

# NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

## ATASCADERO CITY COUNCIL

Wednesday, May 15, 2016, 6:00 P.M.

City Hall Council Chambers, 4th floor  
6500 Palma Avenue, Atascadero, California  
(Entrance on Lewis Ave.)

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in a City meeting or other services offered by this City, please contact the City Manager's Office or the City Clerk's Office, both at (805) 470-3400. Notification at least 48 hours prior to the meeting or time when services are needed will assist the City staff in assuring that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility to the meeting or service.

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 P.M.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Moreno

**ROLL CALL:** Mayor Moreno  
Mayor Pro Tem Bourbeau  
Council Member Fonzi  
Council Member Funk  
Council Member Newsom

### **Strategic Planning 2019-2021 Council Goals and Action Plan**

- **Fiscal Impact:** The two-year budget is based on the goals developed through the strategic planning process. While there is no direct impact as a result of the approval of this work plan, future budgets are based on these goals, and specific projects may require the expenditure of funds or additional resources.
- **Recommendations:** Council:
  1. Review, discuss, amend and provide feedback on 2019-2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan.
  2. Discuss Other Council Topics raised during the Strategic Planning Workshop if time permits. [City Manager]

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Council will adjourn to the next Regular Session on May 28, 2019.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO )  
CITY OF ATASCADERO )

AMANDA MUTHER, being fully sworn, deposes, and says: That she is the Deputy City Clerk of the City of Atascadero and that on May 10, 2019, she caused the above Notice to be posted at the Atascadero City Hall, 6500 Palma Avenue, Atascadero, California and was available for public review in the Customer Service Center at that location.

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AMANDA MUTHER, Deputy City Clerk  
City of Atascadero



# ***Atascadero City Council***

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## ***Staff Report – City Manager’s Office***

### **Strategic Planning 2019-2021 Council Goals and Action Plan**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Council:

1. Review, discuss, amend and provide feedback on 2019-2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan.
2. Discuss Other Council Topics raised during the Strategic Planning Workshop if time permits.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The City utilizes a two-year Budget prepared in odd numbered years following an election. Since 1997 the City has used a Strategic Goal/Priority Setting process as the foundation of the Budget.

The City adopted the Strategic Goal Setting approach as a comprehensive process to deal effectively with the many competing needs and issues facing the City. Through a systematic program, the City anticipates the future, assesses the capabilities of the organization and forces the organization to look at what it is and what it should be in order to deliver effective service to the citizenry. This process provides the Council an opportunity to discuss the many issues and priorities throughout the community and focus the organization on Council priorities. As an organization we can accomplish almost any project, however, we cannot do everything. As the City Council sets clear priorities and provides appropriate resources, we can advance the top priorities.

#### **The Process**

The City Council met at a Special Meeting on January 25th & 26th, 2019. On Friday the Council reviewed accomplishments, insights, council norms, and trends. Saturday was devoted to developing clear “Decision Criteria” to determine day to day priorities, setting of goals/objectives and an exercise to brainstorm creative ways to accomplish the goals and objectives.

The City Council and Staff Leadership identified two decision criteria that will be used to filter the priorities of the City and will serve as guidance to staff as they make operational decisions.

1. Enhance the qualities of community expressed in our vision, for all segments of our community.
2. Efficiently steward resources for the greatest strategic impact over the long term and address true needs.

The City Council also identified the following three priorities for the next two years:

- 1. Leverage Place-Making in the Commercial Areas for Long-Term Economic Development**
- 2. Ensure Comprehensive Safety Readiness and Risk Mitigation**
- 3. Foster Financial Sustainability**

Each focus or goal area was discussed at length by the Council to clarify the vision and expected outcomes of the City Council.

The next step in the process is to identify general action plans or steps for the organization, which is the purpose of tonight's agenda item. Staff developed a series of actions that would implement the Council goals and have organized the steps into a general action plan. At tonight's meeting the Council will review the action plan and provide guidance to insure actions are accurately depicted, and represent the Council priorities. Once staff receives input on the Draft Action Plan it will be revised, if appropriate, and brought back to Council at a regular Council meeting for adoption.

The action plan, developed by staff to further outline the implementation of the Council's goals, is included as Attachment 1.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The two-year budget is based on the goals developed through the strategic goal setting process. While there is no direct impact as a result of the approval of this work plan, future budgets are based on these goals, and specific projects may require the expenditure of funds or additional resources.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 2019-2021 Action Plan
2. Strategic Planning Retreat Recap prepared by Coraggio Group

## 2019 – 2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan

### Process

We know that, as an organization, we can accomplish nearly any project; however, we cannot do everything. As the City Council sets clear priorities and provides appropriate resources, the organization can then move their top priorities forward.

The City Council held a Special Meeting on January 25th & 26th, 2019 to develop their current list of goals and discuss actions. Then, utilizing the Council's newly established Decision Criteria and list of Strategic Priorities, the next step in the process was for staff to identify general action plans or steps and to develop a series of actions for the organization that would implement the Council's identified goals over the next two year budget cycle.

This document is intended to set forth that action plan or work plan for the next two years. By Council formerly adopting the Action Plan, it forces the organization to focus on those agreed upon actions that move the community and organization forward on the identified strategic priorities, keeping in mind the City Mission, 10-Year Vision and Decision Criteria.

