INTRODUCTION

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Preface

In 2002 the City of Atascadero’s General Plan identified a 3,457-acre portion of Eagle Ranch as a future expansion area subject to preparation of a Specific Plan, as it was located within the City’s Urban Reserve Line and Sphere of Influence (SOI). The Specific Plan portion of Eagle Ranch was previously subdivided into 452 lots in 1914 by E.G. Lewis & Co. as part of the Atascadero Colony (refer to Figure 1-3). The existing lots have certificates of compliance and have been bought and sold over the years. Instead of developing the existing lots along existing roads, the Specific Plan reconfigures and clusters development to provide a more implementable framework for future development, while preserving the overall density set forth in the existing entitlements. The Specific Plan provides a blueprint for development of Eagle Ranch, but also contains objectives and policies that build from those included in the City’s General Plan, which form the regulatory basis for such development. Potential land uses include a variety of housing types, village commercial uses, highway commercial uses, a park, trails, open space, agriculture, and resort facilities.

1.2 PROJECT VISION

Eagle Ranch is rich in history, reflecting a long-standing family ownership rooted in a rural tradition. New development within the Specific Plan area will reflect this legacy by protecting oak trees, clustering residential development to maintain large contiguous areas of open space, and using natural materials that preserve the rural ambiance of the site. A variety of housing types will be offered to support the City’s General Plan requirements, with sizes ranging from one half-acre lots to homes on 13-acre parcels to multifamily units in Eagle Ranch’s Village Center.

In keeping with the long rural heritage of the site, a primary goal is to create a project that retains agricultural uses and offers trails and open space alongside a variety of residential options. All aspects of the project are designed to reflect this vision. Infrastructure, particularly roads, have been designed to maintain a look and feel consistent with the Atascadero Colony. In many respects, Eagle Ranch reinforces the existing community’s sense of openness with homes located on sizable lots—a notion existing residents refer to as “elbow room.”

It is anticipated that Eagle Ranch will have a Village Center with amenities such as a central postal center, neighborhood-serving businesses such as a clubhouse/recreation center, deli/restaurant, and an office meeting facility to serve the needs of residents and visitors.

The City of Atascadero is interested in creating a project that enhances the economy of Atascadero. In order to achieve this, a dude ranch with spa facilities is proposed, as well as a second hotel to be located near Highway 101, which will potentially include a maximum of 200 rooms along with meeting space. Even with residential and commercial uses proposed, the Specific Plan’s land use/zoning plan retains approximately 74 percent of the ranch in permanent agriculture and open space.
1.3 SPECIFIC PLAN AREA LOCATION

The subject property is located in a mountainous area of the northern portion of San Luis Obispo County, California. It is west of U.S. Highway 101, twelve miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, immediately southwest of and adjacent to the City of Atascadero, and lies on the northern side of the Cuesta Ridge. The Eagle Ranch Specific Plan area is bound by Atascadero Avenue on the east, and by San Rafael Road, Los Osos Road, and San Diego Road on the north. Open space borders the Specific Plan area to the south and west. See Figures 1-1 and 1-2.
Las Padres National Forest
Atascadero Ave.
San Rafael Rd.
San Diego Rd.
Los Osos Rd.
101

Figure 1-2  Specific Plan Area Vicinity Map
Ranch History/Ownership

The Ranch was founded over a century ago by Baron John Henry von Schröder and was named for a pair of eagles von Schröder found nesting on a steep cliff near the waterfall on the Ranch. For ten years following his original purchase, the Baron added parcels to create the 2,400 acre Eagle Ranch. Additional parcels were added by subsequent owners.

- Prehistoric and Historic Native American Era (Up to 1769)
- Spanish – Mexican Era (1770 – 1880)
- Baron John Henry von Schröder Era (1882 – 1919)
- Peabody/Hale/Price Era (1919 – 1964)
- Smith Era (1964 – Present)
1.4 SCOPE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR THE SPECIFIC PLAN

Eagle Ranch is designated as an expansion area under the City’s General Plan. The General Plan requires that a Specific Plan for Eagle Ranch be adopted prior to annexation of any portion of that area, pursuant to the following General Plan policies and programs:

Policy 1.1, Program 9. Require the approval of specific plans consistent with Government Code Section §65450 for single-family residential projects of 100-units or greater.

