

CHAPTER 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project involves a comprehensive update to the current City of Atascadero (City) 2025 General Plan, which was adopted in 2002 and most recently amended in 2020 (City of Atascadero 2016) to reflect a 2045 horizon year (2045 General Plan Update). The project also includes updates to the Atascadero Municipal Code to ensure consistency with the 2045 General Plan Update (Zoning Code Update) to clarify existing standards and practices and incorporate current City policy (Zoning Code Update). This chapter of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides an overview of the Planning Area location and setting as well as the background, objectives, land use components, policies, and required approvals of the 2045 General Plan Update and subsequent Zoning Code Update (referred to herein collectively as the project or the 2045 General Plan and Zoning Code Update). This EIR evaluates the physical changes associated with community buildout anticipated to occur under the 2045 General Plan Update and Zoning Code Update, if adopted, as well as the physical effects that may result from the establishment and implementation of the goals and policies of the project.

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The City of Atascadero is in northern San Luis Obispo County, California, approximately 13 miles east of the Pacific Ocean (Figure 2-1). The project location—or Planning Area—encompasses all properties within the City of Atascadero incorporated City limits and its surrounding Sphere of Influence (SOI) (Figure 2-2). Atascadero is nestled between the Santa Lucia Mountains to the west and the Salinas River to the east. U.S. Route 101 (U.S. 101) bisects the City in a north-south alignment. California State Route 41 (SR 41) also bisects the City and provides east-west access for travelers to the Pacific Coast and California Central Valley. The City encompasses approximately 26 square miles of varied residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, park, and open space landscapes. The Planning Area, which includes the SOI, encompasses approximately 20,218 acres (32 square miles). The proposed General Plan goals, policies, and implementation programs would apply to land within City limits.

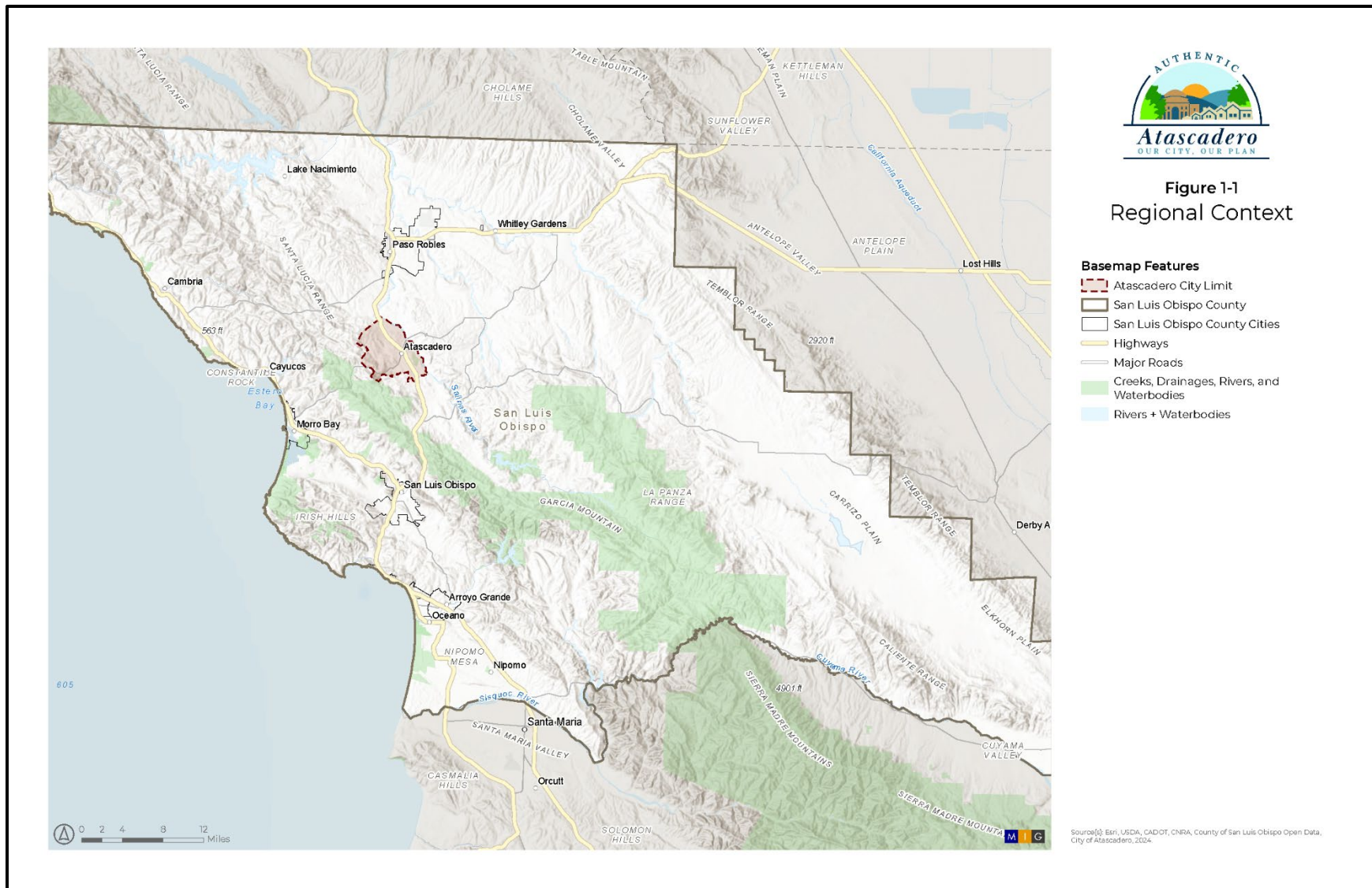
2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

A City's general plan is the primary policy document that lays out the overarching vision and policies for how a city will develop and function in the future. All elements of the general plan have equal legal status, which means that one policy does not supersede another policy. It also means that any optional element or topic a City includes in its general plan has the same legal status as required elements.

The current City General Plan, which is referred to as the 2025 General Plan, was adopted in 2002. Although there have been minor amendments, the 2025 General Plan has not been comprehensively updated since 2002. Therefore, shifts in demographics, land use, transportation, economics, community character, and the housing market warrant a comprehensive update. A changing economic and fiscal landscape, along with the need to supply additional workforce housing and head-of-household jobs, further supports the need to ensure the City's visions, goals, policies, and programs are current and adequately address community needs.

