

# 2045 General Plan Existing Conditions Report

## **Chapter 10: Community Health**

# Community Health Findings

## DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

1. Based on the State of California's definition and criteria pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 1000 and SB 535, no areas (measured in census tracts) within the San Luis Obispo region are designated as disadvantaged communities.
2. Creating a regional definition of disadvantaged communities for the San Luis Obispo region allows San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) to better compete for grant funding, distribute funds more equitably, and meet the state and federal environmental justice requirements. Based on SLOCOG's definition and criteria, 47 areas within the Atascadero city limits have been identified as disadvantaged communities.

## OTHER HEALTH INDICATORS

1. Based on the Healthy Places Index (HPI), Atascadero ranks healthier than 72 percent of other towns and cities in California, which is slightly below the county average of 79 percent.
2. Based on individual HPI indicators, Atascadero ranks lower in preschool and high school enrollment, park access, retail density, severe housing cost burden for renters, drinking water contaminants, and fine particulate matter when compared to other cities in SLO County.
3. The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department, in collaboration with community members, nonprofits, and other government agencies, identified healthy neighborhoods, access to care, and mental health/substance use as the agency's top priorities as part of the 2024-2029 Community Health Improvement Plan.

## 10.1 Introduction

A community's overall health depends on many socioeconomic factors; however, health is also a function of the environment in which residents live and work. Critical determinants of healthy living environments include access to parks and open space, healthy foods, medical and other services, economic opportunities, affordable housing, safe and walkable neighborhoods, public transit options, and environmental quality. This chapter aims to establish a baseline status of health and wellness in Atascadero that will inform the 2045 General Plan update process.

The citywide analysis pulls from existing State and regional datasets including CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and Healthy Places Index 3.0 to synthesis community health outcomes. Additional information relevant to health outcomes can be found in **Chapter 7: Parks and Recreation**, **Chapter 4: Transportation and Mobility**, and the 2021-2028 Housing Element related to housing.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

**Section 10.1:** Introduction

**Section 10.2:** Regulatory Setting

**Section 10.3:** Disadvantaged Communities

**Section 10.4:** Healthy Places Index

**Section 10.5:** SLO County Health Improvement Plan Priorities

**Section 10.6:** Sources

**Section 10.7:** Acronyms and Key Terms

**Section 10.8:** Appendix A: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

## 10.2 Regulatory Setting

### FEDERAL

#### Clean Air Act (1970)

The Clean Air Act (CAA) is a comprehensive Federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources. Among other things, this law authorizes EPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and public welfare and to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants. 42 U.S.C. §7401 et seq. (1970)

#### Clean Water Act (1972)

The Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The basis of the CWA was enacted in 1948 and was called the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, but the Act was significantly reorganized and expanded in 1972. "Clean Water Act" became the Act's common name with amendments in 1972.

Under the CWA, EPA has implemented pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for the industry. EPA has also developed national water quality criteria recommendations for pollutants in surface waters. 33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq.

#### Executive Order 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994)

Issued by President William J. Clinton in 1994, its purpose is to focus Federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of Federal actions on minority and low-income populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities.

E.O. 12898 directs Federal agencies to:

- identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.
- develop a strategy for implementing environmental justice.
- promote nondiscrimination in Federal programs that affect human health and the environment, as well as provide minority and low-income communities access to public information and public participation.
- In addition, the E.O. established an Interagency Working Group (IWG) on environmental justice chaired by the EPA Administrator and comprised of the heads of 11 departments or agencies and several White House offices.

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (1969)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was one of the first laws ever written that establishes a broad national framework for protecting our environment. NEPA's basic policy is to assure that all branches of government consider the environment prior to undertaking any major Federal action that significantly affects the environment.

NEPA requirements are invoked when airports, buildings, military complexes, highways, parkland purchases, and other Federal activities are proposed. Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), which are assessments of the likelihood



of impacts from alternative courses of action, are required from all Federal agencies and are the most visible NEPA requirements. 42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq.

### Pollution Prevention Act (1990)

The Pollution Prevention Act focused industry, government, and public attention on reducing the amount of pollution through cost-effective changes in production, operation, and raw materials used. Opportunities for source reduction are often not realized because of existing regulations, and the industrial resources required for compliance, focus on treatment and disposal. 42 U.S.C. §13101 et seq.

### Safe Drinking Water Act (1974)

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was established to protect the quality of drinking water in the U.S. This law focuses on all waters actually or potentially designed for drinking use, whether from above ground or underground sources. 42 U.S.C. §300f et seq.

- The Act authorizes EPA to establish minimum standards to protect tap water and requires all owners or operators of public water systems to comply with these primary (health-related) standards.
- The 1996 amendments to SDWA require that EPA consider a detailed risk and cost assessment, and the best available peer-reviewed science when developing these standards.
- State governments, which can be approved to implement these rules for EPA, also encourage the attainment of secondary standards (nuisance-related).
- Under the Act, EPA also establishes minimum standards for state programs to protect underground sources of drinking water from endangerment by underground injection of fluids.

## STATE

### California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires state and local government agencies in California to inform decision-makers and the public about the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects on communities already burdened with pollution, and to reduce those impacts to the extent feasible.

The laws and rules governing the CEQA process are contained in the CEQA statute (Public Resources Code Section 21000 and following), the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 and following), published court decisions interpreting CEQA, and locally adopted CEQA procedures.

### Senate Bill 1000

The State of California recognizes that environmental justice disparities are a threat to overall quality of life across all communities. Environmental justice is defined as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Fair treatment in this case means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations and policies.

Passed in 2016, Senate Bill (SB) 1000 requires cities concurrently updating two or more elements of their General Plan to identify “disadvantaged communities” and engage residents within these communities throughout the planning process. Cities that have “disadvantaged communities” within their jurisdiction must include environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in their general plans that address the unique and compounded health risks identified in the “disadvantaged communities.”

### Senate Bill 535

Senate Bill (SB) 535 directs that at least a quarter of proceeds from California’s Cap-and-Trade Program go to projects that provide a benefit to disadvantaged communities and at least ten percent of the funds go to projects located within those communities.

## REGIONAL

### SLOCOG Regional Transportation Plan

A Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-term blueprint of a region’s transportation system. RTPs are required every four years and plan for 20+ years into the future. The plan identifies and analyzes the transportation needs of the metropolitan region and creates a framework for project priorities. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) represents and works with the County of San Luis Obispo (SLO County), as well as the cities of Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo, Beach, and San Luis Obispo, as the lead agency in facilitating the development of the RTP.

Released in January 2023, the RTP coordinates land use, housing, and transportation planning to reduce the amount of time people spend on the road and looks to address our future transportation needs through the year 2045. This effort is part of a statewide strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet established reduction targets, and it may help attract funding for our communities and streamline permitting processes.

## 10.3 Disadvantaged Communities

### CALENVIROSCREEN 4.0

Disadvantaged communities are specifically identified by the State of California for the investment of the state's cap-and-trade program proceeds. These investments are aimed at improving public health, quality of life, and economic opportunity in California's most burdened communities while reducing pollution. The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) as a screening methodology to identify communities by census tract that are disproportionately burdened by, and vulnerable to, multiple sources of pollution. CalEnviroScreen is in its fourth iteration (CalEnviroScreen 4.0) most recently updated in 2021. Twenty-one indicators are evaluated as contributors to cumulative impacts, summarized in **Table 10-1**.

