Atascadero City Council
Staff Report – Public Works Department

Emergency Access Routes

RECOMMENDATION:
Council approve rating criteria and direct staff to develop a priority system for improvements and a funding plan.

DISCUSSION:
Background: Atascadero is a unique City in the way it was first subdivided. In most cities, lots are created in subdivisions and the roads are constructed at the same time. In Atascadero the entire Colony was subdivided into lots in 1914 and the roads were built at different times. This left some road sections unbuilt.

The City Council has expressed concern regarding emergency access routes for neighborhoods, specifically those areas where only single point access is available. The concern is that access may be restricted if a fire or other disaster disrupts the existing access route. The City Council directed staff to identify significant single access neighborhoods and a priority system and potential funding opportunities to add a second access.

Summary: The Fire and Police Chiefs and the Public Works Director worked together to identify existing roads, that if completed in the existing right-of-way, would provide a second emergency access route. Following is a list of these routes in alphabetical order. The list includes including a description of the existing condition, areas of the City that will benefit from the improvements, and the estimated improvements required.

- Agulia Ave (Venedo Ave to Violeta)

Existing Condition: This one lane, dirt road resides within oak woodland with steep drop offs.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide a second access route for Agulia Ave.
Improvement Required: The existing one lane rough road would need widening and paving. This would be difficult due to the steep cross slope.

- Ardilla Road # 1 (Complete section between Portola Road and Graves Creek Road)

   Existing Condition: This road section leads from dirt, 1 lane road to a dead end, which then leads into an oak woodland and rough terrain.

   Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide second access route for Portola Road and Graves Creek Road.

   Improvement Requirements: A portion of the road is graded and used as a driveway. A creek would have to be crossed.

- Ardilla Road # 2 (complete section between Balboa Road and Graves Creek Road)

   Existing Condition: This road section leads from a paved, 2 lane T intersection to a dead end, which then leads into an oak woodland and rough terrain.

   Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide second access route for Ardilla Road.

   Improvement Required: This road construction would required extensive grading, retaining wall, oak tree removal and right-of-way realignment due to the steep existing topography.

- Atajo Road (end to Portola Road)

   Existing Condition: existing dirt road

   Circulation Impact: Second access route for Chauplin and Encino Ave.

   Improvement Required: Paving of existing dirt road.

- Balboa Road (Otero Road to Llano Road)

   Existing Condition: Balboa Road is in the hilly wooded area of west Atascadero. This section of Balboa Road is a graded dirt road that varies in width from 12 to 20 feet and is approximately 2,500 feet long. Subsurface water flow and surface storm water run off leave sections of the road almost impassable during most of the year.

   Circulation Impact: Improving this road would supply a second access route to Llano Road, Santa Lucia Road, Lomitas Road and several other roads.
Improvement Required: The road could be graded and paved to City Standard or the existing dirt road could be graded allowing emergency access. With either option the controlling of ground water and surface storm water flow will have to be addressed.

- Campo Road (End to Graves Creek Road)

Existing Condition: This is a 1 lane dirt road that dead ends at Graves Creek.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide a second access route for Campo Road.

Improvement Required: A bridge would need to be built over Graves Creek and the road would end into Ramona Road.

- Carmelita Ave # 1 (Casanova Ave. north to end of paved Carmelita Ave)

Existing Condition: This 1,500 foot stretch is partially graded, relatively level and is adjoining Atascadero Creek.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide second access route for Lucinda Lane, Barranco Heights, Barranco Road and Casanova Ave.

Improvement Required: Improving this route would not be difficult due to the existing work completed.

- Carmelita Ave # 2 (Barranco Road to Morro Road)

Existing Condition: This 750 foot stretch is partially graded, relatively level and is adjoining Atascadero Creek.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide second access route for Lucinda Lane, Barranco Heights, Barranco Road and Casanova Ave.

Improvement Required: The area is flat and would not require extensive grading. Improving this road to City Standard would cost between $200,000.00 to $400,000.00.

(Note: Only one of these sections of Carmelita Road needs to be constructed to provide access to the above listed roads.)

- Casitas Road ( Sierra Vista to Carmelita Ave)

Existing Condition: This section of Casitas Road is not constructed. The slope is steep and obstacles in the existing right-of-way include trees and residential private improvements. A building permit has been applied for on a lot fronting this section of Casitas Road. Staff has conditioned this permit to construct Casitas Road. The permit has since expired.
Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide secondary access to Casitas Road and Sierra Vista.

Improvement Required: Completing this road to City Standard could include grading, tree removals and paving.

- Corriente Road (complete)

Existing Condition: Corriente Road is in the hilly wooded area of west Atascadero. A 500 foot section of Corriente Road is not improved. Gates are installed at the ends of the paved sections. In the right-of-way a narrow trial exists. The cross slope of the existing terrain is very steep.

Circulation Impact: Improving this road would supply a second access route to Llano Road, Santa Lucia Road, Lomitas Road and several other roads.

Improvement Required: Completing this road to City Standard could include the construction of retaining walls, grading, tree removals and paving.

- Falda Road (complete at Amargon Road)

Existing Condition: This is an un-built road which consists of pine trees and downhill terrain and is about 300 ft. long.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide a second access route for Falda Road Only.