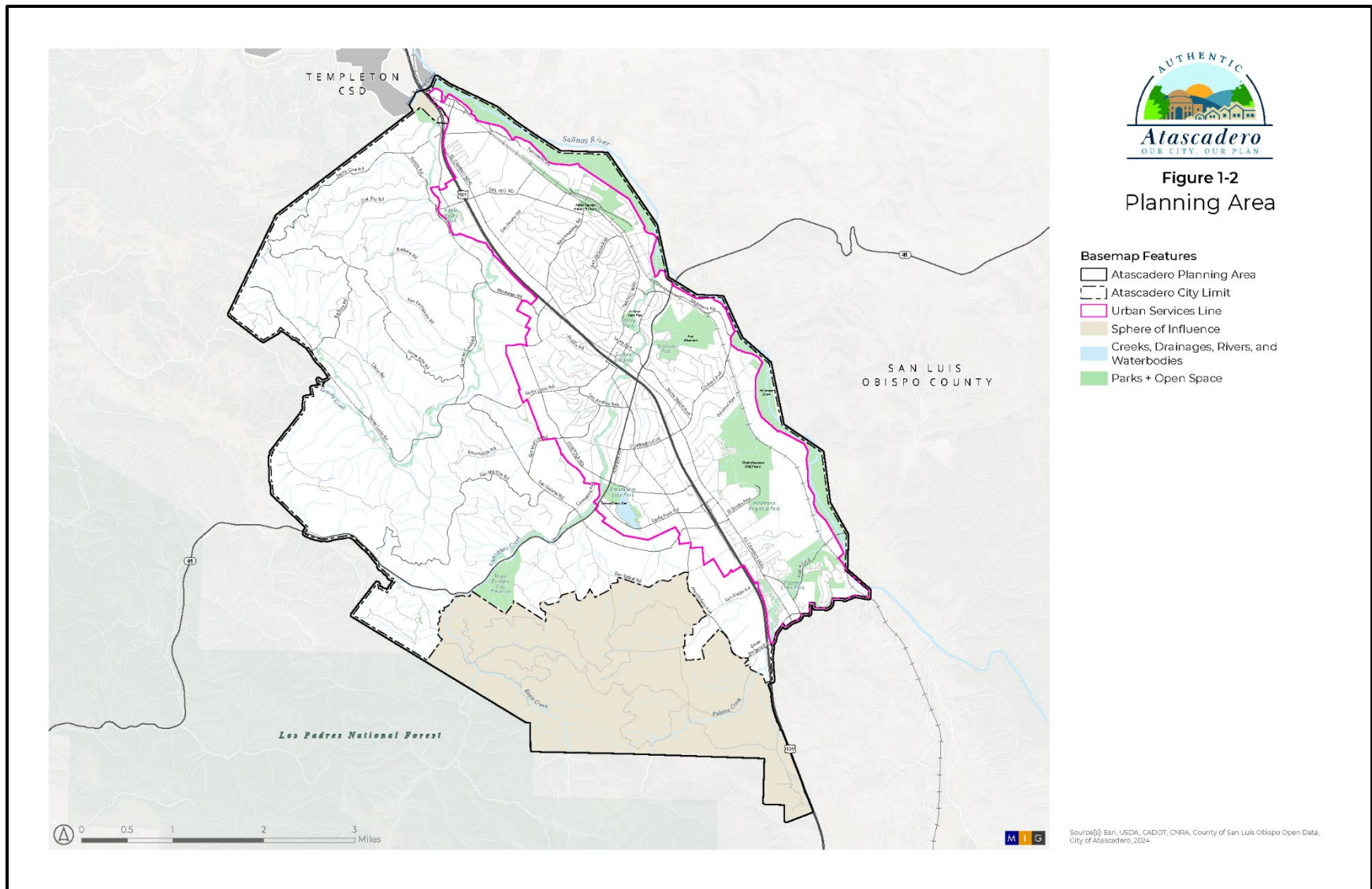
The General Plan Update process was initially authorized by the City Council in July 2021. The following is an overview of the General Plan Update phases:

- **Phase 1 – Scoping:** This phase included project process refinements and development of a community outreach strategy.
- **Phase 2 – Discovery:** This phase included development of the Existing Conditions Report, Vision, and Guiding Principles, and a range of community engagement meetings and activities to hear early feedback on the City's assets, challenges, and opportunities.



Source: City of Atascadero (2025).

Figure 2-1. City of Atascadero vicinity map.



Source: City of Atascadero (2025).

Figure 2-2. 2045 General Plan Update Planning Area.

- **Phase 3 – Exploring Alternatives:** This phase included the development of growth and policy alternatives for Atascadero’s future. This phase includes the selection of a draft land use map, projected population and growth estimates, and general policy direction.
- **Phase 4 – A Plan for Atascadero 2045:** This phase includes the development of the draft General Plan document and Draft EIR.
- **Phase 5 – Celebrating our Future:** This phase will include final outreach on the draft plan, creation of the final General Plan document and Final EIR.

The first three phases of this process have been completed, and preparation and finalization of this EIR are a part of Phase 4 and Phase 5.

The Zoning Code Update process was initially authorized by the City Council in September 2024 and is intended to implement the General Plan to maintain policy consistency. Updates to the Zoning Code are informed by the General Plan. Once the draft 2045 General Plan was circulated for public comment, the identification and update of Zoning Code standards commenced, and final adoption of Zoning Code amendments are expected to follow adoption of the General Plan. The code update focuses on reformatting Title 9 for readability and accessibility while incorporating and refining the new General Plan Placetypes as zoning districts.

2.3 PROJECT VISION STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The 2045 General Plan Update would be comprehensive and internally consistent, serving as the City’s top-level planning document to guide the City’s future growth and development. The Zoning Code Update will implement General Plan Placetypes and provide code consistency with this guiding document.

The Vision Statement serves as the foundation of the General Plan and reflects input from residents, local business and property owners, and elected and appointed officials. The statement expresses the vision for Atascadero, both as an end goal and as the lens through which long-term decisions will be made:

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.

The 2045 General Plan Update identifies a number of Guiding Principles that were developed based on the input of community members during initial engagement activities and the City Council’s strategic planning initiatives. The Guiding Principles both guided preparation of the 2045 General Plan Update and will be used by City staff and decision-makers when implementing the 2045 General Plan Update. For the purposes of this EIR, the Guiding Principles serve as the project objectives which are clearly identified in each chapter of this EIR (e.g., Chapter 5, *Alternatives Analysis*). The Guiding Principles include the following:

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.