Based on the criteria used to establish CalEnviroScreen 4.0, the State of California does not designate any census tract in Atascadero as a disadvantaged community (see **Table 10-2**).<sup>1</sup> When the overall percentile scores for Atascadero are examined, they are low—ranging from 5.61 to 19.47—compared to other areas in California. Low scores indicate that an area experiences a lower pollution burden than areas with high scores. Atascadero's individual indicator scores, including map figures can be found in **Appendix A**, and could be referenced to inform policy and implementation measures throughout the 2045 General Plan update process.

**Table 10-1: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Components and Indicators**

Pollution Burden			
Exposure Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ozone Concentrations</li> <li>• PM<sub>2.5</sub> Concentrations</li> <li>• Children's Lead Risk from Housing</li> <li>• Diesel PM Emissions</li> <li>• Drinking Water Contaminants</li> <li>• Pesticide Use</li> <li>• Toxic Releases from Facilities</li> <li>• Traffic Density</li> </ul>	Environmental Effect Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid Waste Sites</li> <li>• Groundwater Threats</li> <li>• Hazardous Waste</li> <li>• Impaired Water Bodies</li> <li>• Cleanup Sites</li> </ul>
Population Characteristics			
Sensitive Population Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• Cardiovascular Disease</li> <li>• Low Birth Weight Infants</li> </ul>	Socioeconomic Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Attainment</li> <li>• Housing Burdened Low Income Households</li> <li>• Linguistic Isolation</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> </ul>

Source(s): CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2024.

<sup>1</sup> SLOCOG 2023 RTP

Table 10-2: City of Atascadero Overall Percentile Scores

Percentiles and Indicators	Census Tracts								
	6079012503	6079012502	6079012900	6079013000	6079012600	6079012702	6079012704	6079012505	6079012800
Overall Score	19.47	14.71	13.67	12.44	10.48	9.14	5.98	5.61	N/A
Pollution Burden	21.01	16.39	28.60	29.71	24.75	39.14	11.19	7.64	6.77
Population Characteristics	22.21	18.13	11.31	9.75	9.08	5.16	7.55	8.83	N/A

Percentile Scoring Color Coding									
0 - 10	10 - 20	20 - 30	30 - 40	40 - 50	50 - 60	60 - 70	70 - 80	80 - 90	90 - 100

Source(s): CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2024.

SLOCOG 2023 RTP

Based on the State of California’s definition and criteria, no census tracts within the San Luis Obispo region are designated as disadvantaged communities. Beyond the definitions outlined in federal and state law, SLOCOG considers other population and socioeconomic characteristics in the regional definition of disadvantaged communities. Along with Title VI protected variables (racial and ethnic minority and household income), the region includes additional factors such as youth populations, older adult populations, vehicle-less households, individuals without a high school diploma. Creating a regional definition of disadvantaged communities for the San Luis Obispo region allows SLOCOG to better compete for grant funding, distribute funds more equitably, and meet the state and federal environmental justice requirements. The Disadvantaged Communities Assessment was approved by the SLOCOG Board for use in the 2023 RTP and the 2022 Programming Cycle on June 2nd, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

SLOCOG has defined disadvantaged communities as, “disproportionately burdened areas that are economically distressed and/or historically underrepresented as part of the local government process.” The Disadvantaged Communities Assessment identifies these areas using thirteen variables that address a wide range of socioeconomic and population-based factors. **Table 10-3** lists these variables, and the total possible point value for each indicator within the model. SLOCOG disadvantaged communities are defined as areas that score between 116 to 350 total points, as shown in **Figure 10-1**.

Table 10-3: SLOCOG Disadvantaged Communities Variables

SLOCOG Disadvantaged Communities Variables	Total Possible Points
Racial Minority	40
Ethnic Minority	40
Disability Status	40
Household Income	40
Free or Reduced Price Meals	30
Educational Attainment	30

<sup>2</sup> SLOCOG 2023 RTP

SLOCOG Disadvantaged Communities Variables	Total Possible Points
Language Proficiency	30
Renter Affordability	20
Housing Ownership Affordability	20
Older Adults: Age 75 Years and Older	20
Youth: Age 15 Years and Under	20
Households with No Vehicle Available	10
Households with No Computing Device Available	10
<b>Total Possible Points</b> (per Community ID)	<b>350</b>

Source(s): SLOCOG 2023 RTP.

Atascadero's disadvantaged communities, shown in **Table 10-4** and **Figure 10-1**, cover most of the area within the Urban Services Line (USL) west of U.S. Highway 101. Variables that scored lowest (0 to 25 percent) in Atascadero when compared to other SLOCOG region cities include:

- Racial Minority
- Ethnic Minority
- Household Income
- Educational Attainment
- Language Proficiency

Variable that scored highest (75 to 100 percent) in Atascadero when compared to other SLOCOG region cities include:

- Disability Status
- Older Adults (Age 75 Years or Older)
- Households with No Vehicle Available
- Households with no Computing Device Available

**Table 10-4: SLOCOG Disadvantaged Communities – Atascadero Scores**

Community ID	Racial Minority	Ethnic Minority	Disability Status	Household Income	Free/Reduced Price Meals	Educational Attainment	Language Proficiency	Renter Affordability	Housing Ownership Affordability	75 Years Old and Older	15 Years Old and Under	No Vehicle Available	No Computing Device Available	TOTALS
16214	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	0	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16380	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	0	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16381	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	0	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16382	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	0	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16383	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	0	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16547	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16548	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16549	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>
16550	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	<b>120</b>

Community ID	Racial Minority	Ethnic Minority	Disability Status	Household Income	Free/Reduced Price Meals	Educational Attainment	Language Proficiency	Renter Affordability	Housing Ownership Affordability	75 Years Old and Older	15 Years Old and Under	No Vehicle Available	No Computing Device Available	TOTALS
16551	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	0	0	20	10	10	10	120
16715	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
16716	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
16717	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
16718	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
16883	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
16884	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
16885	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
17053	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
17221	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
17222	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
17390	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
17558	0	0	40	10	0	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	120
15553	20	20	0	10	20	0	15	0	20	0	20	0	0	125
15554	20	20	0	10	20	0	15	0	20	0	20	0	0	125
17726	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	0	20	10	10	10	140
15241	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15395	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15396	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15551	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15552	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15713	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15715	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15716	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15873	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15874	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15875	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15876	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
15877	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
16040	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
16041	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
16042	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
16043	0	20	40	10	20	0	0	0	20	20	10	10	10	160
16044	0	20	40	10	20	0	0	0	20	20	10	10	10	160
16211	0	0	40	10	20	0	0	20	20	20	10	10	10	160
16212	0	20	40	10	20	0	0	0	20	20	10	10	10	160
16213	0	20	40	10	20	0	0	0	20	20	10	10	10	160
16215	0	20	40	10	20	0	0	0	20	20	10	10	10	160

Source(s): SLOCOG 2023 RTP.



