Atascadero Avenue, and San Andres Avenue.

Defining Features

- Private and/or shared amenities (e.g., entries, outdoor space, driveway, pedestrian path)
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to and from nearby parks, recreation opportunities, shopping, and public facilities
- Consolidated or shared parking

MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY

General Location

Medium Density Multi-Family is concentrated along major corridors, including El Camino Real, Morro Road, and Traffic Way, in addition to adjacent streets. This Placetype acts as a buffer between nonresidential or mixed-use and lower-density residential uses.

Character and Typical Development

Medium Density Multi-Family neighborhoods continue to grow in Atascadero, providing a mix of housing types and affordability. Development in this Placetype is urban in nature and characterized by detached and attached multi-unit development (duplex, triplex, fourplex, and multiplex with 5+ units). Additional characteristics include irregular block shapes, streets that run parallel and/or connect to major corridors, and sidewalks.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

The road network in Medium Density Multi-Family areas supports moderate traffic volumes and is primarily composed of collector and arterial streets. Key connections from Medium Density Multi-Family neighborhoods to major corridors/destinations include La Linia Avenue, Santa Ysabel Avenue, Santa Ynez Avenue, Curbaril Avenue, Atascadero Avenue, and San Andres Avenue.

Defining Features

- Private and/or shared amenities (e.g., entries, outdoor space, driveway, pedestrian path)
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to and from nearby parks, recreation opportunities, and public facilities
- On-street and consolidated or shared parking

HIGH DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY

General Location

High Density Multi-Family is concentrated along the southern segment of El Camino Real, between Paloma Park and Santa Rosa Road. Additional High-Density Multi-Family areas are located near the Downtown core.

Character and Typical Development

This Placetype is intended to promote high-density residential development to support commercial nodes and enhance neighborhood vibrancy. This Placetype is characterized by moderate residential building heights of a more urban character, including apartments and condominiums with shared entrances and open spaces. Lower-scale structures are typically found in areas transitioning to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Transitions between Placetypes are established with development standards in the Zoning Code.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Key connections from High Density Multi-Family neighborhoods to major corridors/destinations include El Bordo Avenue, Santa Lucia Avenue, and Atascadero Avenue. High Density Multi-Family areas front or back up to El Camino Real.

Defining Features

- Private and/or shared amenities (e.g., entries, outdoor space)
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity to major corridors and community amenities
- On-street and consolidated shared parking

MIXED USE

General Location

Mixed Use is generally concentrated near major intersections, as well as along El Camino Real and Morro Road between El Camino Real and Atascadero Lake Park.

Character and Typical Development

This Placetype is intended to promote a flexible and compatible mix of residential and commercial uses in focused areas. A commercial land use dominates the street facing façade or ground floor of a mixed-use project, while office and residential dominate the upper floors (vertical mixed-use) or buildings that are set back from a public street (horizontal mixed-use). Each area that includes the Mixed Use Placetype is unique. The composition and mix of permitted uses are established by zoning districts in the Zoning Code. Development may allow for a horizontal or vertical mix of commercial and residential uses, depending on zoning district. This Placetype is characterized by moderate-scale residential and commercial building heights that promote urban character. Buildings are oriented toward the street to encourage pedestrian activity.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Mixed Use areas generally abut arterial and collector roads and have direct frontage along these major corridors. Parking is generally on-site with limited street parking.

Defining Features

- Multi-family residential developments, either above or adjacent to commercial uses
- Neighborhood-serving retail, office, and services
- Employment centers
- Active ground-floor uses
- High pedestrian and bicycle activity due to streetscape improvements
- Focal points of economic investment and activity
- Shared and on-street parking
- Shared or private amenities

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DOWNTOWN MIXED USE

General Location

Downtown extends north of Morro Road and south of Rosario Avenue along El Camino Real, Traffic Way, and adjacent cross streets.

Character and Typical Development

Downtown Mixed Use encourages an eclectic and complementary mix of uses, pedestrian-scale development, and locally owned retail and restaurant businesses with upper-story residential and office units. Ground-floor uses should consist of businesses with a weekday, evening, and weekend presence. The Downtown Mixed Use Placetype is characterized by moderate to high building heights to promote urban character. This district has the highest density of any district.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

The 0.6-mile Downtown corridor extends along El Camino Real from Rosario Avenue to the intersection of State Route 41. High levels of pedestrian and bicycle use occur throughout the Downtown core, and this district has the greatest access to transit. A street grid, with consistent block shapes and sizes surrounds City Hall. Short walking distances, sidewalks, street trees, street parking, and access to the Sunken Gardens Park and the Salinas River corridor encourage pedestrian activity.

Defining Features

- Civic center
- Vibrant, walkable, town center
- Active ground-floor commercial uses, many of which are open during evening hours and/or weekends
- Buildings have consistent orientation with no or shallow front setbacks or with recessed storefronts for outdoor dining
- Minimized on-site parking

COMMERCIAL

General Location

Commercial Placetypes are concentrated along El Camino Real adjacent to major intersections with San Ramon, Del Rio, San Anselmo, Morro Road and Santa Rosa Road, particularly where these intersections have access to Highway 101. This Placetype is generally adjacent to Mixed Use, Innovation/Flex, and Multi-Family Placetypes.

Character and Typical Development

Commercial uses include regional- and local-serving retail, restaurants, office, tourist, and service businesses with easy access to and from residential neighborhoods. Development is characterized by single-use commercial buildings, multi-tenant shopping centers, and office buildings. Commercial tenants may include businesses targeted toward visitors to Atascadero, such as breweries, distilleries, and recreation hubs. Uses with outdoor storage are not typically permitted. Residential and Mixed-Use are adjacent to, but not within, this district to prioritize commercial activities and reduce conflict between uses.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Commercial areas abut El Camino Real and are in locations with easy access to Highway 101. Multi-modal access is encouraged as well as on-street parking to supplement on-site parking areas.

Defining Features

- Retail, tourist, and employment based
- Day-to-day needs for residents, visitors, and employees

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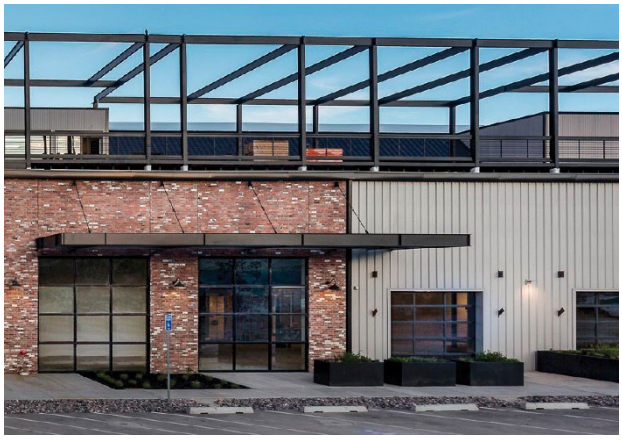


INNOVATION/FLEX

General Location

Innovation/Flex is concentrated along El Camino Real between Santa Cruz Road and San Anselmo Road, Morro Road and Curbaril, and Palomar and Principal Avenue.

Character and Typical Development

This Placetype is intended to promote opportunities for startup businesses and head-of-household jobs and provide spaces that can be adaptable to a variety of compatible uses as workforce trends evolve. This Placetype should attract concentrations of production, design, and maker-space businesses as well as uses that support those businesses and the people that work there. Development is characterized by multi-tenant buildings, often with office or retail uses oriented toward the street and light industrial/manufacturing in the back. Scale varies greatly dependent upon the surrounding context and character. Innovation/Flex has the potential to serve as a primary place for employment and commerce in the Central Coast region in support of emerging technologies and space innovations. Uses with outdoor storage are not permitted except in appropriate locations and limited quantities, and all subject to discretionary review. Residential and Mixed-Use are adjacent to, but not within, this district to prioritize commercial activities and reduce conflict between uses.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Innovation/Flex areas generally abut El Camino Real, with some areas along adjacent collector roads. Most of the parking is located on-site, but some on-street parking may be provided.

Defining Features

- Employment center providing opportunities for a mix of job types/experience
- Desired industries and businesses include but are not limited to research and design, labs, robotics and technology, and artisan business such as microbreweries, and small-scale wineries and distilleries, as well as artisanal food and craft production
- Supportive uses may include restaurants, hotels, and offices

INDUSTRIAL

General Location

Industrial is limited to two areas within Atascadero: along Traffic Way/Sycamore Road and as part of the Woodlands Specific Plan (Las Lomas Neighborhood) at Halcon Road/the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor.

Character and Typical Development

Industrial uses typically include heavy and moderately intense manufacturing, distribution, and vehicle-related uses. Development consists of varying-sized industrial buildings, either as stand-alone businesses or as part of an integrated development. These areas are intended to support industry that contributes to the fiscal health of the City.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Industrial areas abut Sycamore Road, Traffic Way, and Halcon Road. As these areas abut streets where pedestrian linkage to bordering uses is a priority, streets include pedestrian paths and bike lanes. Where areas abut the Salinas River, incorporation of trails or landscape setbacks and buffering to recreational areas is integrated. Parking is concentrated on-site.

Defining Features

- Access to Highway 101 and State Route 41
- Larger parcels for a mix of tenant uses
- Buffers between industrial and surrounding uses (e.g., landscaping, open space, large setbacks, gradual changes in density)
- Screening from the public rights-of-way

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC

General Location

Public/Quasi-Public parcels are distributed throughout the City based on the location of existing facilities, mostly within the Urban Services Line.

Character and Typical Development

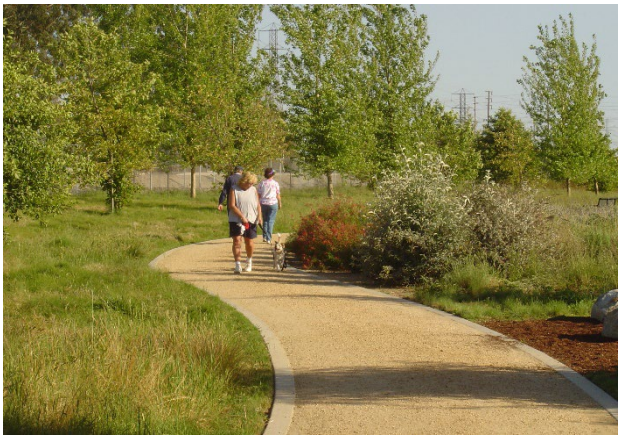
Public/Quasi-Public parcels are set aside for governmental or semi-public facilities, such as hospitals, schools, utilities, and government offices/facilities or related uses such as cemeteries. However, such public facilities may also be allowed in areas with other Placetypes, provided they comply with applicable Zoning Code standards.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

The road network that connects the Public/Quasi-Public Placetype to surrounding areas is primarily composed of arterial and collector streets.

Defining Features

- Civic buildings, formal public spaces, emergency services, schools, State facilities, and community centers
- Atascadero State Hospital



CONSERVATION/PARKS/OPEN SPACE

General Location

Most of the land designated Conservation/Parks/Open Space lies along the Salinas River, Atascadero Creek, and Graves Creek. The Three Bridges Oak Preserve is the largest Conservation/Open Space area outside the Urban Services Line. Multiple City parks are located throughout the community to serve adjacent neighborhoods and citywide sports needs. The City also includes Heilman Park, which is owned and maintained by the County of San Luis Obispo.

Character and Typical Development

The Conservation/Parks/Open Space Placetype applies to lands:

- Currently used or planned for parks or recreation purposes, including trail corridors, sports fields, community gathering spaces, and equestrian facilities
- Identified as a park or creek reservation parcel
- Established for conservation purposes due to the presence of sensitive wildlife or habitats

Land designated for these uses include both publicly and privately owned land. See **Chapter 7** for additional details, including a summary of park types.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Parks are located throughout the community, with larger scale facilities generally located off arterials and collector streets and smaller neighborhood serving spaces off local roads. Parking may be provided on-street or on-site.

Defining Features

- Atascadero's park system (as of 2024) includes regional parks, community parks, neighborhood parks and special use parks, trails, equestrian facilities, natural areas, and open space.
- City recreation facilities include the Atascadero Lake Pavilion, Central Coast Zoo, and Colony Park Community Center.

AGRICULTURE

General Location

The Agriculture Placetype applies to two areas in Atascadero: an approximately 44-acre area adjacent to Graves Creek south of Balboa Road and an approximately 27-acre area along the Salinas River east of the Las Lomas neighborhood (Woodlands Specific Plan area).

Character and Typical Development

This Placetype designates lands to be used for agricultural activities, including field crops, orchards, and ranching and livestock raising, with the Zoning Code identifying specific permitted uses and operational standards. Allowed accessory uses include single-family detached homes and housing for agriculture employees, as permitted by the Zoning Code. Uses may also allow opportunities for public facing commercial uses such as event areas and bed and breakfasts.

Major Corridor(s) or Mobility Characteristics

Agricultural areas are largely served by local, rural roads.

Defining Features

- Graves Creek
- Tree farms, cropland, grasslands, ranching and livestock, and undeveloped land

Land Use and Community Form Goals, Policies, and Actions

The following sections include goals, supporting policies, and implementation actions related to the following topics:

- Citywide Growth and Development
- Key Nodes and Corridors
- Morro Road (Highway 41)
- Industrial Areas
- Downtown

Citywide Growth and Development

Atascadero is a collection of wonderfully diverse neighborhoods, commercial centers, streets, parks, and open space areas, all having their own unique character—and with some needing focused attention to create more vibrancy and long-term community vitality. The following goals, policies, and actions look to maintain the qualities that distinguish Atascadero and further neighborhood preservation, economic development, resource protection, and overall community well-being objectives.

Goal LU-1: Growth integrated and compatible with established land use patterns and the community aesthetic

Policy LU-1.1: Rural Character. Safeguard the rural character of Atascadero including the concept of "elbow room," which calls for maintaining larger minimum lot sizes and lower-density and lower-intensity standards proportionate to the distance from the Downtown core and major corridors.

Action A: Maintain performance standards for determining minimum residential lot size in the Rural Residential Placetype.

Action B: Maintain "dark sky" requirements to minimize light pollution.

Action C: Provide streetlights only in the Downtown, along El Camino Real, at major intersections, and locations where street safety is of concern.

Action D: Maintain allowances for where livestock may be owned and kept within the Rural Residential, Single-Family Residential, and Agriculture Placetypes.

Action E: Continue to require undergrounding of utilities for new development.

Policy LU-1.2: Urban Services Line (USL). Concentrate new and infill development within the Urban Services Line in areas where utilities and public services exist.

Action A: Revisit density and intensity requirements for land use(s) if sewer extends into new areas.

Action B: Maintain Rural Residential as the predominant use and limit the subdivision of land beyond the USL.

Action C: Consider future planned density and intensity when repairing infrastructure and ensure that infrastructure is sized to accommodate future growth.

Policy LU-1.3: Character and Scale. Ensure new and infill development complements the character and scale of existing neighborhoods, cultural resources, historic structures, and natural landscapes.

Action A: Maintain design standards that address the transitions between multi-family and mixed-use development and adjacent lower-density residential zones.

Action B: Provide parking/loading from secondary streets, wherever possible, to maintain an active frontage along major corridors.

Action C: Create a transition in density of development on large parcels moving back from El Camino Real.

Action D: Update or replace the Appearance Review Manual for nonresidential development.

Action E: Undertake a comprehensive Zoning Code update.

Action F: Continue abatement programs to remove unsafe buildings and require the cleanup of premises and vacant lots with code violations.

Policy LU-1.4: Gentle Density Infill. Allow opportunities for missing middle and gentle density style infill development surrounding mixed-use and commercial corridors.

Action A: Support the development of multi-family residential, including missing middle housing, in the neighborhoods adjacent to commercial corridors, including the neighborhood bordered by Morro Road, Highway 101, and Portola Road, as a way to increase density and maintain community character.

Policy LU-1.5: Historic Resources. Encourage the conservation and preservation of structures and houses that have historical and architectural significance.

Action A: Maintain a comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory.

Action B: Continue to implement the California Historical Building Code in review, approval, and design of projects involving historic resources.

Action C: Utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Properties to assess proposed improvements to historic properties.

Action D: Develop incentives for retaining and rehabilitating Atascadero's historic resources, which may include exceptions to development regulations, conservation districts, staff technical assistance, programs to facilitate relocation instead of demolition, and Mill's Act contracts.

Policy LU-1.6: Specific Plans. Adopt, update, and implement specific plans as necessary to address community needs and changing demographic, economic, and market conditions.

Action A: Require the preparation of a specific plan for single-family subdivision developments over 100 units to address fiscal and environmental impacts, community benefits, and neighborhood compatibility.

Action B: Update existing Specific Plans and Overlay Zones to be consistent with the General Plan.

Action C: Utilize Specific Plans to streamline the development process and incentivize development through modified development standards.

Policy LU-1.7: Regional Impacts. Coordinate with neighboring cities and community services districts, the County of San Luis Obispo, and regional transportation agencies to plan for growth and minimize regional impacts.

Action A: Continue to coordinate with the County to maintain rural land use patterns, agriculture, and open space uses beyond the City limit.

Action B: Discourage land use changes by the County within the Colony boundary that would result in more intensive or higher density development, particularly in unincorporated areas and east of the Salinas River.

Action C: Develop financial agreement(s) with the County to recoup the costs to the City if development occurs beyond the City limit that would rely on City services or infrastructure.

Action D: Update the County Memorandum of Understanding requiring City comment on development proposals in the area between Vineyard Drive and Cuesta Grade, between the ridges east of the Salinas River, and Cerro Alto Campground.

Policy LU-1.8: Annexations. Ensure that growth beyond the City limit serves community needs, enhances fiscal stability, and improves quality of life for community members.

Action A: Require annexation proposals align with the Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Policies included in this General Plan.

Action B: Oppose all development within the sphere of influence prior to annexation.

Action C: Require the approval of a Specific Plan prior to the annexation of the Eagle Ranch property.

Key Nodes and Corridors

Atascadero is defined by its two major corridors: El Camino Real and Morro Road (Highway 41). These thoroughfares have been the centers of retail, commercial, and office uses since Atascadero's historic Colony founding. They act as the "spines" of the community–connecting residential neighborhoods to employment centers, schools, civic uses, parks, highways and freeways, and adjacent cities. To support local and regional commercial, office, and housing needs, these corridors must be improved, as described in the Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**). They should be enhanced with more pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities; supported by focused development standards that promote placemaking and a pleasing pedestrian environment; and encouraged to redevelop to meet the current and future community needs.

Focused and intentional development in Downtown and along the major corridors maintains Atascadero's "elbow room" principle, which calls for maintaining larger minimum lot sizes and lower density and intensity standards proportionate to distance from the Downtown core and major corridors. Areas of change and growth in this Plan center around the following principles:

- Areas that support the growth and community design objectives outlined in the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles (see **Chapter 2**).
- Areas designated for and developed with commercial, office, mixed use, or industrial uses.
- Areas along major corridors and near Highway 101 that have good access to local and regional road networks, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and civic destinations.
- Areas that have infrastructure available to support new and more intensive commercial and residential development.
- Areas that have the potential to become more walkable and economically viable as new and more intensive development occurs.
- Areas where increased residential density can support intensified commercial activity and economic vitality.
- Underutilized commercial areas where the City can capitalize on redevelopment efforts and shape development to accommodate uses that support the City's desire for a more balanced jobs-housing ratio.

Goal LU-2: Enhanced major corridors that serve regional and local needs by creating focused, distinct, and economically viable nodes

Policy LU-2.1: Innovation/Flex Areas. Create innovation areas that allow and encourage a mix of lighter, creative employment uses, entertainment, and services.

Action A: Allow property owners to convert and reuse existing buildings for creative commercial, light industrial, and office use.

Action B: Maintain and update uses in the Innovation/Flex zone to allow for restaurant and entertainment uses that are compatible with light industrial and artisan uses.

Action C: Maintain innovation/flex areas for non-residential uses to prioritize commercial activities without conflict with incompatible uses.

Policy LU-2.2: Commercial Vitality. Maintain key areas for commercial and employment uses that are incompatible with integrated residential uses.

Action A: Focus commercial retail development at key nodes to create commercial synergy and destinations for shopping and entertainment.

Action B: Maintain larger parcels of land to accommodate large format uses (e.g., business headquarters, light manufacturing, regional retail, and tourist-serving uses) at strategic locations along major corridors and key nodes.

Action C: Maintain key commercial nodes for non-residential uses to prioritize commercial activities without conflict with incompatible uses.

Policy LU-2.3: Mid-block Infill. Promote flexible land use patterns in areas between activity nodes along El Camino Real and support increased residential densities adjacent to and along commercial corridors to support commercial business activity and growth

Action A: Encourage infill mixed-use development between commercial nodes along El Camino Real to support the economic vitality of commercial centers.

Action B: Explore flexibility in standards for mixed-use development on commercially zoned mid-block infill lots where commercial use potential is limited.

Action C: Increase residential density in areas adjacent to key commercial nodes to support commercial viability and economic vitality.

Action D: Consider utilizing Development Agreements to allow for mid-block multi-family development in exchange for commercial development/redevelopment at key locations.

Policy LU-2.4: Mixed-Use Areas. Create mixed-use districts in locations that benefit from the synergy of commercial and residential uses.

Action A: Focus vertical mixed-use development at key nodes where a ground floor commercial presence is a priority.

Action B: Provide opportunities for horizontal mixed-use developments on deep or double frontage lots where ground floor commercial uses are focused along the primary street frontage.

Action C: Prioritize land uses in mixed-use areas that generate tax revenue, attract economic activity, create jobs, and cater to residents and short-term visitors.

Policy LU-2.5: Multi-Modal Corridors. Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities along El Camino Real and Morro Road. Major corridors should be safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike.

Action A: Continue to make circulation and safety improvements in coordination and collaboration with the Public Works Department and consistent with this General Plan (see **Chapter 6**).

Action B: Require new development to provide pedestrian, bicycle, and trail alignments and facilities consistent with the Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**).

Action C: Adopt plan lines for new neighborhood streets that allow for and support orderly development with increased residential density.

Action D: Support Caltrans' completion of its Morro Road complete streets plan to include pedestrian facilities and a safe buffer between the bike lane and travel/parking lanes.

Action E: Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety measures at intersections along major corridors.

Action F: Enhance entries to Atascadero along El Camino Real with gateway design elements (e.g., signage, entry monuments, landscaping, lighting, etc.).

Action G: Find locations for safe mid-block crossings on El Camino Real to connect neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Morro Road (Highway 41)

Goal LU-3: A new professional office, retail, and employment area focused on (but not limited to) the medical industry, including research and development uses

Policy LU-3.1: Medical/Office Development. Support medical, office, and supporting commercial uses along the Morro Road corridor.

Action A: Prioritize land uses along the Morro Road corridor that attract medical and healthcare-related businesses, generate high-quality jobs, and accommodate long- and short-term workforce needs.

Action B: Incentivize the relocation of existing medical offices and other weekday-only oriented uses from Downtown to the Morro Road corridor.

Policy LU-3.2: Increased residential density. Increase residential density within and adjacent to the Morro Rod corridor to support commercial and office viability.

Action A: Support higher density multi-family development between Morro Road and Atascadero Creek.

Action B: Develop standards for horizontal and vertical mixed use along Morro Road.

Industrial Areas

Goal LU-4: A dedicated, focused area for industrial activity that minimizes impact on nearby residential neighborhoods and protected open space areas

Policy LU-4.1: Employment Opportunity/Diversity. Protect and enhance viable industrial uses to retain job employment opportunities and job diversity.

Action A: Provide zoning flexibility for adaptive reuse of heavy industrial buildings.

Action B: Ensure that the properties along Via Ave are developed to maximize spaces for jobs, industry, and/or commerce. Partner with the property owners to develop a comprehensive master plan for the area.

Policy LU-4.2: Research and Development. Transition away from heavy industrial and storage uses in favor of light industrial uses.

Action A: Prohibit future uses solely devoted to outdoor storage in industrial areas.

Action B: Adopt development standards that focus on creating buildings and spaces that can be adapted over time and respond to changing trends. Consider a form based code for new development in the Industrial Zone.

Policy LU-4.3: Buffer Industrial Uses. Provide buffers between industrial and residential uses. Focus heavy industrial sites away from residential uses.

Action A: Establish standards for new industrial uses adjacent to existing residential and commercial uses, and standards for new residential and commercial uses adjacent to existing industrial uses.

Action B: Develop standards for the interface between industrial development and adjacent creeks and rivers. Consider requirements for public trails and access where appropriate.

Action C: Focus landscaping, including street trees and visual landscape buffers along Traffic Way and Sycamore Ave to enhance the pedestrian and bike connections between adjacent commercial and residential neighborhoods as well as adjacent schools.

Downtown

Goal LU-5: A Downtown core celebrated by the community, with places to shop, be entertained, live, gather outside, learn, and engage in civic discourse

Policy LU-5.1: Community Vibrancy. Intensify the Downtown core with restaurants, community-serving retail, shopping, and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.

Action A: Update the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

Action B: Encourage encroachment into the right-of-way and City plaza spaces for outdoor dining activities, where feasible and where public access is maintained.

Action C: Encourage new multi-story developments to accommodate office spaces above the ground floor in the Downtown core.

Action D: Develop standards to incentivize a reduction in surface parking on Downtown lots and develop a program for alternatives to on-site parking, such as an in-lieu fee program to consolidate parking within the Downtown core and optimize land use, increase commercial viability, and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Policy LU-5.2: Highest Density Residential/Mixed Use. Foster a dynamic Downtown environment by concentrating larger mixed-use projects, higher-density residential development, employment opportunities, and amenities Downtown.

Action A: Focus the highest density and intensity development within the Downtown core.

Action B: Create a discretionary review process for increased height and create standards to ensure that City Hall remains the most prominent structure Downtown.

Action C: Track vacant and underutilized sites. Compile, maintain, and publish an inventory of publicly owned vacant sites that may be developed to serve community needs.

Action D: Review fees, assessments, and development standards and consider strategies to incentivize and encourage mixed-use development.

Policy LU-5.3: Pedestrian Environment. Prioritize pedestrian safety and circulation Downtown with sidewalk improvements, street trees, and other streetscape and public realm amenities.

Action A: Update the Appearance Review Manual and the Downtown Design Toolkit to focus on pedestrian-scale design elements and private outdoor use areas that support a vibrant and active streetscape.

Action B: Explore the use and/or redevelopment of alleys for increased pedestrian and community gathering spaces.

Action C: Continue outreach to Downtown business and property owners to facilitate street tree and frontage maintenance. Seek opportunities for City partnerships to support these actions.

Action D: Periodically review parking needs and continue to provide information on publicly available parking within and surrounding the Downtown core.

Policy LU-5.4: Civic Center. Promote the centralization of civic uses and functions in the Downtown core.

Action A: Support a variety of events Downtown year-round, including City-sponsored events and events that encourage partnerships with local and regional organizations.

Action B: Continue to support the adaptive reuse of the Printery building and the adjacent Armory site for future civic uses.

Policy LU-5.5: Atascadero Creek. Transform Atascadero Creek in the Downtown core into a recreation asset, including trails, outdoor plazas, and public gathering spaces.

Action A: Continue to make improvements to the multi-use path along the Atascadero Creek corridor.

Action B: Consider opportunities for creek-oriented development Downtown.

Action C: Enhance opportunities for public use of Atascadero Creek Reservation Parcels 2 and 3 and develop standards for adjacent businesses to orient toward the creek.

Action D: Partner with the Historic Society to focus future museum and historical resource operations at their Hotel Park parcel.

