

**FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

**AUTHENTIC
ATASCADERO
2045 GENERAL PLAN**

PREPARED FOR

City of Atascadero
6500 Palma Avenue
Atascadero, California 93422

SCH No. 2024070598

July 2026

PREPARED BY

SWCA Environmental Consultants
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San Luis Obispo, California 93401

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2045 GENERAL PLAN**

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SCH NO. 2024070598**

Prepared for

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Atascadero, CA 93422
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SWCA Project No. 69101

July 2026

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Term
ABGSA	Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AMWC	Atascadero Mutual Water Company
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
LCI	California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NWP	Nacimiento Water Project
PFAS	per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances
ROW	right-of-way
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHS	State Highway System
SLOCOG	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Atascadero (City), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to assess the impacts that may result from the approval of the proposed 2045 General Plan Update and Zoning code Update (project; see Draft EIR Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for the full description of the project). This EIR will serve as a public information document to be used by the general public, responsible and trustee agencies, and decision-making bodies to review and evaluate the environmental effects associated with the project and potential mitigation measures recommended to address or minimize those effects. The review process gives both agencies and individuals an opportunity to share expertise, discuss agency analyses, check for accuracy, detect omissions, discover public concerns, and solicit mitigation measures and alternatives capable of avoiding or reducing the significant effects of the project while still attaining most of the basic objectives of the project.

The City circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible, trustee, and affected agencies and other interested parties for a 30-day public review period from July 15 to August 14, 2024; posted the NOP at the County of San Luis Obispo (County) Clerk-Recorder's office for 30 days; and sent the NOP to the CEQAnet Web Portal at the California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation. The City held a public scoping meeting on July 24, 2024, at the Atascadero City Administration Building, located at 6500 Palma Avenue, Atascadero, California 93422.

Subsequently, the City published a public Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIR on April 20, 2026, inviting comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The NOA was filed with the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2024070598) and was published in the County Clerk-Recorder's office and the local newspaper, pursuant to the public noticing requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Draft EIR was available for public review from April 20 through June 4, 2026. The Public Draft General Plan was also available for public review and comment during this time period.

This Final EIR was prepared to address comments received in response to the Public Review Draft EIR. The City has prepared a written response to the Draft EIR comments, and made textual changes to the Draft EIR where warranted. The responses to the comments are provided in this Final EIR in Chapter 2, and any changes to the text of the Draft EIR are summarized in Chapter 3, *Errata*. Responses to comments received during the comment period for the Draft EIR do not involve any new significant impacts or "significant new information" that would require recirculation of the Draft EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Atascadero, incorporated in 1979, has a rich and varied history that has shaped its development over time. Originally established as part of the historic Atascadero Colony in the early twentieth century, the City has evolved from its roots as a planned community with agricultural, residential, and civic uses into a vibrant municipality serving a diverse population. Over the decades, Atascadero has seen significant changes in land use, infrastructure, and community character, influenced by regional growth, transportation improvements, and state and local planning initiatives.

The project encompasses the entire City and its planning area, which includes all lands within the City limits as well as adjacent areas within the Sphere of Influence. The update provides a comprehensive framework to guide future growth and development, address community needs, and respond to challenges such as housing, economic development, transportation and open space preservation.

The project proposes a vision for Atascadero's future that balances growth with the preservation of community character and natural resources. Detailed descriptions of proposed land use changes, policy updates, and implementation measures are provided in Draft EIR Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

Through this process, the City aims to ensure that future development is consistent with community values, supports a high quality of life, and meets the needs of current and future residents.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires an EIR to describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the project or to the location of the project that would reduce or avoid significant impacts, and that could feasibly accomplish the basic objectives of the project. The alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIR are briefly described as follows:

- **No Project Alternative:** The No Project Alternative assumes the City would continue implementing its existing 2025 General Plan (adopted in 2002) rather than adopting the proposed 2045 update. Development through 2045 would follow current land use designations, zoning, and policies, resulting in modest population, housing, and job growth based on regional projections. While growth would generally occur in similar areas identified in the proposed plan, it would be at lower densities and rely more on redevelopment.

Unlike the 2045 General Plan Update, the 2025 General Plan lacks coordinated strategies for land use, mobility, infrastructure, and economic development. It prioritizes maintaining the City's rural character through larger lot sizes, limits on density, and concentrated development within the urban core and select commercial nodes. Although both plans support infill development and preservation of community character, the current plan provides fewer opportunities for housing and economic expansion, making it less capable of meeting projected housing needs, improving the jobs-housing balance, or ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability. Existing zoning regulations and amendment procedures would remain in place.

Alternatives are described in detail in Chapter 5, *Alternatives Analysis*, of the Draft EIR. As summarized in Chapter 5, no feasible alternatives were identified that would reduce any of the significant, unavoidable impacts that would result from the project, and the No Project Alternative would not meet the project's basic objectives. Therefore, the project is the environmentally superior alternative.

4. COMMENTS RECEIVED

The Draft EIR addresses environmental impacts associated with the project that were known to the City, raised during the NOP process, or raised during preparation of the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR discusses potentially significant impacts associated with aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, geology, greenhouse gas emissions and energy, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning and population/housing, mineral resources, noise, public services and recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, wildfire, and cumulative impacts.

A. NOP Comments

During the NOP process the City received 19 written comment letters on the NOP. The City received comment letters from the following organizations and agencies:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- Sierra Club Santa Lucia

Copies of these letters are provided in Appendix A of the Draft EIR.

B. Draft EIR Comments

During the Draft EIR review process, the City received comments from the following public agencies, organizations, or individuals:

- California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, State Clearinghouse
- Atascadero Mutual Water Company
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Transportation

Acting as the CEQA Lead Agency, the City has prepared a response to the Draft EIR comments. The responses to the comments are provided in this Final EIR in Chapter 2, *Response to Comments*, and all changes to the text of the Draft EIR are summarized in Chapter 3, *Errata*.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Atascadero (City) General Plan Update (the 2045 General Plan Update) and corresponding updates to the zoning code provisions of the Atascadero Municipal Code (the Zoning Code Update) (collectively, the project) consists of the Draft EIR, comments received on the Draft EIR, a list of persons, organizations and public agencies that commented on the Draft EIR, the City's (as Lead Agency) responses to comments, and revisions to the Draft EIR. To certify the Final EIR, the City Council must find that:

- The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
- The Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the City and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approval of the project;
- The Final EIR reflects the City's independent judgment and analysis (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15090).