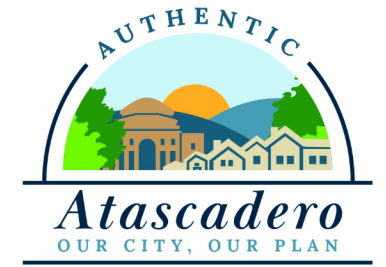


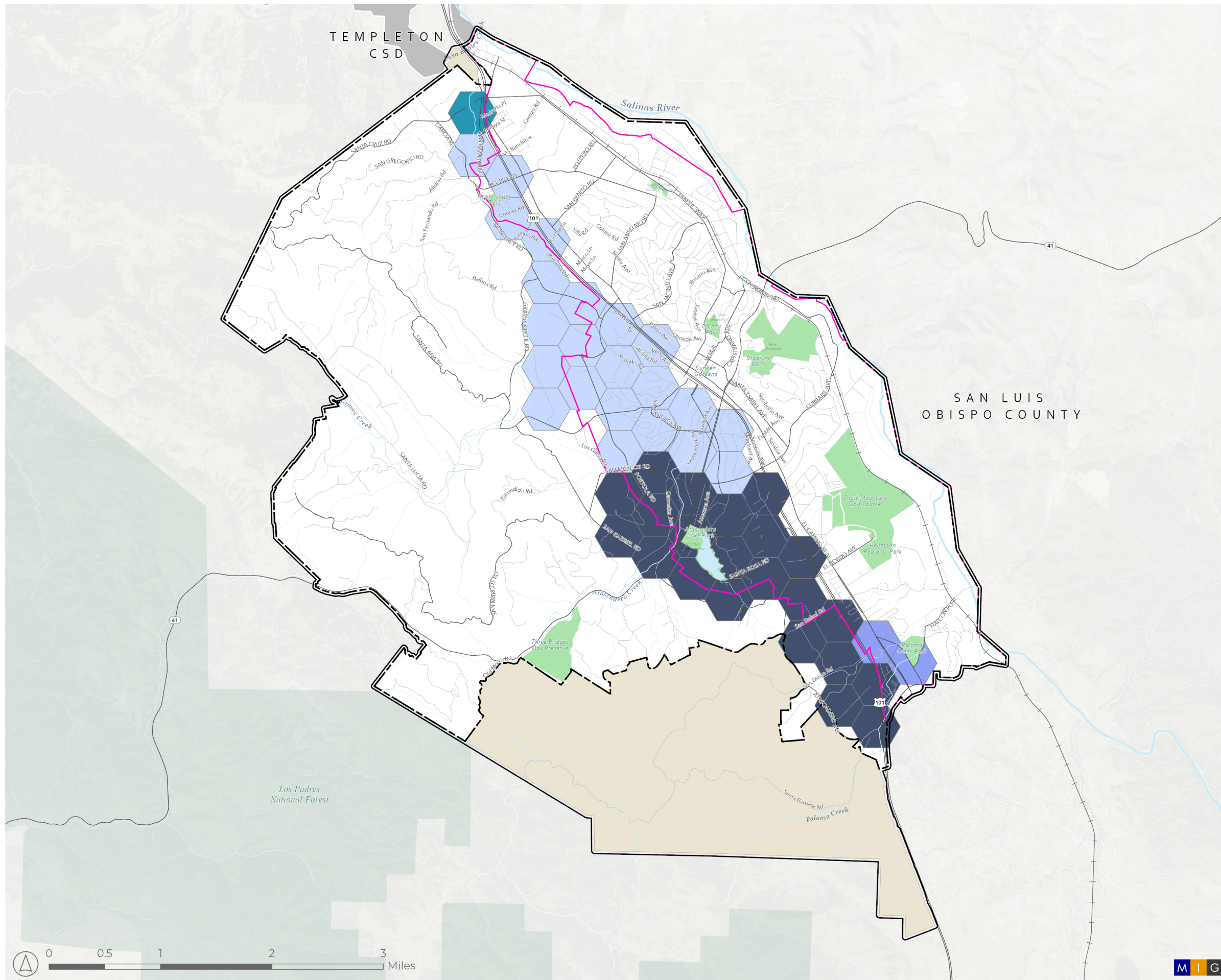
Figure 10-1:  
**Disadvantaged Communities**  
(SLOCOG)

**Basemap Features**

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

**Disadvantaged Communities Score**

- 120
- 125
- 140
- 160



Source(s):  
Esri, CA State Open Data, County of San Luis Obispo, City of Atascadero, 2024.



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## 10.4 Healthy Places Index

Developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California, the Healthy Places Index is a tool that assesses the overall health and well-being of communities. The index considers a wide range of factors that influence health outcomes, including socioeconomic status, environmental conditions, access to healthcare, education, housing quality, and other social determinants of health. The Healthy Places Index provides a comprehensive picture of community health by assigning scores to census tracts based on these various factors. Higher scores indicate healthier communities, while lower scores indicate areas that may be facing greater health challenges and disparities.

The City of Atascadero ranks in the 72<sup>nd</sup> percentile based on the 23 community characteristics that make up the HPI score compared to other cities in California. Atascadero ranks slightly below the SLO County average of 78.6 percent. SLO County percentile scores are based in comparison to other counties in California. **Table 10-5** highlights the HPI percentile scores for each policy area and indicator, comparing Atascadero to other SLO County cities and the region.

**Table 10-5: Regional Healthy Places Index Percentile Rankings**

HPI Policy Action Areas and Indicators	SLO County	Arroyo Grande	Atascadero	Paso Robles	Grover Beach	Morro Bay	Pismo Beach	San Luis Obispo
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>67.3</b>
Economic	75.0	76.7	73.7	62.7	62.1	61.2	83.7	46.0
Above Poverty	75.0	78.2	67.2	50.3	46.3	66.3	83.5	21.3
Employed	69.6	84.8	87.4	81.5	81.3	46.5	56.5	60.0
Per Capita Income	74.1	69.0	65.9	55.9	57.7	68.7	88.6	59.1
Education	73.2	79.7	36.3	43.3	52.6	87.5	93.1	79.0
Bachelor's Education or Higher	75.9	68.7	65.4	53.2	65.0	76.0	80.9	84.0
High School Enrollment	49.1	37.1	35.8	100.0	32.0	62.0	100.0	74.1
Preschool Enrollment	62.5	94.1	26.2	21.8	57.9	96.4	78.8	75.6
Social	83.9	90.8	85.1	72.4	67.1	72.3	50.9	73.7
2020 Census Response Rate	66.1	87.7	79.9	69.9	60.7	46.8	24.0	60.7
Voting	94.6	85.9	77.4	62.7	57.1	92.8	89.6	74.9
Transportation	80.4	38.5	57.5	42.2	75.2	36.1	81.3	94.3
Automobile Access	73.2	45.0	68.5	24.6	74.8	56.9	73.3	96.7
Active Commuting	83.9	46.4	42.5	62.9	52.1	37.3	72.4	19.5
Neighborhood	23.2	38.6	42.7	39.6	52.1	53.1	64.0	66.4
Park Access	37.5	52.4	38.2	54.2	85.3	88.5	88.2	91.7
Retail Density	51.8	80.0	59.3	72.2	77.8	64.9	94.4	92.4
Tree Canopy	35.7	42.6	65.7	44.0	22.6	29.1	29.7	41.1