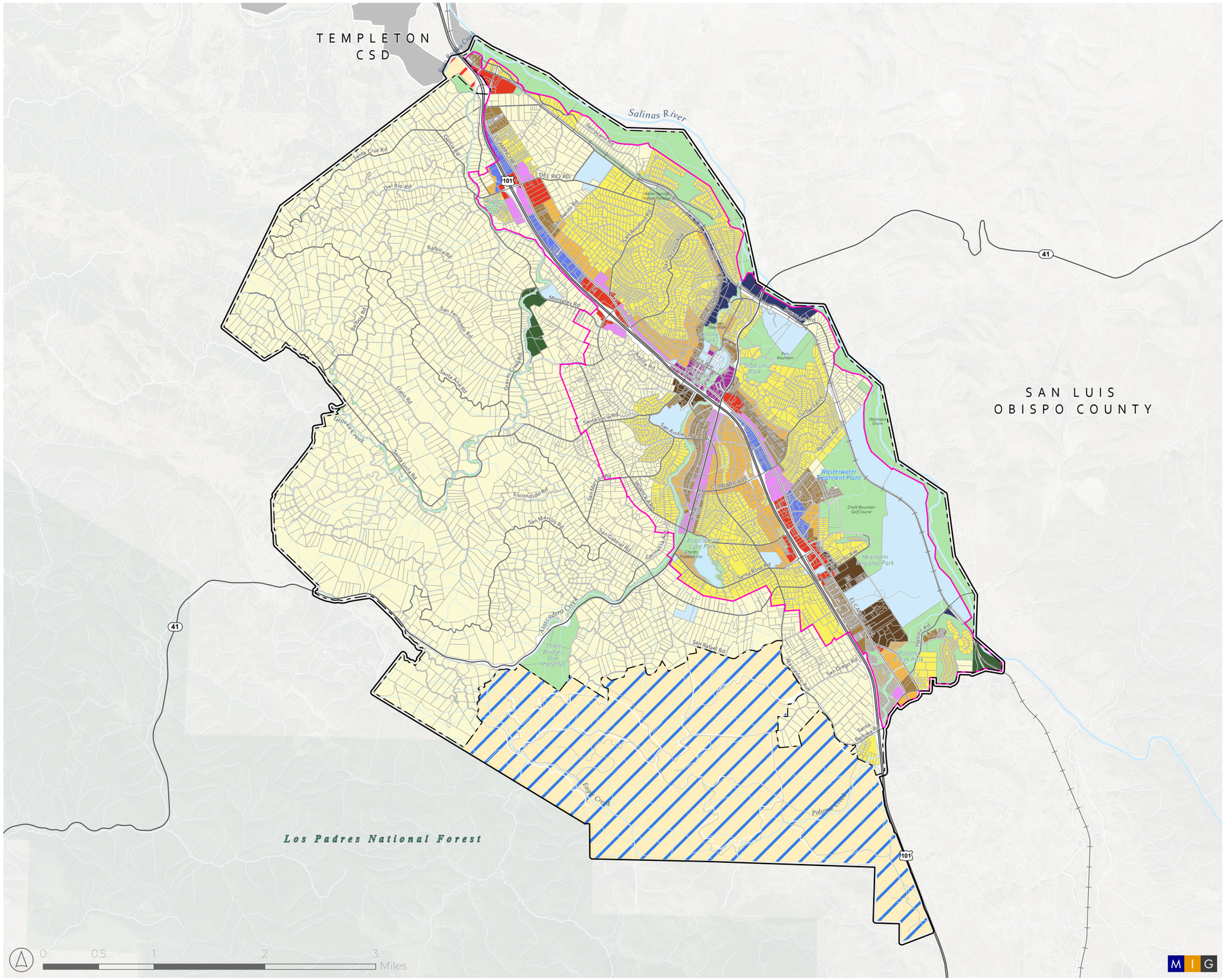


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Figure 3-1

Land Use Plan

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies

Placetypes

- Rural Residential
- Single-Family Residential
- Low Density Multi-Family
- Medium Density Multi-Family
- High Density Multi-Family
- Mixed Use
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Innovation/Flex
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Agriculture
- Conservation/Parks/Open Space
- R.O.W.
- Rural Residential (SOI)
- Conservation/Parks/Open Space (SOI)

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

Chapter 4: Economic Development Element

Introduction

For its compact size, Atascadero has a diverse local economy, with strengths in healthcare, small-scale manufacturing, and retail sectors, with a growing participation in hospitality and tourism. Atascadero's location in the heart of the Central Coast along Highway 101 creates easy connections north and south, with people from the greater Los Angeles and Bay Area regions only three hours' distance to the amenities Atascadero offers. Atascadero serves as a regional gateway to California's Central Coast and via Highway 41, provides access to the Central Valley. Most importantly, however, is Atascadero's role in providing places where locals can work and shop, thereby reducing trips to nearby communities and building an economic base that supports increased investment in City infrastructure and services.

In previous General Plan planning processes, the City addressed its economic development goals within the context of land use planning. This 2045 General Plan elevates the discussion of economic development by dedicating a stand-alone element that highlights specific strategies the City will pursue to support established businesses and further diversify the local economy through

new business attraction. These goals, policies, and actions can be turned into marketing materials to demonstrate to desired industries Atascadero's commitment.

In planning for fiscal sustainability, the City continues to look for ways to increase municipal revenues, primarily through business diversification. Although the City's general fund revenues appeared relatively stable for the first two decades of this century, fund revenues actually decreased by 10 percent between fiscal years 2007-2008 and 2022-2023 when inflation was factored in, limiting the City's ability to expand service levels or invest in infrastructure. Some voter-approved measures aimed to restore General Fund revenues, such as Measure D-20 (approved in 2020), which to raised sales tax by $0.01, and measure F-14 (extended as measure L-24 in 2024), which allocates a 0.5% sales tax toward repairing and maintaining neighborhood roads.

One key strategy in the 2045 General Plan is to support and grow the number of jobs in Atascadero. Historically, the City has been a bedroom community, with many residents commuting out of the City for work each day. One way to change this dynamic is to encourage more higher-wage jobs and new industries to locate in Atascadero. While no optimal jobs/housing balance ratio can be known to strive for (see **Chapter 3**), the local jobs to housing "imbalance" that has existed for years reveals a need to increase nonresidential, employment-generating uses in Atascadero which, on a per-service population basis, could lead to higher net positive annual general fund revenues. Capturing this demand is a key component of City fiscal sustainability and will allow the City to appropriately plan for and deliver needed public services and capital improvements.

In planning for the future, the City's goal is to focus on finding ways to diversify revenues by encouraging new types of businesses and industries to locate in Atascadero. In particular, this includes higher wage and head of household jobs available to local residents. To support the City's economic development initiatives, the 2045 General Plan details a new path forward and addresses these key economic development challenges and opportunities.

City Revenue Sources

The City's main general fund revenue sources in 2022 were property taxes (36.9 percent), sales taxes (33.6 percent), and transient occupancy taxes (4.2 percent). Combined, all types of taxes accounted for roughly 82.6 percent of Atascadero's estimated revenue in 2023. Of these revenue sources, transient occupancy taxes (the tax on hotel rooms) were disproportionately affected by non-resident activity, underscoring the importance of commercial and visitor activity to the City's fiscal health.

Long-Term Fiscal Health

Between 2007 and 2023, the City's overall general fund revenues decreased by 10 percent when accounting for inflation, limiting the ability to expand service levels or invest in new/upgraded infrastructure. Creating long-term fiscal sustainability is a key objective. The lack of growth that outpaces inflation in general fund revenues will make it difficult for the City to improve public service levels going forward unless new funding sources are identified. Even maintaining existing

service levels could be difficult, particularly for higher cost items like salaries and pension obligations that increase faster than inflation. In planning for fiscal sustainability, the 2045 General Plan identifies ways to increase revenues primarily through the types and extent of new uses and businesses and by planning for efficient growth. Efficient growth is particularly important because it ensures the City is not overcommitted with a sprawling infrastructure network.

Visitor Activity Growth

Visitor activity in Atascadero and surrounding communities, and the general draw of the Central Coast, contributes to vibrancy and generates overnight hotel stays and restaurant and retail spending that are critical to the City's fiscal health. Reported hotel data in 2022 indicated high occupancy rates and strong upward pressure on achievable room rates, suggesting opportunities in the market for additional hotel rooms. However, this industry can be cyclical and Atascadero's tourism climate is influenced by regional and Statewide trends. Moving forward, the City will work to attract a range of hotel types, allowing for a diversity in price points and the ability to capture more visitors. This can be paired with initiatives to create places people want to visit and experience—and for longer time periods. The Central Coast offers unparalleled weather, scenery, and outdoor recreation opportunities, and those visitors need places to overnight, eat, and shop.

Business Attraction, Retention, and Growth

Supporting local businesses and attracting desired new businesses are important components of the General Plan. An increase in employment-supporting uses that draw head-of-household jobs allows opportunities for more employment that directly serves residents—while also generally leading to higher annual general fund revenues through increased property taxes, sales taxes, and business license revenue.

Capital Improvements

An important component of fiscal sustainability is the City's ability to appropriately plan for and deliver needed capital improvements. As of 2022, the City was not collecting sufficient revenues through impact fees (which were subsidized and based on 2006 assumed infrastructure costs) to cover the cost of needed capital improvements. This requires that the City further subsidize the improvements with money from the general fund. To be fiscally sustainable, the City will need to recalibrate impact fees to address contemporary infrastructure costs and market conditions, while also keeping an eye on sustainable long-term infrastructure maintenance.

Economic Prosperity and Diversity

A healthy, diverse, and growing business mix provides a range of job opportunities for residents and allows Atascadero to weather economic cycles. The revenues generated by businesses—such as hotel taxes (transient occupancy taxes), sales and use taxes, and business license fees—contribute to providing quality services and infrastructure for residents, workers, and visitors. Higher paying jobs and greater diversity in business options compound direct revenues by keeping people local and reinvesting in the community. Expanded public services and infrastructure upgrades will further reinforce Atascadero's reputation as a highly desirable location for new businesses, creating a virtuous cycle that benefits the entire community.

Atascadero's economic development policies must be responsive to larger economic trends in the region and throughout California. This includes being flexible and nimble enough to address the changing nature nationally of how people work and shop. Increasing demand for open format office space, high-quality research and development space, and flexible/blended retail space will position Atascadero for remaining an attractive and easy place to locate and grow businesses. Opportunities to expand the business mix in Atascadero, provided through new land use Placetypes and flexible land use policies (see **Chapter 3**), will accommodate a range of business sizes and types. As Atascadero does not have the ability to expand the City outward to capture areas for greenfield development, the focus will be on maximizing potential along existing commercial corridors and creating spaces that can be flexible and respond to emerging business needs over time.

The following goal and policies focus on maintaining a diversified economic base by accommodating a variety of business types, supporting major revenue-generating activities that support municipal services, and leveraging Atascadero's competitive advantages.

Goal ED-1: A sound economic base to sustain the City's unique character through a range of employment and business opportunities and generation of sufficient revenue to support adequate levels of public services, as well as environmental and social quality

Policy ED-1.1: Business Attraction. Facilitate establishment of a full range of goods and services desired by Atascadero residents, workers, and visitors.

Action A: Update and maintain the Zoning Ordinance to promote retail, service, and grocery stores at designated neighborhood nodes.

Action B: Consider the use of a form based code to guide development in the Innovation/Flex district to respond to changing business trends over time.

Action C: Ensure that development in commercial and innovation/flex zones is geared to tax-generating uses and/or provides flexible use spaces for evolving trends that allow local businesses to capitalize on emerging economic growth sectors.

Action D: Encourage and incentivize office and medical uses to locate or expand along Morro Road.

Action E: Maintain key commercial sites and nodes that prioritize commercial activities and provide spaces for larger-scale commercial uses, technical education facilities, and light-industrial uses.

Policy ED-1.2: Tourism. Expand tourist-oriented uses in key areas to serve the traveling public, and capitalize on opportunities for tourist destinations that reflect Atascadero's unique character.

Action A: Actively recruit tourism and traveler-serving businesses that can take advantage of accessible and unique areas of the City.

Action B: Encourage hotel, conference, and resort development. Protect potential sites from adjacent incompatible uses.

Action C: Promote the community's rural character, open spaces, zoo, outdoor recreation amenities, and oak woodlands as part of the strategy to attract tourists. Develop tourist destinations based on these features.

Policy ED-1.3: Regional Commercial Centers. Accommodate commercial centers with regional draws that have visibility from Highway 101.

Action A: Ensure zoning regulations continue to allow regional retail uses (including auto related and home furnishing).

Policy ED-1.4: Regulatory Updates. Ensure that City regulations, processes, and initiatives support the City's economic development goals and new private industry opportunities.

Action A: Regularly review and update the Zoning Ordinance to address any regulatory impediments to attracting target businesses and to facilitate desired business expansion and adaptive reuse. Recognize childcare as a vital component of business attraction.

Action B: Prioritize infrastructure upgrades that can provide the service levels needed and desired by industries the City looks to attract.

Business Retention & Attraction

The City's ability to attract and retain businesses, entrepreneurs, and worker talent is heavily influenced by its land use and economic development policies, infrastructure, and relative affordability within the Central Coast region.

The policies in this section address the need to focus attention on retention and expansion of existing businesses in Atascadero. Existing businesses provide a job base and constitute the most effective starting point from which to grow the local economy. The following goal and policies support Atascadero's desire to retain existing businesses, attract new higher-wage businesses and

industries, and position itself for greater economic growth and resilience through careful planning, incentives, and investments.

Goal ED-2: Retention and expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses and industries to increase economic growth, improve the availability of goods and services, and increase opportunities for higher-wage jobs in Atascadero

Policy ED-2.1: Existing Business Support. Encourage established businesses to continue providing products and services the community desires.

Action A: Continue to support Chamber of Commerce efforts to market goods and services available in Atascadero, particularly those produced locally.

Action B: Identify locations with adequate land to accommodate established businesses looking to expand.

Policy ED-2.2: Local Job Growth. Attract new development and enterprises that provide jobs and services for current residents and that build the local jobs base of higher-wage positions.

Action A: Update the Municipal Code to provide flexibility for home occupation uses.

Action B: Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure land use regulations accommodate a broad range of desired industries and that entitlement processes are more efficient.

Partnerships

The City has a long history of being proactive and supportive of a range of businesses and economic development activities. With a focus on attracting new business and industry types to Atascadero, the City will need to develop new partnerships with the private sector. These can include activities from marketing and branding coordination, industry attraction, industry clusters, and more formal public-private partnerships. The following goal and policies highlight Atascadero's ongoing focus to work with private sector on mutually growing and diversifying the local economy.

Goal ED-3: Leveraging the impact of the City's resources and investments in economic development through effective public-private partnerships

Policy ED-3.1: Local Business and Organization Partnerships. Continue to coordinate economic development efforts with local businesses and organizations such as workforce development organizations and businesses, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Action A: Hold regular meetings with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss economic development goals, activities, and ways to help promote or streamline new businesses and industries.

Action B: Formulate and/or refine economic development strategies with local service and utility providers (e.g., broadband internet providers, PG&E, etc.).

Action C: Partner with local employers, co-working spaces, and vocational institutions to expand workforce training, entrepreneurship, and innovation opportunities.

Policy ED-3.2: Regional Partnerships. Continue economic development activities coordination with regional partners.

Action A: Promote the location of new industry sectors to Atascadero, including aerospace, agricultural technology, and biotech.

Action B: Support incubator spaces and small business resources, and highlight proximity to top-tier universities to promote Atascadero as a supportive location for high-tech and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Policy ED-3.3: Workforce Development Partnerships. Support and coordinate with educational and training institutions, including local school districts, universities, and the County Workforce Development Board to advance workforce training and talent retention.

Action A: Engage with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Cuesta College, and the County office of Education, and encourage them to expand curriculum to offer education in areas that would prepare students to work in industries prevalent within Atascadero, such as hospitality and tourism services, aerospace, agricultural technology, and precision manufacturing.

Fiscal Health

The long-term and sustainable fiscal health of Atascadero is an overarching objective and a guiding principle of the 2045 General Plan. Many of the goals, policies, and actions throughout this General Plan focus on attracting, allowing, and supporting new businesses and industries, as well as the expansion of established businesses. This includes establishing new Placetypes that allow for a range of businesses, new incentives (e.g., permitting and regulatory incentives, job creation incentives such as tax credits, workforce training, etc.), and programs that will help to create unique and active places coupled with public service enhancements and infrastructure upgrades that will support these uses. The following goal, policies, and actions build upon these land use and planning strategies by providing clarity regarding specific economic development activities the City will undertake to further support its fiscal health.

Goal ED-4: Long-term fiscal strength that reinforces Atascadero's desire to grow and attract businesses

Policy ED-4.1: Ongoing Fiscal Health. Continue to take a long-range view of the City's fiscal condition, including the possibility of enhancing revenues to maintain and, wherever possible and desirable, enhance current levels of service.

Action A: Prepare and periodically update an Economic Development Strategic Plan that frames a comprehensive strategy for current and future City fiscal health so that projected levels of service can be maintained and enhanced or expanded, as needed.

Action B: Annually adjust long-range revenue and expenditure projections to track changes in the City's fiscal situation so that areas of concern and opportunities can be anticipated and planned for.

Action C: Require new development to pay its share of the costs of providing capital facilities needed to support it.

Action D: Review development impact fees on a regular basis to ensure they stay in line with current City expenditures for providing facilities and infrastructure.

Action E: Work to minimize the City's road maintenance responsibilities by establishing private funding mechanisms for the maintenance of new local streets.

Action F: Regularly review land use regulations to support opportunities for employment centers, entertainment zones, and tax-generating uses.

Policy ED-4.2: Retail/Restaurant Businesses. Maximize development of, and revenues from, the retail and restaurant business sectors. Improve the local retail restaurant business environment by undertaking planning, incentivizing, or other means to help align locations of stores and restaurants with locations of residents and workers.

Action A: Encourage the co-location of retail, dining, and drinking establishments within retail, flex, experience, and entertainment nodes, particularly in Downtown, to create engaging and active neighborhood centers.

Action B: Establish policies to ensure new tenant spaces in areas identified as key nodes contain basic facilities and mechanical space to support restaurant occupancy requirements.

Policy ED-4.3: Hotel Attraction. Maximize opportunities for tourism growth by maintaining and expanding locations for transient lodging.

Action A: Continue to evaluate the hotel market in Atascadero, and identify specific types of lodging that do not currently exist but can be attracted to the City to create a range of hotel options and price points.

Action B. Research and evaluate incentive options that support older or boutique hotels and motels to make upgrades to their facilities to attract more visitors.

Policy ED-4.4: Targeted Economic Incentives. Assess the value of alternative incentive concepts and programs for specific business types.

Action A. Evaluate what neighboring cities within the region are doing to incentivize and support local business, along with a thoughtful assessment of actual overall competitive strength of the community.

Action B. Explore development incentives such as fee deferrals or subsidies, infrastructure prioritization, and streetscape enhancements that the City can use to proactively market target businesses and industries to Atascadero.

Chapter 6: Mobility Element

Introduction

Atascadero has over 145 miles of roadways, more than any other city in San Luis Obispo County. This complex web of streets supports the transportation of people and goods to, through, and within the City, and includes State highways, streets owned and maintained by the City, and public streets that are privately maintained. Edward Gardner Lewis' original Colony plan established the gridded street network still evident today in downtown, and it envisioned a roadway west to the coast, realized in 1934 as State Route 41. Much of the early street network in Atascadero was implemented in 1913, with later extensions serving higher density neighborhoods as they emerged. In the 1950s, the construction of U.S. Highway 101 through Atascadero bisected the City, majorly limiting east-west travel to the bridges and underpasses over and under the freeway.

Combined, this complex street system supports a variety of transportation modes, including freight trucks, vehicles, transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and equestrians. This element focuses on goals, policies, and actions to create, improve, and maintain a network of safe, accessible, and multi-modal streets. Although the City recognizes that the automobile will continue to be the primary means of transportation during the timeframe of this plan, this element also emphasizes

policies and actions that reduce vehicle use by promoting alternative travel modes. This includes reflecting the importance of neighborhood quality as well as vehicle, bicyclist, and pedestrian safety.

As noted, the current circulation network was laid out in the 1913 Atascadero Colony plan. The network consists of radial routes emanating from the Atascadero Administrative Building, supported by a series of arterial rings to convey traffic to outlying areas. Farther from the civic core, the streets follow the topography, resulting in winding, narrow tree-lined streets that have become a defining part of the City's character. As noted above, the radial street pattern was interrupted in 1954 with Highway 101 construction bisecting the civic core and limiting east-west travel to eight crossings. The Colony plan centralized all civic, social, educational, administrative, and commercial activities at the Civic Center. Commercial development has since spread along El Camino Real, and residential neighborhoods extended east of El Camino Real and west of Highway 101. This has increased demand for travel beyond the original Colony era vision.

Few streets within Atascadero are designed to carry high traffic volumes. Freeway interchanges create bottlenecks because they are undersized, and many roadways are not wide enough to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. Street patterns, widths, and adjacent topography constrain transit operations and access. The extent of the roadway network and lack of funding means that maintenance is an ongoing challenge. A key goal of the Mobility Element is to improve these connections and capitalize on opportunities for safe and efficient multi-modal use.

The El Camino Real and Morro Road corridors will be the primary growth areas. The Downtown section has been reinvented for multi-modal travel and economic synergy, including a reduction in vehicle travel lanes to make room for parking, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and streetscape improvements. Parking surveys have shown that the peak parking demand in the City core is less than half the available parking supply. However, many parking spaces are privately controlled, inefficiently allocated, or located away from key destinations.

The SLO Regional Transit Authority provides fixed-route bus transit along the El Camino Real corridor, but service is infrequent and stops are largely concentrated in limited areas, restricting access for residents in western neighborhoods. Additionally, while the local climate and mixed-use development patterns support cycling, the City's bicycle commute mode share is lower than the statewide average due to an incomplete cycling network. The Bicycle Transportation Plan outlines proposed infrastructure projects to enhance connectivity to key destinations.

Community data indicate that walking is a more common mode of commute in Atascadero when compared to the State average, but factors such as steep topography, missing sidewalks, and narrow Highway 101 interchanges are areas of concern for many pedestrians.

Freight movement primarily relies on Union Pacific Railroad's Coast Line, which runs through the City but lacks rail stops, limiting rail-based goods delivery. Highway 101 serves as the main thoroughfare for commercial goods. While Atascadero does not have an airport, it is served by the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport about 20 miles to the south.

In the 2020s, State laws established a new paradigm for assessing and addressing traffic impacts, shifting the focus from vehicle delay metrics, which prioritized cars, to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which promotes sustainable development practices. The SLOCOG Regional Transportation Plan encourages growth in mixed-use corridors, with funding allocated for various infrastructure projects to improve overall transportation efficiency. Strategic planning and investments, bearing in mind the latest State laws and funding opportunities, will be essential for enhancing mobility and accessibility in Atascadero.

Mobility Priorities

To support Atascadero's mobility needs today and well into the future, this General Plan addresses the following mobility considerations.

Impacts of Highway 101

The freeway bisects Atascadero and limits east-west access. Of the eight freeway interchanges, most were constructed in the 1960s and are undersized or outdated, creating congestion and barriers for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Future interchange upgrades will be costly and will need to be prioritized in consultation with Caltrans.

Transit

Atascadero is served by a fixed-route bus transit service along the El Camino Real corridor through the SLO Regional Transit Authority (SLO RTA), and Amtrak provides bus services that link to its rail routes. Bus transit stops are largely concentrated along El Camino Real, with limited access to western residential neighborhoods, and bus service infrequent, which hinders residents' ability to fully rely on transit. SLO RTA also provides dial-a-ride services.

Bicycle Mobility

Atascadero's climate, eastside topography, and development patterns in mixed-use areas are conducive to recreational and commute bicycle trips. However, the bicycle commute mode share in the City is lower than the statewide average (1.6 percent versus 3.1 percent) due to a limited and incomplete bicycle network. With a growing interest in outdoor recreation and supporting local and regional emissions reduction goals, the City sees opportunities to expand the bicycle network and create improved connections to schools, commercial areas, and other destinations.

Pedestrian Mobility

Approximately 4.5 percent of local commute trips are made by walking, substantially higher than the statewide average of 2.7 percent. The City's steep topography and low-density land uses on the west side and east side periphery discourage destination walking, but the higher densities and mix of uses along and adjacent to the El Camino Real and Morro Road corridors generally support walking. Walking is hindered in more residential and rural neighborhoods due to topography, physical constraints, narrow streets without sidewalks, and limited east-west crossings.

Parking

Community members have identified parking as an important issue. Parking surveys show that the overall peak parking demand in downtown Atascadero is less than half the available parking supply. However, many parking spaces are privately controlled, inefficiently allocated, or located away from key destinations. Sufficient and convenient parking will contribute to the economic success of downtown. Parking management techniques such as limited hours and shared parking could be used to maximize resources.

Traffic Collisions

Between 2015 and 2019, more than one-third of the collisions in Atascadero resulted from vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds. Between 2013 and 2023, 145 reported collisions involving cyclists or pedestrians occurred, the majority along El Camino Real and Morro Road/State Route 41. Residents have highlighted roadway and traffic safety as a major concern.

Street Maintenance

Atascadero has 145 miles of roadways, more than any other city in the County. The City utilizes several funding sources to maintain its extensive roadway network, including Local, State, and Federal funding measures (including the City's general fund), SB-1 (Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program), and SLOCOG's Local Transportation Funds. Voters approved a one-half percent sales tax in 2014 (Measure F-14) that the City has used to fund roadway maintenance, with a 12-year term that has generated over $20 million. Measure L-24 in 2024 extended this sales tax until it is cancelled by voters and is projected to generate $3 million annually.

Roadway Capacities and Managing Congestion through New Metrics

Few improvements have been made to the City's road network to increase capacity as growth has not warranted substantial investments other than the needed, but unrealized, State investments to improve freeway bridges. Congestion is typically localized near undersized Highway 101 interchanges and around schools during pick-up and drop-off times. Generally, congestion is short lived, and most drivers experience low levels of delay outside of peak periods.

Consistent with State law, project transportation impact analyses focus on VMT. Historically, the City considered level of service, or LOS, to identify road system impacts associated with new development projects, but this approach focuses on driver delay during a short period of time and often results in undesirable outcomes for connectivity, fiscal responsibility, commercial synergy, and land development. Vehicle operations continue to be evaluated for planning roadway improvements, but multi-modal connectivity and safety are higher priorities than reducing vehicle delay.

The City requires project applicants to submit traffic information to evaluate vehicle miles traveled, vehicular LOS and queuing, project trip generation, site access and circulation, bicycle and pedestrian conditions, access to public transit, and transportation safety. These documents are critical for understanding how all transportation modes may interact with one another on and near a proposed development site and ensure that project impacts are mitigated to improve

connectivity and address safety.

Street Classification System

The Circulation Diagram (see **Figure 6-1**) classifies roadways based on their intended function and projected traffic levels, which determines the appropriate type of design and number of lanes for the route. **Table 6-1** describes the different classes of roads.

Table 6-1: Street Classification System

Type	Purpose and Function	Streets Designated
Freeway	Freeways are high-capacity and high-speed limited access facilities that serve intercity and regional travel.	U.S. 101
Arterial Streets	Arterial streets provide for circulation between major activity centers and residential areas within the City and beyond. They are also the main point of access to freeways and serve as major corridors supporting growth. Arterials should be designed to safely move all modes of travel while efficiently moving vehicles throughout the City. Access points to arterials should be minimized to the extent feasible to reduce conflict points and maintain steady flows. Arterials that provide connections to schools should be enhanced to provide Safe Routes to School for pedestrians and bicyclists. Arterial Street rights-of-way typically range from 80 to 100 feet.	See **Figure 6-1** (Circulation Plan)
Collector Streets	Collectors channel traffic from residential or commercial areas to arterials. Residences, offices, commercial uses, and public activities typically front on to them. They are usually two-lane streets, with maximum acceptable volumes often dictated by residents' concerns about intrusion rather than traffic capacity considerations. Collector Streets rights-of-way typically range from 40 to 60 feet. Collectors are divided into two categories, depending on the area and type of topography: **Urban collectors** serve commercial and higher density areas. Urban roads generally provide on-street parking, as well as sidewalks and bike lanes.	See **Figure 6-1** (Circulation Plan)

Table 6-1: Street Classification System		
Type	**Purpose and Function**	**Streets Designated**
	Rural collectors serve areas that typically have larger parcels. They are generally narrower in width due to lower volumes and limited need to accommodate on-street parking. Rural roadway cross-sections vary depending on topography but may have walkable shoulders, bike lanes, and/or multi-use pathways to provide multi-modal connections to other destinations.	
Local Streets	Local streets provide access to adjoining land uses. All streets not otherwise depicted on the circulation plan are local streets. Local streets typically provide narrower travel lanes and may or may not have dedicated bike lanes. They typically serve rural residential and single-family residential land uses. Local Streets rights-of-way typically range from 36 to 40 feet.	See **Figure 6-1** (Circulation Plan)

Mobility Goals, Policies, and Actions

To address mobility challenges and opportunities, the City will continue to find innovative, creative, and cost-effective solutions for expanding Atascadero's circulation infrastructure and the community's access to multi-modal transportation related to:

- Circulation Network
- Parking
- Freeway Access and Interchanges
- Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Equestrian Facilities
- Transit and Travel Demand Management
- Emerging Mobility Technology

Circulation Network

An efficient, accessible, and safe multimodal transportation network moves people and goods through the community. Atascadero's streets serve many functions, including:

- Allowing people to move about town
- Connecting adjacent communities to businesses, stores, homes, schools, parks, and public spaces
- Supporting adjacent land uses and developments
- Providing safe, attractive areas that encourage personal interactions
- Promoting human and environmental health by making it easier and safer to travel by transit, by bicycle, or on foot

Public rights-of-way (roadways, sidewalks, trails, and paths) cover a significant part of any community, and the layout and use of these areas influence many aspects of the physical environment. Street designs affect the safety and independence of people in the community, especially vulnerable populations such as children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. A well-planned and well-designed mobility network is a means to realize the community's goals for improved health, economic vitality and growth, quality of life, and fiscal soundness. The Circulation Diagram (see **Figure 6-1**) illustrates the existing circulation network for Atascadero and proposed improvements. The following goals, policies, and actions provide a framework for ensuring that future changes and improvements to the circulation system are implemented in a way that improves safety, reduces conflicts, enhances mobility, maintains community character, and supports a range of transportation modes.