If the Final EIR is certified, the City Council will then review and consider the Final EIR before making a decision to approve the project. If the City Council decides to approve the project, it will adopt CEQA findings, including adopting or rejecting mitigation measures and alternatives to avoid or reduce significant impacts, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15097, the purpose of the MMRP is to ensure implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and adopted by decision-makers to mitigate or avoid the project's significant environmental effects. CEQA also requires the adoption of findings prior to approval of a project for which a certified EIR identifies significant environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15092). If the EIR identifies significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels and the project is approved, the findings must include a statement of overriding considerations for those impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093[b]).

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063 and 15082, on July 15, 2024, the City circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible, trustee, and affected agencies, the State Clearinghouse, and other interested parties for a 30-day public review period to begin the formal CEQA scoping process for the project. The NOP informed agencies and the public about the project and the City's decision to prepare an EIR and included a request for comments on environmental issues that should be addressed in the EIR. On July 24, 2024, the City held a scoping meeting at the Atascadero City Administration Building, located at 6500 Palma Avenue, Atascadero, California 93422 to receive comments on the scope of the EIR. During the 30-day public review period for the NOP, which ended on August 14, 2024, the City received 19 written comment letters on the NOP. The City has considered comments pertaining to the scope and content of the EIR made by the public and agencies in preparing this EIR. The NOP and all comments received are presented in Appendix A of the Draft EIR.

The City published a public Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIR on April 20, 2026, inviting comments from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties on the Draft EIR.

The NOA was filed with the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2024070598) and was published in the County Clerk-Recorder's office and the local newspaper, pursuant to the public noticing requirements of CEQA. The public review period for the Draft EIR started on April 20, 2026, and ended on June 4, 2026. The Public Draft General Plan was also available for public review and comment during this time period. An electronic copy of the Draft EIR and Public Draft General Plan could be accessed through the internet on the City's website at the following address: www.atascadero2045.org.

The Draft EIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives, identification of significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The Draft EIR identifies issues determined to have no impact or a less than significant impact and provides detailed analysis of potentially significant and significant impacts. Comments received in response to the NOP were considered in preparing the analysis in the Draft EIR.

During the public review period, the City held 1 informational public meeting to provide agencies and members of the public an additional opportunity to ask questions and submit comments related to the Draft EIR. The public meeting was held on May 26, 2026, at the Atascadero City Hall Chambers and was also available online via Zoom. No public comments were received during this meeting.

The City received three comment letters regarding the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review period from the following entities:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Region 4
- California Department of Transportation, District 5
- Atascadero Mutual Water Company

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088, this Final EIR responds to the comments received on the Draft EIR. The Final EIR also contains minor edits to the Draft EIR, which are included in Chapter 3, *Errata*. This document and the Draft EIR, as amended herein, constitutes the Final EIR.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL EIR

This Final EIR has been prepared consistent with Section 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines, which identifies the content requirements for Final EIRs. This Final EIR is organized in the following manner:

- **Chapter 1. Introduction:** This chapter summarizes the purpose of the Final EIR, identifies the CEQA Lead Agency, discusses the environmental review process, and outlines the organization of this Final EIR.
- **Chapter 2. Response to Comments:** This chapter includes a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies who commented on the Draft EIR; reproductions of the letters received from the public on the Draft EIR (coded for reference); and the responses of the Lead Agency to those comments.
- **Chapter 3. Errata:** This chapter includes text modifications to the Draft EIR. Changes are provided in revision marks with underline for new text and ~~striketrough~~ for deleted text.

CHAPTER 2. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The Response to Comments chapter of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) presents the substantive comments received on the Draft EIR for the City of Atascadero 2045 General Plan and Zoning Code Update (Project) together with the responses to those comments. Comments were received from multiple entities, including state and local agencies and one non-agency organization. In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15132(d), this Final EIR presents the City of Atascadero's (City's) response to comments submitted during the Draft EIR review and consultation process.

A list of persons, organizations and public agencies that submitted comments on the Draft EIR is provided in Section 2.1 followed by the substantive comments received, reproduced in total and listed in chronological order. A numerical annotation has been added as appropriate to delineate certain sections of comments for purposes of organizing the City's responses. The City's responses to directly succeed each comment.

2.1 PUBLIC COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES

The following entities have submitted comments on the Draft EIR.

Table 2-1. Agency Comments

Code	Agency	Commenter Name	Date	Page
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Julie Vance, Regional Manager	June 4, 2026	2-3
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation	Chris Bjornstad, Associate Transportation Planner, Local Development Review Coordinator	June 4, 2026	2-11
AMWC	Atascadero Mutual Water Company	John Neil, General Manager	June 3, 2026	2-18

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2.1.1 California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Region 4

Comment Letter CDFW

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE



1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005
wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
MEGHAN HERTEL, Director

June 4, 2026

Kelley Gleason, Planning Manager
City of Atascadero
6500 Palma Avenue
Atascadero, California 93422
(805) 461-5000
planning@atascadero.org

**Subject: City of Atascadero Comprehensive 2045 General Plan Update (Plan)
Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
SCH No.: 2024070598**

Dear Kelley Gleason:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a DEIR from City of Atascadero (City), as lead agency, for the above-referenced Plan pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Plan that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Plan that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's **Trustee Agency** for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (*Id.*, § 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts.

CDFW-1

¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

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City of Atascadero
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focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a **Responsible Agency** under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, projects tiered from this Plan may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.). Likewise, to the extent implementation of projects tiered from this Plan may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), related authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code will be required.

Nesting Birds: CDFW has jurisdiction over actions with potential to result in the disturbance or destruction of active nest sites or the unauthorized take of birds. Fish and Game Code sections that protect birds, their eggs and nests include, sections 3503 (regarding unlawful take, possession or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird), 3503.5 (regarding the take, possession or destruction of any birds-of-prey or their nests or eggs), and 3513 (regarding unlawful take of any migratory nongame bird).

PLAN DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: City of Atascadero

Objective: The Plan includes comprehensive revisions to all existing elements, along with the incorporation of new long-term planning considerations. It would function as a guiding framework for future growth through the 2050 buildout horizon and reflects community input, recent changes in State law, and updated environmental and socioeconomic conditions. The Plan also includes amendments to the Land Use, Natural and Cultural Resources, Safety, Noise, Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Circulation, Economic Development, and Health and Equity Elements. In addition, the Plan identifies Specific Focus Areas within the City that have the potential to accommodate future development. Other components of the Plan include updated noise contours, an update to the City's 2013 Climate Action Plan, and concurrent amendments to the Development Code to ensure consistency with the updated General Plan.

Location: City of Atascadero

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the following comments and suggestions to assist the City in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Plan's significant, or potentially significant, direct, and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources.

Nesting birds

CDFW encourages that all projects tiered from this Plan occur during the bird non-nesting season; however, if ground-disturbing or vegetation-disturbing activities must occur during

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CDFW-2

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the nesting season (February 1st through September 15th), each future project applicant is responsible for ensuring that implementation of their project does not result in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or relevant Fish and Game Code sections as referenced above.