### Mission:

*The City of Atascadero is committed to building community by fostering an outstanding quality of life with excellent public service, stewardship of the environment, preservation of our heritage and promotion of economic prosperity.*

### Atascadero Ten-Year Vision:

Atascadero is a beautiful and authentic city of outdoor recreation, culinary adventures, and welcoming hospitality. It's a safe place where the arts & history thrive, and the diversity of experience, generosity of spirit, and small-town ambiance are here to be enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

### Decision Criteria:

The City Council and Staff Leadership identified two decision criteria that will be used to filter the priorities of the City and will serve as guidance to staff as they make operational decisions about the priorities.

1. Enhance the qualities of community expressed in our vision, for all segments of our community
2. Efficiently steward resources for the greatest strategic impact over the long term and address true needs

## **2019 – 2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan**

### **Strategic Priorities:**

The City Council identified the following three priorities for the next two years:

- 1. Leverage Place-Making in the Commercial Areas for Long-Term Economic Development**
- 2. Ensure Comprehensive Safety Readiness and Risk Mitigation**
- 3. Foster Financial Sustainability**

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## **2019 – 2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan**

### **Leverage Place-Making in the Commercial Areas for Long-Term Economic Development**

**Complete the El Camino Corridor Study which shall be used as a basis to guide future policies, updates and development along the corridor. At minimum the plan should include:**

- An analysis that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for commercial development.
- Identification of underutilized land along the El Camino Corridor.
- Identification of community wants/needs for the development of the El Camino Corridor.
- Concepts for development of the El Camino Real Corridor.
- A market analysis that identifies market gap and opportunities for commercial growth and/or commercial saturation.
- A traffic analysis and recommendations to improve corridor for all transportation modes.
- A final corridor plan that includes community design concepts, market recommendations and a potential land use plan.

#### **Facilitate Downtown Infrastructure Enhancement**

- Complete and implement Downtown Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (Formerly known as Traffic Calming Plan) including:
  - Continue to explore potential reduction of lanes along El Camino Real between Highway 41 and Rosario Avenue.
  - Continue to explore opportunities for increased on-street parking in the downtown (El Camino Real, West Mall, East Mall).
  - Continue to look for ways to slow traffic in the downtown
  - Continue to look for ways to increase pedestrian safety and the “walkability” of the downtown.
  - Increase aesthetic enhancements along El Camino in the downtown (including landscaping, signage, pavement types and lighting).
  - Adopt a final design plan for the enhancement improvements along El Camino in the downtown.
  - Look for funding, grants and opportunities to complete the desired downtown infrastructure improvements.

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- Look for ways to improve traffic circulation at Traffic Way and El Camino Real.
- Consider downtown watershed improvements and potential available funding as a way to facilitate all desired infrastructure improvements.
- Install and implement wayfinding/parking signs.
- Consider creation of new parking spaces.
- Adopt a Street Trees Program that indicates tree replacement and tree care responsibility, tree varieties and planting specifications.
- Implement the Sunken Gardens tree replanting plan as approved by City Council.
- Consider the incorporation of an Atascadero Entry/Identification sign as part of any downtown infrastructure improvements.

### Facilitate Commercial Development near Del Rio

- Facilitate the submittal of a General Plan Amendment and development concept for the West Side (church) property north of Del Rio adjacent to Highway 101.. The plan should include commercial development adjacent to Highway 101 transitioning to residential development closer to San Ramon
- Facilitate the issuance of construction permits and site development of the Armet site fuel station and electric vehicle charging station.
- Complete a revised traffic analysis for anticipated development at the Del Rio, Hwy 101 and El Camino Real intersections.
- Amend the Del Rio Specific Plan to facilitate development of the North East corner of Del Rio and El Camino with a proposed business park prior to completion of improvements to the Del Rio overpass.
- Continue to move forward with plans for street improvements at the Del Rio/Highway 101 Interchange off-ramps and adjacent areas along Del Rio and El Camino Real.
  - Continue to work with Caltrans on required steps for ultimate construction of the Del Rio Road / US 101 interchange.
  - Continue to advocate and apply for funding for the portion of the Del Rio /US101 Interchange project, which is attributable to general City traffic.
  - Continue to look for ways to reduce potential costs for the Del Rio/US101 Interchange Project.
- Continue to facilitate and prioritize construction of the new Hilton Home 2 Suites Hotel.
- Continue to work with property owner at west side of Hwy 101 to develop the modular unit motel lodging facility.

## **2019 – 2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan**

- Continue to facilitate and prioritize construction of the new restaurant spaces at the corner of NW Del Rio and El Camino Real.
- Help market and attract tenants to the potential business park at the NE corner of Del Rio and El Camino Real.
- Help market and attract tenants to the proposed Barrel Creek development.