Goal MO-1: A safe, multimodal, interconnected, and efficient circulation system that serves all community members

Policy MO-1.1: Roadway Improvements. Plan, fund, and implement circulation improvements consistent with the Mobility Element and Circulation Diagram.

Action A: Maintain an updated Capital Improvement Plan and pursue construction of circulation system improvements on a prioritized basis.

Action B: Require that right-of-way dedications and road improvements required of new development be consistent with the approved concept plans, plan line setbacks, and other adopted circulation studies.

Action C: Enhance all modes of access and travel within the City. Require frontage improvements consistent with planned facilities when adjacent to new development.

Action D: Preserve options for future transportation facilities in advance of development by such means as identifying routes, reserving rights-of-way, establishing setbacks to accommodate future road widths, and limiting direct parcel access along arterials.

Action E: Design future roadway extensions and connections to enable reasonably direct paths to destinations.

Action F: Update development impact fees to ensure fair share payment toward roadway improvements from new development. Include periodic review and updates to fees based on current construction costs.

Action G: Implement Complete Streets projects, including improved travel lanes, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and upgraded bus stops on El Camino Real.

Action H: Work with Caltrans to implement Complete Streets projects, including curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements, on Highway 41.

Action I: Focus multi-modal improvements, as feasible, on designated connector and

backbone rights-of-way through rural west and east side neighborhoods to increase connectivity between rural residential areas and the Downtown core. Connection streets include Portola Road, Atascadero Avenue, Traffic Way, and Santa Lucia Road.

Action J: Look for opportunities to increase parking and enhance walkability along commercial and multi-family corridors including road diets, bulb-outs, controlled crossings, transit enhancements, and other complete streets features.

Action K: Seek funding (e.g., grants, development requirements) for roadway construction projects that complete unbuilt rights-of-way (e.g., missing roadway gaps), especially those that will reduce emergency response times and/or provide key evacuation routes.

Policy MO-1.2: Multimodal Options. Increase pedestrian and bicycle connections and safety between residential areas and commercial areas along major corridors, parks and recreation opportunities, and neighboring communities.

Action A: Provide for roadway and intersection improvements along major corridors as outlined in this Mobility Element.

Action B: Increase safety and access across major corridors and Highway 101.

Action C: Continue working with the County, SLOCOG, Caltrans, and local agencies to create pedestrian and bicycle access between Atascadero and Templeton.

Action D: Work with county and SLOCOG to increase multi-modal connectivity between Santa Margarita and Atascadero.

Action E: Continue to partner with the County, SLOCOG, and Caltrans to improve multimodal safety and mobility adjacent to the City limits in a manner that reflects local priorities.

Action F: Utilize unbuilt rights-of-way in areas where multi-modal pathways could connect neighborhoods to schools, parks, or commercial activity areas.

Action G: Develop road standards that support pedestrian use on rural roads, especially on roads that serve as residential connectors to adjacent neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas.

Policy MO-1.3: Regional Facilities. Provide regional roadway facilities that minimize through-traffic intrusion on local streets and mitigate impacts on local traffic.

Action A: Support regional planning efforts to identify improvements and projects that align with multi-modal and VMT reduction goals, such as the North County US 101 Multi-Modal Plan, and ensure that plans are geared toward support of grant funding efforts.

Action B: Coordinate transportation planning efforts with local, regional, State, and Federal agencies to maintain and upgrade State roadways and prioritize improvements to improve safety and multimodal connectivity.

Action C: Identify key arterial and collector streets and seek funding to provide multimodal connectivity.

Action D: Balance commercial goods movement with the health and quality of life priorities of the community by routing heavy truck traffic away from residential zones and promoting safety at rail crossings.

Action E: Update the City's Capital Facilities Fees consistent with the requirements of AB 1600 and include fair share fees toward Caltrans facilities and multimodal improvements.

Action F: As freeway overcrossings are replaced, work with Caltrans to ensure that bridges can accommodate turn lanes, sidewalks, and bike facilities.

Action G: Develop concept plans and plan lines for interchange corridors and seek funding opportunities to construct improvements.

Policy MO-1.4: Congestion Management and Trip Reduction. Encourage mixed-use and jobs focused infill development that is served by multi-modal facilities to support reductions in regional and local vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Action A: Streamline transportation analysis requirements for infill projects that are consistent with the Land Use and Community Form Element (see **Chapter 3**).

Action B: Consider secondary effects of roadway widening to accommodate multimodal accessibility and safety.

Action C: Minimize driveways and access points along arterial streets whenever possible to reduce the number of conflict points and increase pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Action D: Encourage mixed-use development with residential and commercial densities high enough to support ridesharing and transit.

Action E: Support reduced on-site parking requirements where different uses can share parking or where easy access to frequent transit and bicycle and pedestrian facilities is available.

Policy MO-1.5: Hillside Area Street Character. Preserve the winding, tree-lined nature of the City street system in hillside areas.

Action A: Continue to allow flexible street design standards to allow roads to curve around hillsides to preserve rural character, limit landform alteration, and control vehicle speed.

Policy MO-1.6: Truck Routes. Ensure the new and existing business that use large trucks as a core part of their operations, more than just routine delivery, minimize maintenance impacts on City infrastructure and noise impacts on residents.

Action A: Direct truck routes away from noise- and emissions-sensitive residents.

Action B: Require truck routing plans to describe the operational characteristics of the use of the facility operator. Require plans to include methods and responsibility of enforcement for implementing measures that avoid impacts to public streets.

Parking

Atascadero residents and businesses have expressed the need for convenient parking in Downtown and along commercial corridors, as well as in higher density residential districts. Parking requirements can disincentivize development by displacing building area, but constrained parking supply can limit customer access to businesses. Excessive parking worsens multimodal access and increases impermeable surface areas. Inadequate parking for high-density residential development can impact nearby neighborhoods. The following goal, policies, and actions look to find ways to ensure adequate and well-managed, but not excessive, parking in Atascadero.

Goal MO-2: Accessible, right-sized, well-designed, and convenient public and private parking facilities

Policy MO-2.2: Parking Supply Management. Maintain an adequate and well-designed supply of off-street parking, particularly in commercial, industrial, and higher-density residential areas.

Action A: Balance parking needs within the public right-of-way with considerations of safety, street width, visibility, and property access.

Action B: Require all development to provide sufficient and convenient parking areas with minimal conflict with street traffic.

Action C: Allow new development to provide a parking management plan that utilizes shared parking with other businesses or accommodates multiple uses with different peak hour parking usage.

Action D: Encourage shared parking via reciprocal easement(s) in commercial and industrial areas. Encourage the consolidation of on-site parking, where appropriate, to eliminate the number of ingress and egress points onto public roads.

Action E: Maintain standards for off-street parking areas to include landscaping, screening, lighting, maintenance, and shade trees to mitigate adverse visual impacts and provide comfort for users.

Action F: Periodically review City parking requirements to balance on-site parking demand with other community goals for accessibility, density, and housing affordability and to respond to parking trends and land uses.

Action G: Allow parking supply flexibility to account for shared parking, reduce impermeable surface area, and support higher-density development.

Freeway Access and Interchanges

The construction of Highway 101 introduced a major barrier to east-west connectivity in Atascadero. Most of the freeway interchanges were designed in the 1950s and 1960s and remain difficult to cross for cyclists and pedestrians. Also, the bridge widths and underpasses are undersized and cause peak-hour congestion. This is exacerbated by closely spaced intersections between freeway ramps and El Camino Real.

Through Atascadero, Highway 101 has six interchanges with overcrossings and two with underpasses (at SR 41 and Traffic Way). There is also a southbound on-ramp at West Front Road and an additional ramp at San Diego Road with a northbound off-ramp and southbound on-ramp with low traffic volumes and no crossing.

The North County US 101 Multi-Modal Plan jointly prepared by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, the County, the cities of Atascadero and Paso Robles, and Caltrans evaluates five operational improvements along Highway 101 in Atascadero. The 2024 study identifies multiple on- and off-highway improvements as priorities to improve congestion, reduce queuing impacts, and increase multi-modal travel opportunities.

The following goal, policies, and actions focus on working with Caltrans to improve Highway 101 interchanges so that they are safer, multi-modal, and function better for all users.

Goal MO-3: Rebuilt and/or upgraded Highway 101 interchanges that enhance safety, improve functionalities for all users, and promote continued economic growth and prosperity in Atascadero

Policy MO-3.1: Caltrans Information Sharing and Coordination. Prepare and disseminate pertinent safety, operational, and community information to Caltrans related to the performance of Highway 101 interchanges to support funding of improvements.

Action A: Provide pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicle accident information related to outdated Highway 101 interchange designs to Caltrans District 5 staff.

Action B: Understand emergency response issues related to the current design of the Highway 101 interchanges, including a mitigation plan that studies scenarios where one or more interchange(s) are damaged in a catastrophic event.

Action C: Share pertinent community comments, concerns, and ideas related to Highway 101 interchanges gathered during Atascadero community discussions with Caltrans District 5 staff.

Policy MO-3.2: State Funding Advocacy. Proactively lobby for State funding and project prioritization of Highway 101 interchange improvements in Atascadero.

Action A: Identify a range of State and Federal funding sources that can be used, in partnership with SLOCOG, Caltrans, to fund major Highway 101 interchange

improvements.

Action B: Work with Caltrans to prioritize the Del Rio, San Anselmo, Curbaril, and Santa Rosa interchange upgrades to accommodate multi-model access, increased housing density and continued commercial growth in Atascadero.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Equestrian Facilities

Atascadero's climate and topography generally support walking and biking, but the circulation network has many gaps in facilities for these modes. Infill development, as described in the Land Use and Community Form Element (see **Chapter 3**), will improve the proximity of destinations for many residents and will help fill in gaps in the network. **Figure 6-2** (Bicycle and Trail Facilities) identifies the existing and planned bicycle and trails network in Atascadero. The following goal, policies, and actions provide specific detail on how the City will continue to expand and improve the pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian circulation system in Atascadero.

Goal MO-4: Safe, functional, and appealing bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian (in rural areas) facilities that allow convenient multi-modal mobility

Policy MO-4.1: Coordination and Planning. Provide "backbone" pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian systems that link residential, commercial, recreational, and regional areas.

Action A: Require developments to provide pedestrian, bicycle, and trail alignments and facilities consistent with adopted City plans and policies.

Action B: Adopt and maintain a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Equestrian Transportation Plan.

Action C: Identify a multi-modal network that provides connections between major destinations like schools, commercial nodes, community and park facilities, and the Salinas River. Use creek corridors where feasible to make those connections.

Policy MO-4.2: Pedestrian Mobility. Ensure pedestrian safety, enhance pedestrian comfort, and promote walking as an alternative to vehicle travel, with priority in retail districts and multi-family neighborhoods.

Action A: Develop pedestrian-friendly design standards that apply to all higher density residential and commercial projects and require construction of adequate sidewalks and/or multi-use pathways in new development.

Action B: Consider pedestrian usage when rehabilitating existing roads.

Action C: Ensure that drainage control does not preclude multimodal opportunities.

Action D: Where limited right-of-way width exists, allow modified street sections that maintain parking and pedestrian facilities to the greatest extent possible.

Action E: Provide wider sidewalks at commercial nodes and areas of higher pedestrian use.

Action F: Enhance and maintain streetscapes, especially along commercial and higher density residential corridors to create an enjoyable, safe, and comfortable experience for pedestrians.

Action G: Implement walkable shoulders and/or trails, where feasible, in single-family areas with lot sizes of one-half acre and larger. Develop flexible design standards appropriate for the varied topography and prioritize streets identified as part of the key backbone network.

Action H: Provide enhanced pedestrian crossings of El Camino Real, Traffic Way, and other major corridors where appropriate to support pedestrian safety and non-vehicular connections within the City.

Policy MO-4.3: Bicycle Mobility. Promote bicycle mobility and increase bicyclist safety with new/upgraded facilities and amenities.

Action A: Complete Traffic Way bicycle facilities as part of an alternative north-south connection.

Action B: Support a multi-use path as part of the future Templeton to Atascadero connector. Work with the lead agency to secure easements or other mechanisms to create the necessary connections.

Action C: Complete bicycle and pedestrian improvements along El Camino Real and Highway 41.

Action D: Require adequate and safe bicycle parking in conjunction with new development within the Urban Services Line.

Action E: Create opportunities to utilize unbuilt rights-of-way for pedestrian and bike connections.

Policy MO-4.4: Rural Trails. Provide for walkways, bikeways, and horse trails without curbs and sidewalks in rural areas.

Action A: Work with the National Park service and other interested agencies and organizations to complete and formalize the De Anza Trail. Prioritize access to and protection/expansion of the historic trail.

Action B: Review road abandonment requests for their potential as trails.

Action C: Coordinate local bikeway and trail projects with regional projects whenever possible.

Action D: Develop a Trail Master Plan for Atascadero Creek between Three Bridges Oak

Preserve and the Salinas River.

Action E: Provide and enhance a system of pedestrian and equestrian trailhead access points to the Salinas River corridor. Work with the State, SLO County, and Atascadero Mutual Water Company to provide trailhead access.

Action F: Support trail connections to the nearby communities of Templeton, Paso Robles, and Santa Margarita.

Policy MO-4.5: School and Park Connections. Provide a comprehensive system of routes to schools and parks.

Action A: In conjunction with the Safe Routes to School Program, adopt and maintain a pedestrian and bike system map identifying the locations of connections to key facilities. The system may consist of continuous routes that connect higher density neighborhoods, schools, parks, shopping areas, and workplaces and may also include facilities on identified rural collector streets and adjacent to creeks.

Action B: In conjunction with the Safe Routes to School Program, implement street improvements connecting and adjacent to schools.

Action C: Evaluate and update school zones to prioritize enhancements that benefit safe routes to schools.

Transit and Travel Demand Management

Atascadero is served by fixed-route and dial-a-ride transit. Fixed route stops largely are concentrated along the El Camino Real corridor, with infrequent service common to low-density areas. Higher land use densities and enhanced multimodal connectivity will improve the viability of transit, which can lead to improved service. Well-planned transit infrastructure can improve transportation equity and access for all users to jobs, housing, schools, and other major destinations. It can also play a role in reducing regional vehicle miles traveled. **Figure 6-3** (Transit Facilities) identifies the transit network and service areas in Atascadero.

Successful Travel Demand Management (TDM) can reduce or postpone the need for roadway improvements, particularly on commute routes such as Highway 101. TDM measures are designed to reduce peak-period traffic by increasing use of transit, bicycling, and walking (particularly for work and school trips), and by promoting flexible working hours, ridesharing, and land use and circulation management programs.

Goal MO-5: Reliable alternative travel modes that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality

Policy MO-5.1: Single-Occupancy Vehicle Alternatives. Promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel, particularly for commute trips.

Action A: Seek funding for programs that promote transit, ridesharing, bicycling and walking.

Action B: Support efforts to provide rideshare service to Downtown and major shopping and employment centers.

Policy MO-5.2: Public Transit. Support the evolution of public transit to meet the changing needs for local and regional access.

Action A: Work with the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA) to encourage use of local and regional public transit.

Action B: Support and encourage the use and expansion of Park & Ride facilities and other rideshare infrastructure.

Policy MO-5.3: County TDM Requirements. Seek alternatives that bring Atascadero closer to compliance with Transportation Demand Management program requirements of the San Luis Obispo County Clean Air Plan to reduce peak period trip generation.

Action A: Support programs that encourage employers to promote alternatives to driving alone to work, such as carpooling, walking, biking, transit, and considering slight adjustments to work schedules to incentivize alternatives.

Emerging Mobility Technology

As mobile technology and artificial intelligence become increasingly common, they are radically transforming mobility options and transportation systems. As the future of transportation continues to evolve, the City will remain flexible in accommodating better and more efficient ways to address transportation. Self-driving cars and trucks, smart street and parking technologies, adaptive signal controls, parking availability information, and other forms of new technology can improve many aspects of all modal experiences.

Bike or Scooter Sharing Systems

A bike or scooter-sharing system is a service in which these vehicles are made available for short-term rentals, often using a dockless system and activated by mobile devices. Popularly used vehicles include electric-powered devices such as scooters and bicycles. These vehicles can travel on local roadways, particularly within bike lanes, but are not recommended on sidewalks. While Atascadero may not be positioned for such systems immediately, evolving technologies and user interest can shift as the population and housing density increases. The City will stay abreast of new personal mobility trends and be prepared to respond to what works well for Atascadero.

On-Demand Rideshare

Ride-sharing services are services that use online-enabled platforms to connect passengers with local drivers using their personal vehicles. In most cases, these are a comfortable method for door-to-door transport. As this service continues to expand for rides and delivery services, the City may consider expanding designated curb-side pick-up/drop-off areas within Downtown, commercial centers, schools, and other popular activity areas.

Autonomous Vehicles

Self-driving vehicles are cars or trucks in which human drivers are never required to take control to safely operate the vehicle. Also known as autonomous or "driverless" vehicles, they combine sensors and software to control, navigate, and drive the vehicle. This is technology the City will need to monitor and consider how to properly regulate use before it is established or widely adopted locally. For instance, one approach may be restricting autonomous vehicle use to arterial and collector roads that have clear striping, signage, and other identification systems.

The deployment of advanced technology can help people more easily move around Atascadero. However, given that the local roads range from high-capacity arterials to rural local streets, the City will ensure that deployment of these technologies occurs safely, efficiently, and flexibly. The following goal and policies identify ways the City will support expanding new mobility technology while ensuring safe and efficient operations.

Goal MO-6: Anticipating and addressing emerging mobility technology proactively to allow new systems and industries to operate in Atascadero on the City's terms

Policy MO-6.1: Changing Mobile Technology. Encourage the use of mobile or other electronic devices with similar on-demand hailing functions, particularly for seniors, persons with disabilities, and other mobility challenged people.

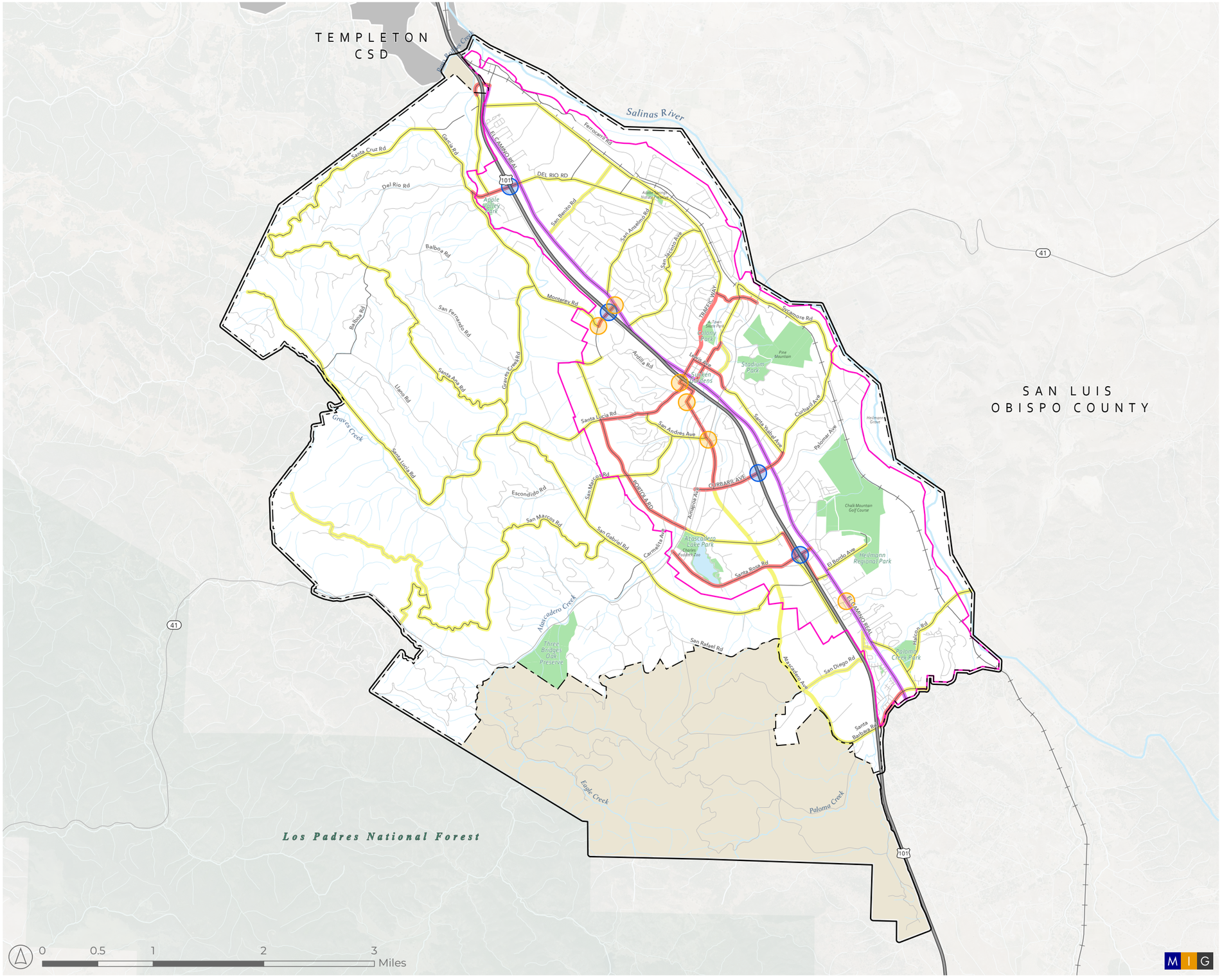
Action A: Manage curb space to efficiently balance parking needs, passenger pick-up and drop-off, commercial goods deliveries, and multimodal access.

Policy MO-6.2: Autonomous Vehicles. Update, when warranted, transportation systems and policies as autonomous and automated vehicles and their attendant facilities are developed locally and regionally.

Action A: Develop an Autonomous Vehicles Master Plan that includes operational requirements, pilot programs, and/or incentives that will allow the technology to be incrementally deployed in the City while ensuring proper safety measures are in place to ensure they operate on specific, safe streets.

Policy MO-6.3: Performance Analysis Measures. Utilize technology to create performance measures to interpret data metrics of vehicles, bicycling, walking, and transit usage within streets, sidewalks, and public facilities.

Action A: Work with local universities and transportation agencies to capture mobility user data as part of student research projects.



AUTHENTIC Atascadero OUR CITY, OUR PLAN

Figure 6-1
Circulation Diagram

Basemap Features
- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

Mobility Improvements
- Interchange Improvement
- Intersection Improvement

Road Classification
- Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector

Note:
Improvements shown are based on the EIR analysis and are for illustrative purposes only, not intended to be prescriptive.

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

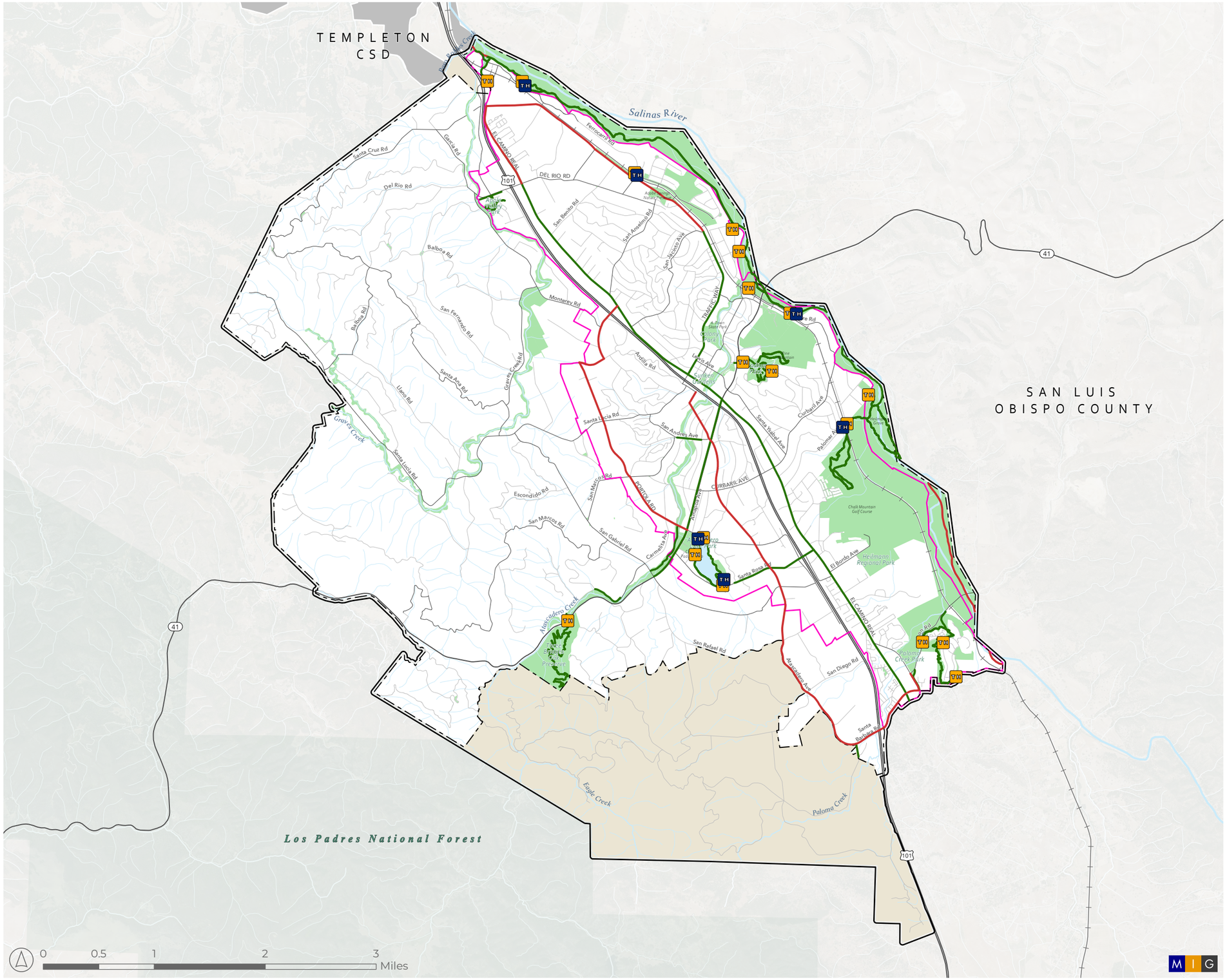


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Figure 6-2
Bicycle and Trail Facilities

Basemap Features
- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

Bicycle and Trail Routes
- Existing Route
- Planned Route

Trailhead Access
- Trailhead
- Trailhead Parking

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

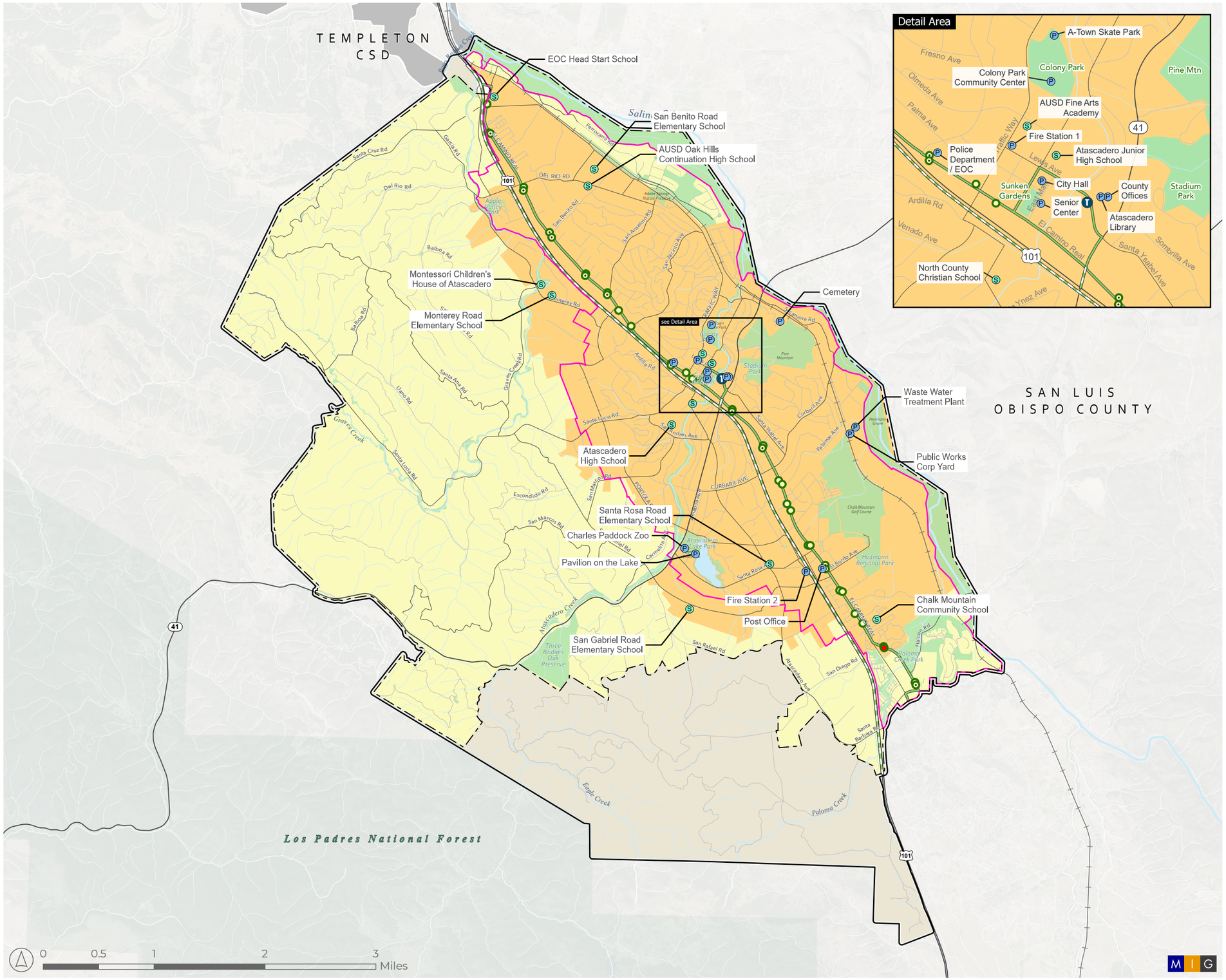

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Figure 6-3
Transit Facilities