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct pre-activity surveys for active nests no more than 10 days prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance to maximize the probability that nests that could potentially be impacted are detected. CDFW also recommends that surveys cover a sufficient area around each future project area to identify nests and determine their status. A sufficient area means any area potentially affected by a project. In addition to direct impacts (i.e., nest destruction), noise, vibration, and movement of workers or equipment could also affect nests. Prior to initiation of construction activities, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a survey to establish a behavioral baseline of all identified nests.

Once construction begins, CDFW recommends having a qualified biologist continuously monitor nests to detect behavioral changes resulting from each future project. If behavioral changes occur, CDFW recommends halting the work causing that change and consulting with CDFW for additional avoidance and minimization measures. If continuous monitoring of identified nests by a qualified biologist is not feasible, CDFW recommends a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet around active nests of non-listed bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of non-listed raptors. These buffers are advised to remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or on-site parental care for survival. Variance from these no-disturbance buffers is possible when there is a compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the construction areas would be concealed from a nest site by topography. CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist advise and support any variance from these buffers and notify CDFW in advance of implementing a variance.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Connectivity

California wildlife is losing the ability to move and migrate as habitat conversion and built infrastructure disrupt species habitat and cut off migration corridors. California Senate Bill (SB) 790, Assembly Bill (AB) 2344, and AB 1889 all address wildlife connectivity in California and assert authority and responsibility to CDFW and/or local and State agencies to implement wildlife connectivity actions by identifying where they are needed, coordinate and implement those actions, and establish compensatory mitigation credits for actions taken. AB 1889 in particular requires the conservation element of general plans to consider the effect of development of wildlife connectivity. The Bill also requires that lead agencies consider incorporating appropriate standards, policies, and feasible implementation programs, consult with specified entities, and consider relevant best available science on identifying and maintaining essential linkages and corridors that are essential to maintain landscape connectivity.

The City of Atascadero contains approximately 27 miles of creeks and rivers—including Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, and a segment of the Salinas River.

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CDFW-3

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These waterways and associated riparian habitats function as important wildlife movement corridors connecting the Salinas River watershed to surrounding upland habitats. As such, the Plan could impact wildlife connectivity for a range of species that utilize these corridors. Direct and indirect impacts to riparian and adjacent habitats may adversely affect sensitive species identified in the DEIR. Such impacts may include habitat reduction; reduced reproductive success; diminished health and vigor; nest disturbance or abandonment; loss of foraging habitat leading to decreased nesting success; and introduction of debris or deleterious materials into riverine systems. Narrow riparian buffers are considerably less effective at minimizing the effects of adjacent development than wider buffers (Castelle et al. 1992; Brososke et al. 1998; Kiffney et al. 2003; Moore et al. 2005).

CDFW acknowledges and generally concurs with the General Plan policies referenced in the DEIR, including Policy LU-1.9 and Policy REC-4.3, which provide important direction for regional coordination, watershed protection, maintenance of natural flows, and preservation of riparian ecosystems, and which also complement the broader goal of supporting habitat connectivity. CDFW also concurs with the establishment of a sufficient buffer zone to protect the streams and associated habitats present within the Plan area.

CDFW further recommends that future projects tiered from the Plan and located adjacent to or within the vicinity of Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, the Salinas River, and associated riparian habitats include project-specific wildlife movement studies. These studies should evaluate potential project impacts to wildlife connectivity and inform the development of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. These studies should also inform appropriate buffer distances from natural wildlife corridors, such as streams and their associated habitats, to ensure wildlife connectivity is maintained. For projects where wildlife corridor improvements are proposed, pre-construction study data should be used to develop biologically feasible design measures. Post-construction monitoring should assess the use of wildlife movement corridors, and results should be summarized in reports submitted to CDFW and made available to other interested parties.

To offset unavoidable impacts from Plan implementation, on- or off-site compensatory mitigation should be required to ensure no net loss of wildlife corridor function. The DEIR should also include an evaluation of feasible off-site wildlife movement corridors or crossings that could be enhanced or constructed to improve regional connectivity.

Lake and Streambed Alteration

Reasonably foreseeable future projects tiered from this Plan may be subject to CDFW's regulatory authority pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq. Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires project proponents to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may (a) substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream, or lake; (b) substantially change or use any material from the bed, bank, or channel of any river, stream, or lake; or (c) deposit debris, waste or other materials that could pass into any river, stream, or lake. "Any river, stream, or lake" includes those that are ephemeral or intermittent as well as those that are perennial in nature. For information on notification requirements, please refer to CDFW's website (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/LSA>) or

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CDFW-4

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contact CDFW staff in the Central Region Lake and Streambed Alteration Program at (559) 243-4593, or R4LSA@wildlife.ca.gov.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database negative declarations be incorporated into a database, which may be used to make (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at the following link:

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDDB at the following email address: CNDDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plants-and-Animals>.

FILING FEES

The Plan, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089).

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR to assist the City in identifying and mitigating this Plan's impacts on biological resources.

More information on survey and monitoring protocols for sensitive species can be found at CDFW's website (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols>). Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Evelyn Barajas-Perez, Environmental Scientist, at (805) 503-5738 or evelyn.barajas-perez@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

12950B95267A4F5...

For Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

ec: State Clearinghouse
Land Use and Climate Innovation
State.Clearinghouse@lci.ca.gov

↑ CDFW-4
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CDFW-5

CDFW-6

CDFW-7

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CDFW-8

2.1.1.1 **Response to Letter from California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Region 4**

