

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY COUNCIL

Jerry L. Clay, Sr., Mayor

George Luna, Mayor Pro-Tem
Becky Pacas, Council Member

Wendy Scalise, Council Member
Tom O'Malley, Council Member

CITY MANAGER

Wade G. McKinney

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY STAFF

John A. Jansons

PARTICIPANTS

Atascadero Chamber of Commerce
Atascadero Main Street Organization
Economic Vitality Corporation of San Luis Obispo County

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Section 1-Economic Development an Strategy Overview	8
1.1 What is Economic Development?	
1.2 Benefits of Economic Development	
1.3 Purpose of an Economic Development Strategy	
1.4 Economic Development Vision Statement / Mission Statement	
1.5 Key Objectives of the Strategy	
1.6 Strategic Plan Process	
1.7 Utilizing the Strategy	
1.8 Updating the Strategy	
1.9 Benchmarking / Measurement of Results	
Section 2-Community Profile	14
2.1 Demographics	
2.2 Labor Force	
2.3 Employment / Unemployment	
2.4 Taxable Retail Sales	
2.5 Hotel Tax Receipts	
2.6 Transportation	
2.7 Utilities	
2.8 Commercial Land Inventory	
Section 3- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analysis.....	19
3.1 SWOT Matrix	20
Section 4-Economic Development Action Plan.....	21
4.1 Business Development Program	22
4.2 Community Image and Promotion Program	24
4.3 Community Revitalization Program	25
4.4 Economic Development Partnerships	28

Section 5 - Economic Development Partners.....	30
Local, Regional, State, and Education	
Credits	31
List of Tables.....	32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of economic development, present economic development strategic planning, review the community's profile and outline a comprehensive approach and work plan that Atascadero can undertake to strengthen and diversify its economy. The actions provide a multi-faceted approach to business retention and attraction by addressing the need to maintain the City's existing retail base, add more diversity to the economy, and ensure that Atascadero is a viable, healthy community where business owners, workers, and their families want to live.

By dedicating City resources and staff to an Economic Development Strategy, the City of Atascadero has signaled that economic development is a high priority. However, this Strategy is only one of several documents that, linked together, set the overall direction for Atascadero economic development. The others documents are the **General Plan**, the **Redevelopment Plan**, **Downtown Revitalization Plan**, and **Economic Investment Strategy**.

Economic Development is a set of policies, programs and procedures undertaken to foster business attraction, business retention, business expansion, job creation, and progressive employment opportunities for the enhancement of the community's economic base.

The benefits of Economic Development include; increased employment, a broadened tax base, rising income levels, reduced unemployment and underemployment, upgraded labor force skill and productivity and a general improved standard of living for all community members.

The purpose of an Economic Development Strategy is to provide a framework for making sound decisions, allocate limited economic development resources among alternative projects; and improve the coordination among the many organizations responsible for implementing economic development activities in Atascadero.

The *Vision* and *Mission* statements for this strategy and resulting Economic Development program are:

VISION: *The City of Atascadero's Office of Economic Development's activities should result in increased employment opportunities, higher wages, a broader tax base for the City, and an improved standard of living for residents. This will be accomplished in a programmed manner that preserves and protects the environment, natural resources, cultural amenities, and the overall quality of life.*

MISSION: *The City of Atascadero Office of Economic Development will utilize a set of policies, programs and procedures that foster business attraction, business retention, business expansion, job creation, and progressive employment opportunities for the enhancement of a Community's economic base.*

The strategy seeks to activate a community vision to provide an overall direction for economic development activities. The *Vision* and *Mission* statements synthesize the common themes articulated in published City plans, citizen surveys, and the views expressed by community leaders in personal interviews. The strategy provides an overview of economic development, strategy development, community profile of Atascadero and its economy, and an action plan for directing economic development activities. The strategy also provides a method for evaluating the progress of economic development activities in expanding and diversifying Atascadero's economic base.

The development process of this strategy revealed findings from the project's information gathering phase, where three fundamental objectives for the Economic Development emerged that included 1) maintain and enhance the City's retail base. (Retention) 2) Reduce the City's retail dependence by diversifying the economy over the long term. (Recruitment) and 3) Enhance the qualities that make Atascadero a unique place to live work and play. (Community Enhancement and Smart Growth)

Thus, the framework for the Economic Development Strategy should be viewed as the three sides of a triangle. A triangle evokes images of a strong, stable, and balanced structure, and this is also a good representation of the overall intent of local economic development efforts that include: retail retention and expansion, long-term economic diversification and enhancing the qualities that make Atascadero unique place to live work and play.