Basemap Features
- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

SLO RTA Bus Stop
- Transfer Hub
- Bus Stop | Single Direction
- Bus Stop | Multi-Direction
- Timed Stop

SLO RTA Route 9
- Daily Route
- Limited Service / Express Trips

Dial-A-Ride Service
- Fare Zone 1
- Fare Zone 2

Public Services
- Public Facility
- School

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

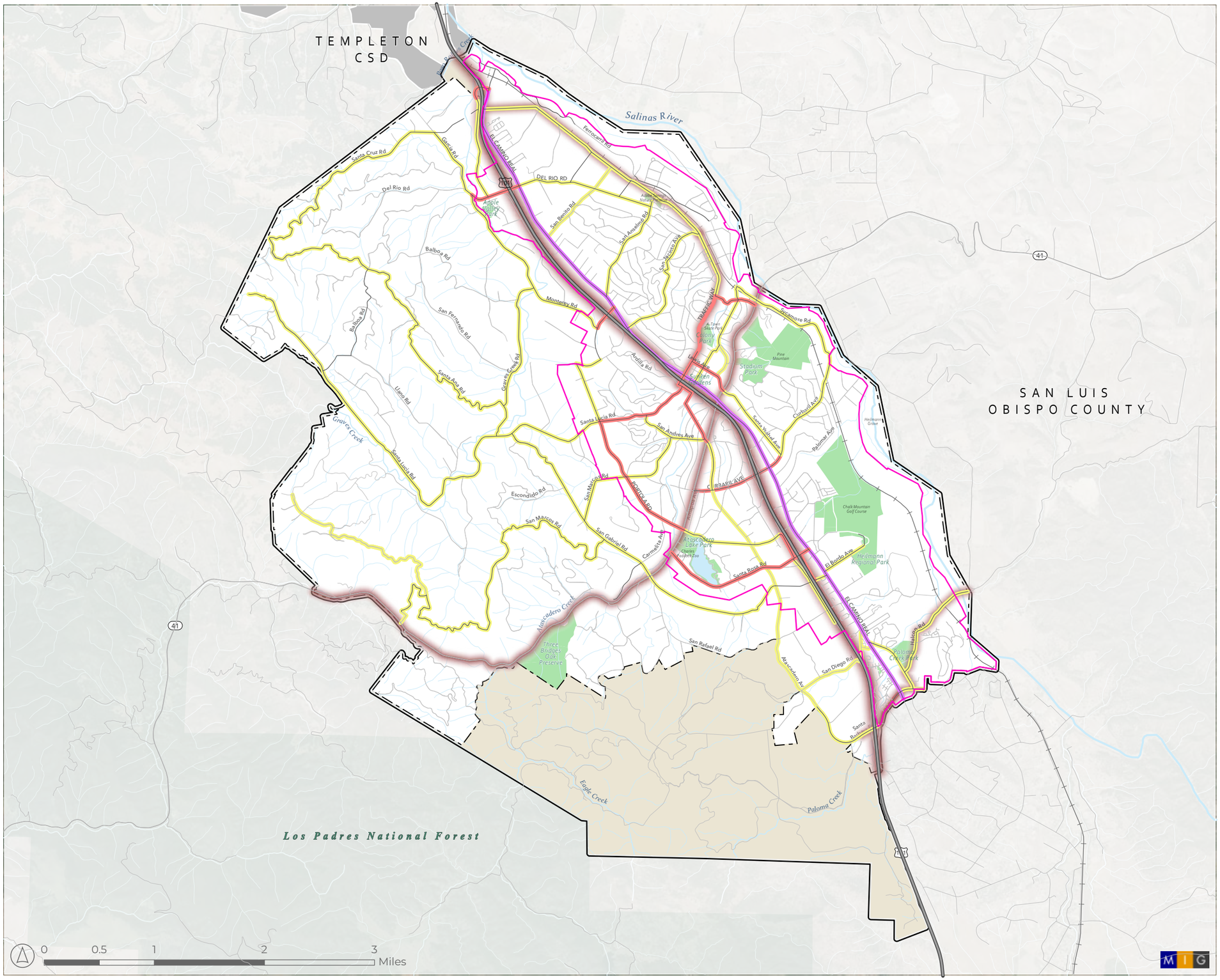

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Figure 6-4

Truck Routes

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

Road Classification

- Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Truck Routes

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

Chapter 7: Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element

Introduction

The rural nature of Atascadero—with open spaces and oak studded hillsides—are fundamental components of the City's character and quality of life. Atascadero is surrounded by natural beauty and resources, from the coastal mountains to the west and north, and the Salinas River Valley to the east and south. Varied habitats and environments occur throughout the Planning Area, including oak woodlands, chaparral, riparian creek corridors, and rangeland.

To help connect the community to nature and opportunities for recreation, the City provides an array of public parks and recreational opportunities: miles of trails, equestrian amenities, lakefront picnic areas, and specialized facilities for sports and leisure activities. Atascadero is also home to the Central Coast Zoo, the only zoo in the region accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. In addition, San Luis Obispo County manages regional parks located in the City, and several private developments include park and recreational amenities for their residents. This element provides an overview of natural resources and recreation and open space amenities,

with specific goals, policies, and actions related to the consideration and management of these resources in response to future community needs.

Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Priorities

To support recreation, open space, and natural resources goals, this General Plan considers these resources as an integral component of the City's quality of life strategy, one that invites placemaking, tourism, and a focus on economic development.

Parks and Open Spaces

As of 2024, the City owns and operates seven public parks (totaling approximately 226 acres) and several recreational facilities (Colony Park Community Center, Pavilion on the Lake) that provide space for residents to enjoy passive and active forms of recreation, including opportunities to hike, bike, and ride horses (see **Figure 7-1**). The City also owns and operates the five-acre Central Coast Zoo, allowing visitors to view hundreds of animal species from around the world. While the overall acreage of parks and open spaces is relatively high, not all Atascadero residents have the same level of access to park and recreational opportunities, as a majority of the City is rural in nature with large distances between larger lots and the urban core.

Opportunities to improve existing and create new linkages to parks and recreational amenities would improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. These may include new or expanded trails via the Jim Green Trail, Pine Mountain Loop, Stadium Park Trail, Three Bridges Oak Preserve Trail, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Also, as new residential development occurs near the City's boundaries or along El Camino Real neighborhoods, new small-scale, neighborhood-oriented parks or plaza spaces may be warranted, along with new multi-modal connections that connect the community to regional open space areas.

Trails

Atascadero contains approximately 17 miles of public trails (2024) either owned and managed by the City, San Luis Obispo County, the Atascadero Land Preservation Society, or the Atascadero Mutual Water Company. This trail system is a community amenity and benefit. The opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bike connections to existing and new trails would better link residents and visitors to recreational destinations, including the Salinas River and Atascadero Lake Park. In addition to providing residents with better access, the City envisions these improvements as a draw for visitors looking to experience Atascadero's natural environment.

Oak Woodlands

Atascadero contains a diversity of habitats and ecosystems. At least four types of oak woodlands are represented in the City, including Blue Oak Woodlands, Coastal Oak Woodlands, Valley Oak Woodlands, and Blue Oak-Foothill Pines (see **Figure 7-2**). Oak woodlands provide important

wildlife habitat and are an integral part of the City's aesthetic appeal and historic character. The California Department of Forestry has mapped approximately 10,822 acres of oak woodlands within the Planning Area. Approximately 7,600 acres of oak woodland habitat occur on parcels zoned for residential use, largely within the rural areas beyond the Urban Limit Line.

Slope and Topography

Nearly half of Atascadero consists of hilly or steep mountainous topography. Steep slopes, while providing dramatic views, can also pose development challenges. Typically, hillsides are much harder to serve with infrastructure due to the need to pump water uphill and build roads on challenging slopes. Hillside areas also make emergency service support and evacuations from natural disasters—wildfires, landslides, earthquakes, and floods—more difficult (see **Chapter 9**).

Creeks, Rivers, and Other Habitat

Atascadero contains approximately 27 miles of creeks and rivers, including Atascadero Creek, Boulder Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, and the Salinas River. In addition, there are over 54 miles of mapped, unidentified "blue-line" drainages that range from simple land depressions to jurisdictional waterways.

The waterways provide important wildlife corridors connecting the Salinas River to the Santa Lucia Mountains and are designated critical habitat areas for South-Central California Coast Steelhead Trout. Additionally, approximately 3,000 acres of critical habitat for California red-legged frogs include the upper watershed areas of Morro and Atascadero Creeks (see **Figure 7-3**). Historically, creeks in Atascadero have sustained degraded habitat quality due to encroachment from development, sedimentation and erosion, off-road vehicle use, and urban pollution. Protecting and enhancing the effected watersheds will support the local ecosystem, help improve water flow to reduce localized flooding risks, and enhance the recreational quality of the City's waterways (see **Figure 7-4**).

The local creeks and rivers also provide recreational opportunities for many residents. The Salinas River has been recognized by residents as an asset to be protected and bolstered as a regional attraction for tourism, recreation, and education. Potential amenities and activities include trails, fishing, interpretative signage, and wildlife observation areas.

Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Goals, Policies, and Actions

The following sections include goals, supporting policies, and implementation actions, related to the following topics:

- Parks and Recreation
- Trails
- Open Space Conservation
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Parks and Recreation

Parks and other public spaces that support recreational pursuits enhance community health and quality of life. Not only do these spaces promote physical and mental health, but they also serve as spaces for social, civic, and cultural engagement. With seven parks totaling more than 200 acres and several facilities providing opportunities for a range of activities like hiking, biking, and horse riding, Atascadero offers recreational opportunities for all community members.

In addition, the County of San Luis Obispo owns, maintains, and operates over 200 acres of parks and open space land within the City limits, including Chalk Mountain Golf Course and Heilmann Regional Park.

Goal REC-1: Diverse parks, recreational activities, and leisure experiences for people of all ages

Policy REC-1.1: Park and Recreation Facilities Planning and Operations. Provide adequate park and recreation facilities to accommodate current community needs and planned future growth.

Action A: Update the comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide for long-term needs.

Action B: Prepare and maintain individual master plans for major City park facilities that include a programming component and management requirements.

Action C: Provide diverse recreation opportunities citywide for residents and visitors, including multi-purpose sports complexes, sports courts, play areas for children, equestrian trails, bikeways, jogging paths, hiking trails, and community centers.

Action D: Explore opportunities to expand park and recreational sites in northern Atascadero.

Action E: If future development is approved for the Eagle Ranch property, require the development of publicly accessible parks, recreational facilities, equestrian facilities, and trails, including a link towards the Los Padres National Forest land to the west.

Action F: Encourage the acquisition of parkland and open space beyond the Quimby Act ratio of five acres per 1,000 residents.

Policy REC-1.2: Interagency Coordination. Work with State, regional, and local agencies to plan for, acquire, and expand park and recreation facilities and amenities in Atascadero.

Action A: Pursue expansion of sports fields in the area to the east of Paloma Park, and/or execute a long-term agreement with the State to acquire or lease the site. Analyze potential expansion into a regional sports facility.

Action B: Work with the Atascadero Unified School District to formulate a program for joint use of facilities to attain a system of school-park complexes, and execute necessary agreements to allocate maintenance and operation costs for joint use.

Action C: Work with the County and other agencies to acquire and develop parks and facilities.

Policy REC-1.3: Park and Recreation Financing. Develop a method of financing park and recreational facilities and services using a variety of revenue sources.

Action A: Acquire parkland through developer dedications, development impact fees, or other financing mechanisms.

Action B: Work with community partners on maintenance of facilities, parklands, and trails.

Action C: Use development impact and/or in-lieu fees to fund park and recreation facilities of all sizes.

Action D: Finance park operations in part through user fees.

Policy REC-1.4: Specialized Recreation. Provide specialized recreation opportunities based on projected needs and standards identified in Park Master Plan(s).

Action A: Plan for funding on-going operations and maintenance to finance development of facilities that support specialized recreation.

Action B: Promote the Zoo, Atascadero Lake Park, and other City parks as unique and valuable attractions.

Action C: Support equestrian staging areas and trail systems, including the De Anza trail along the Salinas River.

Trails

Atascadero has more than 17 miles of public trails owned and managed by the City, San Luis Obispo County, and the Atascadero Land Preservation Society. Some follow natural features, like the Atascadero Lake Park pathway, and some trails have been developed to create new recreational opportunities. A recurring theme of the 2045 General Plan is enhancing existing amenities and developing new amenities where feasible. This strategy can improve connectivity overall to create a system accessible to community members and visitors.

Goal REC-2: A network of public trails that provide opportunities to engage with nature, move through the City, and connect to key destinations

Policy REC-2.1: Trail Connections and Signage. Provide access to a range of City destinations through a well-thought-out, safe, and integrated multi-modal system.

Action A: Integrate multi-modal (pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) and public transportation facilities with the network of public trails/paths, parks, and recreation facilities, consistent with the Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**).

Action B: Develop a comprehensive signage program for pedestrian walkways, bikeways, equestrian trails, and recreation trails.

Policy REC-2.2: Public Access to Creeks. Preserve creek reservation parcels for open space and support opportunities for public access where appropriate.

Action A: Develop parks, trails, and recreational amenities where appropriate on or adjacent to public creek reservation parcels.

Action B: Require the dedication of trail easements and access points to and along creeks and the Salinas River as part of subdivision maps or development permits consistent with the Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**) and Subdivision Map Act, as appropriate to the conditions.

Open Space Conservation

Open space can be defined as any area unencumbered by private development potential. Open space areas can be set aside for preserving habitat, guarding against natural hazards such as flooding or wildfire risk, and providing benefits such as groundwater recharge. Some open space areas can serve multiple benefits. Atascadero's dramatic mountain vistas, expansive undisturbed landscape, and tree-lined streets create a link between the more developed parts of the City and the natural environment, and embody the elements of Atascadero's rural character. Designating and maintaining open spaces achieves several community goals: preserving the character of rural residential neighborhoods, protecting natural resources, creating recreation opportunities, and

facilitating public access to nature. The following goals, policies, and actions work to preserve and enhance Atascadero's natural and scenic resources.

Goal REC-3: Dedicated system of open space that upholds the community's rural character, local biodiversity, natural landscape, and enjoyment of recreation

Policy REC-3.1: Open Space System. Prioritize enhancement and acquisition of parks and open space to meet evolving community needs.

Action A: Seek the acquisition of open space areas that can be managed by community partners.

Action B: Require that hazard lands be managed to minimize risk to life and property, including delineating areas as preserved open space.

Action C: Require that areas with special environmental resources be considered and integrated into development planning.

Policy REC-3.2: New Development. Require that new development and subdivisions blend in with surrounding topography by minimizing disturbance to the existing natural environment.

Action A: Maintain zoning districts to reduce density as natural topography/slope increases.

Action B: Require development built on hillsides to conform with the City's adopted hillside grading ordinance.

Action C: Maintain requirements that prohibit new lots with slope averaging 30 percent or greater except where such lots can contain building envelopes with less than 20 percent average slope.

Action D: Require dedication of open space easements, parklands, and open space as mitigation for subdivisions and development projects that impact significant slopes, floodplains, watercourses and wetlands, wooded areas, sensitive areas, historic sites, cultural sites, and similar areas.

Action E: Require new single-family subdivisions of 20 units or greater to provide on-site shared greenspace/park amenities.

Policy REC-3.3: Grading. Prevent unnecessary intensive grading of development sites.

Action A: Periodically review, and update as necessary, the hillside grading ordinance to minimize hillside grading, cuts, fills, and ridgeline disturbance.

Action B: Require identification of feasible development sites and access in compliance with the Municipal Code prior to any site disturbance, lot line adjustment, parcel map, or

tract map proposed on sites with slopes greater than 15 percent.

Action C: Maintain thresholds that limit and restrict development based on average slopes consistent with the Municipal Code.

Biological Resources

Biological resources provide critical ecosystems that support plant species and provide animal habitat. Natural habitats can provide air and water purification, flood control, pollination for crops, and temperature regulation The following goals, policies, and actions ensure that Atascadero's sensitive biological and watershed resources are considered into the future.

Goal REC-4: Consideration of biological and watershed resources within the urban areas to provide multiple benefits, with resource areas including oak woodlands, riparian corridors, native trees and plants, and creeks and rivers

Policy REC-4.1: Natural Resources Protection. Protect natural and sensitive resource areas to the extent practicable.

Action A: Enforce all provisions of the Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance.

Action B: Maintain a GIS-based inventory of sensitive habitats and resources, including native trees, watercourse- and wetland-adjacent areas, archaeological resources, and historic sites.

Action C: Work with non-profits and community organizations to preserve biologically sensitive areas to increase community resiliency and public access to recreational areas.

Action D: Require identification of scenic and sensitive lands (creeks, riparian corridors, wetlands, critical habitats, etc.) on development applications. Develop and work with applicants to implement avoidance and mitigation measures to minimize impacts.

Action E: Carefully evaluate public and private projects to require the consideration of trees, watersheds, natural slopes, and other natural features.

Policy REC-4.2: Tree Protection and Replenishment. Protect and replenish street and native trees.

Action A: Implement and enforce the Native Tree Ordinance to protect and replenish native tree species.

Action B: Implement a comprehensive street tree planting and maintenance program, specifically within the Downtown core and along major corridors.

Action C: Require planting of shade trees in new projects, in part to provide shade for adjacent buildings to conserve energy use.

Action D: Update the Zoning Ordinance to require native trees and plant species be incorporated into landscaping plans, as appropriate.

Action E: Require lot line adjustments and tentative subdivision maps on sites with 25 percent or greater native tree canopy cover to establish locations of building sites, driveways, and leach fields that will minimize impacts to oak woodlands.

Policy REC-4.3: Watershed Protection. Ensure that development along Atascadero Creek, Graves Creeks, the Salinas River, blue line creeks, and natural springs, lakes, and other riparian areas does not interrupt natural flows or adversely impact riparian ecosystems and water quality.

Action A: Require new development be designed in accordance with all applicable best management practices to prevent obstruction or diversion of flood and drainage flow to minimize adverse impacts to riparian vegetation and habitat along or within a watercourse.

Action B: Maintain waterways in a natural state; prohibit concrete channelization of creeks.

Action C: Limit development and uses that allow animal keeping, storage of vehicles or materials, and active recreation uses that result in disturbance of sensitive resource areas.

Action D: Allow flood protection measures (such as selective brush cleaning), low-impact trail development, streambed maintenance, and bank protection along waterways where appropriate with necessary permits.

Action E: Preserve creek reservations and the Salinas River for open space and recreational use. Minimize the impact of recreational uses on the habitat value and open space qualities of the creeks.

Action F: Protect areas subject to flooding from development, consistent with the City's flood hazard ordinance requirements.

Action G: In conjunction with the AMWC, maintain regulations that identify existing and potential well sites and aquifer recharge areas, including sufficient buffers to protect them from contamination.

Action H: Support the establishment and protection of floodable terraces, wetlands, and revegetation along creeks and streams.

Policy REC-4.4: Stormwater Control Program. Maintain a stormwater control program consistent with the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program (Phase II).

Action A: Continue to implement the Urban Storm Water Quality Management and Discharge Control ordinance.

Action B: Minimize impervious surfaces and decrease off-site storm flows for new and modified development.

Action C: Consider incorporating regionally focused improvements into the stormwater master plan, including shared detention facilities and natural retention and detention systems.

Action D: Continue to notify project applicants of requirements to inspect sediment and erosion control mitigation measures each year.

Policy REC-4.5: Agricultural Practices. Allow accessory agricultural practices, including keeping livestock and farm animals, on parcels designated as Rural Residential and Agriculture, with consideration for the natural environment and residential character.

Action A: Regulate allowed accessory agricultural practices and the keeping of domestic animals on rural and agricultural lands consistent with the farm animal regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

Policy REC-4.6: Soil Health. Encourage soil conservation by minimizing grading and preventing erosion.

Action A: Require soil retention and erosion control as conditions of approval for development projects consistent with Regional Water Quality Control Board standards.

Action B: Periodically review the Municipal Code for consistency with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System requirements.

Policy REC-4.7: Water Conservation. Support ongoing water conservation efforts.

Action A: Coordinate water conservation programs with the Atascadero Mutual Water Company.

Action B: Consider implementation of reclaimed water use, as feasible.

Action C: Encourage incorporation of water conservation measures in new development.

Action D: Continue to implement the State of California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) for new and rehabilitated landscape projects.

Policy REC-4.8: Atascadero Lake Water Quality Improvements. Develop and implement a program to improve water quality in Atascadero Lake.

Action A: Perform periodic water quality assessments of Atascadero Lake.

Action B: Identify potential pollution sources and incorporate feasible mitigation strategies into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Action C: Work with local community groups and organizations to monitor lake water quality and propose strategies for enhancements.

Action D: Seek additional water supply sources, including recycled water sources, to maintain Atascadero Lake water levels and quality.

Cultural and Historic Resources

While Atascadero was created as a fully master-planned community in the early 1900s, human activity in the area dates back millennia. Many Indigenous communities lived and/or traveled through the area, and preserving their history in parallel with Atascadero's developed history is important. In addition, Atascadero has a rich and eclectic mix of historical homes and structures having significance based on their style, unique events or people associated with them, or other qualifying factors.

Goal REC-6: Protection and celebration of Atascadero's rich prehistory and history

Policy REC-6.1: Cultural Resource Protection. Protect prehistoric cultural resources from disturbance associated with development.

Action A: Maintain a current GIS-based map of generalized areas of known archaeological resources.

Action B: Continue to implement the City's archaeologic development standards.

Action C: Require short- and long-term mitigation measures for significant archaeological resource sites, include avoidance of impacts, burial under sterile fill, and/or monitoring of earthmoving activities.

Action D: Involve local Tribal governments with any work located within known archaeological sites where resources are present or likely.

Policy REC-6.2: Historic Structures and Resources. Encourage conservation and preservation of places and buildings of historical and architectural significance.

Action A: Periodically review, and update as necessary, the historic resources standards in the zoning ordinance to maintain historic community assets and provide recognition and consideration of historic resources, districts, and character defining features.

Action B: Create and maintain a list of historic resources in Atascadero, known as the Historic Resources List, to maintain resources significant to Atascadero's heritage, such as Colony homes with character-defining features.

Action C: Utilize the State Historic Building Code to encourage rehabilitation, preservation,

restoration, or relocation of historic buildings.

Action D: Utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Properties to assess proposed improvements to historic properties.

Action E: Develop incentives for retaining and rehabilitating Atascadero's historical resources, including exceptions to development regulations, conservation districts, staff technical assistance, programs to facilitate relocation instead of demolition, and Mills' Act contracts.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Reduction

While greenhouse gas reduction remains a regional and global issue, each jurisdiction in California is obligated to define and implement strategies to reduce localized greenhouse gas emissions, with the aim to achieve the statewide reductions established by the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 and related legislation. Atascadero first addressed greenhouse gas emission in its 2014 Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP set a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the City has made considerable progress over the years in climate actions and sustainability. This General Plan has policies and actions that will move Atascadero forward in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and meeting updated reduction targets.

Goal REC-7: Improve air quality and reduced health risks

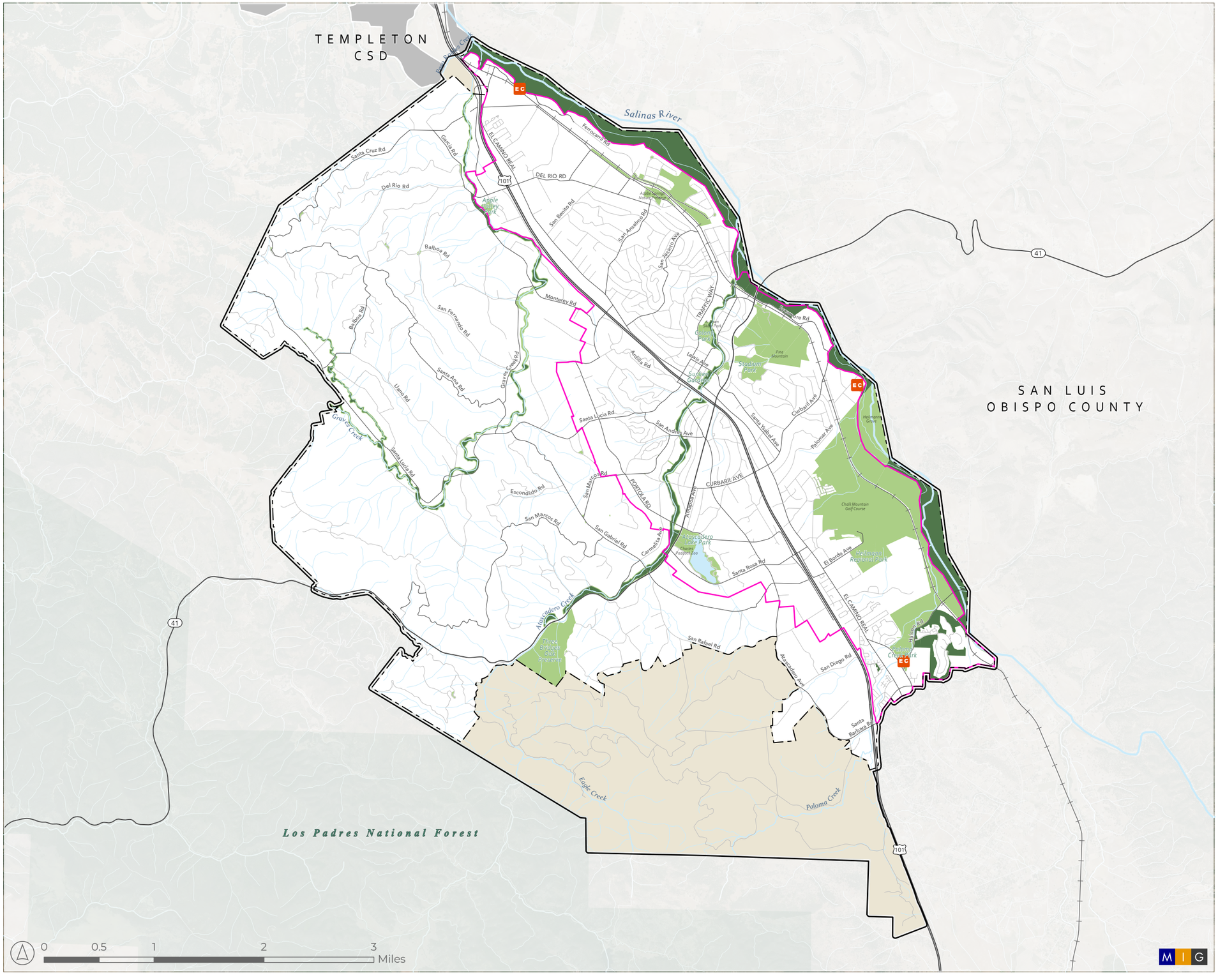
Policy REC-7.1: Clean Air. Support regional efforts to maintain clean air.

Action A: Require dust control and emissions limitations during project construction.

Action B: Adopt circulation policies that encourage vehicle trip reductions consistent with the Mobility Element (see **Chapter 6**), and support regional programs to maintain clean air.