### **Examine Future Uses of City-Owned Lots to Best Facilitate Vibrancy in the Downtown**

- Remove existing structure from the East Mall lot and prepare the site for future development.
- Consider options for the use of the two East Mall lots including:
  - Parking expansion
  - Commercial development that includes restaurant space and outdoor dining

### **Support and adopt legislation that maintains quality public spaces, and a vibrant environment in the downtown.**

- Consider adopting an updated smoking ordinance.
- Consider adopting an ordinance restricting the consumption of alcohol in public spaces.
- Support state legislation that assists with chronic homelessness, mental health support and addiction support.
- Oppose state legislation providing unrestricted use of public land.
- Actively drive legislation to insure that ABC licenses in the downtown area do not contain provisions and limitations that conflict with the community's vision for a vibrant downtown.

### **Explore and investigate potential Code options / changes to the Code that would promote creative solutions to perceived barriers to re-development.**

- Continue to inform potential tenants and landlords about available tax credits for ADA improvements.
- Look for opportunities for shared restrooms and shared accessible paths.
- Continue to seek creativity in design ideas.



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### In Coordination with the El Camino Corridor Plan, Focus on Other Opportunity Areas for Community Place-making

- La Plaza
  - Continue to facilitate the construction and completion of the La Plaza project.
  - Fast-track City construction of the Plaza to assure timely completion of the required public space in order to complement the LaPlaza Project and overall downtown improvements.
  - Continue to facilitate the recordation of the map and road abandonment.
  - Work with the La Plaza broker to assist with marketing and finding appropriate tenants for the commercial spaces.
  - Assist tenants with any necessary tenant improvements, permits, and ABC licenses.
  - Work to insure that La Plaza continues to move forward given the needs/constraints of the wireless communications facility (cell tower).
  - Continue to work with the owner of KLEMS fuel station and the auto mechanic spaces adjacent to the plaza to encourage redevelopment of the property and a transition to conforming businesses that support downtown revitalization.
- Colony Square
  - Continue to facilitate construction permit review for the hotel development.
  - Look for potential City solutions to assist with downtown/Colony Square parking (including wayfinding signs, parking directories, and creation of new parking spaces).
  - Continue to strongly encourage development of the vacant parcels in Colony Square.
  - Be flexible and look for creative interim uses of vacant areas if development will not occur in the near future.
  - Be creative in stimulating development of Colony Square.
  - Look for opportunities to increase foot traffic in Colony Square.
  - Look for opportunities to improve communications with owner of vacant parcels.
  - Work with the developer of Colony Square to remove barriers to development.
  - Look for development incentives such as fee deferments, density bonus, or other options to allow the development to proceed.

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- Home Depot/Marriott Springhill Center
  - Facilitate the development of the proposed new hotel by assisting with attracting an operator.
  - Streamline and prioritize necessary permits and approvals for the proposed new hotel.
  - Continue to guide appropriate quality development on vacant sites.
  - Work with Tesla on facilitating the location of a Tesla charging facility or other Tesla support facility.
  - Continue to promote lodging stays in Atascadero through the City TBID and Countywide TMD.
  - Promote Atascadero businesses through marketing, special events and infrastructure investment.
  - Provide front counter handout on available pads and other undeveloped retail opportunities.
  - Steer potential developers / broker on-site based on needs and accommodations.
- Dove Creek Commercial Parcel
  - Continue to work with property owner on any potential site design or leads for new commercial tenants at this property.
  - Provide a handout at the counter outlining potential uses and site information for perspective developers.
  - Work to preserve this piece of property as a future small commercial opportunity for the Dove Creek, Las Lomas, Eagle Ranch and other south Atascadero neighborhoods.

### Continue to Encourage and Expect Quality Development

- Continue to refine our property development standards towards quality.
- Continue to expect and encourage quality through the building permit review process.
- Continue to support code enforcement actions to maintain compliance with community expectations on neighborhood/area preservation and appearance.
- Continue to facilitate the removal of illegal storage within important industrial zone sites near Via Avenue to help facilitate redevelopment and new investment
- Continue to facilitate compliance of new businesses within the Commercial Park zone to preserve valuable land for uses that are consistent with the General Plan
- Continue to strongly enforce the City's sign program.

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- Consider implementing a receivership program for Long-Term Violations.
- Consider revisions to the municipal code to enhance the abilities of the code enforcement officer to ensure compliance.
- Annually review the City's zoning code to improve transparency and clarity of City expectations.

### Work to Reduce the Number of Vacant Store Fronts

- Continue to improve Atascadero's commercial district appearance working to make it appear attractive and professional.
- Continue to actively spread the word about the City's economic development strategies, successes, and potential tools.
- Continue to actively promote the City's business potential.
- Continue to improve customer service image.
- Continue to foster an entrepreneurial / can do attitude with staff.
- Encourage creative ideas to get things done.
- Encourage reasonableness in our regulatory positions.
- Continue our successful streamlined permitting program for businesses:
  - Continue to prioritize business development permits over residential.
  - Provide intake meeting opportunities for business developers.
  - Purchase and implement a new permitting issuance and tracking system.
  - Actively communicate with owners and consultants if there is the same plan check comment through multiple submittals.
  - Provide training and professional opportunities for our employees.
  - Work to retain professional, friendly employees.
  - Maintain capacity in staff to support projects and permit streamlining.
  - Review all plan check resubmittals prior to sending them to outside plan check for a second review.
  - Allow correction comments to be a condition of approval on the permit card when possible.
  - Continue to work with plan check consultants to reduce boilerplate/repetitive comments.
- Advocate legislation that provides communities with new economic tools.
- Work with businesses to develop programs that will encourage downtown businesses to remain open more.