Comment No.	Response
CDFW-1	The comment serves as an introduction to the comment letter and describes the project. The City would like to thank the commenter for participating in the public review process of the Draft EIR. This is not a comment on the analysis contained in the EIR; therefore, no response is necessary.
CDFW-2	The commenter states that implementation of the 2045 General Plan could result in impacts to nesting birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code. The commenter recommends that projects tiering off of the Atascadero General Plan EIR occur outside the nesting season. If construction occurs during the nesting season, the commenter recommends that nesting bird surveys be conducted no more than 10 days prior to construction, that a qualified biologist establish behavioral baselines and monitor nests during construction, that work be halted and CDFW consulted if disturbances occur, and that no-disturbance buffers be established around active nests. Section 4.4.5, Impact BIO-1, evaluates potential impacts to special-status wildlife species, including nesting birds, and identifies applicable regulatory protections. The 2045 General Plan is a program-level planning document and does not approve specific development projects. Future development subject to CEQA would undergo project-level environmental review, during which site-specific biological resources would be evaluated and appropriate avoidance and minimization measures would be identified where necessary. Because not all future discretionary projects tiering off of the Atascadero General Plan EIR would involve vegetation removal or activities that could affect nesting birds, the commenter's recommended measures would be applied on a case by case, project-specific basis when deemed necessary to demonstrate compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and relevant California Fish and Game Code sections. No changes to the environmental document are necessary.
CDFW-3	The commenter states that wildlife connectivity may be affected by habitat conversion and infrastructure that disrupt wildlife movement corridors. The commenter references Senate Bill 790, Assembly Bill 2344, and Assembly Bill 1889, which address wildlife connectivity and require consideration of connectivity in general plan conservation elements. The commenter notes that creeks and riparian corridors within the City, including Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, Paloma Creek, and the Salinas River, function as wildlife movement corridors connecting upland habitats to the Salinas River watershed. The commenter states that the 2045 General Plan Update and Zoning Code Update could affect wildlife connectivity and sensitive species that rely on these corridors. The commenter acknowledges 2045 General Plan Update policies referenced in the Draft EIR that support watershed protection and riparian habitat preservation and recommends that future projects located near these corridors include wildlife movement studies, appropriate buffer distances, avoidance and minimization measures, monitoring, and compensatory mitigation where necessary. The comment is noted. Potential impacts to wildlife movement corridors are evaluated in Section 4.4.5, Impact BIO-4 of the Draft EIR. The 2045 General Plan includes policies that protect riparian corridors and sensitive habitats, including Policies REC-4.1 and REC-4.3. Because the 2045 General Plan does not approve specific development projects, potential impacts to wildlife corridors would be evaluated during project-level environmental review, as applicable. Any necessary studies or mitigation would be identified based on site-specific conditions. Implementation of the General Plan policies that protect riparian corridors and sensitive habitats, including Policy REC-4.1 (Natural Resources Protection), which requires protection of natural and sensitive resource areas to the maximum extent practicable, and Policy REC-4.3 (Watershed Protection), which ensures that development along Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, the Salinas River, and other riparian areas does not interrupt natural flows or adversely affect riparian ecosystems, combined with discretionary project-specific environmental review and mitigation where applicable, would help avoid or minimize habitat fragmentation and disruption of wildlife movement corridors. Additional supporting policies, such as Policy REC-3.2 (New Development), which requires development to minimize disturbance to the natural environment, and Policy LU-1.2 (Urban Services Line), which directs growth toward infill areas where infrastructure already exists, further reduce development pressure on undeveloped lands and sensitive habitat areas. Accordingly, the framework established by the 2045 General Plan and Zoning Code Update together with discretionary project-specific environmental review and regulatory compliance would address potential impacts to wildlife movement corridors along the City's creek systems and the Salinas River watershed. No changes to the environmental document are necessary.

Comment No.	Response
CDFW-4	The commenter notes that reasonably foreseeable future projects tiered from the 2045 General Plan may be subject to CDFW's regulatory authority pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. The commenter explains that Fish and Game Code Section 1602 requires project proponents to notify CDFW prior to activities that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of a river, stream, or lake; alter the bed, bank, or channel; or deposit debris or other materials into such waterways. The comment is noted. Section 4.4.2, Regulatory Setting, of the Draft EIR describes the requirements of Fish and Game Code Section 1602 and the potential need for a Streambed Alteration Agreement for activities affecting rivers, streams, lakes, or riparian vegetation. Future development projects would comply with applicable permitting requirements during project-level review. No changes to the environmental document are necessary.
CDFW-5	The commenter requests that any special-status species or natural communities detected during surveys be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and provides information on how to submit records. The comment is noted. Section 4.4.4 of the Draft EIR describes the biological resources review conducted for the Planning Area, including consultation of the CNDDDB. Future development projects may include biological surveys during project-level review, and special-status species observations may be reported to the CNDDDB in accordance with standard procedures. No changes to the environmental document are necessary.
CDFW-6	The commenter states that the 2045 General Plan would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife and notes that payment of CDFW filing fees is required upon filing of the Notice of Determination pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 753.5 and Fish and Game Code Section 711.4. The comment is noted. Payment of applicable CDFW filing fees at the time of filing the Notice of Determination is an administrative requirement of CEQA. The comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue, and no changes to the environmental document are necessary.
CDFW-7	This comment serves as a conclusion to the comment letter. Additionally, the commenter extends gratitude to the Lead Agency for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR and to assist the City in identifying and mitigating the Plan's impacts on biological resources, and provides contact information for any questions or further coordination. This comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue; therefore, no response is necessary.
CDFW-8	The commenter has provided a list of references from the comment letter. This comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue; therefore, no response is necessary.

2.1.2 California Department of Transportation, District 5

Comment Letter Caltrans

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

CALTRANS DISTRICT 5
50 HIGUERA STREET | SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401-5415
(805) 549-3101 | FAX (805) 549-3329 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



June 4, 2026

SCH#2024070598
SLO/Var.

Kelly Gleason, Planning Manager
City of Atascadero
6500 Palma Avenue
Atascadero, CA 93422

Dear Ms. Gleason:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the City of Atascadero Comprehensive 2045 General Plan Update and Zoning Code Update Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The Local Development Review (LDR) Branch reviews local land use development projects/plans proposed on and around the State Highway System (SHS), to ensure consistency with our mission and State of California planning priorities. The following comments are based on our review of the April 2026 DEIR.

Project Understanding

The City of Atascadero is updating their General Plan to reflect the City's vision throughout the horizon year 2045. The planning horizon is approximately twenty years, during which time City decision makers will rely on the General Plan as the basis for making decisions on matters such as land use, circulation, environmental management, parks and recreation, housing, noise, public health, and safety. Additionally, the City of Atascadero Municipal Code will be updated to align with the General Plan update. The local highway network in the City of Atascadero consists of US 101 and State Route (SR) 41.

General Comment

Caltrans supports projects that are designed to create a balanced, equitable, affordable, and reliable transportation network where pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, rail, and transit can safely and efficiently navigate to/from their destinations. Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all users and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral parts of the transportation network. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing and providing feedback on land use developments that are proposed in and around the SHS. Noted in the DEIR, the City of Atascadero plans consultation with Caltrans regarding US 101 intersection improvements, Complete Streets projects on SR 41, freeway overcrossings,

"Improving lives and communities through transportation"

Caltrans-1

Caltrans-2

Kelly Gleason
June 4, 2026
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and additional multimodal and safety improvements. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly encouraged for future improvements.

Traffic Operation Comments

Traffic Operations requests that Synchro operational analyses be included for additional key intersections, such as the US 101 northbound off-ramp at Traffic Way and other intersections along the SHS. Although these intersections operate at Level of Service (LOS) C or better, they are expected to play a critical role in future traffic operations.