Action C: Concentrate new intensive development at identified nodes and commercial corridors to help reduce vehicle trips.

Action D: Continue to support the development of Park-and-Ride facilities in appropriate locations.



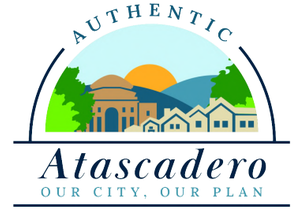


Figure 7-1
Park and Open Space

Basemap Features
- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies

Park and Open Space
- Parks
- Open Space

Recreation Facilities
- EC Equestrian Center

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

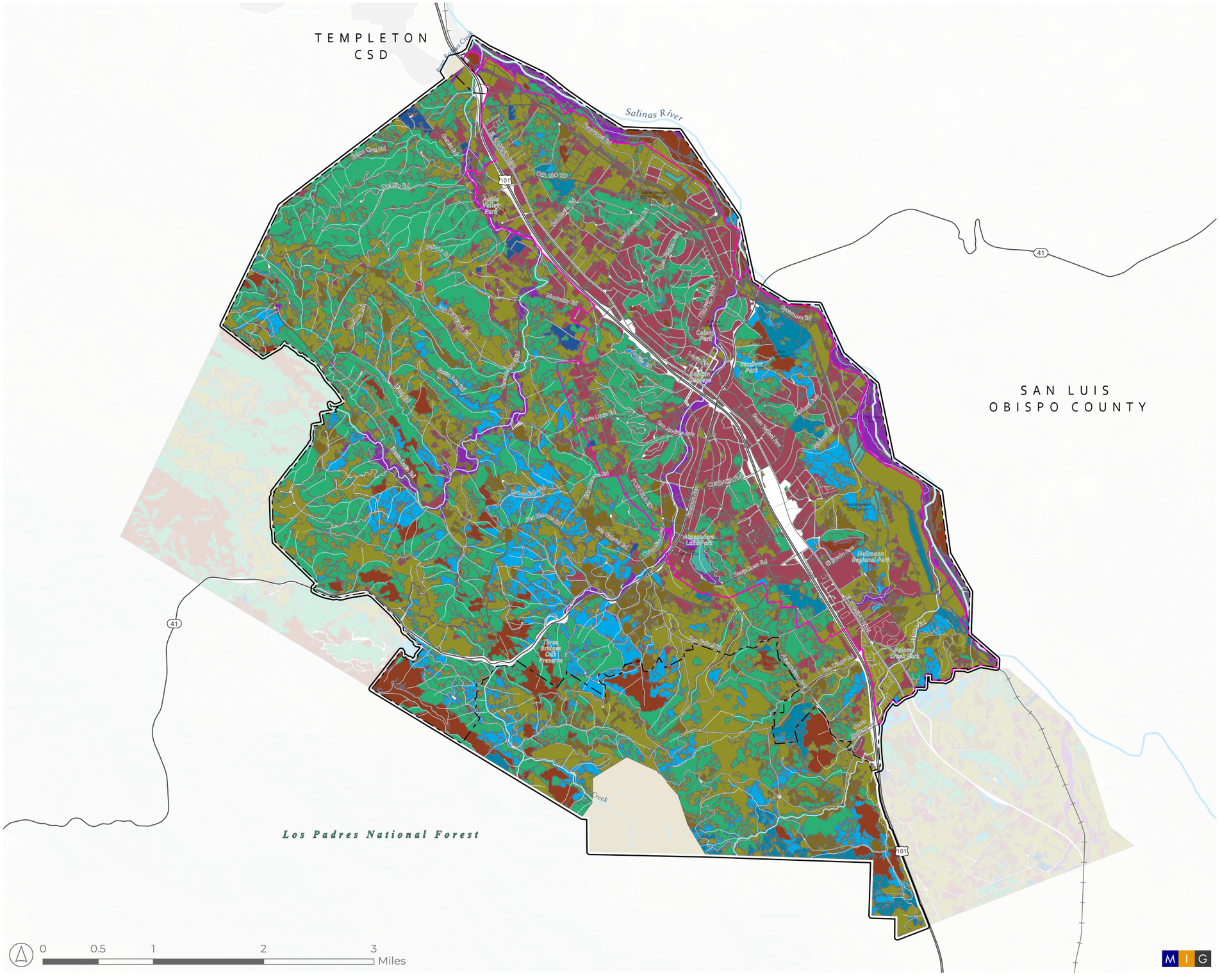


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Figure 7-2

California Vegetation - Oak Woodlands

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

CA Vegetation (CalFire FRAP)

- Annual Grassland
- Barren
- Blue Oak Woodland
- Blue Oak-Foothill Pine
- Coastal Oak Woodland
- Deciduous Orchard
- Lacustrine
- Mixed Chaparral
- Urban
- Valley Foothill Riparian
- Valley Oak Woodland

MIG

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

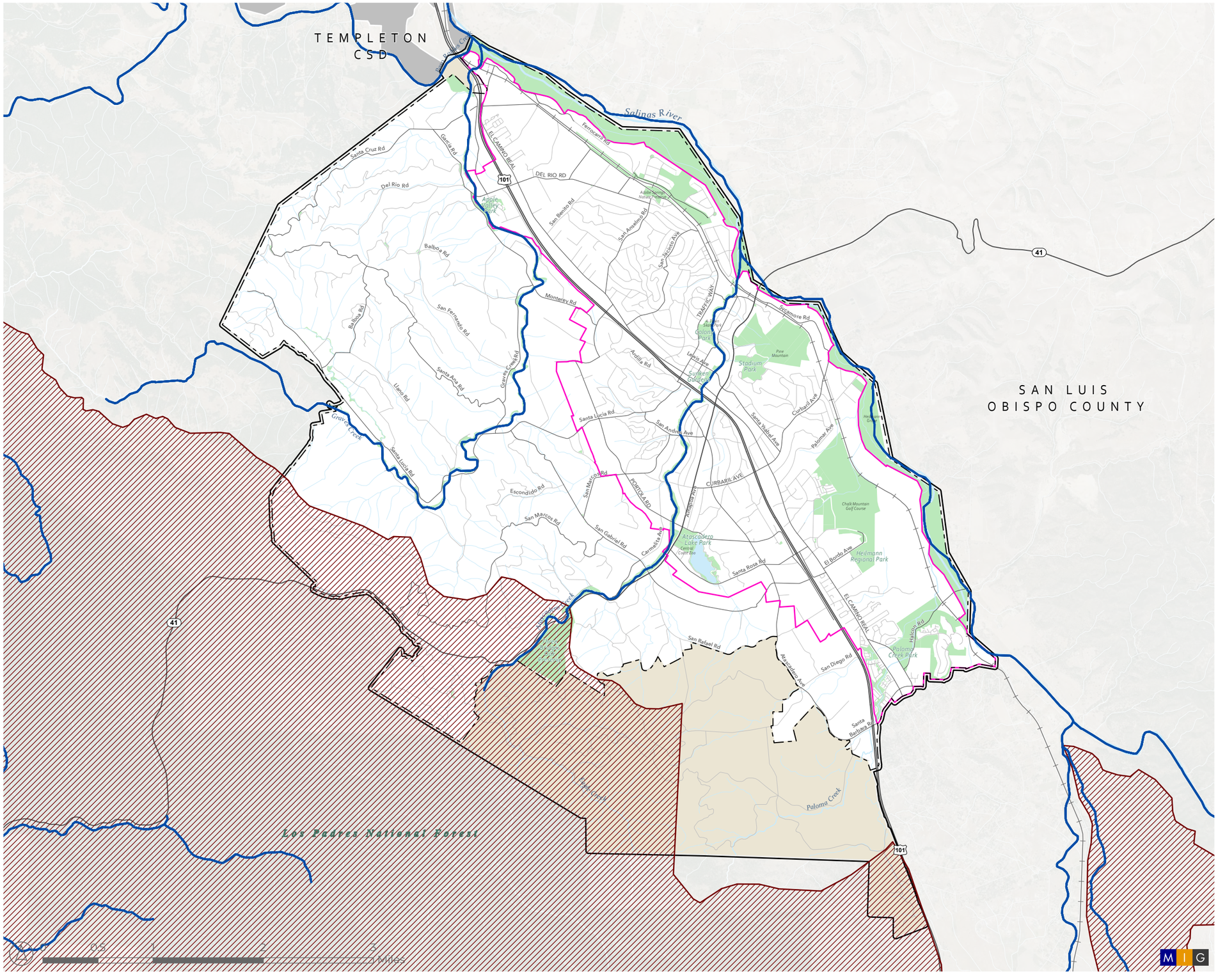

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Figure 7-3

Critical Habitat

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

Critical Habitat

- Steelhead
- California Red-Legged Frog

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

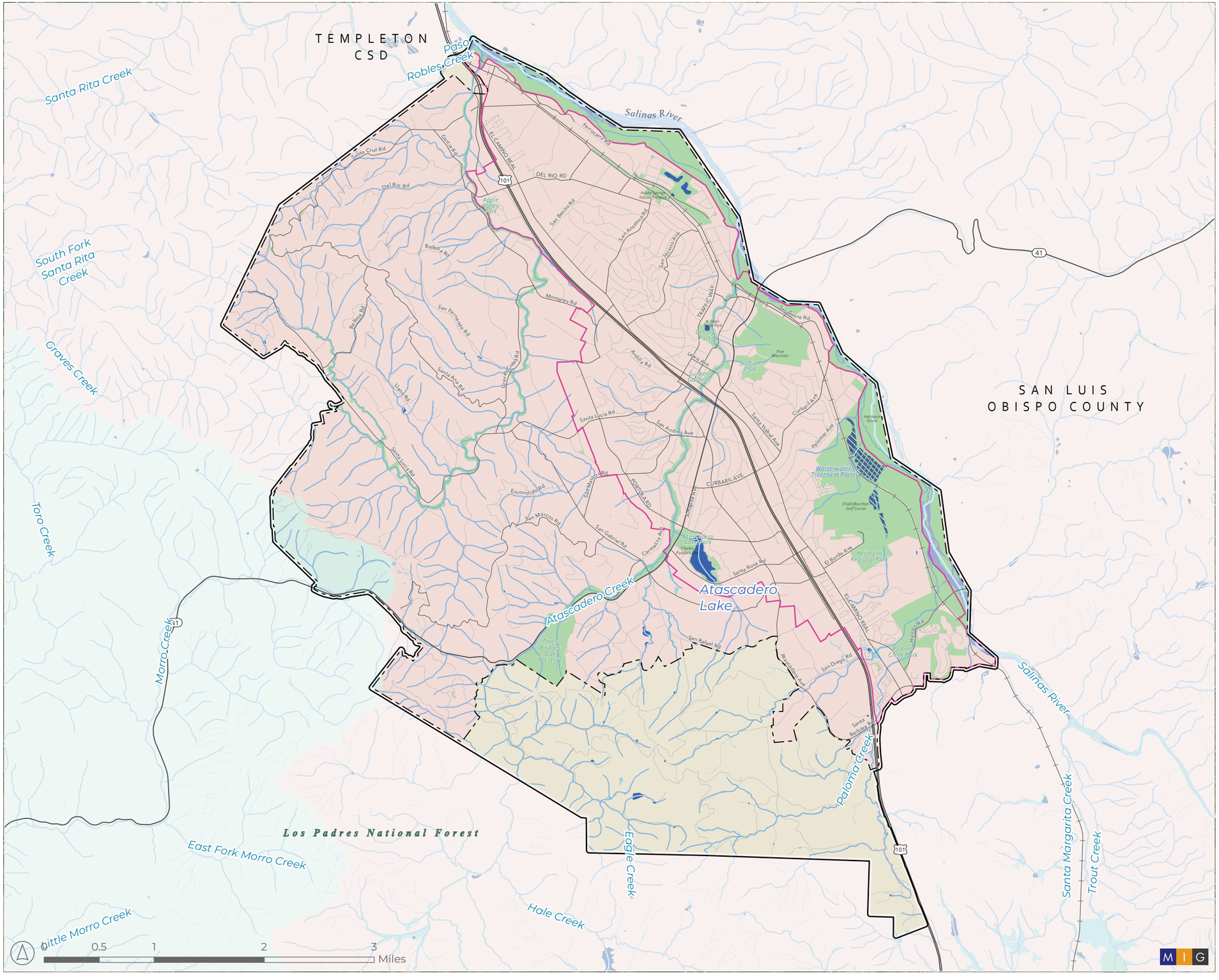

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Figure 7-5
Water Resources

Basemap Features
- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

National Hydrology Dataset (NHD)
- Connector
- Stream/River
- Artificial Path
- Lake/Pond
- Reservoir

National Wetland Inventory (NWI)
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine

Watershed
- Central Coastal
- Salinas

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

Chapter 8: Public Services and Infrastructure Element

Introduction

City residents, institutions, and the business community depend upon reliable, flexible, and cost-effective public services and infrastructure to ensure that homes and businesses have efficient utility services and that desired growth can be accommodated. Citywide, the commitment remains to ensure all residents benefit from high-quality public services and infrastructure suited to community character and growth objectives. The City's Public Works Department oversees many of the local infrastructure and service delivery systems: street maintenance and rehabilitation, stormwater management and flood control, sewage collection and treatment, and maintenance of City-owned parks, trails, and municipal buildings (see **Chapter 7**). The Atascadero Mutual Water Company, a publicly owned enterprise whose founding dates to the original colony in 1913, provides water service, drawing supplies from local groundwater sources and distributing that water to customers through over 250 miles of pipelines.

Other City-provided public services include law enforcement, fire prevention and protection, development review, building permitting, recreation activities, and community events (see **Chapter 9**). The San Luis Obispo County Public Libraries system operates the Atascadero Library in Downtown. The Atascadero Unified School District, an independent government agency, provides public education services for students in transitional kindergarten through grade 12.

For solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling, the City contracts with a private franchised waste company. Natural gas is supplied by the Southern California Gas Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides electric power transmission and service. Alternative electric service providers are also expanding into the area. Residents and businesses have access to several telecommunications service providers, with available companies and services continually shifting in response to advances in technology.

Public Services and Infrastructure Priorities

To help accommodate future projected growth, prioritize future investments, and deliver high-quality community amenities, this General Plan addresses the following public services and infrastructure issues.

Water Supply

The Atascadero Mutual Water Company 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) projected future groundwater budget period (2020–2042) identifies an average annual increase in groundwater storage of 800-acre feet per year[1]. Looking forward, areas for above-ground or below-ground storage (such as tanks), or groundwater recharge areas, may be identified to expand water storage. This will address concerns related to future multi-year drought events that could potentially impact seasonal groundwater capacity.

Wastewater

The City owns, operates, and maintains local sanitary sewer collection facilities and the local water reclamation facility, which as of 2024, had a treatment capacity of 1.4 million gallons per day. Approximately 50 percent of properties in Atascadero rely on individual onsite septic systems and are not connected to the sanitary sewer system, with most of these located outside of the Urban Services Line (USL). Two factors affect the need for a significant upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant: (1) compliance with new water quality standards for effluent and (2) demands associated with planned growth and sewer service expansion within the USL.

Flood Control Facilities

The Salinas River and several creeks traverse the City, providing some measure of natural flood control. Installed flood control improvements, both private and public, consist of catch basins,

[1] An acre-foot of water is 325,821 gallons, or roughly the amount sufficient to meet the needs of a household of four for one year.

culverts, and pipes designed to manage runoff. In 2023, a major 100-year storm resulted in significant flooding citywide, highlighting the need to evaluate opportunities to incorporate flood control facilities where possible and maintain the capacity of natural creeks and waterways to respond to potentially significant weather patterns and events in addition to the need to respond to aging infrastructure conditions.

Infrastructure Undergrounding

Most electric power utility lines extend across the Atascadero via overhead lines. The threat of extreme wind and heat present wildfire risks associated with sparking from these overhead lines. Undergrounding utilities for new development can reduce fire risk, offer more reliable electrical and communications service during and after storms, and reduce visual clutter.

High-Speed Communications Services

Reliable, convenient, and affordable access to high-speed internet and cell phone coverage throughout the community promotes commerce and connectivity. The eastern side of Atascadero generally has good access to broadband technology, but the steep terrain and low-intensity development on Atascadero's western side pose challenges for providers to offer reliable service. Provision of reliable, high-speed communications services allows residents to stay connected to the world and businesses to operate at their optimum.

Public Services and Infrastructure Goals, Policies, and Actions

The following sections include goal sections, with supporting policies and implementation actions, related to the following topics:

- Efficient and Fiscally Sustainable Operations
- Water Supply and Delivery
- Wastewater Collection and Treatment
- Stormwater Drainage and Flood Protection
- Solid Waste and Recycling
- Energy
- Telecommunications

Efficient and Fiscally Sustainable Operations

The City places a high priority on ensuring quality municipal facilities and services, from fire and police services to street maintenance, flood control, and well-maintained parks and community buildings.

Goal PSI-1: Continued reliable public infrastructure and services that support orderly and desired growth

Policy PSI-1.1: Urban Services Line. Direct growth to areas where services can be provided cost effectively.

Action A: Maintain lower-density residential Placetypes on non-City maintained streets.

Policy PSI-1.2: Capital Improvements Program. Maintain an updated Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that forecasts needs at least five years into the future and implements General Plan policies and programs as feasible.

Action A: Include in the CIP a prioritized list of projects, timing, and cost estimates.

Action B: Apply for grants to assist in the expansion of sewer to priority areas.

Action C: Seek funding to address aging and undersized infrastructure to support existing and future service needs.

Policy PSI-1.3: Private Utility Service. Ensure that adequate private utility service capacity and facilities exist prior to approving new development.

Action A: Coordinate with electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications service providers to identify and ensure adequate service levels for existing and planned development.

Action B: Require that private utilities development projects conform to City site improvement standards and applicable ordinances.

Policy PSI-1.4: Capital Facilities Funding. Ensure that new development pays its fair share of providing and/or installing all capital facilities needed to support it, including the infrastructure necessary to attract high-tech and professional support businesses.

Action A: Continue to require new development to finance construction of facilities.

Policy PSI-1.5: Solid and Hazardous Waste Disposal. Continue to support effective regional planning for solid and hazardous waste disposal.

Action A: Contract with solid waste collection service providers capable of meeting City and State goals regarding waste diversion at reasonable cost to residents and businesses.

Policy PSI-1.6: Public Libraries. Coordinate with the San Luis Obispo Public Libraries to maintain the local library, with continuing access for all residents to modern, high-quality resources and programs.

Policy PSI-1.7: Coordination between Agencies. Encourage independent public agencies to consult and coordinate with the City on their development projects.

Action A: Support expansion of Atascadero State Hospital facilities and functions only when impacts can be adequately mitigated.

Action B: Support the efforts of public and private K-12 schools, post-high school, and trades educational facilities to provide diverse and high-quality learning opportunities, and ensure such facilities integrate well into neighborhoods and districts.

Action C: Work with the school district, Atascadero Mutual Water Company, PG&E, the State Hospital, and the County, in addition to other independent agencies, to ensure that frontage and streetscape improvements adjacent to school sites area consistent with City plans and standards.

Water Supply and Delivery

The Atascadero Mutual Water Company services over 30,000 residents through 10,000 service connections and a system of groundwater wells, booster pumps, storage tanks, water treatment facilities, pressure-reducing stations, and fire hydrants. In contrast to other Central Coast cities, Atascadero (through the water company) enjoys a reliable water source. As required by State law, the Atascadero Mutual Water Company prepares updates to its water system and water supply plans to forecast and plan for future needs. The City works with Water Company staff to ensure the plans reflect General Plan growth capacities.

Given that this General Plan accommodates growth largely within the USL, the Atascadero Mutual Water Company will need to provide assurances that water system facilities will support the type and location of new development. Through its master plan, facilities will continue to be defined to provide needed service levels. Regarding water supply, a continued focus on water conservation will help moderate demand withdrawals from local groundwater basins.

Goal PSI-2: Continued high-quality water services

Policy PSI-2.1: Water Service Capacity. Ensure that adequate water service capacity and facilities exist prior to approving new development.

Action A: Coordinate with the Atascadero Mutual Water Company to ensure provision of facilities and water supplies commensurate with demand and projected need.

Action B: Require all proposed new projects and new development requiring domestic water service to obtain a will serve letter from the Atascadero Mutual Water Company.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The Public Works Department Wastewater Division manages all sewage collection, treatment, and disposal services in the City. As of 2024, approximately 5,500 properties are served by City sewer, with a roughly equal number rural properties served by individual private on-site disposal systems. All collected sewage either flows or is pumped to the City's water reclamation facility located east of Chalk Mountain Golf Course, adjacent to the Salinas River. The plant's effluent, after being cleaned to meet State Water Quality Control Board standards, is directed into percolation ponds which recharge groundwater, with a portion of the reclaimed groundwater then used to irrigate the adjacent County-owned golf course.

Since the mid-2010s, the treatment plant has strained to meet increased treatment capacity needs. With initiation of the 2045 General Plan, the City began the process of updating the wastewater treatment and collection master plans to identify upgrades needed to support planned growth levels and achieve high water quality for reclaimed water. The updated Water Reclamation Facility Master Plan addresses long-term development goals. The study also considered expanded treatment capacity to serve properties less suitable for on-site wastewater treatment systems within the USL where not currently connected to the sewer system. Additionally, in 2020, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB) adopted a new Wastewater Discharge Requirements General Permit (General Permit) that significantly tightened requirements for wastewater effluent. The new General Permit will require a new wastewater treatment process to meet these stricter requirements.

Goal PSI-3: A comprehensive wastewater collection system and wastewater treatment plant capacity that support growth and economic development goals

Policy PSI-3.1: Water Reclamation Facility Master Plan. Ensure the Water Reclamation Facility Master Plan responds to long-term growth objectives and local water quality goals.

Policy PSI-3.2: Reclamation Facility. Construct and maintain a water reclamation facility with capacity for forecasted growth that allows for beneficial reuse of treated wastewater.

Policy PSI-3.3: Wastewater Collection System Master Plan. Ensure the municipal sewage collection system serves the needs of all customers efficiently and cost effectively.

Action A: Establish sewer service fees and adjust to levels that can fund planned improvements to the water reclamation facility and sanitary sewer collection system.

Action B: Pursue State and Federal funding opportunities to update the current system and comply with regional regulations.

Action C: Include provisions in the Sewer Collection System Master Plan to address providing sewer service to identified areas in the Local Agency Management Program (LAMP).

Stormwater Drainage and Flood Protection

Four natural watersheds cover Atascadero: Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, and the Salinas River. The Salinas River flows most of the year, whereas the other creeks are more seasonal in nature. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified 100-year floodplains along Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, and the Salinas River. While localized flooding can and does occur during heavy rain events, including the major storms in January 2023, the potential for major flooding is most likely to occur along Atascadero Creek and Graves Creek (see additional discussion of flood zones in the Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element).

The City owns and maintains a stormwater drainage system intended to convey runoff through developed areas to historic receiving waters in a manner that protects public and private infrastructure from flooding. The system was designed and constructed before much of the current development and prior to the rise of extreme weather events attributed to climate change. Historical large storm events, including the large rainstorms of January 2023, have identified system vulnerabilities. During the 2023 event, storm drains could not accommodate the rapidly accumulating runoff or became clogged from stream sediment, resulting in flooded roads, homes, and municipal buildings. Significant sources of stormwater inflow and infiltration throughout the sewer collection system challenged the ability of the water reclamation facility to handle loads.

Many of the system's culverts and catch basins are undersized relative to the volumes of anticipated runoff or require upgrades due to age. The Public Works Department maintains maps identifying all stormwater drainage system components and, as part of the Capital Improvement Plan, itemizes planned improvements to reduce flooding potential or otherwise improve the drainage system. While the City historically has not prepared a stormwater management system master plan, having such a plan in place might qualify the City for grants for more comprehensive system enhancements.

Goal PSI-4: Minimized flood risks via a well-functioning stormwater management system

Policy PSI-4.1: Stormwater Drainage Planning. Plan comprehensively for stormwater drainage, considering the age of the City's system and emerging needs based on targeted growth areas and areas of concern.

Action A: Prepare, implement, and keep current a stormwater drainage master plan. Identify infrastructure in need of significant improvements or capacity upgrades.

Action B: Require improvement and ongoing maintenance of private stormwater drainage and retention areas as a condition of development approval.

Action C: Identify and collect development impact fees needed to pay for mitigation of regional stormwater drainage impacts for new development.

Action D: Require implementation of best management practices for new development to reduce discharges of nonpoint-source pollutants to the storm drain system.

Action E: Require implementation of post-construction structural control measures for new development to mitigate and treat additional stormwater runoff created by new impervious surfaces.

Action F: Consider adopting watershed management plan(s) and implementation mechanisms in Downtown to facilitate off-site stormwater management aimed at maximizing development potential.

Policy PSI-4.2: Stormwater Management. Manage stormwater drainage in a manner that protects and enhances natural drainage areas as habitat and outdoor places people enjoy.

Action A: Establish guidelines or standards for drainage improvements in natural areas that respond to applicable Federal and State requirements.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The California legislature has enacted several laws designed to reduce the volumes of solid waste entering landfills with the overarching goals of producing less waste, protecting land and water resources, and making people more conscious about their consumption practices. With consumers increasingly purchasing online and receiving goods at home, the potential exists for waste volumes to level or increase. Coupled with State programs, local efforts can be targeted to increase people's awareness of the negative impacts of diverting waste into landfills and to shift toward less-impactful behaviors.

The City contracts with a franchise waste hauler for trash pick-up services. That company is required to provide services consistent with State law regarding separation of recyclable materials and organic waste (yard clippings, food scraps) from the rest of the trash. In partnership with the County's Integrated Waste Management Agency, the City promotes awareness of requirements.

Goal PSI-5: Reduced waste volumes entering regional landfills and increased consumer commitment to minimizing waste production

Policy PSI-5.1: Waste Hauler Contracts. Contract with franchise waste haulers whose operations make it easy for residents and business owners to divert recyclable materials and organics from the waste stream.

Action A: Continue to encourage the reduction of solid waste through source reduction, curbside recycling, green waste collection, and recovery in cooperation with the Integrated Waste Management Board (SLO IWMA).

Action B: Support outreach and education efforts related to waste reduction, recycling, and organic waste, including statewide programs for the reuse and recycling of boxes and other packaging materials.

Goal PSI-5.2: Efficient, effective, safe, and orderly waste collection services.

Action A: Work with the waste hauler to identify solutions for consolidated waste collection and pick-up service in higher density, commercial, and mixed-use areas.

Action B: Review and update, as needed, the municipal code to ensure that waste collection service does not impede on-street parking, emergency access, or visual character.

Energy

Electricity and natural gas power the systems that allow residents to enjoy comfortable lifestyles and businesses to thrive. When they work well, we do not think about them much. If systems fail or the price we pay for electricity or gas strains our budgets, we think about them a lot. In Atascadero, private companies—Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)/Central Coast Community Energy (3CE)—provide electrical services with PG&E owing and maintaining the electrical transmission infrastructure. Southern California Gas Company (SoCal Gas) provides natural gas services, however, many residences on larger westside lots use propane gas. PG&E, 3CE, and SoCal Gas support their customers in efforts to conserve energy and lower their energy bills, including programs providing financial assistance and rebates/incentives, as well as advice on home solar energy system installation.

The City does not have the ability to affect private energy operations but can facilitate residents' and businesses' efforts to go "off grid" and establish their own onsite electric power systems. Such efforts can result in clean energy production—meaning less pollution—and lower energy costs for individuals.

Goal PSI-6: Increased development and use of clean, renewable energy systems

Policy PSI-6.1: Onsite Renewable Energy. Facilitate the installation of onsite renewable energy systems for residences and places of business.

Policy PSI-6.2: Energy Efficient Planning and Building Design. Encourage energy-efficient site planning and building design/construction.

Action A: Implement streamlined building permit review processes for onsite energy systems.

Action B: Continue to implement the California Green Building Standards.

Telecommunications

Access to available, affordable, and modern telecommunications infrastructure—including broadband, fiber optic, wireless (WiFi), and emerging technologies—connects Atascadero residents and businesses to the world and can serve as a major economic development tool, attracting businesses that require high-speed, reliable telecommunications service. Atascadero will work to facilitate and support a wide range of innovative telecommunications systems and services to attract and retain businesses, provide information and communication access for all residents, and facilitate public education.

Goal PSI-7: Increased access to modern and affordable telecommunications infrastructure and service throughout Atascadero

Policy PSI-7.1: Telecommunication System Upgrades. Facilitate the installation of and/or upgrades to private telecommunication systems that better connect Atascadero businesses, residents, and students to the world.

Action A: Encourage private investment in high-speed broadband telecommunications infrastructure that serves major commercial, business, and educational corridors.

Action B: Encourage private investment in wireless telecommunications infrastructure that efficiently and affordably connects rural residential neighborhoods, especially in the western half of Atascadero.