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- Continue to engage owners of vacant buildings to facilitate building upgrades and marketing options that will attract new tenants.
- Encourage absent property owners to actively market their property for sale at appropriate market rates.
- Engage property owners that are maintaining important downtown storefronts as storage uses to help facilitate a change to conforming business that can contribute to the downtown vibrancy.
- Continue to enforce building and zoning code to ensure timely completion of seismic retrofits and removal of land use violations.

### Build Partnerships and Alliances with Local Business Interests

- Support, encourage and help grow the Downtown Business Improvement District by:
  - Continue to actively increase traffic to downtown businesses through a promotions and events program.
  - Participate in downtown business district meetings and events.
  - Support the downtown business district through assessment of “BIA” Fees or other program intended to raise funds for downtown business promotions or improvements.
  - Look for potential solutions to help reduce the pigeon population in the downtown.
- Meet regularly with Chamber of Commerce leadership.
  - Look for opportunities for common goal partnerships.
  - Share information about what is going well and what is not going well.
  - Provide accurate information to dispel rumors.
- Remain actively involved with the EVC, promoting Atascadero as a sound business investment opportunity.
- Work with informal communicators in town to learn of business problems or opportunities where City could help.
- Look for opportunities to meet regularly with commercial brokers.

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### **Ensure Comprehensive Safety Readiness and Risk Mitigation**

#### **Implement a Comprehensive Evacuation and Communications Plan**

- Consider Hiring an Outside Consultant to assist the City in preparing a comprehensive evacuation and communication plan that addresses lessons learned in recent catastrophic fire events. At minimum the study should consider:

##### **Evacuation Notification:**

- Effectiveness of cell phone towers and cell phone notifications in the event of loss of power.
- Effectiveness /feasibility of implementing a siren system.
- Development of an strong social media platform for constant communication during an emergency.
- Effectiveness of “weather radio” system.
- Effectiveness of landline notifications.
- Educating the community on evacuation notifications.
- Activating evacuation and evacuation routes.

##### **Evacuation Implementation:**

- Developing clear evacuation route scenarios based on the event.
- Pre-identified routes for evacuation of residents vs. bringing resources and equipment in.
- Identifying areas and streets to close to facilitate one-way traffic moving people out of the affected area.
- Identify choke areas where traffic control personnel will be need to be stationed to move people through quickly.
- Identifying those neighborhoods with one way in / out and look for ways to mitigate through easements, neighborhood discussions, and paper roads.
- Identify and train City staff members in implementing an evacuation.
- Train neighborhood volunteers to assist with knowing evacuation plans and helping others learn about the plans.
- Train neighborhood volunteers to gather information on those that may have special needs in an evacuation (elderly, homebound, etc..) and to assist those with special needs in an evacuation.
- Develop a program that allows those that may not be able to self-evacuate to identify themselves in advance to police/fire.

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- Identify potential safe refuge areas in the event that full evacuation is not possible.

### **Target high hazard areas for additional education and resources**

- Use mapping solutions to identify high-risk areas.
- Prioritize preparedness/evacuation education of those residents in the identified high-risk areas.
- Prioritize high-risk areas for programs such as chipping and fuel modification programs.

### **Reduce the risk and severity of wildland fire by identifying methods of mitigating high hazard fuels**

- Consider hiring a fuels consultant/specialist:
  - To study and understand areas of wildland fire risk.
  - To make recommendations regarding potential brush removal weighing factors such as wildland fire risk, erosion risk and environmental factors.
  - To make recommendations on other wildland fire risk mitigation actions such as shaded fuel breaks, roadside fuel treatment, and other fuel removal projects.
- Partner with Fire Safe Council and others to identify and pursue available funding for fire mitigation activities.

### **Implement a Strong public education and outreach program regarding public safety**

- Implement a “Defend Atascadero” campaign to:
  - Increase public awareness of wildland fire risk.
  - Call community members to take action / personal responsibility:
    - What to do in an emergency.
    - Where to get information.
    - Register for emergency notifications / special needs.
    - How to help your neighbors.
  - Educate on defensible space principles.
  - Educate on “Ready, Set, Go”.
  - Educate people on “hardening” their home to increase fire resistance.

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- Continue all hazard education programs for earthquakes, floods, riots, structure fires, and other natural disasters.
- Work with PG&E to educate the public on PG&E's new power shut-off program.
- Hold neighborhood meetings and/or consultations.
- Set realistic expectations about available public safety resources and capabilities.

### **Look for ways to increase public safety resources to better address public safety concerns.**

- Consider a potential tax measure to address both staffing and infrastructure needs.
- Look for potential grants and other opportunities to retro-fit, rehabilitate and upgrade Station #1.
- Take next steps to move forward with construction of a new EOC facility at Fire Station #1, freeing up space at both the police station and current Station #1.
- Participate in the joint dispatch study to determine if service levels can be increased during high-volume events by partnering with other agencies.
- Consider opportunities to leverage investment return on two fire impact fee parcels. (Consider selling, increased rent, other opportunities.)
- Update impact fees to reflect current understanding of future infrastructure needs of public safety.
- Update impact fees to maximize flexibility of use to address critical infrastructure needs necessary to serve future development.
- Look for funding opportunities to provide additional police staffing to reduce days/hours at minimum staffing.
- Look for funding opportunities to provide "overhead" coverage for incident management at fires and other large emergency events.
- Look for opportunities to fund replacement of unfunded public safety equipment.
- Look for opportunities to enhance public safety communications by partnering with allied agencies for repeater sites within the North Atascadero area.