2.4 GENERAL PLAN “BIG MOVES,” COMPONENTS, AND ORGANIZATION

2.4.1 2045 General Plan “Big Moves”

The 2045 General Plan process involved extensive community and decision-maker discussions regarding future growth and evolving community character. This engagement process informed the goals, policies, actions, and programs included in the 2045 General Plan Update. Each chapter of the General Plan discusses specific topics, but the overarching focus of the 2045 General Plan is a series of “Big Moves” identified by the community and City Council. These Big Moves represent key land use objectives and strategies that would help advance the Vision and Guiding Principles (defined above) and define how the community grows and evolves into the future. The 2045 General Plan Update Big Moves and the associated key policy considerations for each Big Move is provided below:

- **Big Move A: Create a Mix of Housing Types**
 - 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**
 - Encourage business investment through targeted regulatory incentives and infrastructure prioritization (on-site 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**
 - Enhance multimodal 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 multimodal improvements to enhance mobility options.
- **Big Move D: Address Public Infrastructure Needs**
 - 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**
 - 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.

2.4.2 General Plan Components

According to state law, general plans are required to cover nine topics: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, air quality, safety, and, if applicable, environmental justice. (Note: including environmental justice is only required when a city has a state-identified disadvantaged community, which Atascadero does not.) Jurisdictions may include any other topics that are relevant to planning its future and may address the required topics in conjunction with these other topics.

The 2025 General Plan contained the following elements:

- Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Element
- Circulation Element
- Safety and Noise Element
- Housing Element

The 2045 General Plan Update is a comprehensive update to the City’s General Plan and includes the following chapters, which incorporate all required State specified elements:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Vision and Guiding Principles
- Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Form Element
- Chapter 4: Economic Development Element
- Chapter 6: Mobility Element
- Chapter 7: Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element
- Chapter 8: Public Services and Infrastructure Element
- Chapter 9: Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element

The City Housing Element (Chapter 5) was adopted in 2020 and is valid until 2028. Accordingly, the Housing Element will not be included in the 2045 General Plan Update process.

2.4.2.1 Land Use and Community Form Element

The Land Use and Community Form Element would fulfill the State requirements for the Land Use Element and identifies policies to preserve and foster community character when exploring opportunities for growth. The 2045 General Plan Update would include a combination of new and refined land uses and updated land use designations referred to as “Placetypes.” Placetypes intend to create more clarity around the character of new development. Placetypes are similar to land use designations, as they set densities and intensities, but also include detail on the character of the various types of uses, including scale, design quality, and relationship to the street. Placetypes would be further refined by zoning districts, which provide more detailed distinction of allowed uses and development standards within each Placetype established in the 2045 General Plan Update (Figure 2-3). Placetypes, or updated land use designations, that would be included in the 2045 General Plan Update are as follows:

- **Rural Residential (0.1–1 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]):** This designation replaces the three existing rural residential designations and combines them into one. Rural Residential would be the prevalent Placetype outside of the Urban Services Line (USL). Within the USL, Rural Residential would be concentrated west of U.S. 101 and east of El Camino Real north of San Benito Road and east of the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor. Rural Residential neighborhoods would be well established and rural in nature. Development would be characterized by large lots (1.5–10+ acres) and large setbacks, single-unit detached homes, vacant land, and livestock.
- **Single-Family Residential (1–4 du/ac):** Single-Family Residential would be the prevalent Placetype within the USL but outside the urban core. This Placetype would act as a buffer between the Rural Residential Placetype and other, more intensive residential and commercial uses. Single-Family Residential neighborhoods would be well established and suburban in nature. Development would be characterized by medium to large lots (less than or equal to 1 acre) occupied by single-unit 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 allows opportunities for missing middle- and gentle-density style infill development.
- **Low Density Multi-Family (5–12 du/ac):** Low Density Multi-Family Placetypes would be concentrated in areas adjacent to more urban uses, and positioned between the Mixed Use and Single-Family Residential Placetypes. Low Density Multi-Family neighborhoods continue to grow in Atascadero, providing a mix of housing types and affordability. Development in this Placetype would be urban in nature and characterized by detached and attached multiunit development (cottage cluster, duplex, triplex, fourplex, multiplex with 5+ units).

- **Medium Density Multi-Family (13–24 du/ac):** Medium Density Multi-Family would be concentrated along major corridors, including El Camino Real, Morro Road, and Traffic Way in addition to adjacent corridors. This Placetype would act as a buffer between nonresidential and lower-density residential uses. Medium Density Multi-Family neighborhoods continue to grow in Atascadero, providing a mix of housing types and affordability. Development in this Placetype would be urban in nature and characterized by detached and attached multiunit development (duplex, triplex, fourplex, and multiplex with 5+ units).
- **High Density Multi-Family (25–36 du/ac):** High Density Multi-Family would be concentrated along the southern segment of El Camino Real, between Paloma Park and Santa Rosa Road. Additional High Density Multi-Family areas would be located near the Downtown core. This Placetype would be characterized by moderate residential building heights of a more urban character, including apartments and condominiums with shared entrances and open spaces. Lower-scale structures would typically be found in areas transitioning to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Transitions between Placetypes is established with development standards in the Zoning Code.
- **Mixed Use (20–36 du/acre):** The City’s current General Plan has a mixed-use designation; however, it was not put into action on the City’s adopted zoning map and specific development standards were never created. Instead, Mixed Use is conditionally allowed within the existing General Commercial designation when all residential units are above the ground floor. The Mixed Use Placetype would generally be concentrated near major intersections, as well as along El Camino Real and Morro Road between El Camino Real and Atascadero Lake Park. This Placetype is intended to promote a flexible and compatible mix of residential and commercial uses in focused areas. Commercial (office or retail) uses would dominate the frontage or ground floor of a mixed-use project, whereas office and residential uses would dominate the upper floors or buildings that are set back from a public street. Each area that would include the Mixed Use Placetype is unique. The composition and mix of permitted uses are established by zoning district in the Zoning Code. Development may allow for a horizontal or vertical mix of commercial and residential uses, as defined in the Zoning Code. This Placetype would be characterized by moderate-scale residential and commercial building heights that promote urban character. Buildings would be oriented toward the street to encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Downtown Mixed Use (20–45 du/ac):** The Downtown area is north of Morro Road and south of Rosario Avenue along El Camino Real, Traffic Way, and adjacent cross streets. Downtown Mixed Use would encourage an eclectic and complementary mix of uses, pedestrian-scale development, and locally owned businesses, such as retailers and restaurants, with upper-story residential and office units. Ground-floor uses would consist of businesses with a weekday, evening, and weekend presence. The Downtown Mixed Use Placetype would be characterized by moderate to high building heights to promote urban character. This district would have the highest density and building height of any district. Current residential density Downtown is 24 units per acre.
- **Commercial:** Commercial Placetypes would be 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 U.S. 101. Commercial uses would include retail, restaurants, office, tourist, and service businesses that serve both regional and local needs, with easy access to and from residential neighborhoods. Development would be 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.