Encroachment Permits

Please be aware that if any future work is completed in the State's right-of-way it will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans and must be done to our engineering and environmental standards, and at no cost to the State. The conditions of approval and the requirements for the encroachment permit are issued at the sole discretion of the Permits Office, and nothing in this letter shall be implied as limiting those future conditions and requirements. Project Oversight may be needed depending on the complexity of the project. For more information regarding the encroachment permit process, please visit our Encroachment Permit Website at:
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focused on maximizing efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. For more information on how Caltrans assesses VMT analysis for land use projects, please refer to the Caltrans Transportation Impact Study Guide.

The project VMT analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's (LCI) Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA. Per the DEIR, the 2045 General Plan would exceed LCI significance thresholds associated with VMT. Caltrans appreciates the City implementing guiding Policies and Actions to reduce VMT to the greatest extent possible.

Complete Streets Comments

Caltrans strongly advocates for the planning and implementation of Complete Streets. These streets prioritize the needs of all users, regardless of age or ability, by incorporating high-quality infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Improvements may include features such as secure bicycle parking, pedestrian-friendly LED lighting, clear wayfinding signage, and seamless connections to nearby active transportation options or transit facilities. Complete Streets contribute to a range of positive outcomes, including improved regional connectivity, enhanced air

↑ Caltrans-2
(cont'd)

Caltrans-3

Caltrans-4

Caltrans-5

Caltrans-6
↓

"Improving lives and communities through transportation"

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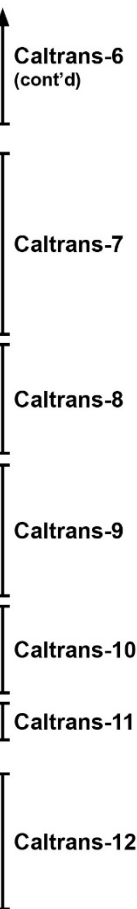
quality, reduced traffic congestion, better first/last-mile connections for transit users, and overall increased safety for all modes of transportation.

The following comments are based on Chapter 4 4.14 Transportation in the DEIR by Caltrans Complete Streets team.

- Section 4.14.2.4 (Local): Please include a description of the US 101 North County Mobility Master Plan (2025) produced by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), Caltrans, and the City of Atascadero. The plan outlines several very specific improvements related to US 101 that are proposed with relevant cost estimate information. In addition, there is no mention of the Caltrans Active Transportation Plan. Please provide a description of Caltrans District 5 Active Transportation Plan (2021) and its relationship to SR 41 & US 101 in these sections.
- Section 4.14-2 (Freeways): Please include a description of Morro Road (SR 41) as part of the SHS, owned, operated, and maintained by Caltrans. There appears to be a consistent theme in the DEIR about SR 41 missing as a highway that runs through the city of Atascadero. Please correct applicable sections to also describe Morro Road (SR 41) as part of the state highway system.
- Section 4.14.1.3 (Bicycle and Pedestrian Network): The section describes that Figure 4.14-2 will illustrate existing and planned bike and trail routes throughout the City by facility type. Figure 4.14-2 does not illustrate this as it's missing biking facilities and their classification (Class I, II, III, and IV). Please illustrate all existing, planned, and proposed bike facilities in the city of Atascadero on Figure 4.14-2 as described in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network section.
- Section 4.14.1.3 (Bicycle and Pedestrian Network): The section describes pedestrian facilities briefly but includes no mention of existing, planned, or proposed pedestrian facilities included in the General Plan update. Please include an illustration of all existing, planned, and proposed pedestrian facilities.
- Section 4.14.-11 (State Route 41 Corridor Study): Please provide a reference source for this plan.

Equitable Access

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. Also, the project must maintain bicycle and pedestrian access during construction. These access considerations support Caltrans' equity mission to provide a safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation network for all users.



"Improving lives and communities through transportation"

Kelly Gleason
June 4, 2026
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Should you have any questions or need further clarification on the items discussed above, please contact me at (805) 888-1508 or by email christopher.bjornstad@dot.ca.gov.

Caltrans-13

Sincerely,

Christopher Bjornstad

Chris Bjornstad
Associate Transportation Planner
Local Development Review Coordinator

CC:

Veronica Lezama, Branch Chief – Regional Planning &
Local Development Review (South)

"Improving lives and communities through transportation"

2.1.2.1 **Response to Letter from California Department Transportation**

Comment No.	Response
Caltrans-1	The comment serves as an introduction to the comment letter and describes the project. The City would like to thank the commenter for participating in the public review process of the Draft EIR. This is not a comment on the analysis contained in the EIR; therefore, no response is necessary.
Caltrans-2	The commenter states that Caltrans supports projects that promote a balanced, multimodal transportation network and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral components of the transportation system. The commenter acknowledges that the Draft EIR identifies consultation with Caltrans regarding improvements to U.S. 101 interchanges, State Route 41 (SR 41) Complete Streets projects, freeway overcrossings, and other multimodal improvements, and encourages early coordination with Caltrans for projects affecting the State Highway System (SHS). The comment is noted. Section 4.14, Transportation, of the Draft EIR identifies coordination with Caltrans regarding improvements affecting the State Highway System. The 2045 General Plan includes policies supporting multimodal transportation and continued coordination with Caltrans on improvements to U.S. 101, SR 41, and related facilities. Future projects affecting the SHS would be coordinated with Caltrans during project-level planning and review. No changes to the environmental document are necessary.
Caltrans-3	The commenter requests that Synchro operational analyses be prepared for additional key intersections, including the U.S. 101 northbound off-ramp at Traffic Way and other intersections along the State Highway System, noting that although these intersections currently operate at Level of Service C or better, they may play an important role in future traffic operations. The comment is noted. As described in Section 4.14.4, Impact Assessment and Methodology, of the Draft EIR, transportation impacts for the 2045 General Plan and Zoning Code Update were evaluated using vehicle miles traveled (VMT) consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 and Senate Bill 743. Because the 2045 General Plan is a program-level planning document, the Draft EIR does not include intersection-level operational analyses. Site-specific transportation studies, including intersection operational analyses where appropriate, may be prepared during project-level review or as part of ongoing City operations analyses for future development or transportation improvements associated with the General Plan and Zoning Code Update. No changes to the environmental document are necessary.
Caltrans-4	The commenter notes that any future work within the State's right-of-way would require an encroachment permit from Caltrans and must comply with Caltrans engineering and environmental standards. The commenter states that permit conditions would be issued by the Caltrans Permits Office and may include project oversight depending on the complexity of the work. The comment is noted. Future projects that involve work within the State right-of-way would be required to obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans and comply with applicable Caltrans standards and requirements during project-level design and permitting. In Section 4.14.5, Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures, of the Draft EIR, Impact TR-4 also notes that future development associated with community build-out pursuant to the 2045 General Plan would be subject to Municipal Code provisions governing construction activities, including roadway closures and encroachments (Atascadero Municipal Code Chapter 7-12, Encroachment on Public Property). Atascadero Municipal Code Chapter 7-12 establishes the City's permitting requirements for work within public rights-of-way, including review and approval of encroachment permits, conditions governing construction activities, etc. The comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue, and no changes to the environmental document are necessary.
Caltrans-5	The commenter notes that, consistent with Senate Bill 743, Caltrans supports efficient development patterns, travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. The commenter states that the Draft EIR evaluates VMT consistent with the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) Technical Advisory and acknowledges that the 2045 General Plan would exceed LCI significance thresholds for VMT. The commenter expresses appreciation for the City including policies and actions intended to reduce VMT. The comment is noted. Section 4.14.5, Impact TR-2, of the Draft EIR evaluates VMT consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 and the LCI Technical Advisory. As described in that section, the 2045 General Plan includes policies and actions that promote multimodal transportation, infill development, and other strategies intended to reduce VMT to the greatest extent feasible. The comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue, and no changes to the environmental document are necessary.
Caltrans-6	The commenter states that Caltrans strongly supports the planning and implementation of Complete Streets that accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and vehicles of all ages and abilities. This comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue ; therefore, no response is necessary.