Based upon input from a wide array of community stakeholders, predominant findings are highlighted below. Stakeholders have helped define the City's strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats, as well as define the community values and themes that should be expressed in the strategy and enhanced through its implementation.

In terms of expanding and improving the economy of Atascadero, Atascadero should be marketed and promoted to the investment community, business executives and owners, and the development community at the local, regional, and statewide level and beyond. Likewise, Atascadero is a community that has a number of unique features and characteristics. An assessment of Atascadero's strengths, weaknesses/challenges, opportunities, and threats provides a basis for further defining and improving our marketability to the business and investment community.

The Economic Development Action Plan consists of four main components that include Business Development, Community Image and Promotion, Community Revitalization, and Economic Development Partnerships.

The **Business Development Program** is proposed to establish and improve linkages between the local business community and the City to assist and improve interactions and dealings with the City and establish business assistance tools.

The **Community Image and Enhancement Program** is proposed to develop a positive identity for the City and the excellent quality of life that exists in Atascadero.

The **Community Revitalization Program** is a proposed improvement program to enhance the physical appearance, economic viability of business and properties, and the physical image of the community. Revitalization will be forwarded by maximizing redevelopment, unifying public improvements, developing design standards for downtown/major corridors, and investing in residential neighborhoods.

The fourth component of the Action Plan will foster **Economic Development Partnerships** to establish a comprehensive Economic Development management framework. This will include establishing clear policy and program direction from the City Council. To enhance existing collaborations and develop new ones, Economic Development efforts with the local business community, regional partners and the community as a whole will be emphasized and expanded.

The Economic Development strategy contains a process for benchmarking and measurement of results that includes an Annual Update on Economic Development presented the City Council to gauge and review the program's activities and progress. Also, the proposed Economic Development Strategy will be reviewed annually and amended as needed and as conditions demand.

The Economic Development Strategy is designed to be a living document that can be amended to reflect changes in economic conditions, opportunities, constraints and direction from the Council and community.

SECTION 1-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

1.1 What is Economic Development?

The economic development of a city is typically part of an overall regional development process. A key point to remember is that economic development is more than simply economic growth within a region. Regional development is a

comprehensive, systematic approach to development that seeks to create wealth and improve the standard of living in a region. Regional development involves the coordinated efforts of private businesses, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies at the national, state, county, and municipal levels. These parties must work together to define regional development goals, plan strategies to achieve those goals, and develop and implement a plan to attract, expand, and retain target industries and/or firms.

On the State level, the California Technology, Trade and Commerce Agency is the Statewide Economic Development organization. The regional organization charged with economic development is the Economic Vitality Corporation of San Luis Obispo County. At the local level, the City of Atascadero is responsible for citywide economic development activities and programs. The Economic Vitality Corporation of San Luis Obispo County has an outstanding track record in business recruitment, high technology partnerships, and a focus on retention and expansion of high technology computer related industries, biotechnology, and manufacturing.

Regional development is typically classified into two interrelated components: economic development and community development. Community development is a broader concept than economic development. It attempts to improve the overall quality of life for a region's inhabitants. The role of community development is characterized by broad social issues such as wage levels, distribution of income, poverty, unemployment or underemployment, housing, health care, education, literacy, culture, recreation, social services, and other factors that affect overall quality of life. This is not to be confused with a municipal Community Development Department that typically is responsible for planning department and building inspections functions as is the case in Atascadero and other adjacent cities.

Simply put, economic development can be defined as follows:

- ***A set of policies, programs and procedures that foster business attraction, business retention business expansion, job creation, and progressive employment opportunities for the enhancement of a Community's economic base.***
- ***The process of developing and maintaining suitable economic, social and political environments, in which balanced growth may be realized, increasing the wealth of the community.***
- ***Economic development can be defined as a sustainable process of:***
 - ***Creating economic opportunity for all citizens***
 - ***Stimulating business investment***
 - ***Diversifying the public revenue base***
 - ***Enhancing "quality of life"***

1.2 Benefits of Economic Development

The benefits of effective economic development are:

- Increased employment
- Broadened tax base
- Rising income levels
- Reduced unemployment and underemployment
- Improved standard of living
- Upgraded labor force skill levels and productivity

When conducted properly, economic development also mitigates the effects of many of the undesirable consequences of unrestrained growth, such as air and water pollution, traffic congestion, overcrowding, and poor zoning and land use.