HPI Policy Action Areas and Indicators	SLO County	Arroyo Grande	Atascadero	Paso Robles	Grover Beach	Morro Bay	Pismo Beach	San Luis Obispo
Housing	80.4	83.2	74.8	69.8	28.9	40.6	61.3	12.2
Homeownership	53.4	53.0	43.5	33.4	22.4	36.3	45.9	9.5
Housing Habitability	41.1	71.7	35.5	83.3	25.4	32.2	63.2	17.4
Low-Income Homeowner Severe Housing Cost Burden	44.6	81.2	41.6	42.0	80.0	44.4	14.4	77.9
Low-Income Renter Severe Housing Cost Burden	48.2	79.7	90.1	88.3	14.0	21.7	84.2	4.0
Uncrowded Housing	70.7	58.4	63.2	43.1	52.2	66.2	74.4	57.2
Clean Environment	60.7	57.0	84.4	67.8	69.2	82.2	71.1	64.0
Diesel PM	64.3	37.9	54.0	45.8	28.9	63.1	34.6	33.0
Drinking Water Contaminants	21.4	29.2	71.5	52.4	63.8	60.9	52.7	33.0
Ozone	75.0	83.8	73.9	63.4	83.6	89.8	86.2	86.8
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	67.9	56.4	84.8	74.4	53.5	69.1	62.2	64.1
Healthcare Access	64.3	61.1	54.0	16.0	22.0	53.6	57.2	73.7
Insured Adults	67.2	56.9	51.8	20.1	25.7	51.9	48.1	67.0

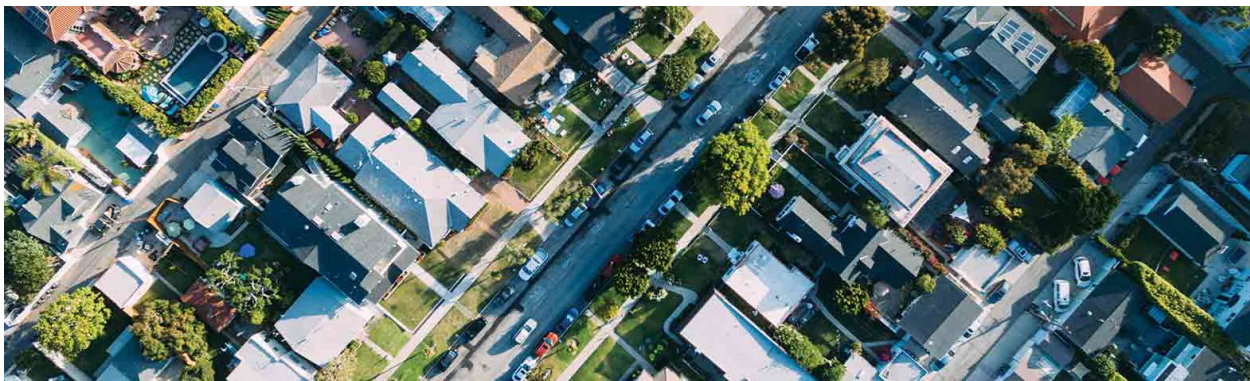
Source(s): Healthy Places Index 3.0, 2022.

Atascadero scored lower than SLO County by 10 percentile points or more in the following policy action areas:

- Education
- Transportation
- Healthcare Access

Atascadero scored higher than SLO County by 10 percentile points or more in the following policy action areas:

- Neighborhood
- Clean Environment



Atascadero scored highest in the following individual HPI indicators (see **Table 10-6**) when compared to other SLO County cities, indicating areas of strength.

**Table 10-6: Highest Ranking HPI Indicators in Atascadero**

HPI INDICATORS	CONNECTION TO HEALTH
<b>ECONOMIC</b> <b>Employed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77.7 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds who are employed</li> </ul>	<p>Every household should be able to afford the necessities of a healthy life—medical care, healthy food, quality housing, education, and other basics. Stable employment allows people to afford the goods and services that are necessary for good health. Research indicates that economic opportunity, especially having a job, is one of the most powerful predictors of good health, and that impacts on health are especially pronounced for people in or near poverty.</p>
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD</b> <b>Tree Canopy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13.3 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of land with tree canopy (weighted by number of people per acre)</li> </ul>	<p>Everybody should have trees and other plant life near their home. Trees are beneficial for mental and physical health in many ways. They can provide shade and cool surrounding areas, reduce stress, and promote health, wellness and physical activity. Trees are essential to mitigate the effects of climate change, especially extreme heat events.</p>
<b>HOUSING</b> <b>Severe Housing Cost Burden (Homeowner)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.5 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of low-income homeowner households who pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs</li> </ul>	<p>All residents should be able to afford adequate housing without giving up healthy food, medical care, or other necessities, or accepting unsafe housing conditions. High housing costs and housing instability are associated with increased stress and depression, communicable diseases like tuberculosis, and decreased children’s wellbeing and educational outcomes.</p>
<b>CLEAN ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>Ozone</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0.0425 ppm</li> <li>This indicator measures the average amount of ozone (often called smog) in the air during the most polluted 8 hours of summer days</li> </ul>	<p>Everyone should be able to live in neighborhoods where it is safe to breathe. When ozone levels in the air are high, it can cause lung inflammation and more serious respiratory issues. Prolonged exposure to high ozone levels can increase the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, poor birth outcomes, and premature death.</p>

Source(s): Healthy Places Index 3.0, 2022.

Atascadero scored the lowest or second lowest in the following individual HPI indicators (see **Table 10-7**) when compared to other SLO County cities, indicating areas of improvement.

**Table 10-7: Lowest Ranking HPI Indicators in Atascadero**

HPI INDICATORS	CONNECTION TO HEALTH
<b>EDUCATION</b> <b>High School Enrollment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>96.2 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of 15- to 17-year-olds enrolled in high school</li> </ul> <b>Preschool Enrollment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35.7 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool</li> </ul>	<p>Every school-age youth should have educational opportunities that prepare them for higher education, a career and the future of their choice. Education is linked to increased life expectancy and reduced chronic disease rates, infant mortality and other negative health outcomes.</p> <p>Every child should have the chance to learn, grow, and thrive. Early childhood is a crucial period for brain development, shaping nearly every aspect of one's future health and wellbeing. Quality preschool is important for healthy development, and has been associated with lifelong educational, economic and health benefits.</p>
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD</b> <b>Park Access</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50.6 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of the population living within a half mile of a park, beach, or open space (larger than 1 acre)</li> </ul> <b>Retail Density</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.85 jobs per acre</li> <li>This indicator measures the number of retail, entertainment, and education jobs per acre</li> </ul>	<p>Everybody should have access to parks and other open spaces near their home. Parks can encourage physical activity, reduce chronic diseases, improve mental health, foster community connections, and support community resilience to climate change and pollution.</p> <p>Everybody should have access to jobs, schools, shops and other essential goods and services which can impact one's health and quality of life. Living in a community with a mix of uses and destinations can improve health by reducing household costs, encouraging physical activity, reducing chronic diseases, improving mental health, fostering community connections and supporting community resilience to climate change and pollution.</p>
<b>HOUSING</b> <b>Severe Housing Cost Burden (Renter)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12.8 percent</li> <li>This indicator measures the percentage of low-income renter households who pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs</li> </ul>	<p>All residents should be able to afford adequate housing without giving up healthy food, medical care, or other necessities, or accepting unsafe housing conditions. High housing costs and housing instability are associated with increased stress and depression, communicable diseases like tuberculosis, and decreased children's wellbeing and educational outcomes.</p>

HPI INDICATORS	CONNECTION TO HEALTH
<b>CLEAN ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>Drinking Water Contaminants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 346 index score</li><li>• This indicator is a CalEPA index score combining information about 13 contaminants and 2 types of water quality violations found during drinking water sample testing</li></ul> <b>Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6.17 µg/m<sup>3</sup></li><li>• This indicator measures the annual average amount of fine particulate matter concentration in micrograms/meter<sup>3</sup></li></ul>	<p>Everyone should have access to safe and affordable drinking water. Water is essential for life. While most drinking water in California meets health and safety standards, some drinking water is contaminated by bacteria and chemicals. Contaminated drinking water disproportionately impacts communities of color, low-income communities and rural areas in the state.</p> <p>Everyone should be able to live in neighborhoods where it is safe to breathe. Since fine particulate matter is so small, it can reach deep into people's lungs, increasing the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, poor birth outcomes, and premature death.</p>

Source(s): Healthy Places Index 3.0, 2022.