Comment No.	Response
Caltrans-7	The commenter requests a description of the U.S. 101 North County Mobility Master Plan (2025), prepared by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, Caltrans, and the City, as well as the Caltrans District 5 Active Transportation Plan (2021), in Section 4.14.2.4, Local, of the Draft EIR. Descriptions of the U.S. 101 North County Mobility Master Plan and the Caltrans District 5 Active Transportation Plan have been added to Section 4.14.2.3, Regional, of the EIR for informational purposes. This revision does not constitute significant new information and does not require recirculation of the Draft EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.
Caltrans-8	The commenter requests including a description of Morro Road (State Route 41) as part of the SHS, which is owned, operated, and maintained by Caltrans. The commenter requests that Section 4.14.2, Freeways, and other applicable sections of the Draft EIR be revised to clearly identify SR 41 as part of the SHS. The Draft EIR identifies SR 41/Morro Road as a major arterial roadway within the Planning Area; however, additional language has been added to clarify that SR 41 is also a state highway facility within the SHS. Revisions have been made in Section 4.14.1.2, Roadway Network, and Section 4.14.2.3, Regional, to clarify Caltrans's jurisdiction over SR 41. These clarifications do not change the analysis or conclusions of the Draft EIR and do not constitute significant new information requiring recirculation pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.
Caltrans-9	The commenter notes that Section 4.14.1.3 states that Figure 4.14-2 in the Draft EIR illustrates existing and planned bicycle facilities by type; however, the figure does not identify bicycle facilities or their classifications (Classes I, II, III, and IV). The commenter recommends revising Figure 4.14-2 to illustrate existing, planned, and proposed bicycle facilities within the City by facility type. The intent of Figure 4.14-2 is to provide a large-scale overview of existing and planned bicycle and trail routes within the Atascadero Planning Area, consistent with the programmatic level of detail appropriate for the 2045 General Plan. Accordingly, the figure is intended to illustrate the locations of existing and proposed bicycle and trail routes and does not depict specific facility classifications. Section 4.14.1.3 of the Draft EIR has been amended to clarify that Figure 4.14-2 does not indicate the facility classifications would be included in the figure. This clarification does not change the analysis or conclusions of the Draft EIR and does not constitute significant new information requiring recirculation pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.
Caltrans-10	The commenter notes that Section 4.14.1.3, Bicycle and Pedestrian Network, of the Draft EIR briefly describes pedestrian conditions but does not identify or illustrate existing, planned, or proposed pedestrian facilities associated with the 2045 General Plan. The commenter recommends including an illustration of pedestrian facilities. Section 4.14.1.3 describes the existing pedestrian environment and identifies factors affecting pedestrian mobility within the Planning Area. The 2045 General Plan Mobility Element includes policies and actions that promote pedestrian connectivity and safety throughout the City. In addition, Figure 4.14-2 illustrates existing and planned bicycle and trail routes within the Planning Area, and the trail network shown in this figure also functions as a component of the City's pedestrian circulation system. As discussed under Impact TR-1, the Mobility Element includes policies and actions supporting Complete Streets improvements, enhanced pedestrian crossings, sidewalk and pathway improvements, and Safe Routes to School connections. Section 4.14 also discusses pedestrian mobility under Impact TR-2, which identifies Mobility Element policies and actions that support sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, Safe Routes to School improvements, and Complete Streets enhancements intended to reduce vehicle travel and improve multimodal access throughout the City. Because the 2045 General Plan is a program-level planning document and does not identify specific pedestrian improvement projects, pedestrian facilities would be evaluated and identified during future project-level planning and design. The comment does not identify a deficiency in the environmental analysis, and no changes to the environmental Document are necessary.
Caltrans-11	The commenter requests that Section 4.14-11, State Route 41 Corridor Study, of the Draft General Plan include a reference source for the plan. This section has been revised to include a direct reference to this plan and Chapter 8, References and Report Preparers, of the Draft EIR has been revised to include the full direct reference accordingly. This revision does not change the analysis or conclusions of the Draft EIR and does not constitute significant new information requiring recirculation pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.

Comment No.	Response
Caltrans-12	The commenter states that if Caltrans facilities are affected by future projects, those facilities must meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards after project completion. The commenter also states that bicycle and pedestrian access should be maintained during construction to support safe and equitable transportation for all users. The comment is noted. Future projects that affect Caltrans facilities would be required to comply with applicable ADA requirements and Caltrans standards during project design and construction. Maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian access during construction activities would also be addressed during project-level planning and permitting, as applicable. The comment does not does not pertain to a significant environmental issue , and no changes to the environmental document are necessary.
Caltrans-13	This comment serves as a conclusion to the comment letter. Additionally, the commenter provides contact information for any questions or further clarification. This comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue; therefore, no response is necessary.

2.1.3 Atascadero Mutual Water Company

Comment Letter AMWC



June 3, 2026

City of Atascadero
 6500 Palma Ave
 Atascadero, CA 93422

Subject: 2045 General Plan

Please accept the comments below on the public review draft of the 2045 General Plan.