Action C: Facilitate and support the development of infrastructure necessary for all residents to use and benefit from new communication technologies.

Action D: Monitor information technology development to ensure compatibility with City infrastructure.

Action E: Strive to expand opportunities for all citizens to participate in City governance through use of communication technologies.

Action F: Continue to make essential City documents available for immediate retrieval by electronic transfer technologies.

Chapter 9: Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element

Introduction

In Atascadero, residents, business owners, and visitors experience low crime rates and benefit from efficient police, fire, and emergency medical services. City leaders and staff work hard to maintain a safe community. However, the threat of wildfires, flooding, hazardous materials, seismic and geological hazards, and noise require constant attention to guard against risks to life and property. Community safety planning reduces risk and creates resilient neighborhoods. This element establishes goals, policies, and actions that are designed to safeguard the community, provide for sound emergency preparedness planning, and build in resilience.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness Priorities

To help plan for, respond to, and recover from natural and human-caused disasters, this General Plan addresses the following safety and emergency preparedness issues.

Wildfires

Atascadero has a considerable wildfire risk, with approximately half of the community included within a Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). The region has suffered from high-fire risk, experiencing several large-scale wildfires recorded between 1985-2025. Additional information about the history of significant wildfires and the potential for future events can be found in the latest Local Hazards Mitigation Plan and online with the California Department of Forestry.

Responsibility for fire protective services in the region falls under several agencies. On the local level, the Atascadero Fire Department is a City-funded department that oversees emergency fire response within City limits. Cal Fire is responsible for protecting natural resources from fire on land designated by the State Board of Forestry as State Responsibility Area, which includes most land directly outside of Atascadero's boundary. Cal Fire has a Mutual Threat Zone (where wildfires pose a shared threat to multiple jurisdictions) within City boundaries and provides a full wildland response. The United States Department of Forestry is responsible for fire protective services on Federally owned land, such as national forests and parks. Nearby Federal land includes Los Padres National Forest, which abuts Eagle Ranch and is located about 10 miles to the west of the City boundary.

Reducing the potential for loss of life and property in the event of a fire requires providing infrastructure that supports rapid response and reducing flammable materials that fuel wildland fires. Necessary infrastructure includes sufficient evacuation routes, adequate water supply and pressure (managed by the Atascadero Mutual Water Company), and strategic placement of new water tanks/reservoirs. Having more compact development pattern and requiring defensible space in areas at risk for wildfires can also help better protect new residents and businesses.

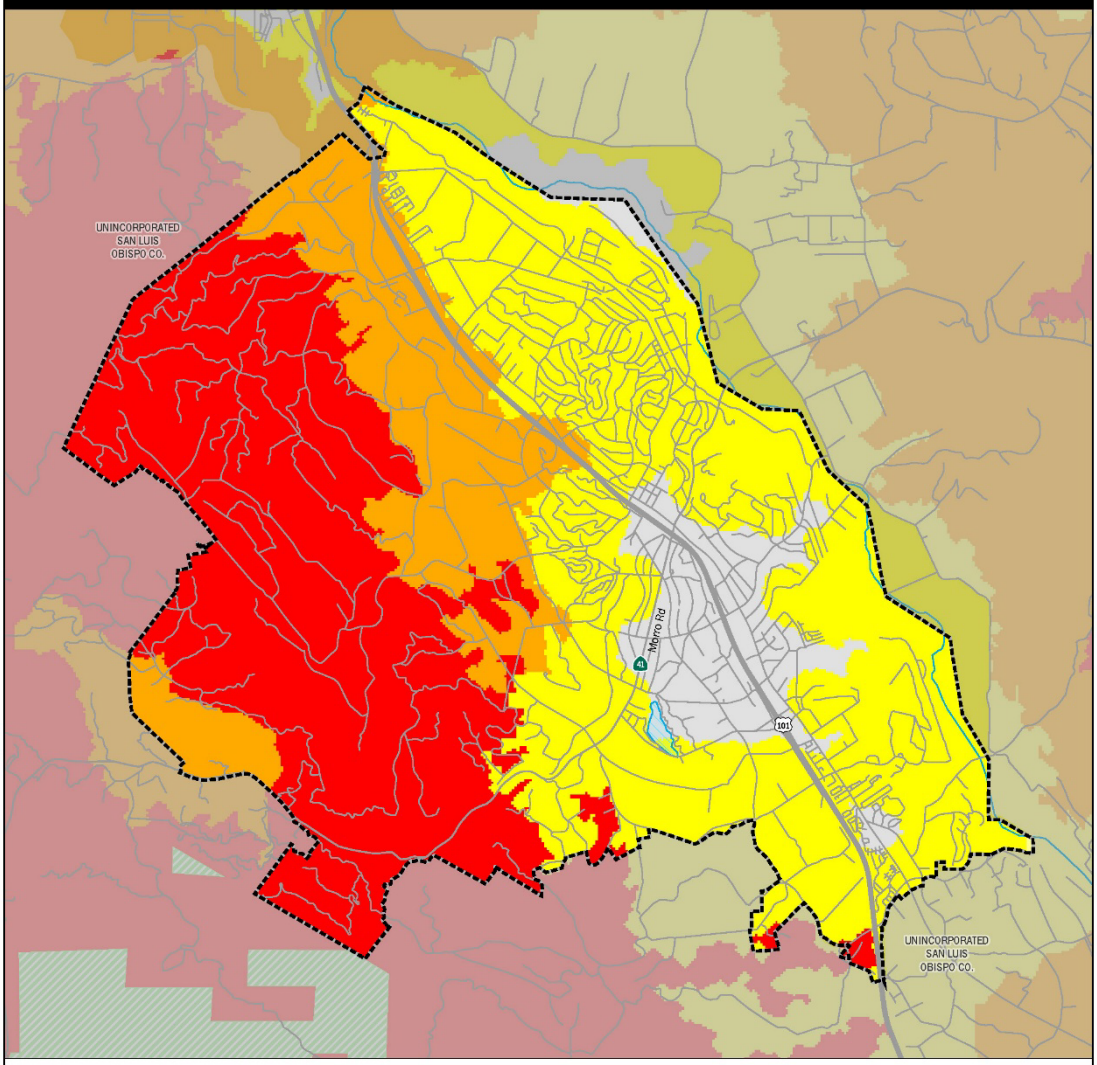
The City has adopted the 2025 State Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map (shown on the following page). Based on local conditions and known fire risks, the City may elect to adopt a more stringent map to address building and fire code requirements for future developments. The City has established clear building and defensible space standards in these areas to reduce wildfire risk. The City has identified fire prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery programs to help make fire prone areas more resilient to the wildfire threat.

CITY OF ATASCADERO – SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones

As Identified by the State Fire Marshal

March 10, 2025



Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in Local Responsibility Area (LRA), as Identified by the State Fire Marshal

Very High | High | Moderate

Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area (SRA), Effective April 1, 2024

Very High | High | Moderate

Mi 0 1 2

Km 0 1 2 3 4

Projection: NAD 83 California Teale Albers
Scale: 1:49,000 at 11" x 17"

Incorporated City | Waterbody | Unzoned LRA | Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)

Government Code section 51178 requires the State Fire Marshal to identify areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent statewide criteria and based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas. Moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones shall be based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors including areas where winds have been identified by the Office of the State Fire Marshal as a major cause of wildfire spread.

The State of California and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy of data or maps. Neither the State nor the Department shall be liable under any circumstances for any direct, special, incidental, or consequential damages with respect to any claim by any user or third party on account of, or arising from, the use of data or maps.

Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California
Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources, CA Natural Resources Agency
Joe Tyler, Director/Fire Chief, CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Daniel Berlant, State Fire Marshal, CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Data Sources:
CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZSRA23_3, FHSZLRA_25_1)
CAL FIRE State Responsibility Areas (SRA25_1)
City and County boundaries as of 10/22/24 (CA Board of Equalization)

Flooding

Areas along Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, and the Salinas River have the potential to flood and are identified as 100-year flood zones by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Some properties fall within high-risk areas, known as Special Flood Zone Areas. These areas—largely located adjacent to the creeks and the Salinas river—have at least a one percent annual chance of flooding. If a property owner has a Federally backed loan within these areas, Federal regulations dictate that the owner maintain flood insurance. Even outside of these FEMA-designated zones, smaller drainage channels and culverts can become clogged or fail, creating the threat of localized flooding.

Flood-prone areas along Atascadero Creek could provide multi-benefit functions such as passive park space, places to recharge the groundwater basin, and areas to naturally filter urban run-off pollutants. However, because Atascadero Creek and other creeks transverse private property, creating dual public benefit uses presents challenges.

Hazardous Materials

Simply defined, a hazardous material is any item or agent (biological, chemical, physical) that has the potential to cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment, either by itself or through interaction with other factors. We encounter hazardous materials as part of our everyday lives: batteries, light bulbs, and household chemicals such as pesticides, motor oil, cleaners, and paints. The many electrical devices we use contain materials that become “e-waste” when those devices fail or become obsolete. Almost all commercial and industrial businesses utilize or produce hazardous materials as part of their processes.

The use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials—including management of contaminated soils and groundwater—are regulated by a myriad of Federal, State, and local laws. In Atascadero, the Fire Department has responsibility to ensure businesses properly store hazardous materials to avoid accidental release and to allow firefighters to respond appropriately if upset occurs. The San Luis Obispo Environmental Health Services Division oversees reporting and inspections.

Seismic and Geologic Hazards

California sits atop the Pacific Plate, a piece of Earth’s crust that extends from Japan and Indonesian to the western U.S., and from Alaska south past Hawaii. The earthquakes we experience locally result from the grinding and shifting of the plate along a myriad of fault lines, some close by and others quite some distance away. For example, during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake that significantly shook the Bay Area and downed part of the Bay Bridge, Atascadero residents experienced light shaking.

The fault zones closest to Atascadero are the Rinconada and the Nacimiento faults. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Rinconada fault is considered active, with the potential to generate a maximum 7.5 magnitude earthquake. An earthquake of this scale would produce significant ground shaking and could trigger the seismic-related effects including landslides (see **Figure 9-3**) and liquefaction (see **Figure 9-4**). The degree of hazard depends on the location of the

seismic epicenter, the magnitude and duration of ground shaking, topography, groundwater conditions, and type of building construction. The Nacimiento fault is considered inactive. Of regional significance is the San Andreas fault, which extends from San Francisco Bay through central California to the Gulf of California. A major earthquake along the San Andreas fault would have the potential to result significant ground shaking and, depending upon the location of the earthquake, cause catastrophic damage. **Table 9-1** identifies fault zones in the vicinity of the Planning Area.

Table 9-1: Nearby Fault Zones and Ground Shaking Potential

Fault Zone	**Distance** (from El Camino Real/Traffic Way)	**Maximum Credible Earthquake**	**Maximum Probable Earthquake**	**Anticipated Acceleration Range** (in gravity, or g)
Rinconada and Jolon	2	7.5	7.0	0.40 – 0.6
Black Mountain	3	7.5	5.75	0.1
La Panza	9	7.5	Unknown, but 5 assumed	0.1 – 0.4
Los Osos	14	7	Unknown, but 5 assumed	0.1 – 0.2
Hosgri	22	7.5	6.5 – 7.5	0.1 – 0.2
San Andreas	27	8.25	8	0.1 – 0.2
San Simeon	35	Unknown	6.5	Unknown

Noise

Noise typically is defined as unwanted sound. Exposure to excessive noise can impact the health and quality of life of people who reside in, work in, or visit Atascadero. While people may not agree as to what constitutes particularly irksome noise, science does show that certain defined noise levels can cause ill health effects. Excessive noise can cause hearing loss, stress, hypertension, sleep disturbance, and fatigue. Noise sources within the City include:

- Roadways and freeways are the primary noise sources in the City of Atascadero. Primary transportation noise sources include vehicular traffic along US-101 and SR-41.
- Freight and Amtrak train traffic along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor result in localized and intermittent noise events.
- Non-transportation-related noise sources are predominantly associated with industrial and commercial operations and building mechanical equipment. Other noise sources can result in intermittent increases in ambient noise levels, such as short-term construction activities, as well as school and events.

Police Services

The Atascadero Police Department prides itself in safeguarding the community. Part of its stated mission is "to work toward being the premier law enforcement agency on the central coast." The Federal Department of Justice reports the rate of crime in Atascadero to be 23.73 per 1,000 residents during a standard year. The most frequent crimes are drug crimes (5.6 percent), vandalism (5.4 percent), vehicle theft (3.4 percent), theft (2.8 percent), and assault (1.6 percent). While Atascadero is a relatively safe community, the realities and perceptions around crime affect how current and prospective residents and business owners view the community.

New Public Safety Facilities

The City's Police and Fire Departments have identified needs for critical upgrades to existing facilities. Fire Station #1 will be rebuilt at its existing site and will include an Emergency Operations Center. Fire Station #2 will have a complete renovation of the living quarters. The Police Department will include major renovations and a new dispatch building. All three projects are expected to be completed in 2027. The Fire Department also envisions a third fire station in the 101/Del Rio region to ensure appropriate response times throughout the City. While capital projects are expensive and require consideration to the cost of additional staff, the one-time expense often helps improve efficiencies and reduce other operations and maintenance expenses.

Relationship to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Under the provisions of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and California Government Code Sections 8685.9 and 65302.6, local governments can adopt a local hazard mitigation plan into their safety element. If a community has not done so, the State will only reimburse the community up to 75 percent of eligible costs associated with emergency response and recovery from a specific situation. Communities with a hazard mitigation plan incorporated into their safety element may receive more than 75 percent of eligible costs from the State.

The City of Atascadero coordinates with San Luis Obispo County on preparation of a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which comprehensively addresses mitigation planning for all seven cities plus unincorporated County areas. Originally adopted in 2020, the County updates the regional plan every five years to respond to emerging issues. The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is incorporated by reference into this Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness Goals, Policies, and Actions

The following sections include goals, with supporting policies and implementation actions, related to the following topics:

- Wildfire Risks
- Flooding
- Hazardous Materials
- Seismic and Geological Hazards
- Noise
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Police Protection
- Fire Protection Services and Emergency Medical Response

Wildfire Risks

Wildfires are major concerns of many municipalities. Like most communities in San Luis Obispo County, Atascadero faces the potential of catastrophic fires even with well-planned risk reduction (see **Figure 9-1**). These goals, policies, and actions focus on strategies the City, property owners, and partner agencies will undertake to reduce the threat of all types of wildfires.

Goal SEP-1: A high level of protection from and minimized risk to life in the event of a fire

Policy SEP-1.1: New Development Risk Reduction. Promote new development in areas of the community that have lower risk of wildfire hazards and ensure new development in higher risk areas are consistent with Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) standards.

Action A: Encourage the clustering of lots in higher fire hazard areas surrounded by defensible open space to minimize fire risk to new rural development.

Action B: Coordinate Fire Department and Atascadero Mutual Water Company review of subdivision design to ensure adequate fire flows.

Action C: Review new development to ensure adequate access for emergency vehicles and compliance with Fire and Building Codes.

Action D: Monitor and update the Municipal Code so that requirements for new development within the WUI to meet or exceed the requirements of the California Code of Regulations, including the California Building Code, the California Fire Code, California Wildland Urban Interface Code, and sections on SRA Fire Safe Regulations and Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations.

Action E: Work with land use applicants to locate development relative to landscape features that can act as buffers from oncoming wildfires (like agricultural lands and

maintained parks and greenbelts).

Action F: Ensure at least two evacuation routes for all new residential developments, with roads wide enough for emergency vehicles.

Action G: Require the installation of all new utilities underground to prevent ignitions from powerlines.

Action H: Implement development standards to assure adequacy of access for equipment, water supplies, construction standards, and vegetation clearance.

Action I: Prohibit increased land use densities in WUI areas, such as those allowed by State laws and density bonus laws, to minimize risk of exposure to persons in the event of wildfires.

Action J: Require that new essential public facilities be located outside of VHFHSZ to the maximum extent practicable.

Policy SEP-1.2: Fire Impact Reduction. Implement programs and policies that minimize risks to life and property posed by fires.

Action A: Coordinate with the Atascadero Municipal Water Company to ensure that fire flows and anticipated water supply storage capacity is adequate for both short- and long-term fire prevention and protection.

Action B: Continue to enforce the Building Code for the installation of residential fire sprinklers on new construction citywide.

Action C: Consider updating the Zoning Code to require conditions on land uses that serve mobility-limited persons, such as assisted care facilities or small group homes, to prepare and maintain detailed evacuation plans in the event of wildfires and other catastrophic events.

Policy SEP-1.3: Wildfire Risk Reduction. Increase wildfire resiliency using required and voluntary risk reduction regulations and strategies.

Action A: Adhere to State and local regulations and recommendations, including fire-safe design, of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan that address wildfire risk and vulnerabilities.

Action B: Pursue becoming a Fire Risk Reduction Community.

Action C: Encourage neighborhoods in becoming a NFPA recognized Firewise USA Community.

Action D: Identify and implement evacuation procedures in coordination with the City's Emergency Plan.

Action E: Support and coordinate with the Air Pollution Control District to allow burning within the City of Atascadero as a strategy for vegetation reduction.

Action F: Update and maintain regulations that balance the need for defensible areas around homes with the preservation of native trees, riparian corridors, and sensitive

habitats.

Action G: Identify residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes identified and pursue grant funding opportunities to construct emergency access roads.

Action H: Update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan every five years to reflect the needs of the community and the changing risks in WUI areas. Ensure each update to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies slope stability and wildfire hazard areas and mitigation strategies to reduce post-wildfire erosion.

Policy SEP-1.5: Vegetation Management Strategies. Implement vegetation management strategies and enhanced roadway standards in fire-prone areas through the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Action A: Implement the fuels mitigation projects in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and establish a monitoring program to track the effectiveness of Community Wildfire Protection Plan fuel-treatment activities.

Action B: Identify and encourage mitigation of existing non-compliant properties to current defensible space standards.

Action C: Enhance roadside safety and access for emergency services by implementing rigorous vegetation clearance.

Action D: Continue to promote the efforts of the Fire Safe Council and continue to identify locations within the City where fuel mitigation treatments can be implemented to help slow wildfire spread.

Policy SEP-1.6: Community Outreach and Education. Ensure all community members and businesses are informed and empowered to address fire hazard vulnerabilities.

Action A: Conduct education and outreach campaigns that assist property owners with defensible space, fire-safe landscaping, home hardening, and wildfire preparedness.

Action B: Ensure wildfire mitigation, education, and outreach efforts are made to vulnerable populations.

Action C: Work with local and regional partners that can provide assistance to low-income households to maintain defensible space around their homes and properties.

Action D: Continue to educate the public about County-wide emergency preparedness resources.

Action E: Inform homeowners and residents of fire dangers, appropriate responses to fire, and ways to prevent loss.

Policy SEP-1.7: Redevelopment after Fire. Use lessons learned from major fire events to minimize future loss of life and property damage within high fire zones.

Action A: Develop a process to evaluate redevelopment after a large fire to meet current codes.

Action B: Require that any redevelopment in a VHFHSZ after a fire complies with all

current zoning, building, and fire codes.

Action C: Require that any redevelopment in a VHFHSZ include a fire protection plan.

Flooding

According to the San Luis Obispo County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the most common type of flooding event in Atascadero is riverine flooding, also known as overbank flooding. In addition to riverine flooding, Atascadero is susceptible to flash flooding in smaller watersheds. The highest risk areas of flooding include properties along the Salinas River, Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Boulder Creek, and Paloma Creek corridors. See **Figure 9-2** for the 100- and 500-year flood zone and dam inundation areas in Atascadero.

Goal SEP-2: Flood prevention and reduction strategies that limit damage to natural areas while safeguarding property and lives

Policy SEP-2.1: Reduce Flooding Risk. Ensure land use strategies consider flood control and stormwater management tactics to reduce the adverse impact of potential minor and major flooding.

Action A: Incorporate flood management strategies into land use analysis and development review.

Action B: Maintain and update a storm drainage infrastructure inventory.

Action C: Employ flood mitigation strategies in the development of plans and projects along creeks and waterways.

Action D: Seek funding to replace and/or improve existing aging infrastructure.

Policy SEP-2.2: Open Space for Flood Protection. Promote the enhancement and expansion of open space areas for flood management and passive recreation where appropriate and safe.

Action A: Protect floodplains by retaining and expanding, as feasible, open space areas that can retain stormwater, recharge groundwater aquifers, and prevent or reduce flooding.

Action B: Integrate stormwater features, as appropriate, into pocket parks in new development where such can provide co-benefits of flood control and passive or active open space.

Policy SEP-2.3: FEMA Requirements. Comply with all applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood-management regulations and requirements.

Action A: Continue to maintain and periodically update flood hazard data, and coordinate with Federal, State, and local agencies responsible for flood hazard analysis and management activities.

Action B: Continue to incorporate features into capital projects and appropriate standards

that reduce flooding hazards.

Action C: Consider impacts to biological resources when performing flood-related preventive maintenance and repair.

Policy SEP-2.4: Structures in Floodplains. Enforce Federal regulations regarding placement of structures in floodplains, and maintain appropriate standards for development in flood-prone and poorly drained areas.

Action A: Require an evaluation of flood hazards and appropriate on-site mitigation options by a qualified professional for any project in a FEMA designated floodway during the development review process.

Action B: Discourage modifications to natural floodways and enforce FEMA's Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) processes if development occurs within an existing floodway.

Action C: Require the lowest finished floor of new construction in low-lying or other areas with serious drainage or flooding potential to be a minimum of one foot above the 100-year water surface elevation.

Action D: Prohibit development that will create new upstream or downstream flooding or drainage problems.

Policy SEP-2.5: Damage Reduction. Reduce flood damage in areas known to be prone to flooding.

Action A: Augment existing GIS and other data regarding low-lying areas with information obtained during storms.

Action B: Identify flood mitigation improvements for low-lying, flood-prone areas, and seek funding for those projects.

Action C: Catalog aging, undersized, or damaged drainage infrastructure and seek funding for replacement and repair.

Policy SEP-2.6: Flood Response. Prepare the City to respond to flood emergencies.

Action A: Train and adequately equip City personnel to a level appropriate to their positions and responsibilities to respond to flood emergencies.

Policy SEP-2.7: Dam Failure. Minimize the risk of dam failure.

Action A: Work with State agencies to assist with inspection and maintenance of the Atascadero Lake dam.

Action B: Coordinate with applicable agencies to ensure Atascadero has the latest information about impacts and emergency response coordination should failure occur to Salinas Dam on the Santa Margarita Lake reservoir.

Action C: Maintain a dam failure evacuation plan to guide public officials that includes use of the emergency alert system to notify the public.

Action D: Maintain, and update as needed, dam failure inundation mapping and emergency action plan for Atascadero Lake dam.

Hazardous Materials

The City's interest in maintaining a healthy environment drives policies to keep hazardous materials out of the air, water, and ground. A parallel interest is minimizing exposure of people to materials that could adversely affect their health. With land use policies allowing flex commercial and limited light industrial uses near residential neighborhoods, care will be taken to minimize risk to nearby residents and to people who work in the businesses.

Goal SEP-3: Reduced potential for harm to individuals and the environment due to the presence of hazardous materials

Policy SEP-3.1: Hazardous Substance Exposure. Reduce the potential for exposure to humans and the environment from hazardous substances.

Action A: Coordinate with the County to ensure that hazardous materials used in business and industry be used, handled, transported, and stored in accordance with Federal, State, County, and local regulations.

Action B: Work with Caltrans to require all transport of hazardous materials to follow approved routes.

Action C: Require businesses to maintain access needed for emergency response to spill incidents.

Action D: Ensure that regional routes for transportation of hazardous materials are identified and unsafe conditions comprehensively addressed with partner agencies.

Action E: Ensure State regulations and proper City protocols are followed to guard against failure of the City's wastewater treatment facility.

Action F: Coordinate with the State Regional Water Quality Control Board to implement standards that regulate discharge of pollutants into surface waters and groundwater.

Policy SEP-3.2: Pesticide Exposure. Reduce the potential of pesticide exposure to humans and the environment.

Action A: Ensure that emergency first responders and dispatch operators know to contact the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office or State Poison Control for technical assistance in the event of a pesticide-related emergency.

Action B: Minimize use and continue to train City staff on the safe application and handling of chemical-based pesticides at City parks and other City facilities.

Policy SEP-3.3: Oil and Gas Spills. Minimize potential hazards and spills from oil and gas pipelines and underground storage tanks.

Action A: Work with pipeline owners and operators and appropriate County and State agencies to develop adequate prevention and cleanup strategies.

Action B: Coordinate with property owners and the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Health Department to abate leaking underground storage tanks and monitor existing tanks for leakage.

Policy SEP-3.4: Radiation Exposure Reduction. Support San Luis Obispo County efforts to maintain a high level of radiation emergency preparedness.

Action A: Coordinate with the County and PG&E to review and update information about emergency preparedness and evacuation.

Action B: Coordinate with the County and PG&E to provide information about the Diablo Canyon Power Plant.

Seismic and Geologic Hazards

State building codes and careful site planning provide guards against catastrophic loss of life and damage to property in the event of an earthquake or events such as landslides. Land use policies address avoiding density in the hillside environments most susceptible to slope failure. The following goal and policies point to the importance of proactive measures in minimizing risk.

Goal SEP-4: Minimized exposure geologic and seismic hazards and the associated risks to life and property

Policy SEP-4.1: Risk Reduction. Ensure that the public is informed about the risks of geologic and seismic hazards and potential mitigation options.

Action A: Provide information to the public to improve awareness of geologic hazards and seismic safety.

Action B: Continually update information about faults and geologic hazards (including GIS data and geologic and fault mapping) as new information becomes available.

Action C: Work with property owners of unreinforced masonry buildings to retrofit or demolish structures consistent with the California Building Code.

Policy SEP-4.2: Structure Design. Ensure that structures are designed and located to withstand strong ground shaking, liquefaction, and seismic settlement.

Action A: Enforce building code requirements for new development, including addressing liquefaction potential and preparing geotechnical reports.

Action B: Enforce Building Code provisions pertaining to grading and construction relative to seismic hazards.

Action C: Update Title 8 of the Municipal Code as necessary to promote seismic safety in structural designs.

Action D: Require retrofitting and abatement of structural hazards to levels of risk acceptable to the Building Official.

Action E: Prioritize retrofitting and abatement of City-owned structures, including buildings, bridges, and other infrastructure, in areas determined to experience strong ground shaking during an earthquake.

Action F: Work with and support state and local agencies, including public utilities, to retrofit and harden water storage facilities, wastewater conveyance, electricity transmission lines, roadways, regional stormwater facilities, levees, and other utilities that could be negatively affected by earthquakes.

Policy SEP-4.3: Reduced Risk. Minimize development in areas at high risk for geologic hazards.

Action A: Avoid or adequately mitigate any development of critical facilities—hospitals, fire stations, emergency management headquarters, broadcast services, sewage treatment plants, and places of large congregations of people—in high-risk geologic hazard zones (e.g., fault zones, liquefiable soils, areas of slope instability).

Policy SEP-4.4: Erosion Control. Promote erosion control strategies that reduce hazards to structures, properties, and drainages.

Action A: Identify and require enhanced erosion control measures for properties that exhibit high erosion potential, are in areas of steep slopes, or have experienced past erosion problems.

Action B: Require development proposals to mitigate landslide and slope stability conditions that have the potential to impact adjacent properties, structures, and infrastructure.

Action C: Enforce Building Code provisions and other applicable ordinances regulating development on sloping ground.

Action D: Continue to require slope stability assessments by appropriate registered professionals for developments in areas of known slope instability, landslides, or slopes steeper than 10 percent.

Action E: Maintain mapping of high landslide risk areas and ensure that structures are engineered to account for any associated risk.

Noise

Part of Atascadero's attraction is its quiet neighborhoods, where the topography largely buffers homes from Highway 101 noise. Residents appreciate being able to hear sounds of nature in the evening and enjoy the outdoors. Downtown and larger parks are places where a noisier environment is acceptable, as people gather at these locations for community events and entertainment. This goal and associated policies and actions respond to varied community noise environments.

Goal SEP-5: Neighborhoods that maintain a strong quality of life while supporting a vibrant and thriving economy.

Policy SEP-5.1: Noise Ordinance. Maintain and update the City's Noise Ordinance to balance the economic, social, and rural vision of Atascadero.

Action A: Update the Noise Ordinance to incorporate construction best management practices to minimize construction noise when construction activities would be located within 1,000 feet of noise-sensitive land uses.

Action B: Update the Noise Ordinance to add conditions that would allow for temporary increases in noise in certain locations, such as Downtown, mixed-use areas, key commercail nodes, and parks, to accommodate special events. Encourage and allow these uses with appropriate noise thresholds.

Action C: Require projects to reduce noise exceeding the City's maximum allowable exterior and interior noise standards, unless exceptions are granted.