- **Innovation/Flex:** Innovation/Flex would be concentrated along El Camino Real between Santa Cruz Road and San Anselmo Road, Morro Road and Curbaril, and Palomar and Principal Avenue. This Placetype is intended to promote opportunities for startup businesses and head-of-household jobs. This Placetype should attract concentrations of production, design, and maker-space businesses. Development would be 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 and would be 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 would not be permitted except in appropriate locations and limited quantities would be subject to discretionary review.
- **Industrial:** Industrial would be 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. Similar to the existing Industrial zones now in place along Traffic Way and Sycamore, this district would reflect the highest-intensity land uses that accommodate manufacturing and industrial land uses, with an emphasis on indoor and some outdoor land uses. Industrial uses would consist of moderate and heavy manufacturing, distribution, and vehicle-related uses. Development would consist of industrial buildings of various sizes, either as stand-alone businesses or as part of an integrated development.
- **Public/Quasi-Public:** Public/Quasi-Public parcels would be distributed throughout the City based on the location of existing facilities, mostly within the USL. Public/Quasi-Public parcels would be set aside for governmental or semipublic 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.
- **Conservation/Parks/Open Space:** Most of the land designated Conservation/Parks/Open Space would occur along the Salinas River and Atascadero and Graves Creeks. The Three Bridges Oak Preserve is the largest Conservation/Open Space area outside the USL. Stadium Park and Pine Mountain, located near Downtown, also provide significant open space. 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 (County). Similar to current designations, Conservation/Parks/Open Space land would accommodate both formal parks, and natural trail areas.
- **Agriculture (0.1–0.4 du/ac):** The Agriculture Placetype would apply to two areas in Atascadero, including 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). This Placetype would designate 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 would include single-unit 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.

The Land Use and Community Form Element identifies the following priorities:

- **Atascadero’s Authentic Character:** Atascadero is a unique place. The community values Atascadero’s special character, with a strong will to preserve these features while 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.

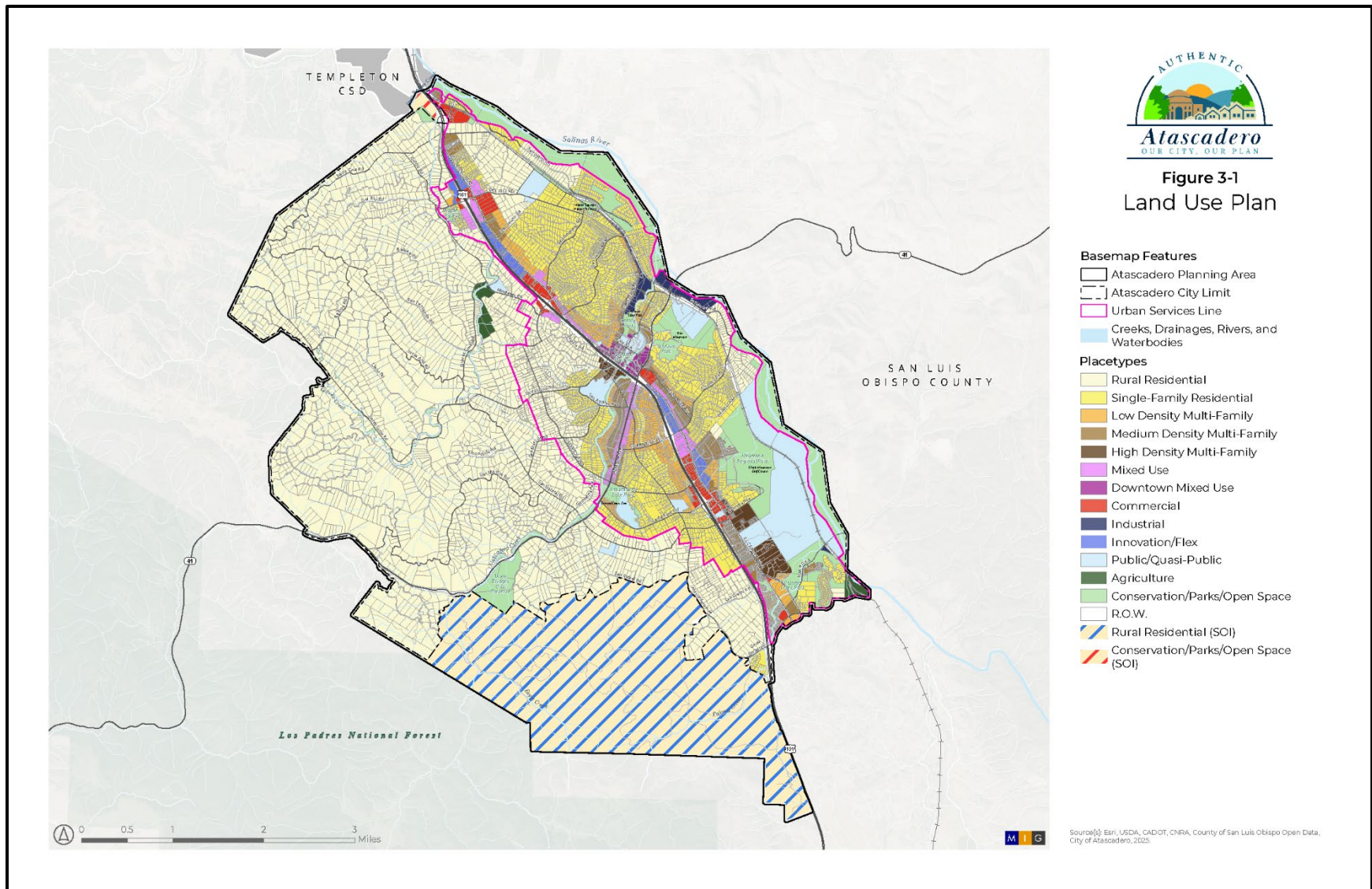
- **Rural Residential Focus:** Atascadero’s predominant land use, in terms of total acreage, consists of large lot homesites with a rural character, encompassing over 9,000 acres (just over 41% of the City). Most of these homesites lie west of U.S. 101, beyond the USL, and extend to the northern and southern edges of the City limits. Terrain and the absence of sewer service will continue to limit growth west of U.S. 101.
- **Commercial Corridors:** Commercial businesses extend over 7 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, multifamily, and accessory dwelling unit 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, whereas 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.