Policy 1.1, Program 10. Require the comprehensive master planning of large development projects to minimize environmental impacts and maximize community compatibility. Projects identified in Table II-5 and Figure 2-4 shall be required to have an approved Master Plan of Development prior to any site development. The Master Plan of Development may be approved in the form of Conditional Use Permit, Planned Development, or Specific Plan.

Table II-5 of the General Plan identifies Eagle Ranch as Overlay Area 11, and requires a Specific Plan be implemented to guide future development at that location.

The Eagle Ranch Specific Plan provides a comprehensive land use program to guide future public and private development in the planning area in conformance with the requirements set forth in California Government Code Sections §65450 through §65457.

The Specific Plan provides a bridge between the City’s General Plan and detailed plans such as development plans and subdivisions. It directs all facets of future development within the Eagle Ranch area including:

- Designation of land uses;
- Designation of required access and circulation elements;
- Location and sizing of infrastructure;
- Phasing of development;
- Financing methods for public improvements; and
- Establishing standards of development.
As with a general plan, the authority for adoption of the specific plan is vested with the local legislative body pursuant to §65453(a). However, unlike the general plan, which is required to be adopted by resolution (§65356), two options are available for the adoption of a specific plan: 1) adoption by resolution, which is designed to be policy driven, or 2) adoption by ordinance, which is regulatory by design. In the case of the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan, the intent is to adopt portions of the document by resolution and portions of the document by ordinance, since it encompasses both regulatory and design features. The adoption of a specific plan is a legislative act similar to adoption of a general plan or zoning ordinance.

A specific plan must meet the minimum requirements of the statute listed above in order to be legally adequate. Among the key features that must be included are:

- Maps, diagrams or descriptions to adequately describe the distribution, location, extent, and size of the major infrastructure components needed to serve the project.
- A thorough discussion of the implementation measures necessary to carry out §65451 (a)(1-4).
- A discussion of the methods to be used for infrastructure financing and a program for implementation.
- A detailed statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan, including consistency between both plans and a comparison of goals, objectives, and policies.
- A discussion of how the specific plan implements the policies of the general plan.

Historic ranch photo - the “Show Barn”
1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF ATASCADERO 2025 GENERAL PLAN

Together, the City’s General Plan and the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan provide a framework to guide future land use and development decisions in the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan is consistent with the City of Atascadero General Plan and functions as both a policy and regulatory document. When development proposals for the Specific Plan area are brought before the City, the planning staff will use the Specific Plan as a guide for project review. Likewise, projects brought before Eagle Ranch’s Homeowner’s Association Architectural Review Committee (HOA ARC) will also need to show compliance with this Specific Plan. Projects will be evaluated for consistency with Specific Plan policies and for conformance with development standards and design guidelines. For projects within the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan area, policies and standards in the Specific Plan will take precedence over more general policies and standards applied throughout the rest of the city. In situations where policies or standards relating to a particular subject have not been provided in the Specific Plan, the existing policies and standards of the City’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance will continue to apply.

The objectives and policies throughout this Specific Plan are consistent with those of the City’s General Plan. The following policies and programs are taken from the City of Atascadero’s General Plan Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Elements and address the planning of Eagle Ranch directly:

Policy 1.2, Program 8 - Cooperate with LAFCO and the County to incorporate the Eagle Ranch into the City's Sphere of Influence for eventual annexation.

Policy 1.2, Program 9 - It is the City’s position that Eagle Ranch shall be developed within the City and any development of the site prior to annexation will be opposed.

Policy 1.2, Program 10 - Prior to the annexation of Eagle Ranch, a Specific Plan shall be approved by the City which will provide a comprehensive development plan for the property that addresses issues including, clustering of Colony lots, public facilities, circulation facilities, parks, open space, conservation easements, and a fiscal analysis of service costs.