1.3 Purpose of an Economic Development Strategy

The purpose of the City's economic development strategy is to:

- Provide a framework for making sound decisions,
- Allocate limited economic development resources among alternative projects; and
- Improve the coordination among the many organizations responsible for implementing economic development activities Atascadero.

1.4 Vision for Economic Development in Atascadero

The vision statement for this strategy is:

The City of Atascadero Office of Economic Development's activities should result in increased employment opportunities, higher wages, a broader tax base for the City, and an improved standard of living for its residents. This will be accomplished in a programmed manner that preserves and protects the environment, natural resources, cultural amenities, and the overall quality of life.

The Mission Statement for the Atascadero Economic Development Program is:

The City of Atascadero Office of Economic Development will utilize a set of policies, programs and procedures that foster business attraction, business retention, business expansion, job creation, and progressive employment opportunities for the enhancement of a Community's economic base.

1.5 Key Objectives of the Strategy

1) The strategy seeks to activate a community vision to provide an overall direction for economic development activities. The *Vision* and *Mission* statements synthesize the common themes articulated in published City plans, citizen surveys, and the views expressed by community leaders in personal interviews.

2) The strategy provides an overview of economic development, strategy development, community profile of Atascadero and its economy, and an action plan for directing economic development activities.

3) The strategy also provides a method for evaluating the progress of economic development activities in expanding and diversifying Atascadero's economic base.

1.6 Process of Developing the Economic Development Strategy

How was it created?

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • Creation of Draft Strategy and Action Plan | July 2002 |
| • Economic Development Community Input | September 2002 |
| • Rewrite of Draft including Community Comments | December 2003 |
| • Inclusion of City Council Strategic Goals Workshop | February 2003 |
| • Final Draft Economic Development Strategy | July 2003 |
| • Council Review and Consideration | October 2003 |

The development of an Atascadero Economic Development Strategy is a reflection of information and knowledge and input of local Economic Development stakeholders. Together, this helped to define the City's strengths, weaknesses opportunities, and challenges, as well as to define community values and themes that should be expressed in this Strategy and enhanced through its implementation.

What was revealed / learned?

Based on the findings from the project's information gathering phase, three fundamental objectives for the Economic Development Strategy emerged.

- **Maintain and enhance the City's retail base. (Retention and Expansion)**
- **Reduce the City's retail dependence by diversifying the economy over the long term. (Recruitment of Light Industrial, Commercial and Office Uses)**

- **Enhance the qualities that make Atascadero a unique place to live work and play. (Community Enhancement and Smart Growth)**

Thus, the framework for the Economic Development Strategy can be viewed as the three sides of a triangle. A triangle evokes images of a strong, stable, and balanced structure, and this is also a good representation of the overall intent of local economic development efforts:

- **Retail Retention and Strengthening**
- **Long-Term Economic Diversification**
- **Enhancing the Qualities that Make Atascadero a Unique Place**

1.7 Implementation of the Strategy

The primary tool for implementing this Strategy is the list of actions associated with each of the three major objectives listed above. Each action defines specific steps the City can take to reach its economic development goals (see attached Action Plan). Examples of some of the steps include but are not limited to:

- Recognize the "Opportunity Areas" as key locations (Attraction/ Retention)
- Maintain close communications with retailers/property owners (Attraction/ Retention)
- Create and distribute a broker's "Retailer's Guide" to Atascadero (Retail Retention)
- Develop and implement a city image campaign (Image Enhancement)
- Undertake long-term planning to enhance strategic location (Diversification)
- Develop list of opportunity sites and establish targeted uses (Diversification)
- Promote high quality education (Human Capital)
- Enhance and promote the city's housing stock and residential neighborhoods (Neighborhood Enhancement)

Implementing an Economic Development Strategy requires teamwork among many partners. Critical team members in this process include the City Council, City Staff, the Atascadero Chamber of Commerce and Atascadero Main Street, workforce/education partners and private sector partners such as financial institutions, real estate professionals, developers, property owners and businesspersons.

One aspect of this team-oriented approach is the need to identify an initial point of contact for the City's business attraction function. For Atascadero, this person who functions as the economic development coordinator is the Deputy Executive Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency. It is his/her role is to screen inquiries and direct interested parties to other appropriate team members.