2.4.2.1.1 GENERAL PLAN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH PROJECTIONS

The 2045 General Plan Update includes City population and employment growth projections based on land capacity, ability to expand infrastructure, and the anticipated growth rates for both residential and commercial sectors based on multiple factors. These projections were used to make assumptions about anticipated infrastructure and service needs over the planning period.

The City has the land use authority to approve or revise assumed growth as part of the General Plan Update process. The City’s population as of 2024 was 29,365, with 1,318 group quarter residents at the Atascadero State Hospital, resulting in a total effective population of 30,683 for planning purposes, and the City’s forecasted population for the General Plan Update planning period (through 2045) is 37,279, reflecting an overall increase of 6,596 over the 20-year planning period. Similarly, the number of dwelling units is projected to increase from 12,660 in 2024 to 15,550 by 2045. Employment is expected to increase from 9,729 employees in 2024 to 12,914 employees in 2045, improving the City’s jobs/housing ratio from 0.77 to 0.83 (City of Atascadero 2025).

The growth rate assumptions for the plan year 2045 were developed by City staff based on historic City growth rates, anticipated trends, State housing goals, and input from members of the City Council.



Source: City of Atascadero 2025.

Figure 2-3. Proposed land use map.

2.4.2.2 Economic Development Element

In previous General Plan planning processes, the City addressed its economic development goals within the context of land use planning. The 2045 General Plan would elevate the discussion of economic development by dedicating a stand-alone element that would highlight specific goals, policies, and strategies that would be pursued to diversify the City’s economic base and expand employment opportunities by attracting new business and supporting existing businesses.

The Economic Development Element identifies the following priorities:

- **City Revenue Sources:** The City’s main general fund revenue sources in 2022 were property taxes (36.9%), sales taxes (33.6%), and transient occupancy taxes (4.2%). Combined, all types of taxes accounted for roughly 82.6% of the City’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%, limiting the ability to expand service levels or invest in new/upgraded infrastructure. When adjusted for inflation, the City’s General Fund revenues (excluding Measure D-20) increased 2.0 percent per year, or 34.2 percent since FY 2007/08, slightly below inflation during the same period, resulting in a decrease in per capita revenues in constant dollar terms during the 15-year period. 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—such as 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 to providing, not overextending resources on, a sprawling infrastructure network and helps the City avoid costly overexpansion.
- **Visitor Activity Growth:** Visitor activity in Atascadero and surrounding communities and the general draw of the Central Coast contribute to vibrancy and generate revenue from overnight hotel stays and restaurant and retail spending that is critical to the City’s fiscal health. Reported hotel data in 2022 indicated high occupancy rates and strong upward pressure on achievable room rates. However, Atascadero saw a decline in occupancy in the 2024-2025 fiscal year due to market saturation of new hotels in surrounding communities and the decline of the wine industry. Moving forward, the City will work to attract a range of hotel types with a focus on experience-based models, allowing for a diversity in price points and the ability to capture more visitors, which can be paired with initiatives to create places people want to visit and experience throughout the City—and for longer time periods. The Central Coast offers unparalleled weather, scenery, and outdoor recreation opportunities, and those visitors need places to eat, and shop, and stay.
- **Business Attraction, Retention, and Growth:** Supporting local businesses and attracting desired new businesses are important components of a general plan. An increase in employment-supporting uses that draw head-of-household jobs allows opportunities for more employment that directly serves residents—while 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 deficit 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 keeping an eye on sustainable long-term infrastructure maintenance.

2.4.2.3 Mobility Element

The Mobility Element would fulfill state requirements for the Circulation Element and would outline policies to balance all modes of transportation throughout Atascadero, with an emphasis on multimodal transportation along major corridors, strategies to improve circulation at key intersections and freeway overpasses, and opportunities for expanded bicycle routes and pedestrian connections and trails.

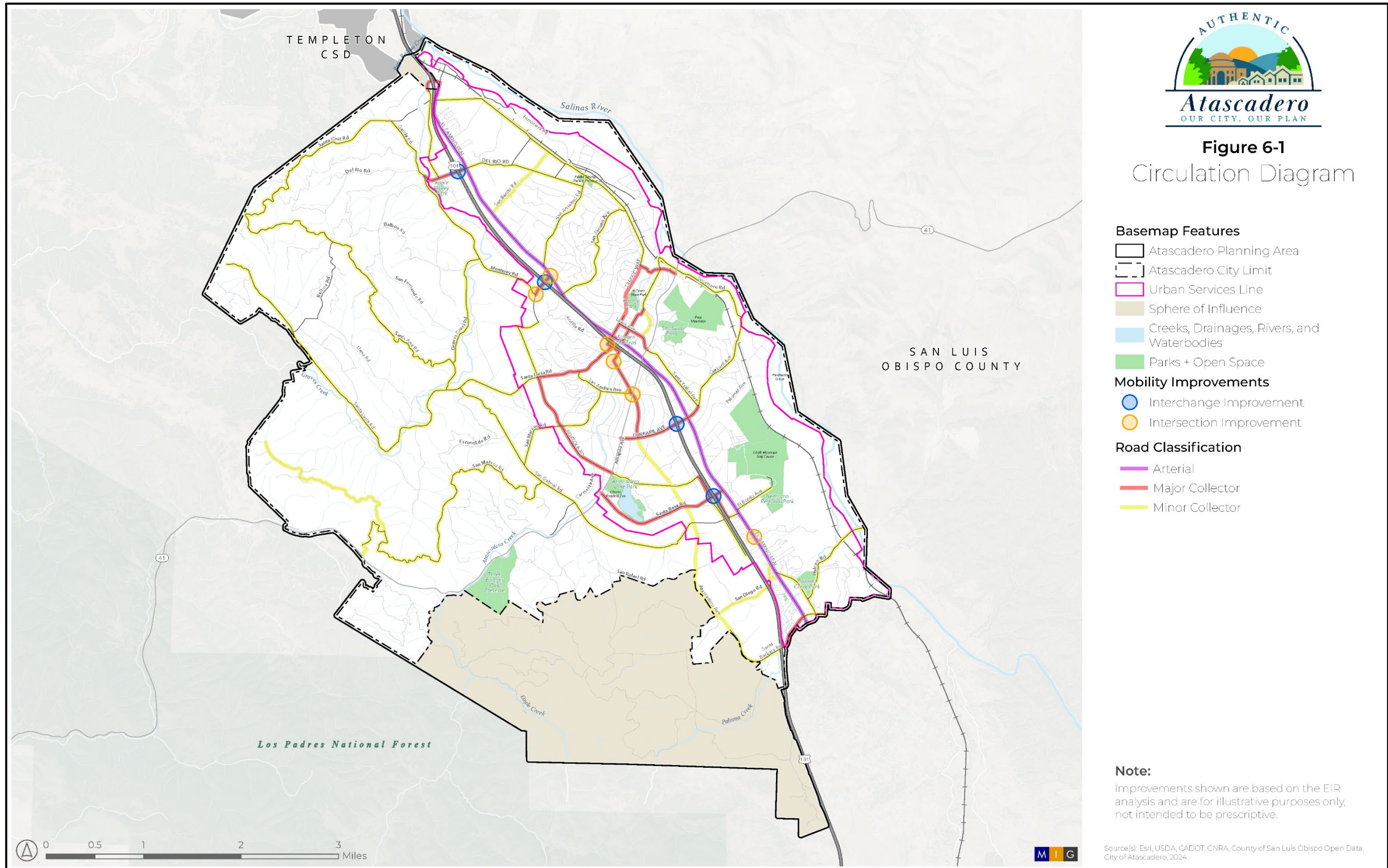
A key goal of the 2045 General Plan Mobility Element is to improve these connections and capitalize on opportunities for safe and efficient multimodal use. To support Atascadero's mobility needs today and well into the future, the Mobility Element identifies the following priorities:

