



City of Atascadero
6598 Palma Avenue
Atascadero, CA 93422
(805) 461-5000
www.Atascadero.org

Notice Of Preparation

TO: RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES AND INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE CITY OF ATASCADERO COMPREHENSIVE 2045 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Notice of Preparation

Notice is hereby given that the City of Atascadero (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Atascadero Comprehensive 2045 General Plan Update (project or 2045 General Plan Update). This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is hereby provided pursuant to Section 15082(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The City is requesting your views as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the project and/or your organization's or individual interest in the project. Responsible agencies will need to use the EIR prepared for the project when considering a permit or other approval for the project. The City is issuing this NOP to notify public agencies and the public and to request input regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR for this project.

Review and Response Period

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, this NOP is being circulated for a 30-day comment period from July 15, 2024 to August 14, 2024. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), responses to this NOP must be provided during this comment period. No Initial Study (IS) is attached because the Lead Agency has determined that an EIR is required for the project, which will consider each issue area included in the IS/CEQA Environmental Checklist Form, and is therefore not required to prepare an Initial Study per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a).

Written comments may be submitted to the City's Community Development Department at the address below:

City of Atascadero
Community Development Department
Attn: Kelly Gleason, Planning Manager
6500 Palma Avenue
Atascadero, CA 93422

Comments may also be submitted electronically to: planning@atascadero.org.

Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

In addition, as the project is of regional and areawide significance and in accordance with Section 15082(c)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, a scoping meeting will be held by the City on **July 24th, 2024** from **4:00 PM to 7:00 PM**. The scoping meeting will be held at the Atascadero City Administration Building, located at **6500 Palma Ave, Atascadero, CA 93422**.

As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Atascadero does not discriminate. Closed captioning or other assistive services may be provided upon request. Other services, such as translation between English and other languages, may also be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request no later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by contacting the City at the phone number or by the email shown at the end of this notice.

Project Title: *City of Atascadero Comprehensive 2045 General Plan Update*

State Clearinghouse #: *Pending*

Project Location:

The project location, or Planning Area, encompasses all properties within the city of Atascadero incorporated city limits and its surrounding Sphere of Influence (SOI). The city of Atascadero is located in northern San Luis Obispo County, California, on U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101) approximately 13 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Atascadero is nestled between the Santa Lucia Mountains to the west and the Salinas River to the east. U.S. 101 bisects the community running north/south. California State Route 41 (SR 41) also bisects the city and provides east/west access for travelers to reach the Pacific Coast and the California Central Valley. The city of Atascadero encompasses approximately 26 square miles of varied residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, park, and open space landscapes. The Planning Area, which includes the SOI, encompasses approximately 20,218 acres or 32 square miles.¹

Project Description:

A City's General Plan is the primary policy document that lays out the overarching vision and policies for how a city will develop and function in the future. All elements of the General Plan have equal legal status. This means that one policy does not supersede another policy. It also means that any optional element or topic a City includes in its General Plan has the same legal status as required elements. The goals, policies, and actions established in the 2045 General Plan Update would be interrelated and considered together when making decisions related to land use, mobility, growth, preservation, and development.

¹ Source: San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) 2024

The project involves a comprehensive update to the City of Atascadero's current 2025 General Plan (2025 General Plan), which was adopted in 2002 and most recently amended in 2016.

Since Atascadero adopted its current General Plan in 2002, shifts in demographics, land use, transportation, economics, community character, and the housing market warrant the need for a comprehensive update. A changing economic and fiscal landscape, along with the need to supply additional workforce housing and head of household jobs, further support the need to ensure the City's visions, goals, policies, and programs are current and adequately address community needs.

The 2045 General Plan Update would be comprehensive and internally consistent, serving as the City's top-level planning document to guide the City's future growth and development. The overall role of the 2045 General Plan Update is to:

- Define a realistic community vision for Atascadero through the year 2045.
- Provide the legal foundation for local government decision-making. This includes but is not limited to zoning regulations, ordinances, guidelines, standards, other adopted Citywide plans, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) decisions and projects, all of which must be consistent with the General Plan.
- Express policy direction in regard to the physical, social, economic, cultural, and environmental character of the city.
- Serve as a comprehensive guide for making decisions regulating land use, circulation, environmental management, parks and recreation, housing, noise, public health, and safety.
- Provide citizens the opportunity to participate in the planning and decision-making process of their community; and
- Inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities and counties of the ground rules that guide development within a particular community.