### **Develop personnel to take on future leadership roles/next steps within the organization.**

- Hold second leadership class for line level personnel.
- Continue mentoring mid-level managers within the organization for future advancement.

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- Delegate responsibilities throughout the organization in order to provide learning opportunities.
- Continue to focus on culture of the organization to reduce staff turnover.

### **Increase solution based response to homeless transient issues.**

- Provide office space for Mental Health Community Action Team (CAT) at the Police Station in order to better partner with their organization.
- Dedicate street crimes detective to working with CAT.
- Work with the District Attorney's office to enhance prosecution of repeat/significant offenders.
- Continue to seek modification to municipal code as appropriate to deal with community concerns/problem behaviors.
- Consider purchase of surveillance cameras for problem areas.



## **2019 – 2021 City of Atascadero Draft Action Plan**

### **Foster Financial Sustainability**

#### **Consider Putting a Tax Measure on the November 2020 Ballot**

- Conduct a public outreach campaign to hear about priorities from the community and to educate community members about fiscal realities.
  - Talk on the Block
  - Presentations to Community Clubs
  - Employee Education
- Conduct scientific polling to learn community thoughts on priorities, fiscal choices and receptiveness to additional taxes to fund priorities.
- Explore different types and levels of tax measures to determine which would best be suited for the ballot measure.
- Hold public hearings and prepare tax measure language.

#### **Set Fees at Rates Necessary to Provide Services at the Service-Level Expected by the Public**

- Update the Service Cost Study to ensure that fees and any resulting tax payer subsidies are being set at levels consistent with Council policies.
- Adopt significant increases to wastewater fees to fund current and future wastewater needs in accordance with a Wastewater Rate Review Study.
- Consider increasing Business Tax.
- Consider pro-active enforcement of business tax ordinance.
- Complete impact fee study and adopt updated impact fees needed to fund infrastructure for future development.
- Continue to annually update all service fees.

#### **Reduce Tax Subsidies to City Services**

- Consider eliminating or reducing hours that Planning staff is available at the front counter and move toward appointment only assistance.
- Reduce the types of calls that the Police Department responds to and move toward community self-reporting via the web-site for certain types of calls.
- Investigate what services other similarly funded cities provide and don't provide.

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- Consider ways to reduce the tax subsidy to the Zoo
  - Consider expanding fundraising for operations at the Zoo.
  - Consider increasing admission fees and annual pass membership costs.
  - Work with the Friends of the Zoo on a strong community capital campaign for new exhibits/exhibit renovation in accordance with modern zoological practices.
  - Work with the Friends of the Zoo to increase funding for operational support.
  - Consider a countywide tax measure just for the Zoo (operations and capital).
  - Consider reducing operational costs by changing mission.
  - Consider privatizing the Zoo.
  - If all else fails, consider closing the Zoo.
- Examine possibilities for reducing tax subsidies for other City amenity programs such as parks, Pavilion on the Lake, and recreation programming.

### **Consider Allowing Commercial Cannabis Activities to Increase the City's Tax Base**

#### **Embrace “Essentialism” and the Decision Criteria set by Council**

- Actively look for and implement investments needed to remove impediments to getting things done.
- Consider bringing in outside subject matter experts to review each department's processes, procedures and service levels to look for opportunities to streamline work processes and look for areas to reduce services.
- Continue to look for opportunities for streamlining.
- Change organizational culture to embrace essentialism at all areas of the organization.
- Look for ways to reduce time and resources on those items that do not solidly meet the priorities outlined in the Decision Criteria.



## City of Atascadero

### Strategic Planning Retreat Recap

January 25, 2019

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2240 N Interstate Ave. Suite 300  
Portland, OR 97227  
503.493.1452  
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## Decision Criteria

The City Council and Staff Leadership identified two decision criteria that will be used to filter the priorities of the City and will serve as guidance to staff as they make operational decisions about the priorities.

1. Enhance the qualities of community expressed in our vision, for all segments of our community
2. Efficiently steward resources for the greatest strategic impact over the long term and address true needs

## Strategic Priorities

The City Council identified the following three priorities for the next two years:

1. Leverage Place-Making in the Commercial Areas for Long-Term Economic Development
2. Ensure Comprehensive Safety Readiness and Risk Mitigation
3. Foster Financial Sustainability

## Other Council Topics

The Council identified the following topics for further exploration by staff, if staff believe they support the identified Strategic Priorities:

1. Homelessness
  - a. Cooperative agreement with neighboring communities and County services to address homelessness
  - b. ECHO space limitations
2. Future use of the National Guard Armory
3. State housing policy
4. Community Outreach – Getting the word out and word in from the public
  - a. “Talk on the Block” opportunities
  - b. Single topic community forum/workshop
  - c. Monthly/quarterly branded message from Council Members to community groups
5. Affordable housing
  - a. Rent control for senior mobile home parks
  - b. Tiny homes
  - c. Self-Help Housing
6. Actively push back on State policy/regulations when it impacts us
7. Evaluate cannabis as an opportunity area
  - a. Consider use of resources and quality of life
  - b. Does it generate revenue?
8. Consider formalizing approach/stance on environmental issues

## Appendix 1: Insight Report

### Overview

There are more areas of alignment than disagreement among City Council members and City staff leadership. Coraggio conducted one-on-one interviews with each City Councilor and City Department Head, as well as a focus group with community business leaders. Based on these conversations, we have identified six key themes. On the pages that follow, each theme is highlighted with representative quotes from our conversations:

- › The City has a talented and dedicated staff that is very effective with the limited resources they have
- › There is a desire to focus on fewer highly impactful priorities
- › Aligning on a common vision for the City and community will help clarify our priorities
- › Generating additional revenue for the City is seen as essential
- › Economic development, with a focus on revitalizing downtown, is still an opportunity
- › Quality of life concerns, including wildfire readiness and the homeless population, are top of mind

### Atascadero Ten-Year Vision (City Council, 2014)

Atascadero is a beautiful and authentic city of outdoor recreation, culinary adventures, and welcoming hospitality. It's a safe place where the arts & history thrive, and the diversity of experience, generosity of spirit, and small-town ambiance are here to be enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

## The City has a talented and dedicated staff that is very effective with the limited resources they have

- › “The people who work here are the best. We can’t pay as much as other places around us, but we can make it a great place to work. It’s pretty unusual.”
- › “We have a pretty lean staff and a pretty full plate.”
- › “We’ve been trying to trim the fat for years, but I don’t know how much there is to cut out.”
- › “We’re consistently efficient with lean resources. Given what we have to accomplish, we accomplish it quite well.”
- › “We’re still being asked to do everything with fewer resources. It affects employee morale.”
- › “We have less staff and less resources than most of our neighbors and we put out a better product.”
- › “We can count on them for putting a lot of time, money and energy into events that bring people to Atascadero and into our downtown.”
- › “They support existing business very well. They have been very supportive through the years.”

## There is a desire to focus on fewer highly impactful priorities

- › “It’s easier to measure things you do if it’s going to impact the largest number of community members.”
- › “If you add something new, you have to take something away.”
- › “The more scattered we are, the less focus we will have on the important things.”
- › “What can we do with the resources we have?”
- › “[We struggle with] being able to tell the community no.”
- › “I don’t want strategic planning to be: ‘Here are the 25 goals we want accomplish this year.’”
- › “Expectations from the public and the Council are rising without the resources to deal with it.”

## Aligning on a common vision for the City and community will help clarify our priorities

- › “Try to find our identity, we don’t really have an identity beyond a bedroom community.”
- › “We need to have Council and City staff on the same page as far as vision.”
- › “I would like for us to figure out what is the identity for Atascadero. Things like culture, who are we, how do we identify ourselves, what makes us, us?”
- › “[We need to] have a coherent vision of what our community is at least at a high level. If we have consensus of vision, the decision criteria is: ‘Does this get us closer or further from our vision?’”
- › “People are not going to want to go to a town that doesn’t have identity.”
- › “We want to be the best of who we are; we don’t want to lose that small-town feel.”
- › “How do we continue to make Atascadero a destination? How can we make Atascadero more attractive as a destination?”

## Generating additional revenue for the City is seen as essential

- › “Maintaining and improving City services, in an economy that doesn’t generate much sales tax or TOT—how do we provide a sufficient level of services with less money?”
- › “[There are] things we’d love to do but don’t have enough money for.”
- › “How do we increase City revenue?”
- › “Being proud of the fact that we charge less for everything [is] running our city into the ground.”
- › “Our expenses and our needs are outpacing our revenue. I don’t know that we can bring in enough retail and TOT to fill that gap in the long-term.”
- › “If we have something people truly want, I think people are willing to pay more to get that.”
- › “Our zoo is a drain on City services... it’s a tough one because a lot of the community take pride in having the County’s only zoo.”

## Economic development, with a focus on revitalizing downtown, is still an opportunity

- › “We can’t keep being this bedroom community we’ve been for 100 years.”
- › “Jobs into our community is a key one. Particularly tech jobs because we don’t have the physical space to accommodate much else”
- › “We have a lot of development coming in and we have the opportunity to do things right.”
- › “Let’s create the kind of environment where you want to take your kids on a Saturday night.”
- › “We have for years tried to have a more vital downtown and only in the last five years have we made progress.”
- › “We need to focus on our business community and in particular making our downtown thrive... if we don’t get that right and the downtown is dead... then we won’t attract more investment, we won’t get additional services, we won’t be attractive to employers.”
- › “One of the focus areas I would like to see is the continued activation of vacant lots and buildings in the downtown. As much as there is so much growth, these vacant lots detract from the beauty of what has grown.”
- › “[We should foster] partnerships with local developers to have collaboration and joint understanding of the types of businesses we would like to see in the community.”
- › “Whether we like it or not, we need a more diverse housing stock. We don’t need more 5,000 square foot homes on 3-acre lots. We need more townhomes and apartments.”
- › “We could be making a better plan to avoid some of the issues around parking. Stay in front of that.”
- › “I talk to new businesses, or businesses hoping to come to this community, who get different answers from different departments, or either from staff members in the same department. The process to get through permitting to open your doors can be tedious, difficult, and inconsistent.”
- › “We have a lot of interested parties wanting to be a part of our growth.”
- › “There is a perception that we’re so business friendly that people can go forward without permission and without consequence.”