- **Impacts of U.S. 101:** The freeway bisects Atascadero and limits east-west access. Of the eight freeway interchanges, most were constructed in the late 1950s 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 the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).
- **Transit:** Atascadero is served by a fixed-route bus transit service along the El Camino Real corridor through the San Luis Obispo 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 infrequent bus service, which hinders residents' ability to fully rely on public transit. SLO RTA also provides dial-a-ride services.
- **Bicycle Mobility:** Atascadero's climate, east-side 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% versus 3.1%) due to a limited and incomplete bicycle network and a rural street system with significant topography. With a growing interest in outdoor recreation and the desire to support 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% of local commute trips are made by walking, substantially higher than the statewide average of 2.7%. 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, sidewalk gaps, 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/SR 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 uses several funding sources to maintain its extensive roadway network, including local, state, and federal funding measures (including the City’s General Fund), Senate Bill (SB-1) (Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program), and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) local transportation funds. Voters approved a 0.5% 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 canceled by voters and is projected to generate \$3 million annually. SLOCOG is pursuing a similar 0.5% sales tax measure for the 2026 election.
- **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 U.S. 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 vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Historically, the City considered level of service (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 multimodal connectivity and safety are higher priorities than reducing vehicle delay.

The City requires project applicants to submit traffic information to evaluate VMT, 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.

The Mobility Element classifies roadways based on their intended function and projected traffic levels, which determine the appropriate type of design and number of lanes for the route. The different classes of roads proposed under the 2045 General Plan are shown in Figure 2-4 and described in Table 2-1.



Source: City of Atascadero 2025.

Figure 2-4. 2045 General Plan Update circulation diagram.

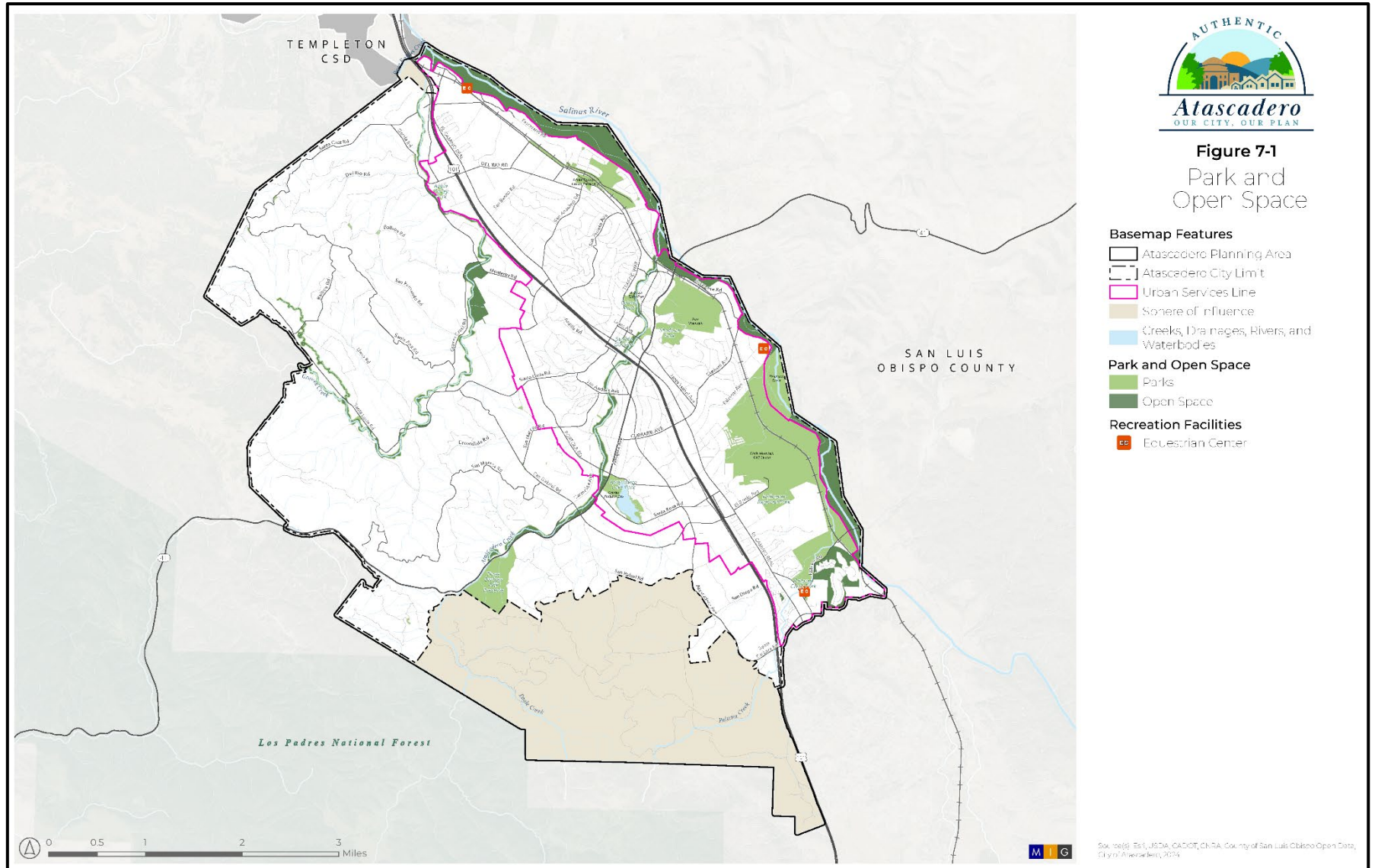
Table 2-1. 2045 General Plan Roadway Classifications