Section	Comment
4.8.1.1.1, Groundwater Quality	Note that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) were first detected in the groundwater and the Salinas River underflow in 2013 under sampling required by the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 3. PFAS continues to be detected in the groundwater and underflow at levels that require AMWC to treat the community's drinking water to remove PFAS.
4.15.1.1, ¶11	Revise to show that AMWC operates 15 active wells and nine booster stations
4.15.1.1, ¶12	Note that AMWC is in the process of preparing a 5-year update of its UWMP.
4.15.1.1, Atascadero Groundwater Basin, ¶13	Revise the last sentence to indicate that the DWR approved the Atascadero Basin GSP on April 14, 2025, with recommendations. Note that the Atascadero Basin GSA is performing a five year periodic evaluation of the Atascadero Basin GSP that will address the DWR's recommendation related to water quality.
4.15.2.3, Atascadero Basin Groundwater Management Plan	Revise "...outlines the proactive management approach..." to "...outlines the adaptive management approach..."

AMWC-1

AMWC-2

AMWC-3

AMWC-4

AMWC-5

Respectfully,


 John B. Neil, General Manager

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 Neil
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John B. Neil
 General Manager

2.1.3.1 **Response to Letter from Atascadero Mutual Water Company**

Comment No.	Response
AMWC-1	The commenter notes that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) were first detected in groundwater and the Salinas River underflow in 2013 and that AMWC currently treats drinking water to remove PFAS. The comment is noted. Section 4.8.1.1.1, Groundwater, describes regional groundwater conditions and basin characteristics relevant to the hydrology and water quality analysis in the Draft EIR. Section 4.8.1.1.1 states that groundwater quality in the Atascadero Basin is generally suitable for both drinking water and agricultural purposes. The presence of PFAS in the groundwater and Salinas River underflow and AMWC's treatment to remove PFAS does not alter this conclusion nor does it affect the impact conclusions of the Draft EIR. Therefore, no changes to the environmental document are necessary. In addition, this information does not constitute significant new information requiring recirculation pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.
AMWC-2	The commenter recommends revising Section 4.15.1.1 to indicate that AMWC operates 15 active wells and nine booster stations. Section 4.15.1.1, Atascadero Mutual Water Company, originally stated that AMWC operates 17 active wells and eight booster stations based on Atascadero Mutual Water Company's website: (https://www.amwc.us/about-us). The EIR has been revised to clarify that AMWC operates 15 active wells and nine booster stations according to the AMWC comment. This revision does not constitute significant new information nor does it require recirculation of the Draft EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. The analysis of water supply and system capacity in the Draft EIR relied on AMWC's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (prepared in 2021), which is based on the correct number of active wells and booster stations in the system. The discrepancy in the number of wells stated in the Draft EIR reflects a clerical error and does not affect the underlying analysis or the conclusion that adequate water supplies are available. Therefore, the clarification does not change the impact analysis or conclusions presented in the Draft EIR, and recirculation is not required.
AMWC-3	The commenter notes that AMWC is currently preparing a five-year update to its Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). The comment is noted. Section 4.15.1.1, Atascadero Mutual Water Company, of the Draft EIR describes AMWC's existing water supply system and references the most recent adopted UWMP available at the time of preparation of the Draft EIR (2020 UWMP). Section 4.8.2.2, Urban Water Management Planning Act, also acknowledges the 2020 UWMP as the most recent UWMP update available at the time of preparation. Text has been added to this section to reflect that the AMWC is currently in the process of preparing a 5-year update of its UWMP. The comment does not pertain to a significant environmental issue and this additional information does not constitute significant new information requiring recirculation pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.
AMWC-4	The commenter recommends revising the last sentence in Section 4.15.1.1, Atascadero Groundwater Basin subsection, to indicate that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) approved the Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) on April 14, 2025, with recommendations. The commenter also notes that the Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is conducting a five-year periodic evaluation of the GSP that will address DWR's recommendations related to water quality. Section 4.15.1.1 describes the regulatory framework and planning efforts associated with groundwater management in the Atascadero Basin. The Draft EIR states that the GSP was submitted for review to the California DWR, according to the Atascadero Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency. The approval date by DWR was added to the section based on AMWC's comment. This discrepancy identifies a clerical error and not a deficiency in the environmental analysis. Therefore, this clarification does not change the impact analysis or conclusions presented in the Draft EIR, and recirculation is not required.
AMWC-5	The commenter recommends revising the text in Section 4.15.2. to replace the phrase "outlines the proactive management approach" with "outlines the adaptive management approach." The comment is noted. Section 4.15.2.3 provides a general summary of local plans and policies relevant to utilities and service systems, including a brief description of the Atascadero Groundwater Sustainability Plan. While the suggested wording change would not affect the analysis or conclusions of the Draft EIR, the text has been revised to correct this minor error for accuracy. Therefore, this clarification does not change the impact analysis or conclusions presented in the Draft EIR, and recirculation is not required.

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CHAPTER 3. ERRATA

This chapter of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) includes minor edits to the Draft EIR as warranted resulting from responses to comments received during the public review period for the Draft EIR of the proposed 2045 General Plan Update and Zoning Code Update (project).

Revisions herein do not result in new significant environmental impacts, do not constitute significant new information, and do not alter the conclusions of the environmental analysis that would warrant recirculation of the Draft EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. Changes are provided in revision marks with underline for new text and ~~strike through~~ for deleted text.

3.1 REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT EIR

Executive Summary

No changes were made to the Executive Summary of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 1. Introduction

No changes were made to Chapter 1 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 2. Project Description

No changes were made to Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 3. Environmental Setting

No changes were made to Chapter 3 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 4. Environmental Impact Analysis

No changes were made to Chapter 4 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.1 Aesthetics

No changes were made to Section 4.1 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

No changes were made to Section 4.2 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.3 Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy

No changes were made to Section 4.3 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.4 Biological Resources

No changes were made to Section 4.4 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.5 Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

No changes were made to Section 4.5 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.6 Geology and Soils

No changes were made to Section 4.6 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

No changes were made to Section 4.7 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

The following change was made to Section 4.8.1.1.1, *Surface Water*, on page 4.8-2 of the Draft EIR:

4.8.1.1.1.2 Surface Water

The following text was added to Section 4.8.2.3, *Local*, on page 4.8-10 of the Draft EIR:

The most recent UWMP update available at the time of preparation of this EIR is the 2020 UWMP update. AMWC is currently in the process of preparing a 5-year update of its UWMP.

Section 4.9 Land Use and Planning

No changes were made to Section 4.9 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.10 Mineral Resources

No changes were made to Section 4.10 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.11 Noise

No changes were made to Section 4.11 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.12 Population and Housing

No changes were made to Section 4.12 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.13 Public Services and Recreation

No changes were made to Section 4.13 of the Draft EIR.