## 10.5 SLO County Health Improvement Plan Priorities

In April 2024, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department released a five-year Community Health Improvement Plan. The plan was developed by SLO Health Counts, a collaborative of community members, nonprofits, government agencies, cities, schools, and leaders in SLO County working together toward the shared goal of a healthy, thriving community. It is based on analysis of the Community Health Assessment released in August 2023, which brings together information from primary local sources, multiple state-level data sets and the results of a countywide survey with more than 3,790 responses from residents.

The plan examines key drivers of health unique to SLO County and identifies targeted interventions to improve community well-being over time. Priorities over the next five years include:

- **Healthy Neighborhoods**, including objectives that focus on access to affordable housing, enhanced food access, safe community spaces such as parks, resilience to the health impacts of climate change, and investment in bike and pedestrian safety.
- **Access to Care**, with a focus on recruiting and retaining healthcare providers on the Central Coast as well as expanding services in remote areas and for populations who have difficulty getting care.
- **Mental Health and Substance Use**, including reducing drug-related deaths and suicide deaths, and connecting more teens and parents with mental health supports.<sup>3</sup>

### ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Access to affordable, healthy food is a critical component for health and well-being. Food insecurity is associated with malnutrition, particularly as it relates to inadequate consumption of nutritious foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Individuals living in food insecure households face more health challenges and are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and pulmonary disease.<sup>4</sup>

Establishments commonly known as supermarkets or grocery stores primarily engaged in the retail sale of an extensive variety of staple food items and other store merchandise.<sup>5</sup> Staple food categories fruits or vegetables; meat, poultry, or fish; dairy products; and breads or cereals. Atascadero has several grocery stores located along El Camino Real including:

- Grocery Outlet – 2100 El Camino Real
- Vons Supermarket – 7135 El Camino Real
- Harvest Natural Foods – 6985 San Luis Avenue
- Smart and Final Extra! – 8200 El Camino Real
- Food 4 Less – 8360 El Camino Real
- Valley Fresh Market – Approved (in 2022) to locate in the Del Rio Marketplace project.

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<sup>3</sup> SLO Health Counts, 2024

<sup>4</sup> Healthy People 2030

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2024

## ACCESS TO PARKS

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), more time spent in parks and green spaces can improve mental health, physical health, and social health. Safe and convenient access to parks, open space, quality recreation facilities, and programming is a critical way to increase these positive effects on health and quality of life.

An overview of the City of Atascadero's park system is included in **Chapter 7: Parks and Recreation**.

## ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Poverty and unemployment rates in Atascadero are lower than the regional average. Additionally, median household income in Atascadero is third highest in SLO County, all of which are indicators considered to have positive impacts on health outcomes. However, a large majority (approximately 80 percent) of employed Atascadero residents commute outside of the city for work.

Sectors in Atascadero that demonstrated the largest gains over the last five years include Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Construction, which have lower reported total annual wages than professional or health services jobs<sup>6</sup>. These trends emphasize the city's role as an integral part of the regional economy and highlight the opportunity for establishing more head of household jobs closer to home.

Additional economic information including employment and commute trends are included in **Chapter 3: Economic, Market, and Fiscal Conditions**.

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<sup>6</sup> CA Employment Development Department, 2022



## 10.6 Sources

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## 10.7 Acronyms and Key Terms

**CalEnviroScreen 4.0** A mapping tool that identifies California communities by census tract that are disproportionately burdened by, and vulnerable to, multiple sources of pollution.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** State law requiring governmental agencies to evaluate, disclose, and mitigate the environmental impacts of a proposed project.

**California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)** A CalEPA agency that evaluates the risk posed by environmental contaminants.

**Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)** A geographic area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pursuant to SB 535 that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards.

**Environmental Justice** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of planning and environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** The United States agency charged with setting policy and guidelines and carrying out legal mandated for the protection of national interests in environmental resources.

**Fine particulate matter (or PM<sub>2.5</sub>)** Technical term for very small particles from vehicle tailpipes, tires and brakes, power plants, factories, burning wood, construction dust, and many other sources. These particles are 30 times smaller than a human hair, or 2.5 micrometers.

**Healthy Places Index (HPI)** A data and policy platform developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California created to advance health equity.

**San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)** Association of local governments in San Luis Obispo County, which is made up of seven cities (Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo) and the County of San Luis Obispo. SLOCOG's prime responsibilities include transportation planning and funding for the region, while also serving as a forum for the study and resolution of regional issues.

**Severely Cost Burdened** A household that pays more than 50% of their income on housing is considered "severely cost burdened," meaning they are paying much more than they can likely afford. A high proportion of cost burdened households can suggest high housing costs, low incomes, or both.

# 10.8 Appendix A: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

Per Senate Bill (SB) 1000, all census tracts with CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (CES 4.0) scores in the percentile range between 75 to 100 are considered disadvantaged communities. Additionally, census tracts previously identified in the top 25 percent in CalEnviroScreen 3.0, and Federally-recognized tribal areas as identified by the Census in the 2021 American Indian Areas Related National Geodatabase.

**Figure 10-A1** through **Figure 10-A3** show CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Overall Percentile Scores, Pollution Burden Percentile Scores, and Population Characteristics Percentile Scores by census tract in Atascadero.

## Atascadero Scoring and Results

### Overall Percentile Scores

The overall percentile scores for Atascadero census tracts range from 5.61 to 19.47. Low scores indicate that an area experiences a lower pollution burden than areas with high scores. **Table 10-A1** and **Figure 10-A1** depict the overall percentile scores for census tracts in Atascadero.

Table 10-A1: City of Atascadero Overall Percentile Scores

Percentiles and Indicators	Census Tracts								
	6079012503	6079012502	6079012900	6079013000	6079012600	6079012702	6079012704	6079012505	6079012800
Overall Score	19.47	14.71	13.67	12.44	10.48	9.14	5.98	5.61	N/A
Pollution Burden	21.01	16.39	28.60	29.71	24.75	39.14	11.19	7.64	6.77
Population Characteristics	22.21	18.13	11.31	9.75	9.08	5.16	7.55	8.83	N/A

Percentile Scoring Color Coding									
0 - 10	10 - 20	20 - 30	30 -40	40 - 50	50 - 60	60 - 70	70 -80	80 -90	90 – 100

Source(s): CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2024.

## Pollution Burden Scores

Pollution burden represents the potential exposure to pollutants and the adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution. Atascadero's pollution burden scores for individual indicators range from 0.00 to 95.37. Six out of the nine census tracts in Atascadero fall into the top 25 percentile for at least one pollution burden indicator, yet the overall scores remain low. Those individual indicators include solid waste, impure water bodies, and groundwater threats. **Table 10-A2** and **Figure 10-A2** depict the pollution burden percentile scores for census tracts in Atascadero.