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 near schools should be enhanced to provide Safe Routes to School for pedestrians and bicyclists. Arterial street rights-of-way (ROWs) typically range from 80–100 feet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Camino Real • Morro Road (SR 41) • Atascadero Avenue • Halcon Road • Portola Road • Santa Barbara Road • Santa Rosa Road • Traffic Way Portions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curbaril Avenue • Del Rio Road • San Anselmo Road • Santa Cruz Road • Santa Lucia Avenue
Collector Streets	<p>Collector streets channel traffic from residential or commercial areas to arterials. Residential, office and commercial, 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 street ROWs typically range from 40–60 feet.</p> <p>Collectors are divided into two categories, depending on the area and type of topography.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban collectors serve commercial and higher-density areas. Urban roads generally provide on-street parking, as well as sidewalks and bike lanes. • 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 multiuse pathways to provide multimodal connections to other destinations. 	See Figure 2-4 (City of Atascadero 2025)
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 street ROWs typically range from 36–40 feet.	See Figure 2-4 (City of Atascadero 2025)

2.4.2.4 Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element

The Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element would fulfill the State requirement for the Conservation and Open Space Elements. The 2045 General Plan Update makes recreation, open space, and natural resources a central focus by introducing strategies to conserve Atascadero’s diverse natural habitats, including oak woodlands, chaparral, and riparian corridors, while expanding recreational opportunities that enhance the City’s rural character and quality of life. The Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element identifies the following priorities:

- **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 (Figure 2-5). The City also owns and operates the 5-acre Central Coast Zoo, allowing visitors to view hundreds of animal species from around the world.



Source: City of Atascadero 2025.

Figure 2-5. 2045 General Plan Update park and trails system diagram.

Whereas 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 most of the City is rural in nature with large distances between larger lots and the urban core. Opportunities to improve existing linkages and create new linkages to parks and recreational amenities would improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

- **Trails:** Atascadero contains approximately 17 miles of public trails (as of 2024) either owned and managed by the City, County, or Atascadero Land Preservation Society. 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. 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 and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped approximately 10,822 acres of oak woodlands within the Planning Area (City of Atascadero 2025). 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 (City of Atascadero 2025).
- **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 challenging.
- **Creeks, Rivers, and Other Habitat:** Atascadero contains approximately 27 miles of creeks and rivers, including Atascadero, Boulder, Graves, and Paloma Creeks and the Salinas River. In addition, there are over 54 miles of mapped, unidentified “blue-line” drainages, which 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 frog include the upper watershed areas of Morro and Atascadero Creeks. 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. 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.

The Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element contains sections including 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

2.4.2.5 Public Services and Infrastructure Element

The 2045 General Plan Update makes high-quality public services and infrastructure a central focus by introducing strategies to ensure reliable, flexible, and cost-effective service delivery that supports Atascadero’s community character and growth objectives. The City is committed to ensuring that all residents benefit from quality services that reflect community character and growth objectives. The City Public Works Department manages key infrastructure systems, including street maintenance, stormwater management, flood control, sewage treatment, and upkeep of City-owned parks, trails, and facilities. Water service is provided by the historic Atascadero Mutual Water Company (AMWC), which sources local groundwater and distributes it through an extensive pipeline network.

Additional public services include law enforcement, fire protection, development review, building permitting, recreation, and community events, and the Atascadero Library and public schools are operated by County and independent agencies, respectively. Solid waste is managed by a private contractor, and utilities such as natural gas and electricity are supplied by regional providers, with alternative energy options and telecommunications services continually evolving to meet the community’s needs.

The Public Services and Infrastructure Element provides a comprehensive overview of the City’s essential services and infrastructure systems and sets forth goals, policies, and actions to ensure their thoughtful management and enhancement. The Public Services and Infrastructure Element identifies the following priorities:

- **Water Supply:** The AMWC 2020 Urban Water Management Plan 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 aboveground or belowground storage (such as tanks) or groundwater recharge areas may be identified to expand water storage. This increase in capacity will address concerns related to future multiyear 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% of properties in Atascadero rely on individual on-site septic systems and are not connected to the sanitary sewer system, with the majority outside the 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.
- **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, 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 lines extend across 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 reduced visual clutter.

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 1 year.

- **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 east side of Atascadero generally has good access to broadband technology, but the steep terrain and low-intensity development on Atascadero’s west side pose challenges for providers to offer reliable service. Recently, Astound has entered the City to provide service to the area. They have expanded broadband to the west side of Atascadero within rural neighborhoods. This has prompted Spectrum to expand services as well. Provision of reliable, high-speed communications services allows residents to stay connected to the world and businesses to operate at their optimum.

2.4.2.6 Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element

The Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element would establish goals, policies, and actions designed to safeguard the community, provide for dependable emergency preparedness planning, and build in resilience. To help plan for, respond to, and recover from natural and human-caused disasters, the 2045 General Plan addresses safety and emergency response issues related to flooding, wildfires, crime, and public service facilities.

The Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element identifies the following priorities:

- **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 CAL FIRE. The region has suffered from high fire risk, experiencing several large-scale wildfires recorded between 1985 and 2025.

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 U.S. 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, about 10 miles 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 AMWC), and strategic placement of new water tanks/reservoirs. Having more a 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 (City of Atascadero 2025b). 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.

- **Flooding:** Areas along Atascadero, Graves, Boulder, and Paloma Creeks 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 1% 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 runoff 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 use 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 should a spill occur. The San Luis Obispo Environmental Health Services Division oversees reporting and inspections.

- **Seismic and Geologic Hazards:** California straddles the boundary between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate, which is primarily defined by the San Andreas Fault. The earthquakes we experience locally result from the grinding and shifting of the plates 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, the Rinconada Fault is considered active, with the potential to generate a maximum 7.5 magnitude earthquake (City of Atascadero 2025). An earthquake of this scale would produce significant ground shaking and could trigger the seismic-related effects including landslides and liquefaction. 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 on the location of the earthquake, cause catastrophic damage.

- **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. Although 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. The following describes noise sources within the City:
 - Roadways and freeways are the primary noise sources in the City. Primary transportation noise sources include vehicular traffic along U.S. 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 mechanical equipment within buildings. Other noise sources

can result in intermittent increases in ambient noise levels, such as short-term construction activities, schools, 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 U.S. Department of Justice reports the rate of crime in Atascadero to be 23.73 per 1,000 residents during a standard year (City of Atascadero 2025). The most frequent crimes are drug crimes (5.6%), vandalism (5.4%), vehicle theft (3.4%), theft (2.8%), and assault (1.6%). Although 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 U.S. 101/Del Rio region to ensure appropriate response times throughout the City. Whereas 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.