Section 4.14 Transportation

The following text was added to Section 4.14.2.3, *Regional*, on page 4.14-10 of the Draft EIR:

U.S. 101 NORTH COUNTY MOBILITY MASTER PLAN SLOCOG, in coordination with Caltrans, San Luis Obispo County, and the cities of Atascadero and Paso Robles, prepared the U.S. 101 North County Mobility Master Plan to evaluate transportation conditions and identify priority improvements along the northern portion of the U.S. 101 corridor. The plan focuses on the segment extending from the Cuesta Grade to the San Luis Obispo–Monterey County line and includes related connections such as State Route 46. The study evaluates existing conditions, identifies key mobility and safety issues, and develops a list of multimodal transportation improvements intended to enhance the movement of people and goods along the corridor. The plan also evaluates potential improvements to parallel routes and frontage roads and includes planning-level cost estimates, benefit–cost analyses, and public outreach results. Projects identified through the plan are intended to reduce congestion, improve safety and accessibility, and support environmental goals such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The plan synthesizes dozens of potential capital improvements with planning-level costs totaling approximately \$306 million in current dollars and is intended to help position regional projects for future funding programs, including the California Transportation Commission’s Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SLOCOG 2025).

CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN Caltrans prepared the District 5 Active Transportation Plan to identify opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian travel along and across the State Highway System within District 5, which includes San Luis Obispo County. The plan documents existing conditions for active transportation, summarizes community and agency input, and identifies locations where improvements are needed to support walking and bicycling. The plan includes a prioritized list of bicycle and pedestrian needs along state highways and identifies barriers to safe and convenient non-motorized travel, such as limited crossing opportunities and gaps in pedestrian and bicycle facilities. While the plan does not serve as a construction program, it provides a framework for incorporating active transportation improvements into future Caltrans projects and maintenance activities. The plan is intended to improve safety, enhance multimodal connectivity, and support statewide goals that promote walking and bicycling as viable transportation options for people of all ages and abilities (Caltrans 2021).

The following change was made to Section 4.14.1.2, *Roadway Network*, on page 4.14-1 of the Draft EIR:

Major arterials usually carry the highest volumes and/or longest trip in the City. Major arterials in Atascadero include El Camino Real and Morro Road/ California State Route 41 (SR 41) (MIG 2025). SR 41 is part of the State Highway System (SHS) and is owned, operated, and maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Within the Planning Area, SR 41 functions as a major arterial roadway while also serving as a state highway facility.

The following change was made to Section 4.14.1.3, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Network*, on page 4.14-2 of the Draft EIR:

Figure 4.14-2 shows planned and existing bike and trail routes in Atascadero by type of facility.

The following change was made to Section 4.14.2.3, *Regional*, on page 4.14-10 of the Draft EIR:

The 2020 Transportation Impact Study Guide acts as a replacement for the 2002 Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies but is only intended for use with local land use projects and plans, not for transportation projects on the state highway system. Because SR 41 is a part of the SHS, improvements to SR 41 require coordination with Caltrans and must comply with applicable state design and operational standards.

The following change was made to Section 4.14.2.3, *Regional*, on page 4.14-11 of the Draft EIR:

A Complete Streets Feasibility Study was completed for SR 41 between El Camino Real and the City's western limits (MIG 2023). The study evaluated potential improvements to the roadway that would improve safety for all modes of transportation while continuing to provide access to businesses. Improvements to bicycle and pedestrian access along Atascadero Avenue was added to the plan. The final plan included proposed Class IV protected bikeways on each side of the corridor. A portion of the improvements were completed in 2025 (W-Trans 2016).

The following change was made to Section 4.14.2.4, *Local*, on page 4.14-11 of the Draft EIR:

The Interchange Operation Improvement Study evaluated traffic operations at six key U.S. 101 interchanges within the City (W-Trans 2016MIG 2023).

Section 4.15 Utilities and Service Systems

The following change was made to Section 4.15.1.1, *Atascadero Mutual Water Company*, on page 4.15-1 of the Draft EIR:

The system includes nine storage tanks (ranging from 120,000 to 4.8 million gallons [MG]), ~~17~~15 active wells, ~~eight~~nine booster stations, five treatment buildings, and 20 pressure-reducing stations. AMWC also participates in the Nacimiento Water Project (NWP) which is available to supplement water supply and groundwater recharge efforts.

The following change was made to Section 4.15.1.1, *Atascadero Mutual Water Company*, on page 4.15-4 of the Draft EIR:

DWR downgraded the Atascadero Basin's priority status to "very low" in May 2018, lifting the SGMA compliance mandate however, the GSA chose to remain proactive and continues to manage groundwater resources in the basin. The Atascadero Basin GSP was adopted by the Executive Committee in 2022. The GSP has since been submitted for review to the California DWR (ABGSA 2025). DWR approved the Atascadero Basin GSP on April 14, 2025, with recommendations, and the ABGSA is currently conducting a five-year periodic evaluation of the GSP that will address DWR's recommendations related to water quality (AMWC 2026).

The following change was made to Section 4.15.2, *Atascadero Mutual Water Company*, on page 4.15-12 of the Draft EIR:

The Atascadero GSP outlines the ~~proactive~~adaptive management approach adopted for the Atascadero Basin, despite its designation as a very-low priority basin under the SGMA.

Section 4.16 Wildfire

No changes were made to Section 4.16 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 5. Alternatives Analysis

No changes were made to Chapter 5 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 6. Other CEQA Considerations

No changes were made to Chapter 6 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 7. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

No changes were made to Chapter 7 of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 8. References and Report Preparers

The following change was made to Section 8.2.14, *Traffic and Circulation*, on page 8-15 of the Draft EIR:

W-Trans. 2016. *SR 41 Complete Street Feasibility Study*. Prepared for the City of Atascadero. September 15.

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CHAPTER 4. REFERENCES AND REPORT PREPARATION

4.1 REFERENCES

Atascadero Mutual Water Company (AMWC). 2026. Comment Letter on the Draft 2045 General Plan. Letter from John B. Neil, General Manager, Atascadero Mutual Water Company, to the City of Atascadero regarding the Draft 2045 General Plan. June 3, 2026.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2021. *Caltrans District 5 Active Transportation Plan – Summary Report*. Available at: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/active-transportation-complete-streets/district5-finalreport-a11y.pdf>. Accessed June 24, 2026.

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG). 2025. *U.S. 101 North San Luis Obispo County Mobility Master Plan (Multimodal Corridor Plan)*. Available at: <https://www.slocog.org/programs/highways-streets-roads/us-highway-101/us-101-north-slo-county-multimodal-corridor-plan>. Accessed June 24, 2026.

W-Trans. 2016. *SR 41 Complete Street Feasibility Study*. Prepared for the City of Atascadero. September 15.

4.2 REPORT PREPARATION

This Final EIR has been prepared by the City of Atascadero (CEQA Lead Agency), in association with SWCA Environmental Consultants.

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4.3 FINAL EIR PREPARERS

The following is a list of individuals responsible for preparation of the EIR.

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