**Table 10-A2: City of Atascadero Pollution Burden Indicators Percentile Scores**

Percentiles and Indicators	Census Tracts								
	6079012503	6079012502	6079012900	6079013000	6079012600	6079012702	6079012704	6079012505	6079012800
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>21.01</b>	<b>16.39</b>	<b>28.60</b>	<b>29.71</b>	<b>24.75</b>	<b>39.14</b>	<b>11.19</b>	<b>7.64</b>	<b>6.77</b>
Ozone	26.70	32.15	42.59	20.88	26.70	60.00	26.73	32.15	29.89
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	4.49	2.94	4.84	5.48	3.83	4.70	4.19	3.50	4.95
Diesel PM	26.25	12.67	11.74	3.19	23.86	2.29	7.27	24.26	12.10
Drinking Water	31.29	31.29	69.08	43.81	31.29	61.72	64.19	31.29	55.86
Lead	27.42	44.51	32.77	21.15	43.50	40.50	5.77	36.90	N/A
Pesticides	59.17	45.00	62.86	58.76	34.59	73.28	58.45	44.00	46.69
Toxic Release	11.78	12.45	13.93	10.49	11.94	48.94	14.95	13.69	11.67
Traffic	60.73	30.61	4.48	8.14	67.16	3.88	35.15	49.56	26.78
Cleanup Sites	0.00	0.00	0.00	31.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Groundwater Threats	0.00	0.00	69.58	57.10	0.00	82.90	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hazardous Waste	50.14	50.14	3.64	39.77	65.92	1.80	16.64	19.25	16.64
Impure Water Bodies	33.16	51.22	51.22	91.87	51.22	82.97	51.22	51.22	33.16
Solid Waste	79.95	75.67	95.37	93.65	77.62	42.50	59.18	0.00	35.72

### Percentile Scoring Color Coding

0 - 10	10 - 20	20 - 30	30 - 40	40 - 50	50 - 60	60 - 70	70 - 80	80 - 90	90 - 100
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Source(s): CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2024.

Pollution burden indicators above 75, at the top 25 percent of the State census tracts, that apply to Atascadero census tracts are noted and described below.

- Pesticides:** The southernmost census tract in Atascadero has the highest pesticide use in Atascadero, with a percentile score of 73. This is a large rural census tract that spans both west and east of Highway 101 in Atascadero, encompassing Santa Margarita and east toward the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The selected pesticides with the highest use in this tract are 1) potassium n-methyldithiocarbamate, 2) 1,3-dichloropropene, 3) dimethenamid-p, 4) linuron, and 5) 2,4-d, dimethylamine salt.

- **Groundwater Threats:** The Groundwater Threats indicator is calculated by considering the number of groundwater cleanup sites, the weight of each site, and the distance to the census tract. The westernmost census tract in Atascadero ranks in the 70 – 80<sup>th</sup> percentile and has three groundwater threat sites. The southernmost census tract in Atascadero ranks in the 80 – 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and has three groundwater threat sites near Atascadero (with seven groundwater threat sites in total).
- **Impure Water Bodies:** Impaired Water Bodies are bodies of water contaminated by pollutants. All census tracts in Atascadero, besides the census tract that encompasses Downtown Atascadero, rank above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in terms of impaired water bodies. The westernmost census tract that only has a small portion that falls into Atascadero's Urban Reserve Line has the highest ranking, in the 90 – 100<sup>th</sup> percentile. The southernmost census tract in Atascadero has the next highest score, ranking in the 80 – 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, and has ten impairments. This census tract is a large rural census tract that extends eastward. The Salinas River and Atascadero Creek are labeled as impaired water bodies.
- **Solid Waste:** Solid waste facilities are where household garbage and other kinds of waste are collected, processed, and stored, and include landfills and composting or recycling facilities. Atascadero has three solid waste facilities within the city boundaries. The highest-ranking scores for this indicator include the westernmost census tract which only has a small portion falling into Atascadero's Urban Reserve Line, and the easternmost census tract with a sliver of the census tract running along the eastern edge of Atascadero's city Limits, with scores in the 90 – 100<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Two other census tracts within Atascadero fall into the 70 – 80<sup>th</sup> percentile. These two census tracts are the same census tracts with high scores for the traffic impact indicator that are on both the west and east sides of Highway 101.

## Population Characteristics

Population characteristics represent physiological traits, health status, or community characteristics that can result in increased vulnerability to pollution. Atascadero ranks low in overall population characteristics scores, with scores ranging from 5.16 to 22.21. Individual indicators also remain relatively low, ranging from 0.00 to 58.95. There is one outlier, census tract 6079012800 ranks in the top 90-100<sup>th</sup> percentile in the poverty indicator. **Table 10-A3** and **Figure 10-A3** depict the population characteristics percentile scores for census tracts in Atascadero.

**Table 10-A3: City of Atascadero Population Characteristic Indicators Percentile Scores**

Percentiles and Indicators	Census Tracts								
	6079012503	6079012502	6079012900	6079013000	6079012600	6079012702	6079012704	6079012505	6079012800
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>22.21</b>	<b>18.13</b>	<b>11.31</b>	<b>9.75</b>	<b>9.08</b>	<b>5.16</b>	<b>7.55</b>	<b>8.83</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Asthma	39.72	39.72	23.70	8.77	39.72	21.88	32.37	33.21	39.72
Low Birth Weight	50.19	15.87	52.54	26.64	11.51	17.98	19.00	35.60	N/A
Cardiovascular Disease	16.48	16.48	16.16	0.81	16.48	8.49	24.00	12.15	16.48
Education	22.22	30.41	22.22	30.03	10.81	12.55	17.25	36.90	N/A
Linguistic Isolation	21.42	29.53	0.00	58.95	0.00	0.92	10.45	0.00	N/A
Poverty	54.65	48.92	11.03	32.27	34.92	29.46	15.83	17.71	91.04
Unemployment	22.57	28.20	13.18	N/A	11.87	30.88	6.30	15.84	N/A
Housing	17.93	30.20	32.27	6.10	40.90	15.07	22.10	3.60	N/A

Percentile Scoring Color Coding									
0 - 10	10 - 20	20 - 30	30 - 40	40 - 50	50 - 60	60 - 70	70 - 80	80 - 90	90 - 100

Source(s): CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2024.

Population characteristics indicators above 75, at the top 25 percent of the State census tracts, that apply to Atascadero census tracts are noted and described below.

- Poverty:** The U.S. Census Bureau determines the Federal poverty level each year. The poverty level is based on the size of the household and the age of family members. If a person or family's total income before taxes is less than the poverty level, the person or family are considered in poverty. The poverty indicator measures the percentage of people in the census tract living below twice the Federal poverty level. The census tract on the eastern edge of the City Limit south of State Route 41 and just north of the southern City Limit has a poverty indicator ranking in the 91<sup>st</sup> percentile, it is to be noted, however, that this census tract only has 243 people living in it, which is far lower than any other census tract in the city. There are two other census tracts on the east side of Highway 101 that also have higher scores, the census tract adjacent to the census tract that falls into the 90 – 100<sup>th</sup> percentile has a score in the 50 – 60<sup>th</sup> percentile, and the census tract just north of that has a score falling in the 40 – 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

## Methodology

The scoring methodology for CalEnviroScreen 4.0 is described below:

- Each census tract receives scores for as many of the 21 indicators as possible. Some census tracts will not have scores for every one of the indicators.
- For each indicator, the scores are put in order from highest to lowest. This allows us to calculate a percentile for all areas that have a score.
- An average of the indicators that make up a component (Exposures, Environmental Effects, Sensitive Populations, Socioeconomic Factors) is first calculated.
- The Population Characteristics score for a census tract is the average Sensitive Populations and Socioeconomic Factors component for that census tract.
- The Pollution Burden score is the average of Environmental Effects and Exposures components, where the Environmental Effects component is weighted one-half because we consider Environmental Effects to make a smaller contribution to Pollution Burden than Exposures do.