## Quality of life concerns, including wildfire readiness and the homeless population, are top of mind

- › “Fire Station 1 needs significant Improvements just for safety.”
- › “We have to address homelessness.”
- › “Fire safety is a big issue for everyone.”
- › “We underfund and understaff our police and fire.”
- › “It’s a challenge for us to deal with the homeless community. Some of the community’s efforts to help homeless folks draws more people to the city.”
- › “We need address housing because there is money coming for it from the state. We need to do it on our terms.”
- › “Homelessness... if we don’t talk about it the public will bring that back up.”
- › “I would love, at the end of two years, for the City to have a solution for the people who are experiencing homelessness—a plan to help them in some way.”
- › “I don’t think we can blame the homelessness on the City, but somehow it seems to be our problem to deal with.”

## Appendix 2: Other Discussions

The City Council, Staff Leadership, and members of the public identified the following as context for developing the City's two-year goals.

### Recent Accomplishments

- › LAMP – Local Agency Management Plan
- › Downtown progress
- › Streamlining tree ordinance
- › Community events
- › Event growth
- › Purchasing ordinance
- › Groundwater sustainability
- › Zoning
- › Co-working space
- › Centennial bridge
- › Homeless emergency
- › Joy Park
- › Creekside building
- › Trak-it
- › Hotel
- › Echo
- › New zoo exhibits
- › Red panda
- › Cornhole tournaments
- › Historical park
- › Downtown BID
- › Road improvements
- › El Camino
- › La Plaza
- › New city properties
- › New Lake Park playground
- › Farmers market
- › Reputation ++
- › Firefighter grant
- › Bridge walk hotel
- › Traffic calming
- › Disbanded parks & rec
- › Marketing assets & collaborations
- › Expanded visitor center
- › Laser
- › Rural sourcing
- › New chamber brand
- › Boys & Girls Club
- › Cannabis tax
- › Animal shelter

## Positive Trends

- › More experiential retail
- › State \$ for housing, fire, homeless
- › Wine & beer boom
- › More interest in Atascadero
- › Downtown thriving due to more events
- › State incentives for affordable housing
- › Increase in spirits sales
- › Modular & prefab conservation
- › More awareness of climate change
- › Rural sourcing trend
- › Focus on civility in politics
- › Inter city/ county cooperation
- › Fiber optic internet
- › Water sustainability
- › Appreciation for local artisans
- › More diverse population
- › Higher quality development
- › More women in leadership
- › Intervention at an early age against addiction
- › Career Technical Education (CTE) training at high school

## Negative Trends

- › Decriminalization at state level
- › Housing requirements
- › Less traditional retail
- › Fire risk
- › More rooms, lower occupancy
- › Increased traffic, road deterioration
- › PERS
- › Labor competition
- › Closure of Diablo
- › Decrease in beer sales
- › Flat wine sales
- › Too expensive for middle class
- › Pushing tax burden to business
- › Polarization in politics
- › Waste water
- › County self-help/ infrastructure
- › Homelessness
- › Opioid addiction, young adults
- › Volatility in recycling

## Appendix 3: Goals Brainstorm

The City Council and Staff Leadership individually brainstormed several potential goals before aligning on final Strategic Priorities

- › Continue Downtown Revitalization
- › Vibrant Downtown
- › Downtown Success
- › Enhance Downtown Shopping/Dining Experience
- › Continue to Promote Our Assets:
  - Vibrant Downtown
  - Outdoors, Hiking, Biking
  - Zoo
  - Central Location
- › Economic Development Focus Through Marketing Efforts
- › Economic Growth to Support Services
- › Expanded Base of Jobs and Opportunities
- › Balance our Economy with more HOH Jobs – How do we incentivize/facilitate?
- › Economic Development –
  - Downtown
  - Restaurants
- › Promote Economic Development
- › Employee Retention
- › Employees
- › Staff Retention
- › Employees (morale), Community within a Community
- › Maintain Natural Resources and Provide Outdoor Recreation
- › Streamline Local Regulation and Staff Processes
- › Disaster Readiness
  - Wildland
  - Evacuation
  - Community Preparedness
- › Sustainably Safe Community
- › Public Safety
- › Community Risk Preparedness
- › Facilities
- › Staffing
- › Public Safety Enhanced
- › Wildfire Protection
- › Police Needs
- › Public Safety (Fire)
- › Public Safety (Police) Public Outreach
- › Improve Communication with Community
- › Communication
- › El Camino Plan
- › Del Rio Specific Plan II
- › Long-Term Planning – Sphere of Influence
- › Traffic Calming
- › Grow/Enhance Existing Signature Events
- › Reliable and Cost-Efficient Infrastructure
- › Special Projects (Prioritization)
- › Revenue Generation. e.g. Tax measure, Increase Sewer Rates
- › Revenue to Support Vision
- › Have Economic Sustainability
- › Build Reserves
- › Resource Optimization
  - Increase Revenue
  - Eliminate Non-Essentials
  - Stick to Decision Criteria
- › Cost Analysis
- › Close the Gap Between Revenue and Expenditures Including Long-Term Infrastructure Needs and Employee Constraints
- › Maintain/Enhance Fiscal Position
- › Resources
- › Stay Focused on the Other Two [Goals]



## Appendix 4: Propelling Questions

The City Council, Staff Leadership, and members of the public worked in small groups to identify potential barriers and solutions to achieving the City's goals.