2.4.3 2045 General Plan Goals

The goals of the 2045 General Plan Update are shown below in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2. 2045 General Plan Update Goals

General Plan Chapter	Goals
Land Use and Community Form Element	LU-1 Growth integrated and compatible with established land use patterns and the community aesthetic
	LU-2 Enhanced major corridors that serve regional and local needs by creating focused, distinct, and economically viable nodes
	LU-3 A new professional office, retail, and employment area focused on (but not limited to) the medical industry, including research and development uses
	LU-4 A dedicated, focused area for industrial activity that minimizes impact on nearby residential neighborhoods and protected open space areas
	LU-5 A Downtown core celebrated by the community, with places to shop, be entertained, live, gather outside, learn, and engage in civic discourse
Economic Development Element	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
	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
	ED-3 Leveraging the impact of the City’s resources and investments in economic development through effective public-private partnerships
	ED-4 Long-term fiscal strength that reinforces Atascadero’s desire to grow and attract businesses

General Plan Chapter	Goals
Mobility Element	MO-1 A safe, multimodal, interconnected, and efficient circulation system that serves all community members
	MO-2 Accessible, right-sized, well-designed, and convenient public and private parking facilities
	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
	MO-4 Safe, functional, and appealing bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian (in rural areas) facilities that allow convenient multimodal mobility
	MO-5 Reliable alternative travel modes that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality
	MO-6 Anticipating and addressing emerging mobility technology proactively to allow new systems and industries to operate in Atascadero on the City's terms
Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Element	REC-1 Diverse parks, recreational activities, and leisure experiences for people of all ages
	REC-2 A network of public trails that provide opportunities to engage with nature, move through the City, and connect to key destinations
	REC-3 Dedicated system of open space that upholds the community's rural character, local biodiversity, natural landscape, and enjoyment of recreation
	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
	REC-5
	REC-6 Protection and celebration of Atascadero's rich prehistory and history
	REC-7 Improve air quality and reduced health risks
Public Service and Infrastructure Element	PSI-1 Continued reliable public infrastructure and services that support orderly and desired growth
	PSI-2 Continued high-quality water services
	PSI-3 A comprehensive wastewater collection system and wastewater treatment plant capacity that support growth and economic development goals
	PSI-4 Minimized flood risks via a well-functioning stormwater management system
	PSI-5 Reduced waste volumes entering regional landfills and increased consumer commitment to minimizing waste production
	PSI-5.2 Efficient, effective, safe, and orderly waste collection services
	PSI-6 Increased development and use of clean, renewable energy systems
PSI-7 Increased access to modern and affordable telecommunications infrastructure and service throughout Atascadero	
Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element	SEP-1 A high level of protection from and minimized risk to life in the event of a fire
	SEP-2 Flood prevention and reduction strategies that limit damage to natural areas while safeguarding property and lives
	SEP-3 Reduced potential for harm to individuals and the environment due to the presence of hazardous materials
	SEP-4 Minimized exposure geologic and seismic hazards and the associated risks to life and property
	SEP-5 Neighborhoods that maintain a strong quality of life while supporting a vibrant and thriving economy
	SEP-6 A community well prepared to respond to and recover from natural and human-caused disasters
	SEP-7 Responsive police services that deter and respond to crime and support a safe and secure community
	SEP-8 A robust, well-trained, and highly capable fire protection and emergency response system

2.5 ZONING CODE UPDATE

The Zoning Code Update will:

1. Update zoning to be consistent with the new General Plan Placetypes
2. Reorganize the chapters for increased accessibility
3. Make minor changes to certain administrative processes

The Zoning Code Update focuses on reorganization of Title 9 for readability and accessibility while incorporating new zoning districts to correspond to updated General Plan Placetypes. This ensures that the City can provide for consistent implementation following adoption of the 2045 General Plan.

The revised organization consolidates the zoning topics into eight chapters. Existing standards or policies, including, but not limited to, processes and review authority for legislative actions (General Plan Amendments, Development Agreements and Planned Development), precise plans, variances, use permits, design review and other permits, building permits, alcohol licenses, specific plans, and annexations, will be reorganized accordingly to improve the utility and readability of the Zoning Code. The chapters include:

- Ch 1: Enactment And Applicability
- Ch 2: Zoning Districts, Allowable Uses, and Development Standards
- Ch 3: Regulations Applicable to All Zoning Districts
- Ch 4: Standards for Specific Uses
- Ch 5: Nonconformities
- Ch 6: Entitlement Processing Procedures
- Ch 7: Zoning Code Administration
- Ch 8: Definitions

The Zoning Code Update will include new land use definitions that are intended to match and implement the General Plan Placetypes. These redefined uses will be used to update specific zoning district use tables to ensure that zoning aligns with General Plan vision, policies and goals. To further implement the General Plan, the Zoning Code Update will include objective development standards for mixed-use sites and the innovation/flex zone as well as special use standards, lighting standards, and temporary and mobile event regulations in alignment with the General Plan goals and policies. The Zoning Code Update also includes any standards or regulations identified as required mitigation through this EIR.

With respect to zoning code administration, the Zoning Code Update will make the following minor administrative process changes: amending the requirement for a hearing on an Administrative Use Permit to require a hearing upon request of the applicant or an interested party, rather than automatically; expanding the notification radius for general plan and zoning amendments; establishing a 2-year duration for all entitlements; clarifying the requirements for temporary use permits; and other minor text changes to clarify existing City processes.

2.6 REQUESTED ACTIONS AND REQUIRED APPROVALS

Following review of the proposed General Plan Update, Zoning Code Update, and Draft EIR, the City Planning Commission would make recommendations to the City Council. Following review of these components by the Planning Commission, the City Council would review the project and decide whether to certify the Final EIR and adopt the proposed General Plan Update and Zoning Code Update. If the 2045 General Plan Update is not adopted at that time, the City would continue using the zoning and policy framework established under the currently adopted 2025 General Plan until an updated general plan is adopted by City Council.

Implementation of the 2045 General Plan Update would also require consultation and/or coordination with several other agencies, including Caltrans, which would be responsible for approving future improvement to the state highway system (e.g., U.S. 101 and SR 41), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which has a responsibility for issuing take permits and streambed alteration agreements for any projects with the potential to affect plant or animal species listed by the State of California as rare, threatened, or endangered or that would affect waters of the State.

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