To get the CalEnviroScreen score we multiply the Pollution Burden score by the Population Characteristics score.



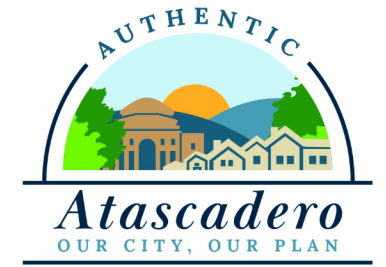

















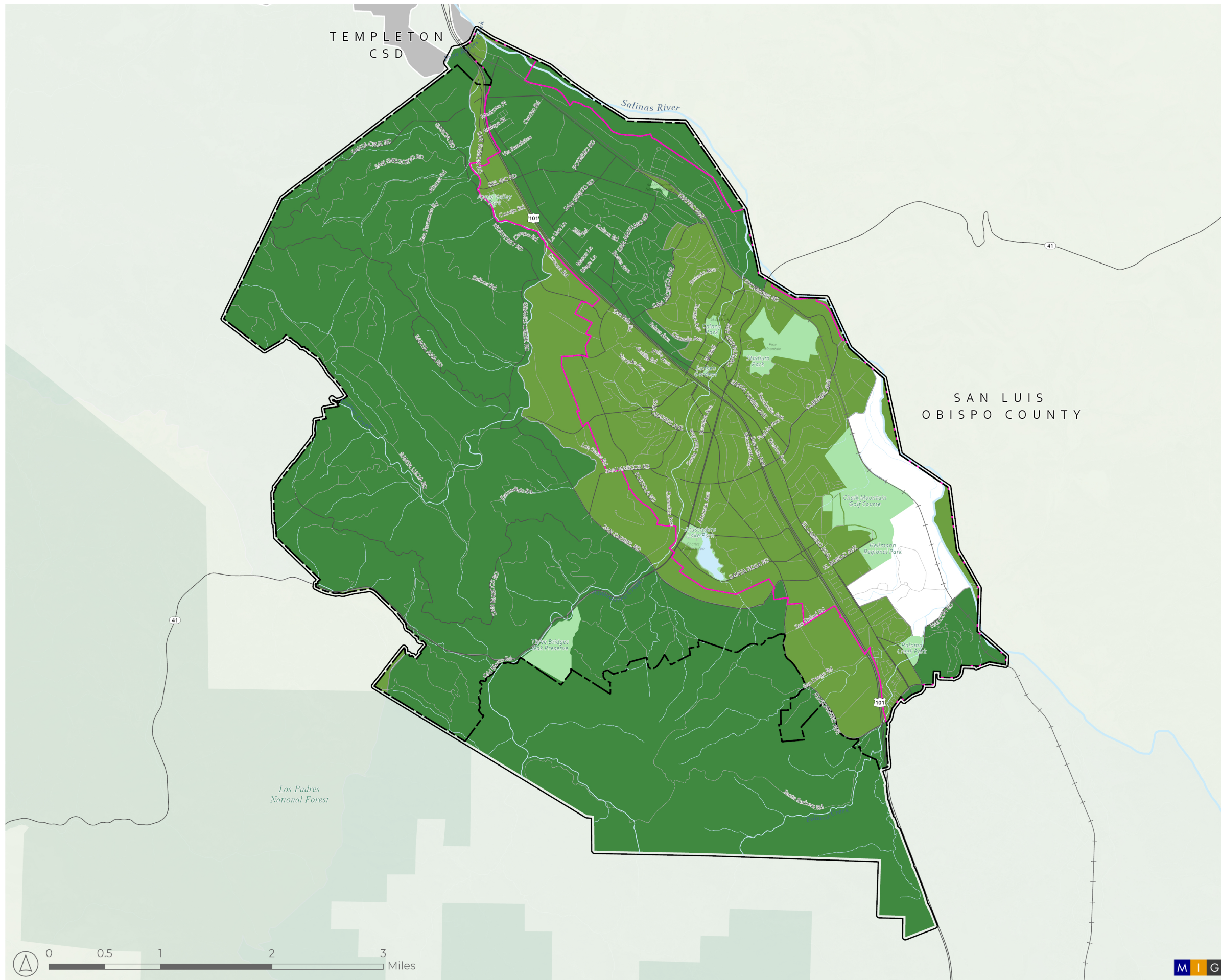
Figure 10-A1:  
**Overall Percentile Scores**  
(CalEnviroScreen)

**Basemap Features**

-  Atascadero Planning Area
-  Atascadero City Limit
-  Urban Services Line
-  Rivers + Waterbodies
-  Parks + Open Space

**CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Score**

-  > 90 - 100 (Highest Scores)
-  > 80 - 90
-  > 70 - 80
-  > 60 - 70
-  > 50 - 60
-  > 40 - 50
-  > 30 - 40
-  > 20 - 30
-  > 10 - 20
-  0 - 10 (Lowest Scores)



Source(s):  
Esri, CA State Open Data, County of San Luis Obispo, City of Atascadero, 2024.

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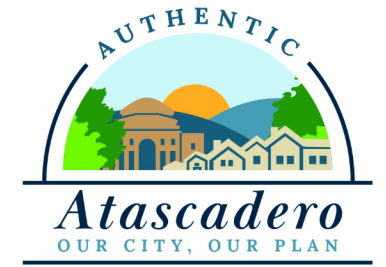
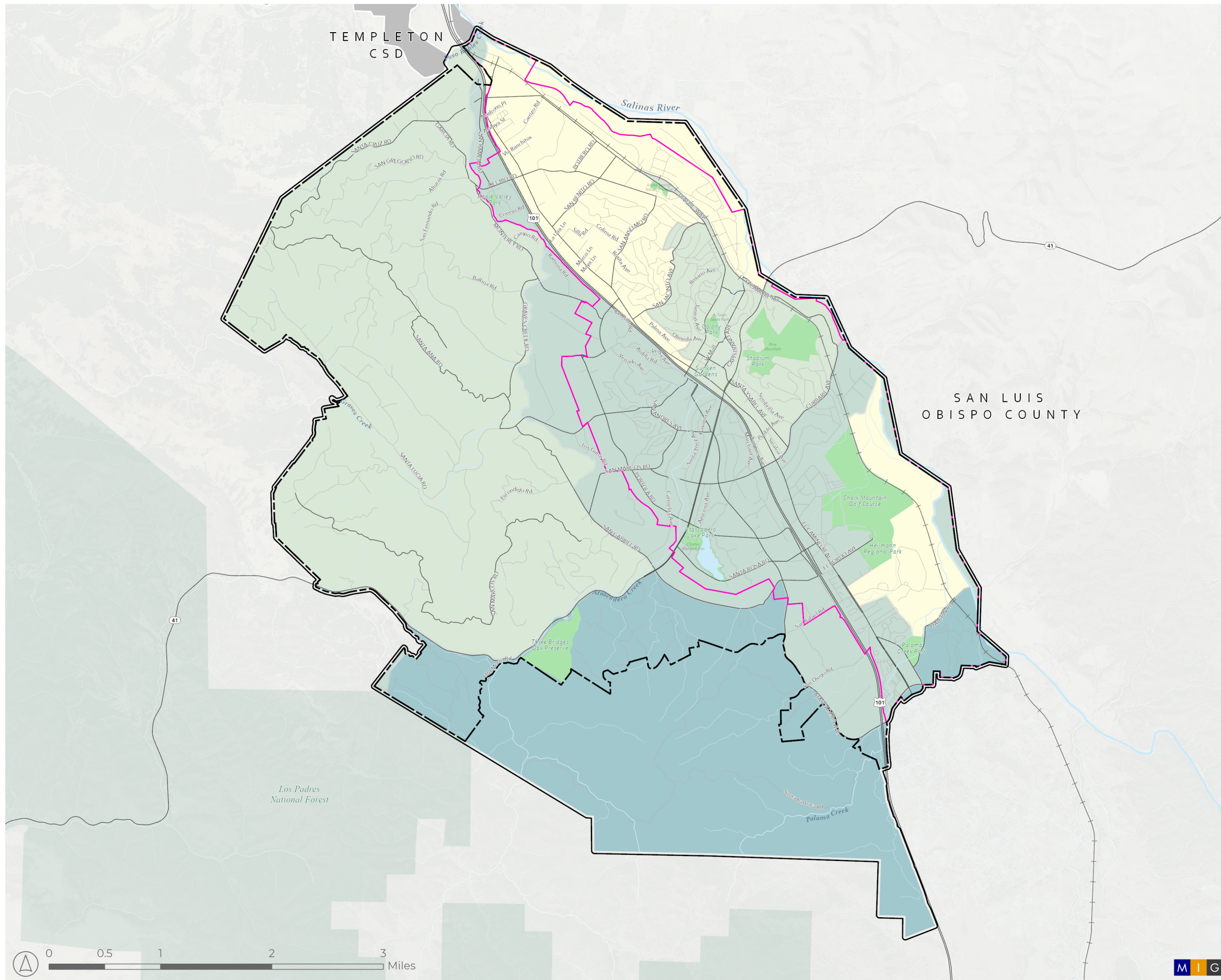


