



# CITY OF ATASCADERO

Action Plan

Adopted: 6/8/2021

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# Strategic Priorities

Through a process of discovery and collaboration between council members and staff, the City of Atascadero identified four strategic priorities for the upcoming strategic plan:

- **Economic and Community Vibrancy**
- **Fiscal and Infrastructure Efficiency & Sustainability**
- **Ensuring Public Safety and Providing Exceptional City Services**
- **Quality of Life**

# ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

## Definition

Creating the environment and services to nurture quality and diverse economic, recreational, and community connections that create prosperity and enrich our genuine, authentic community.

## Key Focus Area: Recreation & Events

### Notes to consider

- *Communal: Events & Shared Experiences/Connections (Events)*
- *Recreation/Zoo/Hiking/Trails/Parks*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Restart events
- Plan and execute events at the new Zoo event center
- Design events around new plaza
- Hold new/recurring events in Centennial plaza to ensure the space is shared by all in the community
- Encourage events on privately owned vacant properties downtown (interim until developed)
- Encourage more events that focus on downtown (Music, Food, Host a stage)

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Expand hiking/trails and park amenities
- Look for opportunities to build more contiguous trails- build off the trails we have, plan for future
- Trails/open space/hiking - facilitate new trail connections associated w/new developments
- Explore opportunities to acquire new open space
- Evaluate zoning code and city policies as part of General Plan Update to encourage private development of recreational, hospitality & resort-type development
- Restart discussion w/owners of Eagle Ranch property (interest in resort-type land use near 101)

## Key Focus Area: Downtown

### Notes to consider

- *Thriving downtown (people want to come to / infrastructure / shovel-ready / outdoors / Completion of downtown improvements / collaboration w/ businesses)*
- *Upzoning/Mixed-Use/Potential incentives*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Pursue funding and complete construction documents for Downtown Infrastructure Enhancement Plan
- Assist development of new restaurants
  - Explore ways to reduce start-up costs
- Maximize utilization of the plazas (food trucks, etc)
- Look for funding and opportunities to fix existing street trees & sidewalks in the downtown
- Pursue opportunities along East Mall
  - Develop land use options for the adapted re-use options of the City-owned property near Centennial Plaza
- Explore programs such as infrastructure assistance, parking flexibility, and zoning changes to promote new desired development of underutilized space
- Promote the preservation of the theater in Colony square
- Pursue the Armory site as a potential location for replacement of fire station #1
- Develop and implement a plan to increase utilization of parking in City-owned alleys
- Communicate collaboratively with businesses to encourage a sense of pride, ownership, positive attitude, and harmony that promotes downtown vibrancy

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Complete downtown infrastructure enhancement plan
- Consider upzoning/Mixed-Use/Potential incentives as part of the General Plan Update
- Engage property owners and tenants to encourage compatible development of vacant lots
- Explore incentives and code revisions to expedite the relocation of nonconforming uses and the occupancy of vacant buildings downtown
- Develop the creek into a quality aesthetic feature to be enjoyed by all
- Alleviate downtown bird nuisance

## Key Focus Area: Safe & Hospitable Business / Work Environment

### Notes to consider

- *Connectivity throughout the community (physical spaces)*
- *Support Infrastructure to attract businesses (broadband, restaurants open late, all-night coffee shops, class A office space)*
- *Built Business Infrastructure - safe & hospitable/welcoming environment & spaces*
- *Constructive engagement with those experiencing homelessness*
  - *Tie to mental health support*
- *Supportive engagement by businesses*
- *Commercial nodes & corridors outside downtown*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Work to enhance broadband infrastructure
- Evaluate areas for restricted time parking
- Expand the Outreach for Underrepresented Residents (OUR)Team
- Increase pedestrian safety/access downtown through the Downtown Infrastructure Enhancement Plan
- Commence citywide General Plan update

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Continue to facilitate enhancement of broadband system
- Enhance streetscape in strategic locations to support business development
- Complete General Plan Update and begin implementation strategies

## Key Focus Area: Business Infrastructure, Technology & Support

### Notes to consider

- *Additional commercial nodes/Economically diverse city*
- *Internal processes - business-friendly - permitting, etc.*
- *Business retention, expansion & prospecting*
- *Entrepreneurial support/business incubators*
- *Broadband*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Creatively support development at Del Rio, Dove Creek & San Anselmo nodes
- Implement an online payment and tracking system for City fees and tax payments
- Discuss potential policies related to wastewater capacity charges and other development fees that may discourage desired business types
- Look for opportunities and grants to fund infrastructure
- Create and incentivize a new customer satisfaction survey for permit/planning processes
- Support expansion of Bridgeworks through SB1090
- Update City Engineering Standards to provide safe and consistent public improvements
- Perform critical third-party review of permitting process towards essentialism
- Explore Community Choice Energy (February 2022)

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

# FISCAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

## Definition

Continuing to be responsible and accountable stewards of our resources now and into the future by efficiently and effectively investing in modern and reliable infrastructure and equipment and maintaining financial stability regardless of economic conditions.

Staff has the tools, technology and resources they need to do their jobs.

