Atascadero City Council
Staff Report - City Manager’s Office

Work Plan for City Council Strategic Planning Goals

RECOMMENDATION:

Council provide direction on the work plan for the City Council strategic planning goals.

DISCUSSION:

At the strategic planning meeting of February 23-24, 2007, the City Council adopted six major goals. This report outlines work plans for each of these goals. The six goals are:

1. Improving City’s Economic Base
2. Continue Emphasis on Roads
3. Repair City Hall
4. Enhance Public Safety
5. Campaign Reform
6. Natural Resources Program

Improving the City’s Economic Base

Enhancing the City’s economic base to ensure adequate revenues for services remains a top priority for the City Council. Specifically, staff is proposing:

- Involve the public in a series of roundtable meetings to gather information about the community’s preferences and priorities for economic development projects.
- Adopting a revised Economic Development strategy building on the successes of the 2003-08 plan. The strategy will outline ways to enhance the fiscal health of the community and support the existing business climate in a way that is consistent with the General Plan.
- Implementing the Council-adopted wayfinding program installing identification and directional signs throughout the community.
- Determining an appropriate scope of development for the Del Rio intersection.
- Successfully promoting and supporting infill development including the following:
- Rite Aide center development
- Additional retail stores at Mission Oaks
- Completion of Colony Square
- Downtown business district improvements

- Continuing to make progress on permit streamlining.
- Investing in redevelopment projects in the downtown area including streetscape improvements and additional lighting.
- Conducting another tax increment financing to gain additional capital for improvements in the redevelopment area.
- Promoting hotel development & tourist friendly development along the freeway corridor.
- Working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Main Street Association to retain and attract new businesses to the community.

**Continue Emphasis on Roads**

All asphalt surfaces deteriorate over time due to traffic loading, storm water, temperature variation and age. Well-timed preventative maintenance of a roadway surface increases its service life and delays the need for expensive rehabilitation or reconstruction. The Atascadero Road Program was developed to focus the City’s efforts in maintaining and protecting the roads of Atascadero in an organized, efficient and cost-effective manner. To continue the emphasis on roads, staff is proposing:

- Rehabilitating pre-determined sections of the circulation plan roads, collectors and arterials. Sections of roads scheduled for rehabilitation are determined by pavement condition evaluation, safety considerations, traffic impacts and other factors.
- Inspecting and rating the surface condition of the roads. Research new and cost effective methods for road maintenance.
- Preserving and enhancing the roads we have rehabilitated over the last 7 years by using slurry seals, cap seals and other forms of maintenance.
- Aggressively seeking additional funding for road maintenance and repair.
- Overlaying approximately one-mile of local roads per year with City staff and equipment.
- Installing roadside drainage improvements and upgrades to remove storm water flow from the road surface therefore preserving it from further damage.
- Working with neighborhoods, to pave non-city maintained roads, using the Road Loan Program.
- Providing cold mix at fire station one free of charge to residents.
- Updating the Atascadero Engineering Standards to require improved construction related to roads and drainage.

Un-congested circulation for vehicle, pedestrians and bicycles is important to the quality of life for the citizens and visitors to the community. City Staff will seek to improve circulation systems to provide a high level of service, therefore ensuring an enjoyable experience and easy access to our community. Specifically staff is proposing:
• Approving the Interchange Operational Improvement Study. This study will define cost effective improvements to improve the level of service at Atascadero’s eight Interchanges.
• Improving traffic safety by improving coordination between the Police and Public Works Departments pertaining to public education, engineering, and enforcement.
• Installing improvements from the Interchange Operational Improvement Study.
• Completing construction of the Lewis Ave Bridge.
• Installing interconnected signals at the Santa Rosa Road Interchange.
• Installing traffic calming, pedestrian access and bicycle routes in the Downtown.
• Working with Caltrans to complete the US 101/SR 41 Interchange Project and provide the public advance information about the project and circulation impacts.
• Implementing the Adopt-A-Road Program to allow citizens groups to remove litter from the right-of-way.
• Operating and promoting local and regional transit systems and park and ride lots to provide alternate transportation modes and reduce vehicle trips.

**Repair City Hall**

*Completing a Funding Package*

Obtaining funding for the building remains our first priority. Negotiations with FEMA have resulted in only moderate success in getting disaster relief funding to repair the damage to City Hall that resulted from the San Simeon earthquake. It has recently become clear that FEMA is unwilling to make any changes to their proposed funding. Staff is proposing:

• Aggressively pursuing appeals locally and in Washington.
• Working with Congressman McCarthy and other political channels to insure that our arguments are heard.
• Carefully monitoring the project to insure that FEMA regulations are followed throughout the process and that the City’s funding options do not become limited.
• Continuing to aggressively search for new grants and funding opportunities.