Figure 10-A2:  
**Pollution Burden**  
(CalEnviroScreen)



**Basemap Features**

- Atascadero Planning Area
- Atascadero City Limit
- Urban Services Line
- Rivers + Waterbodies
- Parks + Open Space

**CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Score**

- > 90 – 100 (Highest Scores)
- > 80 – 90
- > 70 – 80
- > 60 – 70
- > 50 – 60
- > 40 – 50
- > 30 – 40
- > 20 – 30
- > 10 – 20
- 0 – 10 (Lowest Scores)

Source(s):  
Esri, CA State Open Data, County of San Luis Obispo, City of Atascadero, 2024.





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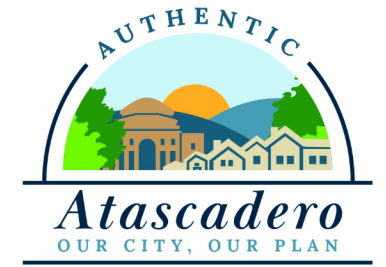

















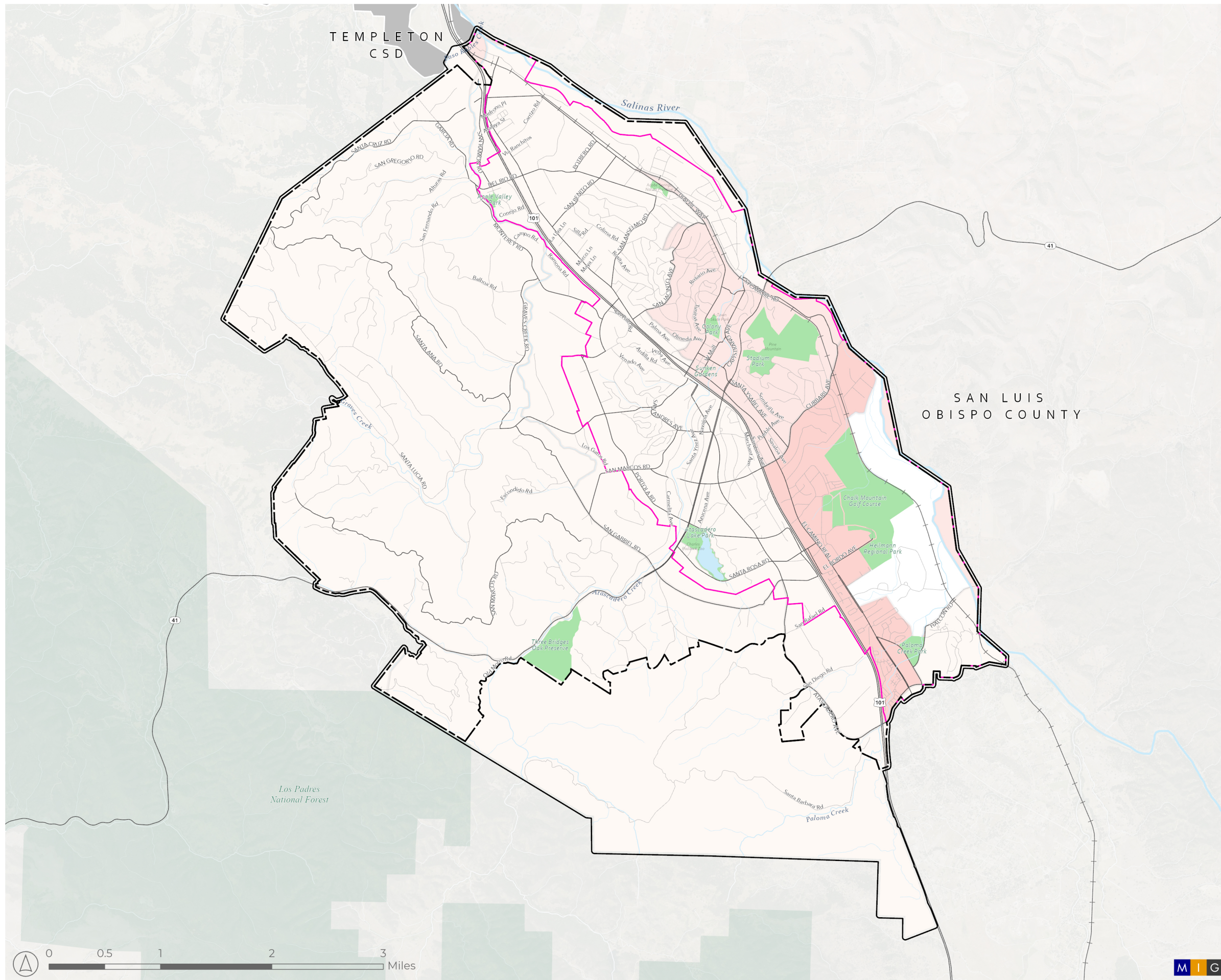
Figure 10-A3:  
**Population Characteristics**  
(CalEnviroScreen)

**Basemap Features**

-  Atascadero Planning Area
-  Atascadero City Limit
-  Urban Services Line
-  Rivers + Waterbodies
-  Parks + Open Space

**CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Score**

-  > 90 – 100 (Highest Scores)
-  > 80 – 90
-  > 70 – 80
-  > 60 – 70
-  > 50 – 60
-  > 40 – 50
-  > 30 – 40
-  > 20 – 30
-  > 10 – 20
-  0 – 10 (Lowest Scores)



Source(s):  
Esri, CA State Open Data, County of San Luis Obispo, City of Atascadero, 2024.





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