## Key Focus Area: Asset Management / Replacement / Modernization

### Notes to consider

- *Replace failing/vulnerable and vital equipment and facilities and citywide apparatus*
  - *Modernize*
  - *Optimization for replacement*
  - *Energy infrastructure (back-up generators, redundancy)*
- *Resources (tools, equipment, facilities) to assist staff/build capacity*
- *Infrastructure/asset management*
  - *Major equipment inventory & plan to where we can maintain cost-effectively*
  - *Proactive monitoring, assessing & evaluating infrastructure, equipment & vehicles*
  - *Look to quality & cost-effectiveness*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Purchase and implement an asset management system
- Prepare a detailed inventory w/condition assessment
- Develop a sustainable replacement plan for City assets
- Begin funding vehicle, technology, equipment, infrastructure and facility reserves
- Replace failing/vulnerable and vital equipment and facilities and citywide apparatus
- Begin Replacement Fire station 1
  - Prepare needs assessment
  - Explore use of Armory site for Fire Station #1 replacement project
  - Complete design phase and engineers estimates
  - Prepare financing plan
- Ensure that the resources (tools, equipment, facilities) are available to assist staff and to build staff capacity.



- Identify and invest in equipment and facilities to increase long-term operational efficiencies
- Use technology where appropriate/right technology applications to save staff time
- Expand energy infrastructure (back-up generators, redundancy)
- Consider sidewalk repair amnesty or other limited assistance program

### **Beyond Year 2 Action Items**

- Complete Replacement of Fire Station 1
- Completely fund equipment, vehicle, technology, infrastructure and facility reserves based on asset management plan

## **Key Focus Area: Financial Strategies**

### **Notes to consider**

- *Maintain/develop responsible reserves generally and for currently unfunded uses*
  - *Continue conservative Council/general fiscal strategy*
  - *Addressing unfunded mandates*
  - *Be prepared for changing economic conditions*
- *Invest modestly to achieve future efficiencies & benefits*
  - *Records management*
  - *Grants*
- *Public and private partnerships*
- *Consider and plan for lifecycle costs and long-term cost savings/cost-effectiveness*

### **Year 1-2 Action Items**

- Develop responsible reserves for unfunded liabilities (non-asset)
  - Explore and consider funding Section 115 Trust for pension
  - Consider additional payments for unfunded pension liability (UAL)
  - Look for ways to fund reserve for future State and Federal mandates
- Adopt budgets and fiscal strategies that:
  - Continue conservative Council/general fiscal strategy
  - Prepare the City for changing economic conditions
  - Consider and plan for lifecycle costs and long-term cost savings/cost-effectiveness
- Develop balanced strategy of operational expenditures vs. capital/one-time expenditures that will accommodate future growth for Measure D-20 funds
- Implement opportunities, strategies and plans to grow the organization as the community grows

- Identify and modestly invest in programs to increase long-term operational efficiencies
- Capitalize on grant opportunities to accomplish action plan goals
- Explore public and private partnerships to achieve action plan goals

### **Beyond Year 2 Action Items**

- Maintain responsible reserves for unfunded liabilities
- Continue fiscal strategies and adjust plans as needed to allow the City to respond to changes in a fiscally sustainable manner
- Establish Citywide primary survey benchmark system to reduce public works and technology staff time and to streamline development

## **Key Focus Area: Transparency & Accountability**

### **Notes to consider**

- *Technology for transparency and accountability*
  - *Reporting for the community*
  - *Website/share more information*
  - *Improved responses to requests/records management*
- *Annual tax measure Reporting*

### **Year 1-2 Action Items**

- Use technology for transparency and accountability
  - Overhaul/modernize/simplify/make more efficient website
  - Develop and implement strategy to maintain website and accessibility
- Implement records management program to facilitate access to public records
- Prepare, publicize and widely distribute an annual report on the use of Measure D-20 funds. While the Measure D-20 annual report will not include detailed accounting of spending, it should include information on the general areas where the funding was targeted, the goals to be achieved with the Measure D-20 funding, and objective metrics for measuring the success in achieving those goals.

### **Beyond Year 2 Action Items**

# ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL CITY SERVICES

## Definition

That we have the tools, resources, and professional staffing necessary to create and maintain an environment where our community (residents, businesses, visitors, and staff) feels safe, served, and mutually respected.

## Key Focus Area: Staffing

### Notes to consider

- *Hire, Grow and Retain*
  - *Salary*
  - *Training/development*
  - *Hire for heart (consider local)*
  - *Resources and support for staff*
- *Need a sufficient number of staff and capacity to achieve our priorities*
- *Optimization of processes*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Hire and retain an adequate number of staff to achieve our priorities
- Complete an essentialism evaluation of each department
- Provide competitive salaries/benefits and appropriate classifications for all employees
- Provide opportunities for employee growth & succession
- Explore other retention and attraction strategies
- Provide training and professional development opportunities
- Hire for heart
- Encourage growth and development of local workforce
  - Expand PD explorer program
- Explore a wider City employee recognition/commendation program
- Work to insure that employees have the tools necessary to do their job