Policy SEP- 5.2: Land Use Compatibility. Prevent noise-sensitive land uses from encroaching upon existing or planned noise-producing uses, such as permitted industrial businesses and commercial activities, to allow businesses enterprises to thrive.

Policy SEP-5.3: Residential Noise Reduction. Preserve the tranquility of rural single-family residential areas by preventing the encroachment of noise-producing uses.

Policy SEP-5.4: Site Planning. Avoid or reduce noise impacts through site planning, project design, and implementation of the California Building Code and Health and Safety Code.

Action A: Consider updating the Municipal Code to provide options for new development to provide buffers other than sound walls when required.

Policy SEP-5.6: Transportation Noise. Reduce the impacts of transportation-related noise.

Action A: Avoid new development of noise-sensitive land uses in areas exposed to existing or projected future levels of noise from transportation noise sources which exceed the City's "normally acceptable" noise standards for land use compatibility unless the project design includes effective measures to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas and interior spaces to or below the "conditionally-acceptable levels," as specified for the given land use in **Table 9-2**.

Action B: Work with Caltrans to evaluate and develop traffic noise mitigation programs along Highway 101 and State Route 41.

Policy SEP-5.7: Stationary Noise. Reduce the impacts of stationary noise sources.

Action A: Avoid new development of noise-sensitive land uses where the noise level due to existing stationary noise sources will exceed the noise level standards of **Table 9-3** unless effective noise mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of the

development to reduce noise exposure to or below the levels specified in **Table 9-3**.

Action B: Require mitigation of noise created by new proposed stationary noise sources or existing stationary noise sources which undergo modifications so such uses do not exceed the noise level standards of **Table 9-3** on properties designated for noise-sensitive uses.

Action C: Maintain exceptions for Agricultural activities within the Agricultural land use designations during reasonable hours.

Action D: Work with private parties to reduce or mitigate noise exceeding allowed levels from existing industrial and commercial stationary-noise sources that impact nearby noise-sensitive land uses.

Table 9-2: Maximum Allowable Noise Standards for Transportation Noise Sources

Noise Sensitive Land Use	Interior Occupied Spaces (dBA)		Outdoor Activity Areas (dBA)1
	CNEL	Leq6	
Residential	45[4]		65[2,3]
Mixed-Use Residential	45[4]	--	--
Convalescent Care Facilities, Hospitals	45[4]		70[2,3]
Transient Lodging	45		65[2,3]
Schools, Libraries, Museums and Places of Worship	--	45	--
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	--		705
Office Buildings	--	45	703

1. To be applied at outdoor activity areas. Where the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied at the property line of the receiving land use.
2. Where it is not possible to reduce exterior noise levels to 65 dBA CNEL, or less, an exterior noise level of 70 dBA CNEL may be allowed provided that an acoustical analysis has been prepared for the project to identify available exterior noise-reduction measures to be incorporated and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table. For multi-family development, the exterior noise standard may be applied at a designated on-site outdoor common-use area in lieu of individual unit patios or balconies.
3. Where outdoor activity areas are not included in the project design, only the interior noise level standard shall apply.
4. In locations where railroad noise is the predominant noise source, the interior noise standard for residential land uses shall be reduced by 5 dB to account for the increased potential for sleep disruption to building occupants.
5. Where quiet is a basis for use.
6. 6. This standard is intended to apply to land uses with operational hours predominantly during the daytime hours. The interior noise standard applies to a typical worst-case hour during the period of use.

Table 9-3: Maximum Allowable Noise Standards for Non-Transportation Noise Sources

	Daytime 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM	Evening 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM	Nighttime 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM
Exterior Noise Standards[1,2]			
Hourly Equivalent (L_{eq} dBA)[3,5]	55	50	45
Maximum Level (L_{max} dBA)[4,5]	75	70	65
Interior Noise Standards[6]			
Hourly Equivalent (L_{eq} dBA)[3,5]	45	40	35
Maximum Level (L_{max} dBA)[4,5]	60	55	45

1. As determined at the outdoor activity area of the receiving noise-sensitive land use. Where the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied at the property line of the receiving land use. In the event the measured ambient noise level exceeds the applicable noise level standard the applicable standard shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level.
2. Exterior noise standards are to be applied in noise-sensitive outdoor activity areas. Excludes mixed-use residential and school playgrounds.
3. Leq = Average or "Equivalent" noise level during the worst-case operational hour of use. Sound level measurements shall be made with slow meter response.
4. Lmax = Highest measured sound level occurring during a given interval of time (e.g., 1 hour). Sound level measurements shall be made with fast meter response.
5. Where the noise source in question consists of speech or music, or is impulsive in nature, or contains a pure tone, the noise standards are reduced by 5 dB.
6. As determined within occupied areas of the receiving noise-sensitive structure. In the event the measured ambient noise level exceeds the applicable noise level standard the applicable standard shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level.

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response

Community resilience refers to a community's ability to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from challenges. Resilient communities are those with public services, health systems, and infrastructure that will be put into effective action in the event of a hazard or emergency. Resiliency enables a community to recover more quickly from a disaster. Private businesses, individual residents, and volunteer organizations play a critical role. Key components of resilience are effective pre-planning for potential future catastrophic events and efficient response to disasters once they have occurred.

Goal SEP-6: A community well prepared to respond to and recover from natural and human-caused disasters

Policy SEP-6.1: Emergency Preparedness and City Response: Train City staff, coordinate with regional agencies, and implement programs to be prepared for and capable of responding to all emergency events.

Action A: Maintain and periodically update the City's Emergency Operations Plan.

Action B: Coordinate with San Luis Obispo County, adjacent cities, special districts, and unincorporated communities to prepare and regularly update joint emergency response and disaster response plans.

Action C: Consider hazard mitigation and climate resilience actions and strategies with the City's Capital Improvement Program and annual budgeting process.

Action D: Provide required training to ensure the readiness of response teams and Emergency Operations Center staff.

Action E: Follow statewide Standardized Emergency Management System procedures.

Action F: Consider planned evacuation routes with roadway improvement projects and incorporate identified elements as feasible.

Action G: Provide ongoing emergency preparedness training for all City staff.

Policy SEP-6.3: Resident Response Programs and Support. Help prepare and organize residents to respond effectively to disasters.

Action A: Provide educational materials to increase community awareness of hazard risks/vulnerabilities and strategies that community members and businesses can employ to mitigate risks/vulnerabilities.

Action B: Support education in the schools that teaches children how to avoid dangers and behave during an emergency.

Action C: Maintain and update, as needed, the emergency evacuation program for Atascadero neighborhoods.

Action D: Support disaster education and preparedness education geared towards residents through programs such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or other community-based efforts.

Action E: Promote public awareness of the natural hazards and potential effects of disasters through community and volunteer organizations.

Action F: Incorporate strategies from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other resilience-building plans into outreach and educational information.

Policy SEP-6.4: Inter-Agency and Media Coordination. Coordinate with San Luis Obispo County and State agencies, news media, and others working to reduce the risks of disasters through effective preparedness, response, and recovery.

Action A: Continue to implement mutual aid, automatic aid, and California's Mutual Master Aid System to provide effective emergency response and to support emergency management.

Action B: Continue to execute agreements with public and private entities to support community emergency response and management.

Action C: Maintain a Public Information Officer (PIO) to meet with agency and media

representatives to coordinate communications, activities, and materials.

Action D: Support the efforts of many organizations – government, radio, newspapers and TV stations, utilities, emergency response providers, the Office of Emergency Services – that provide outreach and education to the community.

Policy SEP-6.5: Database Maintenance. Expand and update the database of safety-related information and convey that information to the public and decision makers.

Action A: Maintain an updated City GIS hazard map with information on fire hazard areas, native plant fuel loads, flood zones, un-reinforced masonry buildings, underground storage tanks, landslide areas, earthquake faults, pipelines, high voltage electrical transmission lines, railroads, state highways, and evacuation routes.

Action B: Seek new data from other government, academic, and private organizations that can be used for emergency preparedness and response.

Action C: Share hazard information with nearby jurisdictions, private and public organizations, and the public.

Policy SEP-6.6: Evacuation Coordination and Investments. Prioritize investments that expand and enhance evacuation capacity and capabilities.

Action A: Seek funding to improve existing single-access residential neighborhoods so they include additional access routes or other provisions to increase evacuation safety.

Action B: Analyze the capacity, viability, and safety of evacuation routes for hazard areas in Atascadero, and incorporate the results into City emergency operations and disaster recovery plans.

Policy SEP-6.7: Reduce or Eliminate Long-Term Risk. Perform assessments aimed at reducing or eliminating long-term risks to improve efficiency and decrease the cost of disaster response and recovery.

Policy SEP-6.8. Long-Term Recovery. Facilitate long-term recovery following a disaster.

Action A: Assist with public and private rebuilding efforts, provision of housing for displaced residents, and resumption of service, business and government functions.

Action B: Provide mutual aid and coordination assistance to agencies and organizations involved in disaster recovery.

Action C: Identify and coordinate with agencies needed to participate in assessing damage, providing citizens with care and shelter, and repairing critical infrastructure.

Action D: Ensure duplicate storage of essential City records.

Police Services

The quality of Atascadero's Police Department and its relationship with the community have a direct impact on the community's overall safety and security and contribute to the quality-of-life residents enjoy. The following goal, policies, and actions aim to enhance the services and operations of the Atascadero Police Department while strengthening community partnerships.

Goal SEP-7: Responsive police services that deter and respond to crime and support a safe and secure community

Policy SEP-7.1: Equipment and Training. Develop, maintain, and implement a Police Department Master Plan that guides the provision of equipment, facilities, training, and operations centers.

Action A: Establish internal and operational goals for the Department based on assessment of needs, as directed by the City Council.

Action B: Produce a Master Plan which includes guiding sections on equipment, facilities, training, and operations.

Policy SEP-7.2: Staffing Levels. Work to maintain optimal police staffing levels, including sworn officers and civilian support, necessary to meet projected community needs.

Action A: In conjunction with the Police Department Master Plan, determine an efficient allocation level to meet projected goals and needs.

Action B: Monitor and assess the allocation of staff to needs on a regular basis.

Policy SEP-7.3: Response Times. Identify, monitor, and achieve appropriate minimum police response times for all call priority levels.

Action A: Establish goals for police response times based on priority levels.

Action B: Identify and implement strategies and tools needed to monitor police response times.

Action C: Implement a strategy to improve police response times, if needed, and maintain an ongoing assessment of response times.

Policy SEP-7.4: Inter-Agency Coordination. Coordinate with local, regional, State, and Federal criminal justice agencies to promote regional cooperation in the delivery of police services.

Action A: Identify and coordinate with relevant agencies, including both current and potential future partners.

Action B: Establish and maintain a system for ongoing and case-specific communications.

Fire Protection Services and Emergency Medical Response

Fire prevention and protection services and emergency medical response benefit the community in many ways. Most critically, loss of life and property can be minimized with quality services and response to emergency incidents. The City's Fire Department provides fire and emergency medical response services to the community. Fire prevention and emergency response planning are priorities. Minimizing fire risks occurs through education, routine inspections, and requiring building renovations and new construction to comply with current fire access and building codes. The following goal, policies, and actions address fire department staffing levels, emergency response times, training, facilities and equipment, and coordination with ambulance service providers and local hospitals.

Goal SEP-8: A robust, well-trained, and highly capable fire protection and emergency response system

Policy SEP-8.1: Facilities and Equipment. Plan for adequate facilities, equipment, and personnel to meet firefighting demands.

Action A: Establish operational goals for the Department based on assessment of needs, as directed by the City Council.

Action B: Develop and maintain a Fire Department strategic plan.

Action C: Continue to plan for future facility, apparatus, equipment, communication system, and personnel requirements.

Policy SEP-8.2: Fire Response. Sustain the ability of the Fire Department to respond to emergencies.

Action A: Prepare, adopt, and maintain standards of coverage for the Fire Department.

Action B: Maintain a fire-related GIS database to assist decision-makers with analyzing development proposals and to assist with fire response and planning. Update the database as new fire hazard severity maps become available.

Policy SEP-8.3: Staffing Levels. Work to maintain optimal fire staffing levels necessary to meet projected community needs.

Action A: In conjunction with the strategic plan and standards of cover, determine the number fire stations and staffing as necessary for projected community growth.

Action B: Monitor and assess the allocation of staff to needs on a regular basis.

Policy SEP-8.4: Response Times. Identify, monitor and work to achieve appropriate fire response times.

Action A: Establish goals for fire response times based national standards and local conditions.

Action B: Identify and implement strategies and tools needed to monitor fire response times.

Action C: Implement a strategy to improve fire response times, if needed, and maintain an ongoing assessment of response times.

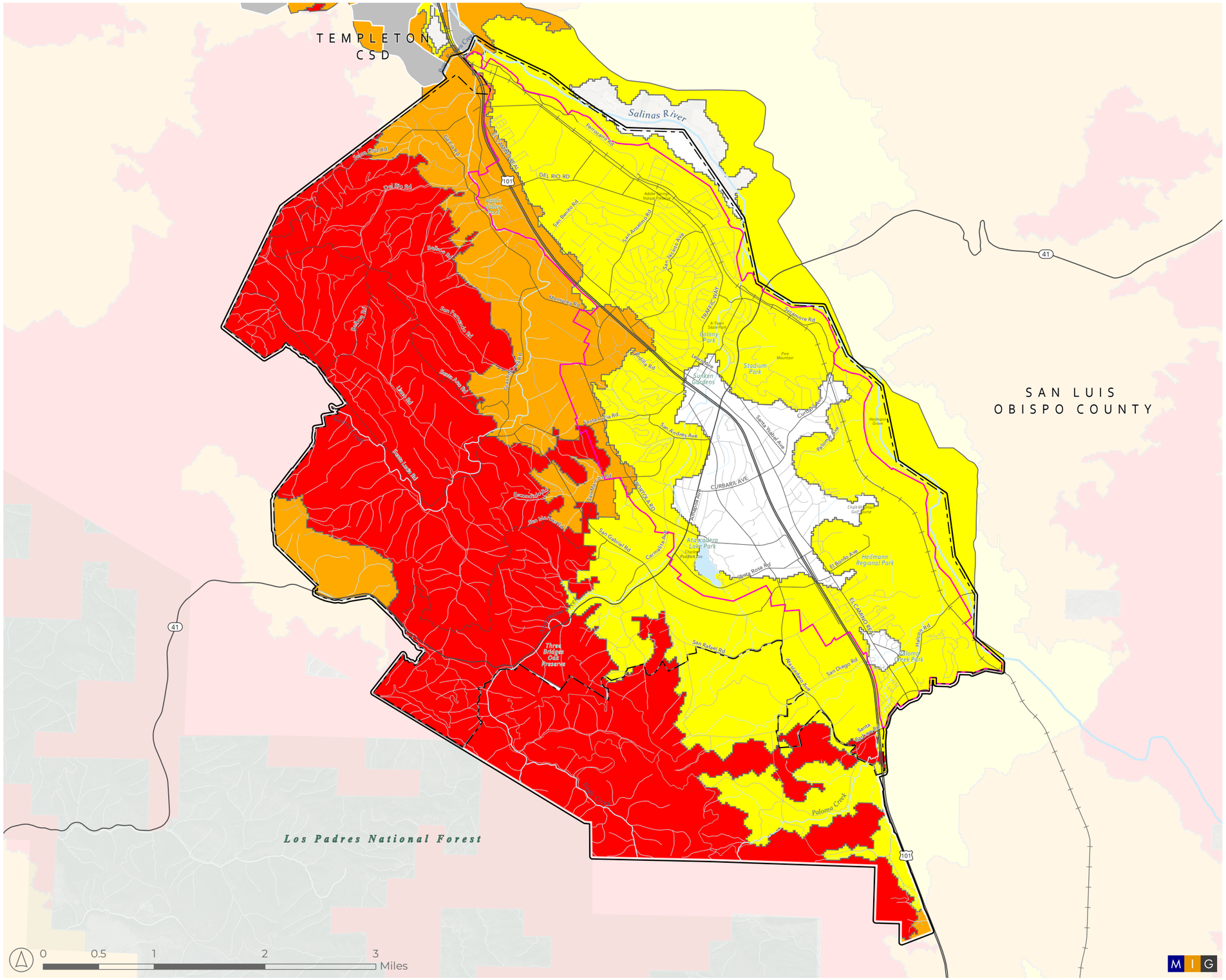


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Figure 9-1
Wildfire Risk

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies

Local Responsibility Area FHSZ - Updated March 9, 2025

Fire Hazard Severity Zone

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- NonWildland

State Responsibility Area FHSZ - Data Effective April 1, 2024

Fire Hazard Severity Zone

- Very High
- High
- Moderate

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

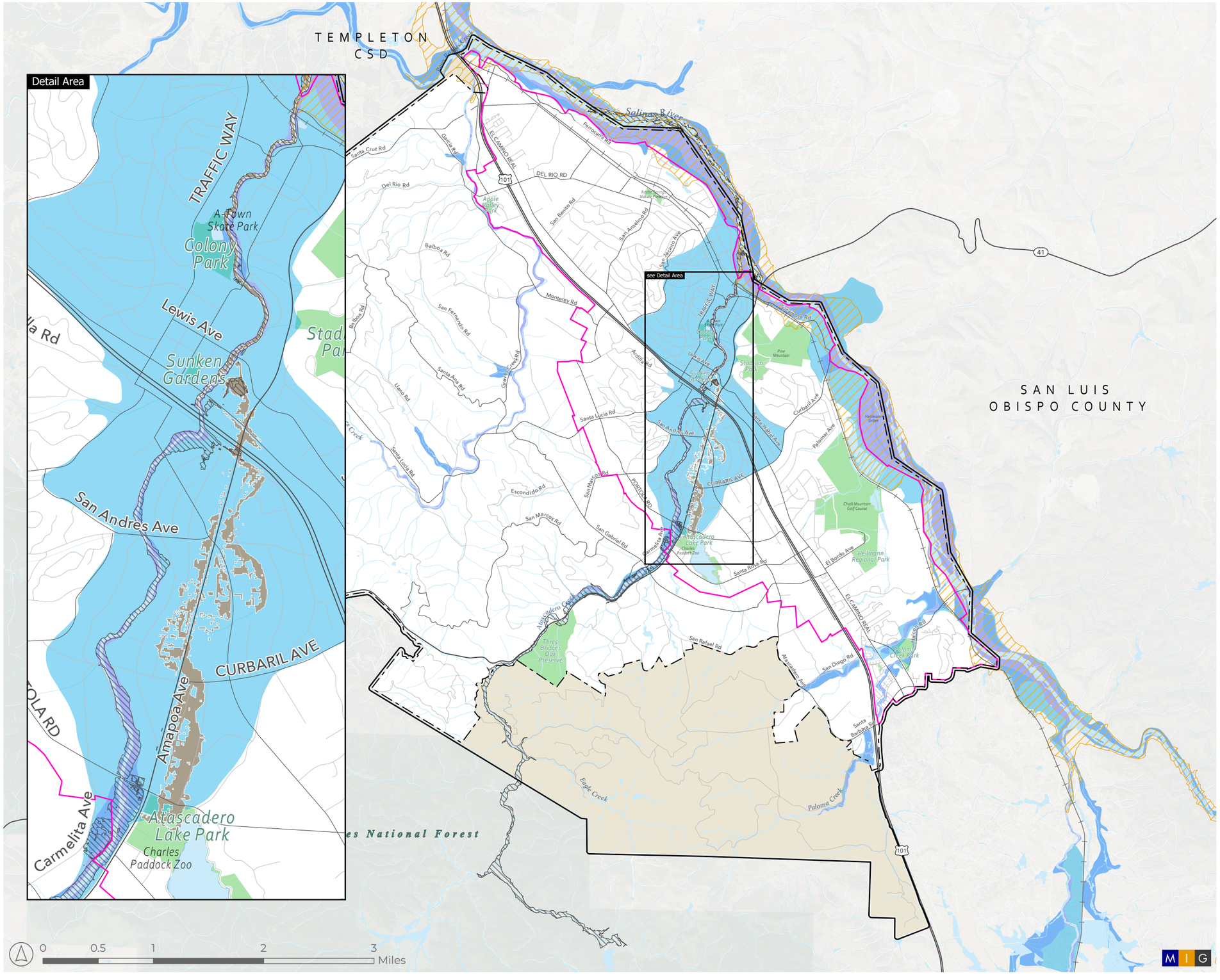

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Figure 9-2
Flood Zones

Basemap Features
- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

FEMA Flood Zones
- 100-Year Floodplain (1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard)
- 500-Year Floodplain (0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard)
- Regulatory Floodway

Dam Inundation Areas
- Atascadero Lake (CA00723) (> 1 foot)
- Salinas Dam (CA10202)
- Eagle Ranch (CA01101)

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

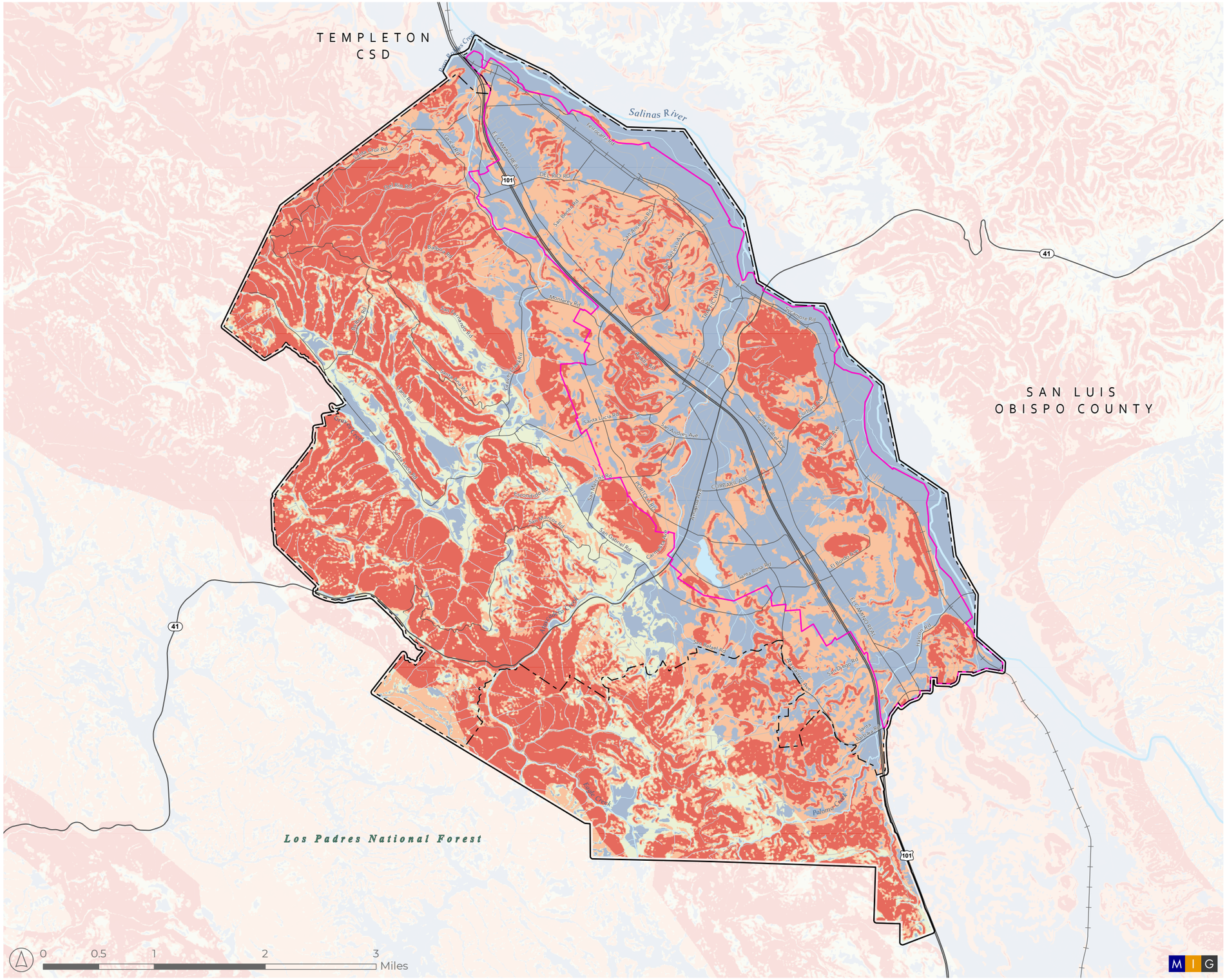

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Figure 9-3
Landslide Susceptibility

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Creeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies

Landslide Susceptibility

- Low (0-3)
- Moderate (4-6)
- High (7-8)
- Very High (9-10)

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

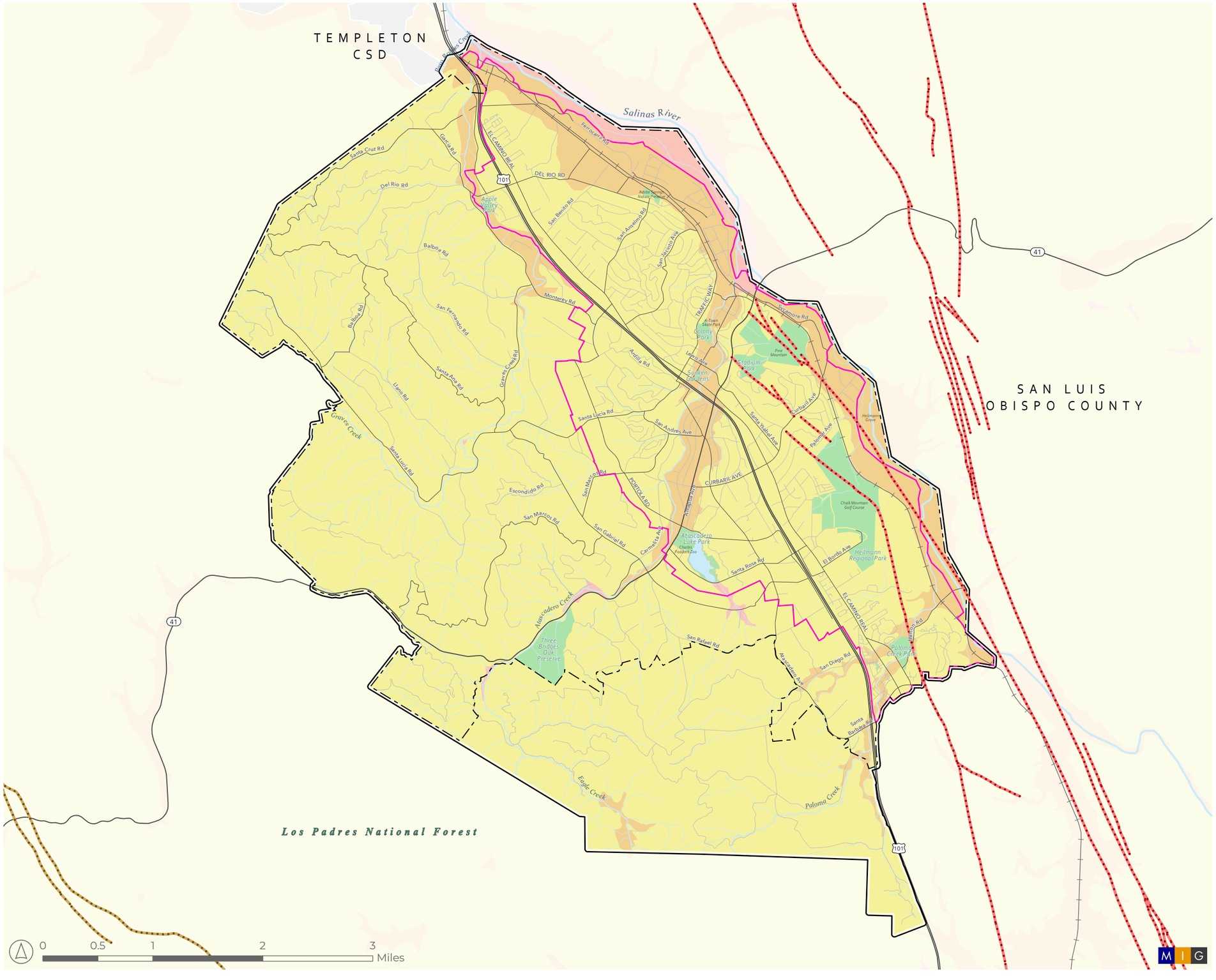

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Figure 9-4

Fault Lines and Liquefaction Risk

Basemap Features

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Sphere of Influence
- Creeeks, Drainages, Rivers, and Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

US Quaternary Faults

- Oceanic Fault Zone
- Rinconada Fault Zone

Liquefaction Risk

- Low Potential
- Moderate Potential
- High Potential

Source(s): Esri, USDA, CADOT, CNRA, County of San Luis Obispo Open Data, City of Atascadero, 2024.