Improvement Required: This would required grading and impacts to two existing residences.

- Llano Road (Balboa Road to Santa Lucia Ave)

Existing Condition: Llano Road is in the hilly wooded area of west Atascadero. This section of Llano Road is approximately 1,700 feet long and the surface is a graded dirt road. The road is bisected by Graves Creek. A small wooden bridge, built by a private citizen, crosses Graves Creek and is currently used by non-vehicular traffic. This bridge can be opened to passenger vehicles in an emergency.

Circulation Impact: Improving this road would supply a second access route to Llano Road, Santa Lucia Road, Lomitas Road and several other roads.

Improvement Required: A new bridge will have to be constructed over Graves Creek and the road paved.

- Palo Verde Road (End to San Miguel Road)
Existing Condition: The existing Palo Verde Road is a steep and narrow road on the westside of Atascadero off Morro Road. The unimproved section of this road is approximately 2,200 feet long in the steep hills of Atascadero.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this unimproved section will provide secondary access to Palo Verde Road and the Summit Hills Development outside the City limits.

Improvement Required: These improvements would be difficult and expensive to construct due to the steep and rugged terrain of the area.

- San Rafael Road (end to Atascadero Ave)

Existing Condition: The unimproved section is approximately 3,000 feet long, crosses 2 blue line creeks, oak woodlands and steep terrain.

Circulation Impact: These improvements would provide a second access route for a portion of San Rafael Road and San Carlos.

Improvement Required: These improvements would be difficult and expensive to construct due to the creeks, oak woodlands and right-of-way realignment requirements.

- Santa Cruz Road (Bridge over Graves Creek)

Existing Condition: Dirt road lead on both sides of Graves Creek

Circulation Impact: Provide a second access route to the Santa Cruz Road area on westside Atascadero.

Improvement Required: Road grading and construction. Construction of bridge.

- Seperado (complete missing section)

Existing Condition: Seperado is a narrow poorly paved road. A short section is impassable due to a residential garage existing between the two ends.

Circulation Impact: Constructing this road would provide second access route for Seperado.

Improvement Required: Removal of the garage and potential right-of-way issue.

- Serena Court (Pinal to SR 41)

Existing Condition: Not constructed.

Circulation Impact: Provide second access road for many residences on the north side of Curbaril Road.
Improvement Required: Massive grading and retaining wall. Very steep terrain.

- Toloso Road (end of Toloso to San Diego Road)

Existing Condition: No road exists.

Circulation Impact: This improvement would connect two existing roads.

Improvement Required: If the road was placed in the existing right-of-way grading, retaining wall and oak tree removal would be extensive due to the steep, wood nature of the right-of-way.

- Eagle Ranch (Outside City limits)

Existing Condition: This is a large undeveloped property directly south of Atascadero City limits was part of the original Atascadero Colony. It is in the City’s sphere of influence and could some day be annexed to City.

Circulation Impact: If San Carlos and San Diego Roads were constructed in their existing right-of-way, secondary access would be provided to a large portion of south west Atascadero.

Improvement Required: Several miles of road would have to be constructed.

This list studies what roads, which if constructed in the existing right-of-way, would provide a second emergency access route. There may be other routes that could also be constructed to improve emergency access.

Analysis: As shown in this report, there are many emergency access improvements needed in Atascadero. Several projects have been, or are being, installed to improve emergency access. Listed below is a description of the access improvements:

- Encino Ave. Encino Ave was completed to Atajo Ave by a developer to provide a emergency access route for Encino Ave.
- Escondido Ave. Escondido Ave was completed to San Gabriel Road to provide a second point of access for Escondido Ave, Portal Road and San Marcos Road.
- River Gardens. The Lakes Subdivision provided River Gardens with an emergency egress route.
- Ferrocaril Road. De Anza Estates provided Ferrocaril Road with an emergency egress route.
- 3-F Meadows. Cenegal Road is being extended to the 3-F Meadows Development (Oak Ridge Estates) which will provide an emergency access route for the development and San Marcos Road.
Lewis Ave Bridge. The completion of Lewis Ave Bridge will provide another north south circulation link for the City and provide better response time to areas of Atascadero from Fire Station # 1.

The next question is what criteria should the City use to prioritize remaining emergency access routes for construction? Listed below is a sample of potential criteria.

1. Number of residences affected by having only one way out.
2. Potential for the existing single access route to be blocked.
3. Shortening of emergency response time by installation of improvement.
4. Wildland Fire Hazard Severity rating of the area.
5. Cost of construction of the emergency access route.
6. Fiscal, or other, participation by residences.
7. Environmental impacts of the construction of the emergency access route.

**Conclusion:** Staff will bring back a priority system for improvements based on the selected criteria and a funding plan in the next Atascadero Road Program staff report.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact with this report however there is a fiscal impact to construct and maintain new roads. The City does not have enough funding to maintain the existing road system and install circulation improvements associated with our interchanges. One of the policies of the Atascadero Road Program is to not construct and maintain new roads until the backlog of maintenance and circulation improvements are better addressed. The City Council will have to weigh the need for emergency access routes with the need for maintenance and circulation improvements in the next budget.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Exhibit A – Map of Roads