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Create a long-term strategy to keep employee salaries and benefits competitive
  - Continue to maintain and look for opportunities to enhance other hiring, retention employee growth and development programs
- Create a long-term plan for staffing based on projected changes to workload as community grows/demands change

## Key Focus Area: Unhoused Population

### Notes to consider

- *Routine cleanups*
- *Training of available resources for staff and community*
- *Continue strong relationships with regional partners*
- *Increase support of Community Action Team (CAT)*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Perform regular clean-ups of problem encampments
- Perform vegetation management activities in the Downtown District
- Train and educate staff and community members on available support resources for our unhoused population
- Train and educate staff and community members on compassionate interactions with our under-represented residents
- Establish needed Outreach for Underrepresented Residents (**OUR**) Team (formerly known as CAT)
- Support partner non-government organizations outreach efforts
- Support regional combined approach related to unhoused population
- Implement strategies to encourage existing unhoused residents to reduce trash and litter in public and sensitive environmental areas
- Implement strategies for ongoing areas of public concern including design of public spaces
- Provide staff resources to maximize effectiveness (use technology)
- Look for opportunities and grants to provide resources to respond to future opportunities to support underrepresented residents

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Expand vegetation management activities

## Key Focus Area: Community Engagement

### Notes to consider

- *Community Policing*
  - *Strong relationships and trust between PD and the community*
- *Public participation*
- *Emergency Preparedness*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Establish needed Outreach for Underrepresented Residents (**OUR**) Team (formerly known as CAT)

- Hold more public safety outreach events
- Ensure that all messaging is accessible and consistent across all media platforms
- Look for more opportunities for public engagement
- Continue online and in-person engagement in decision-making discussions
- Improve emergency planning communications with business community through the fire inspection program

**Beyond Year 2 Action Items**

- Continue robust communications regarding community wildfire preparedness and evacuation planning

# QUALITY OF LIFE

## Definition

We are embracing our warm friendly atmosphere and building on our sense of community by providing attractions, open spaces, outdoor interactions, and a variety of things to do for all.

Atascadero: Where everybody knows your name and is willing to lend a hand.

## Key Focus Area: Things to do

### Notes to consider

- *Outdoor Activities*
  - *Hiking/equestrian/biking trails*
  - *Lake Park/Zoo*
    - *Discuss the future of the Zoo (AZA Accreditation)*
  - *Skate park*
- *Galaxy Theater*
- *Recreation / Youth sports*
- *Don't have to go out of town for "date night" (Come to A-Town for date night)*
- *Events that attract local residents as well as folks from out of town.*
  - *Winter Wonderland*
  - *Colony Day Parade and Tent City*
  - *Tamale Festival*
  - *Wine Festival*
  - *Dancing in the Streets*
  - *Cider Festival*
  - *First Fridays (when its safe)*
  - *Concerts in the park (Community bands)*
- *Attracting private pop-up events / activities*
- *Performing Arts Center*
- *Affordable activities*

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- See Action Items under the "Economic and Community Vibrancy" section
- Discuss long-term capital needs of the zoo and the viability of continuing AZA accreditation
- Begin to address key deferred maintenance issues in parks and public spaces
- Fund lake quality program to mitigate algae blooms

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Address additional deferred maintenance issues in parks and public spaces

# Key Focus Area: Welcoming and Inclusive

## Notes to consider

- *Supportive community*
- *Diversity (in many categories)*
- *Ethnicity (not just skin color- socio-economic, background / thought, etc.)*
- *Community Engagement*
  - *Reach out to new folks*
- *Hiring for Heart*
- *Reach out to Schools and PTAs*
- *Volunteerism*
  - *Atascadero leading in volunteerism*
  - *Make volunteering easier / simpler*
  - *Work with community partners*
- *Awareness of scholarships and sponsorships*
- *Community Beautification*
  - *Environmental improvements*
  - *Clean (trash-free) physical spaces*
  - *Blight removal*

## Year 1-2 Action Items

- Work with and support community partners and volunteers to advance diversity, inclusion, and community beautification
- Use technology to facilitate volunteer opportunities
- See Action Items under “Ensuring Public Safety and Providing Exceptional City Services”

## Beyond Year 2 Action Items

## Key Focus Area: Supporting families

### Notes to consider

- *Spurring the conversation around childcare*
- *Collaborate with partners*
- *Internet / Broadband*
- *Mental health support for adults and children*
- *Affordable housing*
- *Bringing more jobs to Atascadero\**

### Year 1-2 Action Items

- Encourage regional organizations that bring attention to childcare needs in the community
- Continue on-going successful partnerships with organizations such as ECHO, LINK, and AUSD
- Remain involved in regional efforts to improve broadband access to residents and businesses
- Educate staff and community members of availability of mental health resources that are available in the community
- Continue to implement affordable housing policies of the General Plan Housing Element including minimum densities, objective design standards, small lot standards, ADU ordinance, and inclusionary housing ordinance
- See “Economic and Community Vibrancy” section for other action items
- Explore Community Choice Energy (February 2022)

### Beyond Year 2 Action Items

- Consider a childcare policy statement in the General Plan Update to support working families