General Plan Elements:

According to State law, General Plans are required to cover nine topics: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, air quality, safety, and environmental justice (note: including environmental justice is only required when a city has a State-identified disadvantaged community, which Atascadero does not). Jurisdictions may include any other topics that are relevant to planning its future and may address the required topics in conjunction with these other topics.

The 2025 General Plan contains the following elements:

- Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Element
- Circulation Element
- Safety and Noise Element
- Housing Element

The 2045 General Plan Update would include the following elements:

- Land Use and Community Form Element
- Economic Development Element
- Mobility Element
- Recreation and Open Space Element

- Public Services and Infrastructure Element
- Safety and Emergency Preparedness Element

The City of Atascadero Housing Element was adopted in 2020 and is valid until 2028. It will not be part of this current update process.

Proposed Land Use Plan:

The 2045 General Plan Update will include a combination of new and refined land uses and updated land use designations referred to here as “placetypes”. Placetypes intend to create more clarity around the character of new development. Placetypes are similar to land use designations, as they set densities and intensities, but also include detail on the character of the various types of uses, including scale, design quality, and relationship to the street. Placetypes would be further refined by zoning districts, which provide more detailed distinction of allowed uses and development standards within each placetype established in the 2045 General Plan Update. Placetypes, or updated land use designations, that will be included in the 2045 General Plan Update are as follows:

- Rural Residential (0.1-1 dwelling units per acre [du/ac])
- Single Family Residential (1-4 du/ac)
- Low Density Multi-Family (5-12 du/ac)
- Medium Density Multi-Family (13-24 du/ac)
- High Density Multi-Family (25-36 du/ac)
- Mixed Use (20-36 du/acre)
- Downtown Mixed Use (20-45 du/ac)
- Commercial
- Community Recreation
- Innovation/Flex
- Industrial
- Conservation/Parks/Open Space
- Public/Quasi Public
- Agriculture (0.1-1 du/ac)

General Plan Population and Employment Growth Projections

The 2045 General Plan Update will include city population and employment growth projections based on land capacity, ability to expand infrastructure, and the anticipated growth rates for both residential and commercial sectors based on multiple factors. These projections will be used to make assumptions about anticipated infrastructure and service needs over the planning period.

- The city’s current (2024) population is **30,158** and the forecasted population for the planning period (through 2045) is **38,112**, an increase of approximately 21% for the 20-year planning period, or just over 1% per year.² (The 2025 General Plan projected the city’s population would grow to 36,000 by 2025)

² Population estimates assume a 2.42 person per household ratio and a 95.45% occupancy rate, based on demographic trends.

- The city's current number of dwelling units (2024) is **12,431**; the forecasted number of dwelling units for the planning period (through 2045) is **15,976**.
- The city's current total employment (2024) is **8,603** jobs. This results in a jobs/housing balance ratio of 0.69. Anticipated employment in 2045 is **13,438**. This will result in a change to the jobs/housing ratio to 0.84.

The City will consider all written comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the project received during the NOP public review period. All written comments received will be reviewed and considered by the City as part of the environmental analysis of the proposed project and will become a part of the public record for the EIR.

Potential Environmental Effects:

The 2045 General Plan Update will guide growth in Atascadero over the next twenty years. The potential environmental effects associated with the growth of a community include, but are not necessarily limited to, impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services and recreation, transportation, utility and service systems, and wildfire. In addition to analyzing the proposed project's environmental effects, the EIR will also include a reasonable range of alternatives to the project to reduce and avoid environmental impacts to the extent feasible.

Responses to NOP:

Written comments regarding the project should be addressed to the City via the contact information below. Comments will be accepted from July 15, 2024 to August 14, 2024.

City of Atascadero
Community Development Department
Attn: Kelly Gleason, Planning Manager
6500 Palma Avenue
Atascadero, CA 93422

planning@atascadero.org

Date: July 12, 2024

Signature:  FOR _____

Kelly Gleason, Planning Manager
planning@atascadero.org
(805) 470-3446