**How can we leverage place-making when we have geographic challenges, specifically: size, parking or infrastructure?**

**We can if...**

1. We do specific plans that narrow our focus to have specific desirable businesses/outcomes per zone.
2. We are more creative with stepping outside the box and promoting experience-like businesses.
3. We work closely with the Planning Department to get creative with the spaces we have in Atascadero. e.g. food trucks—making best use of small spaces.

**How can we leverage place-making when we have business not wanting to move to our area?**

**We can if...**

1. We expand our marketing into larger metro cities, e.g. San Jose. Educating local as well.
2. We provide incentives to attract people here/more partnerships-bridging the gap. Business Success Checklist that includes the Chamber & the resources they have—"The Bridge to Success" Terrie Banish
3. We focus on the quality of life Atascadero provides. Promoting large & educated workforce.

**How can we increase Head of Household jobs; internet home jobs, mindspace growth when we have poorly planned commercial areas?**

**We can if...**

1. We develop fiber optic infrastructure
2. We complete (El Camino Plan), Housing Element and as catalyst for General Plan update, change zoning along ECR for more apartments, multi-family, workforce housing
3. We redo the specific plan for Del Rio

**How can we leverage place making when we have no open flat land for development, small properties need to be combined and we have uncooperative landlords?**

**We can if...**

1. We develop policies to deal with problems as above
2. We partner with community groups like SCORE, EVC to help new business thrive
3. We expect quality, prepared ventures

**How can we increase property value to make development happen downtown when we have vacant property & uncooperative/out of town landlords?**

**We can if...**

1. We develop a vacancy tax modeled after need abatement ordinance
2. We enforce vacant property maintenance standard
3. We decorate vacant windows
4. We provide lighting at night
5. We liberalize possibilities on their property re: height restrictions
6. We provide incentives to renovate incompatible uses, change prop 13 to increase property tax revenue, or sell it
7. We embrace cannabis industry/ manufacturing

8. Charging station for public downtown (free or Charge Point)

#### How can we have safety readiness & risk mitigation when we have lack of funding?

##### We can if...

1. We create a Go Fund Me Account, fundraising for new fire station
2. The public can contribute directly to the cause – fund staff volunteer – citizen academy – patrols – youth explorer growth or program
3. We offer incentives; ride in police car & fire truck, ride on helicopter, public recognition – paper, council meetings

#### How can we increase public perception of readiness when we have public apathy?

##### We can if...

1. We participate on radio shows and we can offer incentives to people who participate – i.e. ride on fire truck
2. We have a neighborhood/ group champion, we use our recreation guide, we provide mailers
3. We concentrate the message – 1-week blast
  - a. Involve school kids
  - b. Involve community groups
  - c. Use NextDoor
  - d. Public recognition

#### How can we ensure comprehensive safety readiness & risk mitigation when we have fuels unique to Atascadero that burn quickly?

##### We can if...

1. We bring in a fire behavior/ fuel expert that helps us to weigh out the pros & cons of protective measures
2. We share the knowledge from & to residents
3. We start a “Defend Atascadero” program to rally community around taking fire safety measure in their space
4. We get the word out through Talk on the Block

#### How can we ensure comprehensive safety readiness & risk mitigation when we have limited personnel?

##### We can if...

1. We introduce a tax measure for public safety
2. We utilize grants towards people, equipment
3. We utilize volunteers
4. We look to CCC for use
5. We use functional consolidation
6. We leverage partnerships for non-emerging calls for service (county/RideToCare Spokane)

#### How can we grow revenue when we have limited revenue-generating business, limited access to transportation, and no quality broadband services?

##### We can if...

1. We do cannabis sales & productions
2. We increase access to transportation – airport, etc. for tourism and business
3. We increase sales tax, close the zoo or offset with tax specific for the zoo
4. We attract large industry that can offer support on tax base & employment incentives
5. We expand on quality businesses that contribute to sales tax base
6. We develop quality broadband

7. We increase revenue from already existing infrastructure, i.e. zoo memberships, sewage treatment (We need reminders sent to zoo society members)

**How can we boost staff morale when we have constrained resources?**

**We can if...**

1. We increase “salaries” (non-monetary incentives – making it enjoyable) or increase revenue – another ½ cent sales tax measure
  - a. lunch & learn
  - b. departmental challenges
2. We use contract services where feasible
3. We hire additional “staff” or reduce service levels, decrease workload (eliminating non-essential tasks)
  - a. increasing training opportunities
4. We allow flexible schedules (i.e. core hours)