Glossary

A

Access: A way of approaching or entering a property, including ingress (the right to enter) and egress (the right to leave).

Accessory Dwelling Unit: A dwelling unit that is subordinate to and on the same lot or parcel of property as another single dwelling unit, and as governed by State Law.

Acreage, Gross: The total land area in acres within a defined boundary, including any area for rights-of-way, public streets, and dedications of land for public easements.

Acreage, Net: That portion of gross acreage exclusive of public streets and rights-of-way and dedications of land for public uses.

Active Transportation: Forms of transportation involving physical activity, such as walking and cycling.

Adaptive Use/Reuse: The process of converting a building to a use other than that for which it was originally designed and/or built.

Affordable Housing: Under State and Federal statutes, generally housing that costs no more than 30 percent of gross household income. Housing costs include rent or mortgage payments, utilities, taxes, insurance, homeowner association fees, and other related costs.

Air Pollutants: Amounts of foreign and/or natural substances occurring in the atmosphere that may result in adverse effects on humans, animals, vegetation, and/or materials.

Air Quality Standards: The prescribed (by the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board) level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified time in a specified geographical area.

Alternate Fuel: Fuels such as methanol, ethanol, natural gas, and liquid gases that are cleaner burning and help to meet the Air Resources Board's mobile and stationary emission standards.

Ambient Noise Level: The level of noise that is all-encompassing within a given environment for which a single source cannot be determined. It is usually a composite of sounds from many and varied sources near to and far from the receiver.

Annexation: The incorporation of a land area into an existing city with a resulting change in the boundaries of that city.

Average Daily Trips (ADT): Average daily trips made by vehicles in a 24-hour period.

A-Weighted Decibel (dBA): A numerical method of rating human judgment of loudness. The A-weighted scale reduces the effects of low and high frequencies to simulate human hearing.

B

Bike Lane: A corridor expressly reserved by markings for bicycles existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles (Class II Bikeway).

Bike Path: A paved route distinct from a street or roadway and expressly reserved for bicycles. Bike paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from them (Class I Bikeway).

Bike Route: A bicycle facility shared with motorists and identified by signs or pavement marking symbols. A bike route does not have lane stripes (Class III Bikeway).

Bikeways: A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

Buffer: Land and/or improvement designated to protect one type of land use from another where there could be compatibility issues. Where a commercial district or agricultural use abuts a residential district, for example, additional use, yard, or height restrictions may be imposed to protect residential properties. The term may also be used to describe any zone that separates two unlike zones such as a multiunit housing zone between single-unit housing and commercial uses.

Bulbout: A curb extension intended to slow the speed of traffic and increase driver awareness, particularly in residential neighborhoods. They also allow pedestrians and vehicle drivers to see each other when vehicles parked in a parking lane would otherwise block visibility.

C

California Building Code: A standard building code that sets minimum standards for construction. The California Building Code is outlined in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations and includes the Uniform Plumbing Code, Uniform Mechanical Code, National Electric Code, California Fire Code, and the California Energy Code.

California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD): The State department responsible for administering State-sponsored housing programs and for reviewing housing elements to determine compliance with State housing law.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): A State law enacted in 1971 that requires governmental agencies at all levels to consider and publicly disclose the impact proposed projects have on the environment, including cultural resource impacts.

California Register of Historical Resources: A listing of archaeological and historic resources that meet the criteria for designation on the State register.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans): California agency whose mission is to improve mobility across the State. It manages the State highway system and is actively involved with public transportation systems within the State.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP): A proposed timetable or schedule of future capital improvements (i.e., government acquisition of real property, major construction project, or acquisition of long lasting, expensive equipment) to be carried out during a specific period, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project.

Census: An official enumeration of the population, with details as to age, sex, occupation, etc. conducted by the federal government.

Child Care: Care, control, supervision, or maintenance of a child provided for compensation by an individual, other than a parent, for fewer than 24 hours in a day.

City: City, with a capital "C," generally refers to the government or administration of the City of Atascadero. City, with a lower case "c," may mean any city or the general boundaries of Atascadero.

Climate Change: Climate change refers to any significant change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation or wind) lasting for an extended period (decades or longer). Climate change may result from: 1) natural factors, such as changes in the sun's intensity or slow changes in the Earth's orbit around the sun, 2) natural processes within the climate system (e.g., changes in ocean circulation), or 3) human activities that change the atmosphere's composition

(e.g., through burning fossil fuels) and the land surface (e.g., deforestation, reforestation, urbanization and desertification)

Commercial Recreation Use: A privately owned or operated use providing facilities, typically for indoor recreation activities.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL): The noise metric adopted by the State of California for evaluating airport noise. It represents the average daytime noise level during a 24-hour day, adjusted to an equivalent level to account for the lower tolerance of people to noise during evening and nighttime periods relative to the daytime period.

Compatibility: The characteristics of different uses or activities that permit them to be located near each other in harmony and without conflict. The designation of permitted and conditionally permitted uses in zoning districts is intended to achieve compatibility within the district. Some elements affecting compatibility include: intensity of occupancy as measured by dwelling units per acre; pedestrian or vehicular traffic generated; volume of goods handled; and such environmental effects as noise, vibration, glare, air pollution, or the presence of hazardous materials. On the other hand, many aspects of compatibility are based on personal preference and are much harder to measure quantitatively, at least for regulatory purposes.

Complete Streets: A comprehensive approach to the practice and related policies of mobility planning. The complete street concept recognizes that transportation corridors have multiple users with different abilities and mode preferences (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers) that need to be accounted for.

Composting: The controlled microbial decomposition of organic matter (such as food scraps and yard trimmings) in the presence of oxygen into a humus- or soil-like material.

Condominium: An estate in real property consisting of an undivided interest in common in a portion of a parcel in real property, together with a separate interest in airspace in a residential, industrial, or commercial building on such real property such as an apartment, office, or store.

Conservation: The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

Corridor: Major commercial or mix-use streets that connect centers and neighborhoods and have their own identity.

Coverage: The proportion of the area of the footprint of a building in relation to the area of the lot on which it stands.

D

Day-Night Average Sound Level (Ldn): The A-weighted average sound level for a given area (measured in decibels) during a 24-hour period with a 10-dB weighting applied to night-time sound levels. The Ldn is approximately numerically equal to the CNEL for most environmental settings.

dBA: The "A-weighted" scale for measuring sound in decibels; weighs or reduces the effects of low and high frequencies to simulate human hearing. Every increase of 10 dBA doubles the perceived loudness though the noise is actually 10 times more intense.

Decibel (dB): A unit measuring the magnitude of a sound, equal to the logarithm of the ratio of the intensity of the sound to the intensity of an arbitrarily chosen standard sound, specifically a sound just barely audible to an unimpaired human ear. For environmental noise from aircraft and other transportation sources, an A-weighted sound level (abbreviated dBA) is normally used. The A-weighting scale adjusts the values of different sound frequencies to approximate the auditory sensitivity of the human ear.

Density: The number of dwelling units per unit of land. The City of Atascadero 2045 General Plan refers to density in terms of dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

Density Bonus: The allocation of development rights as required by State law that allows a parcel to be developed at a higher residential density than the maximum for which the parcel is designated in exchange for the provision of a certain percentage of those units as affordable.

Developer: An individual or business that prepares raw land for the construction of buildings or causes to be built physical building space for use primarily by others, and in which the preparation of the land or the creation of the building space is in itself a business and is not incidental to another business or activity.

Development: Development is generally defined as any human-caused change to improved or unimproved real estate that requires a permit or approval from the City.

Development Agreement: A contractual agreement between a developer and the City that clearly establishes the developer's responsibility to provide a certain type of development, streets, and sewer improvements, and any other mutually agreed to terms and responsibilities as a precondition for securing the right to develop.

Development Impact Fee: A fee or charge imposed on developers to pay for a jurisdiction's costs of providing infrastructure for new development.

Director: Otherwise known as Community Development Director. This staff position oversees the operations and staffing of the Community Development Department and assigned authority over certain determinations, decisions, and approvals as specified in the Municipal Code, General Plan, and other state and municipal policies.

Diversity: The variation among a particular group of things or people; for example, various social and cultural identities among people existing together.

Drought: An extended period of months or years when a region notes a deficiency in its water supply. Generally, this occurs when a region receives consistently below average precipitation.

Dwelling Unit: A structure or portion of a structure used exclusively for human habitation.

Dwelling Unit per Acre (du/ac): Number of dwelling units per one acre of land; denotes residential density.

E

Easement: A recorded right or interest in the land that belongs to someone else, and which entitles the holder to some use, privilege, or benefit out of or over said land.

Ecosystem: A naturally occurring assemblage of organisms (plant, animal, and other living organisms) living together with their environment, functioning as a loose unit; also referred to as a biotic community.

Emergency Shelter: A facility that provides temporary overnight shelter for persons with no permanent housing. Such facilities may offer services to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and limited medical care.

Encourage: A less rigid directive to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations. Encourage communicates a clear commitment that permits flexibility if circumstances so dictate.

Endangered Species: A species of animal or plant is considered to be endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

Energy Conservation: Reduction or elimination of unnecessary energy use and waste.

Entitlement: A permit granted to a landowner or other authorized party giving it the right to establish a land use or improve a property. Such right is usually expressed in terms of a use and intensity allowed under a development agreement, subdivision or tract map, use permit, variance, building permit, or other similar permit. For example, an entitlement may specify the maximum number of residential dwelling units permitted on a site or the maximum square footage of non-residential development permitted on a site.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR): A report required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act when environmental impacts are determined to be potentially significant. The report assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area, determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action, and identifies alternatives or other measures to avoid or reduce those impacts.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): The United States agency charged with setting policy and guidelines and carrying out legal mandates for the protection of national interests in environmental resources.

Erosion: The loosening and transportation of rock and soil debris by wind, rain, or running water; or the gradual wearing away of the upper layers of the Earth.

F

Fair Market Rent (FMR): Freely set rental rates defined by HUD as the median gross rents charged for available standard units in a county or Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). Fair Market Rents are used for the Section 8 Rental Program and many other HUD programs and are published annually by HUD.

Fault: A fracture in the Earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.

Fiber Optic Cable: High-speed data transmission medium that uses cables to transmit digital data.

Floodplain: A lowland or relatively flat area adjoining the banks of a river or stream which is subject to a one percent or greater chance or flooding in any given year (i.e., 100-year flood).

G

Gateway: A point along a roadway entering a city or county at which a visitor, resident, or local worker gains a sense of having left the previous environs and of having entered a new place.

Goal: The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable; a broad statement of intended direction and purpose.

Governance: The persons, boards, commissions, committees, councils, and/or departments who make up a body for the purpose of administering city government.

Grade: The vertical location of the ground surface.

Grading: Any excavating, filling of land, or combination thereof.

Greenhouse Gases: Gases in the Earth's atmosphere that produce the greenhouse effect. Changes in the concentration of certain greenhouse gases, due to human activity such as fossil fuel burning, increase the risk of global climate change. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, halogenated fluorocarbons, ozone, perfluorinated carbons, and hydro fluorocarbons.

Ground Failure: Mudslide, landslide, liquefaction, or the compaction of soils due to ground shaking from an earthquake.

Ground Shaking: Ground movement resulting from the transmission of seismic waves during an earthquake.

Groundwater: The supply of fresh water under the ground surface in an aquifer or soil that forms a natural reservoir.

Groundwater Recharge: The natural process of infiltration and percolation of rainwater from land areas or streams through permeable soils into water-holding rocks that provide underground storage (aquifers).

H

Habitat: The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

Hazardous Materials: An injurious substance, including pesticides, herbicides, toxic metals and chemicals, liquefied gases.

Historic: A historic building or site is one that is noteworthy for its significance in local, State, or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia, or artifacts.

Historic Context: A narrative description of the broad patterns of historical development in a community or its region that is represented by cultural resources. A historic context statement is organized by themes such as economic, residential, and commercial development.

Historic District: A district, geographical area, or neighborhood containing a collection of residential and/or commercial historical buildings which generally represents a significant aspect of the community's architectural and/or development history, and has been designated by the City Council.

Historic Resource: A general term that refers to buildings, areas, districts, streets, sites, places, structures, outdoor works of art, natural or agricultural features, and other objects having a special historical, cultural, archaeological, architectural, community, or aesthetic value, and are usually 50 years of age or older.

Household: According to the U.S. Census, a household is all persons living in a dwelling unit, whether or not they are related. Both a single person living in an apartment and a family living in a house are considered households.

Household Income: The total income of all the people living in a household. Households are usually described as very low income, low income, moderate income, and above moderate income for that household size, based on their position relative to the county median income.

Housing Unit: A room or group of rooms used by one or more individuals living separately from others in the structure, with direct access to the outside or to a public hall and containing separate toilet and kitchen facilities.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): The United States federal department that administers federal programs dealing with better housing and urban renewal.

I

Impervious surfaces: Structures or installed surface materials—such as pavements (roads, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots) that are covered by impenetrable materials.

Implementation: An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out General Plan policy.

Improvement: As defined the Atascadero Municipal Code, is any building, structure, place, parking facility, fence, gate, wall, work of art, or other object constituting a physical betterment of real property, or any part of such betterment.

Income Category: Four categories are used to classify a household according to income based on the median income for the county. Under State housing statutes, these categories are defined as follows: Very Low (0-50% of county median); Low (51-80% of county median); Moderate (81-120% of county median); and Above Moderate (over 120% of county median).

Industrial: The manufacture, production, and processing of consumer goods. Industrial is often divided into "heavy industrial" uses, such as construction yards, quarrying, and factories; and "light industrial" uses, which are generally indoor uses such as research and development and less intensive warehousing and manufacturing.

Infill Development: Development that occurs on or within an existing urban framework on: 1) vacant land (usually individual lots or previously passed-over properties) or 2) land that has been previously developed within areas that are already largely developed.

Infrastructure: The physical systems and services which support development and population, such as roadways, railroads, water, sewer, natural gas, electrical generation and transmission, telephone, cable television, storm drainage, and others.

Institutional Uses: Publicly or privately owned and operated activities such as hospitals, convalescent hospitals, intermediate care facilities, nursing homes, museums, and schools and colleges; churches and other religious organizations; and other nonprofit activities of a welfare, educational, or philanthropic nature that cannot be considered residential, commercial, or industrial

Intensity: A measure of the amount or level of development often expressed as the ratio of building floor area to lot area (floor area ratio) for commercial, business, and industrial development, or dwelling units per acre of land for residential development (also called "density"). For the purposes of this General Plan, the intensity of nonresidential development is described in terms of floor-area ratio (FAR).

Interagency: Indicates consultation between or among two or more discrete agencies in regard to a specific program.

Intersection: Where two or more roads cross at grade.

J

Jurisdiction: The territory over which authority to govern is exercised

K

Reserved

L

Landmark: A site (including significant trees or other significant permanent landscaping located on a site), place, building, structure, street, improvement, street furniture, sign, work of art, natural feature, or other object representative of the historical, archaeological, cultural, architectural, community, aesthetic, or artistic heritage of the city.

Landscaping: Planting, including but not limited to, trees, shrubs, and ground covers which are suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained to enhance a site or right-of-way.

Land Use: A description of how land is occupied or used.

Land Use Plan: A plan showing the allowed location, extent, and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes.

Landslide: A general term for a falling or sliding mass of soil or rocks.

Lateral Spread: Refers to landslides that commonly form on gentle slopes and that have rapid fluid-like flow movement, like water.

Level of Service (LOS) Standard: One standard used by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service such as police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, such as a street or highway.

Light Pollution: Excessive or obtrusive artificial light.

Liquefaction: A process by which water saturated granular soils transform from a solid to a liquid state due to groundshaking. This phenomenon usually results from shaking from energy waves released in an earthquake.

Live/Work Unit: A land use that combines residential units with commercial spaces, typically in which the resident uses the workspace for his or her own business.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO): A five- or seven- member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals.

Local Street: A street providing direct access to properties and not designed for through traffic.

Lot: A legally recognized parcel of land

Low Impact Development: Development that uses or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.

M

Market-Rate Housing: Housing available on the open market without any subsidy. The price for housing is determined by the market forces of supply and demand and varies by location.

Mass Communication System: A system to impart or exchange information on a large scale to a wide range of people.

Median Income: The annual income for each household size within a region is defined annually by HUD. Half of the households in the region have incomes above the median and half have incomes below the median.

Mitigate: To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible.

Mixed Use: A combination of residential and compatible commercial uses on a site that can be integrated horizontally or vertically as defined by their specific Placetype and zoning standards.

Mobile Sources: Sources of air pollution such as automobiles, motorcycles, trucks, off-road vehicles, boats, and airplanes.

Monitor: A commitment to keep track of.

Multi-Generational: Of or relating to several generations.

Multimodal: The utilization of a variety of available modes of travel that enhance the movement of people and goods, including, but not limited to, highway, transit, nonmotorized, and demand management strategies including, but not limited to, telecommuting. The availability and practicality of specific multimodal systems, projects, and strategies may vary by county and region in accordance with the size and complexity of different urbanized areas. (Government Code §65088)

Municipal Services: Services traditionally provided by local government, including water and sewer, roads, parks, schools, and police and fire protection.

Mutual Aid Agreement: An agreement among emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries.

N

National Flood Insurance Program: A federal program which authorizes the sale of federally subsidized flood insurance in communities where such flood insurance is not available privately.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES): As authorized by the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program controls

water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. The State Water Resources Control Board issues permits to jurisdictions with the objectives to attain and protect the beneficial uses of water bodies in the State; reduce pollutants in stormwater to the maximum extent practicable; and to evaluate compliance with the objectives and requirements contained in the permit.

National Register of Historic Places: The nation's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in national, regional or local American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture, maintained by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Neighborhood: A geographically localized community within Atascadero.

Neighborhood Context: The background and surrounding information that enhances understanding of a particular neighborhood.

Neighborhood Park: City- or county-owned land intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working in proximity to the park.

Noise: Sound that is discernible to the human ear. Excessive noise is any sound which exceeds the appropriate actual or presumed ambient noise level which annoys or tends to disturb humans, or which causes or tends to cause an adverse psychological or physiological effect on humans.

Noise Contours: Continuous lines of equal noise level usually drawn around a noise source, such as an airport or highway. The lines are generally drawn in five-decibel increments so that they resemble elevation contours in topographic maps.

Nonconforming Use: An established use of a building or land which may have been legally initiated but which does not conform to the present code because of subsequent changes in land use regulations.

O

Open Space: Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as defined in this section, and that is designated on a local, regional or state open-space plan as any of the following:

- Open space for the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, areas identified for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species.
- Open space used for the managed production of resources, including but not limited to, forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; and areas required for recharge of groundwater basins.

- Open space for outdoor recreation purposes, and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations.
- Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, floodplains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

Optimize: A commitment to make as effective and useful as possible or to plan or carryout with maximum efficiency.

Ordinance: A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Outdoor Recreation Use: A privately or publicly owned or operated use providing facilities for outdoor recreation activities.

Overlay: A land use designation or a zoning designation that modifies the basic underlying designation in some specific manner.

P

Parcel: The basic unit of land entitlement. A designated area of land established by plat, subdivision, or otherwise legally defined and permitted to be used or built upon.

Park: Land that is publicly owned or controlled for providing parks, recreation, or open space for public use.

Parking (public): An open area, excluding a street or other public way, used for the parking of automobiles and available to the public, whether for free or for compensation.

Parking Management: A system designed and carried out to obtain maximum utilization from a limited number of parking spaces.

Participate: A directive to take or have a part or share with others in a program or group effort.

Particulate Matter (PM_{10}): Particulate matter less than 10 microns in size. A major air pollutant consisting of tiny solid or liquid particles of soot, dust, smoke, fumes and aerosols.

Placetype: A system for classifying and designating the appropriate use of properties.

Planning Area: The Planning Area is the land areas addressed by the General Plan. For a city, the Planning Area boundary typically coincides with the sphere of influence and encompasses land both within the City limits and potentially annexable land.

Planning Commission: A decision making body, created by the City in compliance with California law (Government Code Section 65100 et seq.).

Policy, General Plan: Statement guiding action and implying clear commitment found within each element of the General Plan.

Pollution: The presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired environmental effects.

Pollution, Non-Point: Sources for pollution that are less definable and usually cover broad areas of land, such as agricultural land with fertilizers that are carried from the land by runoff, or automobiles.

Pollution, Point: In reference to water quality, a discrete source from which pollution is generated before it enters receiving waters, such as a sewer outfall, a smokestack, or an industrial waste pipe.

Potable Water: Water that is of sufficiently high quality so that it can be consumed or used without risk of immediate or long-term harm.

Private: Of or concerning a particular person or group; not owned by a government body.

Program: A coordinated set of specific measures and actions (e.g., zoning, subdivision procedures, and capital expenditures) the local government intends to use in carrying out the policies of the General Plan.

Public: Of the people as a whole, or for the use and benefit of all.

Public and Quasi-Public Facilities: Institutional, academic, governmental and community service uses, either owned publicly or operated by non-profit organizations, including private hospitals and cemeteries.

Public Services: See "Municipal Services."

Public Space: Land or structures that are open to anyone; may include public or private property; also referred to as "public realm."

Q

Reserved

R

Recycling: The act of processing used or abandoned materials for use in creating new product.

Recycled Water: Former wastewater (sewage) that has been treated to remove solids and certain impurities, and then allowed to recharge the aquifer rather than being discharged to surface water. This recharging is often done by using the treated wastewater for irrigation.

Redevelop: To demolish existing buildings, increase the overall floor area existing on a property, or both, irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.

Regional: Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction and affecting a broader area.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA): The Regional Housing Needs Allocation is based on State of California projections of population growth and housing unit demand and assigns a share of the region's future housing need to each jurisdiction in the State. These housing need numbers serve as the basis for the update of the housing element in each California city and county.

Rehabilitation: The upgrading of a building in previously dilapidated or substandard condition for human habitation or use.

Renewable Energy: The term renewable energy generally refers to electricity supplied from renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, geothermal, hydropower and various forms of biomass. These energy sources are considered renewable sources because their fuel sources are continuously replenished.

Retrofit: To add materials and/or devices to an existing building or system to improve its operation or efficiency.

Rezoning: An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning code to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Right-of-Way: Any place which is dedicated to use by the public for pedestrian and vehicular travel. A right-of-way may include, but is not limited to, a street, sidewalk, curb, and gutter. A right-of-way may be a crossing, intersection, parkway, median, highway, alley, lane, mall, court, way, avenue, boulevard, road, roadway, railway, viaduct, subway, tunnel, bridge, thoroughfare, park square, or other similar public way.

Riparian: Relating to or living on or located on the bank of bodies or courses of water.

S

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG): A regional planning agency, or any successor agency, incorporating various local governments in San Luis Obispo County in California. It deals with regional land use, housing, environmental quality, and economic development.

Sanitary Sewer: A system of subterranean conduits that carries refuse liquids or waste matter to a plant where the sewage is treated, as contrasted with storm drainage systems (that carry surface water) and septic tanks or leach fields (that hold refuse liquids and waste matter on site).

Scenic Highway/Scenic Route: A highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and human-made

scenic resources and access or direct views to areas or scenes of exceptional beauty or historic or cultural interest.

Seismic: Caused by or subject to earthquakes or Earth vibrations.

Sensitive Species: Includes those plant and animal species considered threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Game, according to Section 3 of the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Setback: The distance from a defined point of line governing the placement of buildings, structures, parking, or uses on a lot.

Sewer: Any pipe or conduit used to collect and carry away wastewater from the generating source to a treatment plant or discharge outfall.

Specific Plan: A tool authorized by Government Code Section 65450 et seq. for the systematic implementation of the General Plan for a defined portion of a community's planning area. A specific plan must specify in detail the land uses, public and private facilities needed to support the land uses, phasing of development and use of natural resources, and a program of implementation measures, including financing measures.

Soil: Naturally occurring superficial deposits overlying bedrock.

Solar Energy: Energy from the sun that is converted into thermal or electrical energy.

Solid Waste: All solid, semi-solid, and liquid wastes, including garbage, trash, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles and parts thereof, discarded home and industrial appliances, dewatered, treated, or chemically fixed sewage sludge which is not hazardous waste, manure, vegetable of animal solid and semi-solid wastes, and other discarded solid and semisolid waste.

Sphere of Influence: The probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency as determined by the San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

Standards: (1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The California Government Code (Section 65302) requires that General Plans describe "standards." (2) Requirements in a Zoning Code that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions; for example, site design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

State Historical Building Code (SHBC): State of California, Title 24, Building Standards, Part 8, which regulates control and allows alternatives to any and all prevailing codes when dealing with qualified historic buildings and structures.

Stationary Sources: Nonmobile sources such as power plants, refineries, and manufacturing facilities which emit air pollutants.

Stormwater Runoff: Stormwater from city streets and adjacent domestic or commercial properties that carries pollutants of various kinds into the sewer systems and receiving waters.

Streetscape: The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, sidewalks, street furniture, trees and open spaces, etc. that combine to form the street's character.

Structure: Anything constructed or erected that requires location on the ground or attachment to something having location on the ground, including swimming pools, but excluding driveways, sidewalks, patios, or parking spaces.

Subdivision: The division of any improved or unimproved legal lot of record

Subsidence: The sinking or downward settling and compaction of soil and other surface material with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence may be caused by a variety of human and natural activity, including earthquakes.

Subsidize: To assist by payment of a sum of money or by the granting of terms or fee reductions that reduce the need for monetary expenditures.

Substandard Housing: Residential dwellings that, because of their physical condition, do not provide safe and sanitary housing (i.e., does not provide shelter, endangers the health, safety or well-being of occupants). Jurisdictions may adopt more stringent local definitions of substandard housing.

Sustainability: The ability for the city and citizens of Atascadero to meet the needs of the present economy, society, and environment while preserving the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

T

Tenure: Refers to the distinction between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units.

Topography: Configuration of a surface, including its relief and the position of natural and human-made features.

Townhouse: A dwelling unit occupying its own lot but which is physically attached to at least one other dwelling unit.

Traffic Calming: The combination of policies and measures that reduce the negative effects of motorized vehicle use by improving livability in the surrounding neighborhood. With traffic calming, accessibility and mobility are not reduced; they are modified to fit needs of neighborhood. Traffic calming achieves this by modifying the design of streets to serve a broad range of transportation, social, and environmental purposes.

Transit: A system of regularly scheduled buses and/or trains available to the public on a fee-per-ride basis. Also called mass transit.

Transmission Line: An interconnected group of electric lines located on poles or underground which transfer energy, in bulk, between points of supply and points of delivery.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM): A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking, and biking.

Trees, Street: Trees strategically planted—usually in parkway strips, medians, or along streets-to enhance the visual quality of a street.

Trip: A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end" (or origin) and one "attraction end" (destination).

U

Undergrounding Utilities: The process of transferring overhead utilities into underground facilities

Unincorporated Area: A region of land that is not governed by a local municipality such as a city, but are under the jurisdiction of the county.

Urban Forest: The community forest includes street trees, open green spaces, undeveloped land, and parks, along with other public and private spaces within urban areas.

Urban Form: Urban form addresses the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks.

V

Vacant: Lands or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): The total distance traveled in miles by all motor vehicles of a specific group within a given area at a given time.

Viewshed: The area within view from a defined observation point.

W

Walkable: A measure of how friendly an area is for pedestrians. Factors affecting walkability include, but are not limited to, land use mix; street connectivity; residential density (residential units per area of residential use); "transparency" which includes amount of glass in windows and doors, as well as orientation and proximity of homes and buildings to watch over the street; plenty of places to go to near the majority of homes; placemaking, street designs that work for

people, not just cars; and nonresidential floor area ratio. Major infrastructural factors include access to mass transit, presence and quality walkways, buffers to moving traffic (planter strips, on-street parking, or bike lanes) and pedestrian crossings, aesthetics, nearby local destinations, shade or sun in appropriate seasons, street furniture, and traffic volume and speed.

Water Conservation: Using water wisely and efficiently so that it is not wasted.

Water-Efficient Landscaping: Landscaping designed to minimize water use and maximize energy efficiency.

Water Quality: The physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of water. It is most frequently used by reference to a set of standards against which compliance can be assessed. The most common standards used to assess water quality relate to drinking water, safety of human contact, and for health of ecosystems.

Watershed: The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or watercourse that drains into a lake or reservoir.

Wayfinding: All of the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place, including signage and other graphic communication.

Wetlands: Areas that are saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration to support wetland hydrology.

X

Reserved

Y

Reserved

Z

Zoning: A police power measure, enacted primarily by units of local government, in which the community is divided into districts or zones within which permitted and special uses are established as are regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement and other development standards. Requirements vary from district to district, but they must be uniform within the same district. The Zoning Code consists of a map and text.

Zoning Map: The officially adopted zoning map of the City specifying the location of zoning districts within all geographic areas of the city.