*Construction*

Once a project worksheet is received from FEMA, the construction clock starts moving. We anticipate this worksheet very soon. During the next year, staff is proposing:

• Assembling the City’s architecture and engineering consultant team to begin generating rehabilitation design drawings, to be developed into construction documents.
• Completing an operations plan and programming space for staff needs.
• Preparing bid documents and completing a successful bid process.
• Constructing the building including repair of all of the cracks and structural issues throughout the building.
• Restoring selected historic elements within the building.
Enhance Public Safety

Public safety remains an important goal. Staff has prepared a detailed work plan and is proposing:

- Reducing attrition and increasing retention by improving salaries, enhancing the working environment, and increasing opportunities for training and professional development.
- Finding ways to create a “farm team” for future recruitments including participating in job fairs, recruiting high school cadets and ROP work-experience students, and converting the cadet programs from volunteer to paid programs.
- Providing timely and relevant information to the public on topics of interest that enhance the safety of the community.
- Seeking out opportunities to interact with the school system and community groups such as participating in the Every 15 Minutes Drug and Alcohol program, in school open houses, and other events that offer opportunities for public safety presentations.
- Improving traffic enforcement by articulating problem areas to patrol staff for selected enforcement.
- Establishing a liaison with Atascadero State Hospital with respect to coordinating the release of any High Risk Sex Offenders or others in the Sexual Violent Predator category to insure that information regarding such releases is shared in a timely manner, and seeking additional ordinances or regulations if necessary to monitor or regulate the placement of released persons.
- Reevaluating the existing Police and Fire radio coverage to measure the effectiveness of the new radio system and make strategic changes as appropriate.
- Testing, evaluating and changing the City’s Emergency Plan where needed to ensure the most efficient and effective response.
- Continuing staff development in responding to emergencies.
- Developing homeowner fire safety and evacuation maps of the west side of the City and completely testing the evacuation plan.
- Beginning planning for new or upgraded Police and Fire facilities.
- Purchasing a ladder truck in preparation for the construction of additional three and four story buildings including hotels.

Campaign Reform

- The City Attorney has prepared a campaign reform program that considers comments previously made by council members.

Natural Resources Program

The native oak forest is the character defining feature of Atascadero. The General Plan and the City’s Tree Ordinance both require the protection and preservation of native trees. To preserve the forest staff is proposing:
• Monitoring and protecting impacted trees during development by retaining a City Arborist.
• Developing a more comprehensive strategy for the acquisition of easements and open space to protect undisturbed portions of the native forest.
• Developing a systematic plan for reducing fuel loads to better protect the native forest from wildland fires.

The Native Tree inventory concluded that both Valley Oaks and Blue Oaks are not regenerating at sufficient rates to sustain these stands of trees. The diversity of oak species in Atascadero is an important part of the visual character, habitat quality and long term sustainability of the native forest. Staff is proposing:

• Implementing a tree planting program that will plant 3,000 native oak trees by 2010.
• Creating a native oak seedling give-away program.

Atascadero’s native forest and network of creeks and streams support a wild range of wildlife. Although the community values and appreciates the wildlife that live within Atascadero, the City does not have a formal process to evaluate and protect the habitats that support this wildlife. Staff is proposing:

• Hiring a contract biologist to allow for the informal and early review of both small and large development projects. The biologist could also provide peer review of biological studies and monitoring that is occurring on development projects.
• Identifying and protecting wildlife corridors, riparian areas and wetlands.
• Using GIS mapping technology to identify sensitive habitats.

Atascadero takes its name from the numerous creeks and wetlands that snake through the hills. These creeks support a variety of wildlife, including the endangered steelhead salmon and these creeks provide the City with all of its drinking water. It is a difficult, but extremely important task to balance development and urbanization with riparian protection and water quality. Staff is proposing:

• Creating a downtown creek master plan to manage the creek area.
• Finalizing the Creek Setback Ordinance
• Implementing the Atascadero Lake Water Quality Plan
• Implementing the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II program.

Both the General Plan and the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement commit the City to take steps to maximize energy and resource conservation. There are steps that the City can take to improve energy conservation, including encouraging Green Building practices and recycling of construction debris. Staff is proposing:

• Finding a way to reinstate the chipping program to recycle biomass and protect air quality.
- Creating Green building incentives and a construction recycling program.
- Implementing steps outlined in the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement

The 2002 General Plan was developed on a framework of Smart Growth Principles. These Principles encourage compact, mixed use infill development within the Downtown and along El Camino Real. This type of development is more pedestrian scaled, less auto dependent and provides for affordable housing. Staff is proposing:

- Increased use of mixed use and compact, walkable development.
- Promoting Infill Affordable Housing.
- Continuing the Downtown Revitalization efforts including improved lighting, streetscape, and retail attraction.
- Creating a Trails and Bikeway Master Plan.

**Next Steps**

Staff is looking for comments regarding this work plan. This outline has focused on capturing the broad thoughts from the Council’s goal setting session. The next step is provide additional comments to staff so specific action plans can be established and included as part of the 2007-09 budget.