Policy 1.2, Program 11 - Update and maintain the Zoning Ordinance to designate the Eagle Ranch property as a future Specific Plan area to be subject to future environmental and site-specific review prior to annexation.

Policy 11.1, Program 11 - Future development of the Eagle Ranch property shall include a system of parks, recreation facilities, trails, and equestrian facilities.

Additional General Plan goals, policies, and programs also apply to development of Eagle Ranch and have been addressed by various components of the Specific Plan including land use, circulation, parks and recreation, open space, conservation, and safety.
Implementation of the General Plan
The goals set forth in the City of Atascadero General Plan are implemented by the objectives, policies, development standards, and design guidelines found in this Specific Plan. The definitions of these implementation tools are as follows:

**GOAL**
Found in the City of Atascadero General Plan, goals are a general statement of desired community outcome.

**OBJECTIVE**
Objectives are found in Section 2 of this Specific Plan. Objectives are a subset of a goal, are more specific, and provide measurable strategies.

**POLICY**
Policies are found after the Objectives in Section 2 of this Specific Plan. Policies are actions that various entities will undertake to meet the objectives. Policies typically include the word “shall.”

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD**
Found in Section 3 of this Specific Plan, development standards are also referred to as the zoning code for the Specific Plan area. Development standards are required regulations that apply to the built environment. Development standards typically include the words “shall,” “minimum,” “maximum,” “must,” “required,” or “will.”

**DESIGN GUIDELINES**
Design guidelines are found in Appendix A of this Specific Plan. Design guidelines guide development of the built environment and are intended to serve as a guide for developers, architects, and designers when preparing development plans. Flexibility in interpretation of the design guidelines is permitted as long as the intent is followed.
1.6 OTHER REGULATORY COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

**Project Level Consistency**

All projects approved within the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan (ERSP) area, including, but not limited to, subdivision maps, vesting tentative subdivision maps, use permits, rezoning, and public works projects shall be consistent with the ERSP and all objectives, policies, development standards, and design guidelines contained herein. In situations where objectives or standards relating to a particular subject have not been provided in the ERSP, the City of Atascadero Municipal Code will prevail. For plan amendments or modifications, refer to Section 8.

**Severability Clause**

In the event that any regulation, condition, program or portion of the ERSP is held invalid or unconstitutional by a California or federal court or other jurisdiction, such portions shall be deemed separate, distinct, and independent provisions and the validity of such provisions shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions thereof. In such an event, the City of Atascadero’s Community Development Director may determine if an amendment to the ERSP is required. This amendment will replace the stricken provision with an alternative regulation, condition, program, or portion of the ERSP in order to maintain consistency of the Specific Plan with the General Plan’s goals and policies, and to maintain internal consistency with the remaining ERSP, objectives, policies, development standards, and/or design guidelines.
1.7 HOW TO USE THIS SPECIFIC PLAN

The following Figure (*Figure 1-4*) provides a conceptual overview regarding how to apply the contents of this Specific Plan to a proposed development project within the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan area.

Refer to applicable recorded Map, identify lot, identify if No-Build area is present or if supplemental City Planning process (AUP, CUP, or Precise Plan) is required

Identify applicable Development Standards or if supplemental City Planning process (AUP, CUP, or Precise Plan) is required

(Appendix A)

Apply Design Guidelines

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE

Submit Schematic Plans to HOA ARC for design review and submit Building Permit plans and any supplemental Planning applications to City

(See Process in Section 8, *Figure 8-1*)

NON-RESIDENTIAL or MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Submit Conditional Use Permit application to City for review and processing of master plan of development of the site

(See Process in Section 8, *Figure 8-2*)

HOA ARC = Homeowner’s Association Architectural Review Committee
City DRC = City Design Review Committee
AUP = Administrative Use Permit
CUP = Conditional Use Permit

*Figure 1-4 Conceptual Implementation Diagram*