1.8 Updating the Strategy

The final adopted Strategy is intended to be adaptable, forward looking and responsive. Following each annual review of the economic development program, the Strategy may be amended to reflect current economic conditions, changes and innovations in industry, and opportunities that present themselves throughout the five-year life of the Strategy. The update process will again include community stakeholders to shape and polish the proposed new/revised strategy.

In year four of the adopted strategy (2007), a process shall commence to update a proposed new five-year strategy for Fiscal Years 2008-2013, prior to the expiration of the existing Strategy.

1.9 Benchmarking / Measurement of Results

The success, or lack of success, in producing beneficial economic change in the community will be assessed annually with an update and progress report on Economic Development in Atascadero presented to the Council for consideration, review and comment. The *Economic Development Progress Report* will include:

- **Business Development**
 - Total Number of businesses
 - Number of New businesses
 - Number of closed/relocated businesses
 - Attraction, Expansion and Retention Activity

- **Commercial Development Update**
 - New Development / Buildings
 - Apartments Production

- **Employment**
 - Employment levels
 - Unemployment rate
 - Revision of Top Employers

- **Municipal Revenue**
 - Sales Tax Receipts
 - Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Receipts

- **Public Infrastructure /Capital improvement investment**

The *Economic Development Progress Report* will also include an evaluation of plan's effectiveness and propose changes if necessary to address findings contained in the annual report.

SECTION 2-COMMUNITY PROFILE

Compared to countywide figures, Atascadero proportionately has fewer low-income households, more middle-income households, and a comparable proportion of higher-income households. The median household in Atascadero is high for the county, but comparable to statewide figures. Atascadero has more people to support in each household than is typical for the county and the state. The poverty rate in Atascadero is far below county and state averages according to the last census. Atascadero is solid middle-income community. Compared to the countywide age distribution, Atascadero tends to have more younger middle-aged adults and children, reflecting a strong family-oriented community.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 2.1

		1990	2000	Estimate 2002
Population		23,903	26,411	27,177
Median Age		33.3	38.2	38.8
Household Income				
	Median Household Income	\$35,140	\$48,725	\$55,179
	Median Family Income	\$39,344	\$55,009	\$59,460
Housing Units		9520	9,848	-
	% Owner Occupied	-	65.6%	-
	% Tenant Occupied	-	34.4	-
	Vacancy Rate	4.4%	3.8%	3.2%
Median Home Price		\$140,500	\$196,000	\$265,000

2.2 LABOR FORCE

Atascadero's labor force includes 13,980 persons according to the California Employment Development Department. The economic base of the city has been oriented to service positions including staff at the college, university, Atascadero State Hospital and California Men's Colony. The unemployment rate has been historically low, but there has been significant out migration due to the lack of jobs. The work force has been relatively skilled and dependable. Companies can expect to draw employees from a much larger pool. The following table depicts the top ten employers in Atascadero for 2002.

The economy of Atascadero remains relatively stable because about one-fourth of all residents work for some level of government. Major employer for the past 40 years in Atascadero is the State Hospital with +/- 2000 employees. Labor in large restaurants and grocery stores tends to be unionized. Except for large construction firms, the construction trades are almost completely non-unionized. Typically, other retail trade and service workers are non-unionized.

Further information on the area's workforce and labor can be obtained from the CA Employment Development Department or from the *Atascadero CA Area Workforce Report*, by PFRESOURCES, January 2001 available on file with the City.

2.3 EMPLOYMENT-UNEMPLOYMENT

TABLE 2.3

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	13,190	13,660	13,980	14,760
Employment	12,860	13,350	13,680	14,370
Unemployment	330	310	300	390
Rate	2.5%	2.3%	2.1%	2.6%

2.3.1 TOP EMPLOYERS

TABLE 2.3.1

	Name	Industry	# Employees*
1	Atascadero State Hospital	Corrections / Health Care	2006
2	Atascadero Unified Sch. District	Education	679
3	Albertson's	Grocery/Drug	230
4	Home Depot	Retail Trade	155
5	K-Mart	Retail Trade	155
6	City of Atascadero	Public Administration	120**
7	Food 4 Less	Grocery/Drug	105
8	Atascadero Ford	Vehicle Sales and Service	67
9	Weatherby	Manufacturing	45
10	Idler's	Retail Sales	30

*Full-Time and Part-Time Employees-2002, **Full Time Only

2.4 TOTAL TAXABLE RETAIL SALES

Atascadero's largest sales tax generators are new and used automotive dealers, building supply and home improvement, general consumer goods, food and drug and fuels.

TABLE 2.4

	2000	2002	% Change
Atascadero	\$260,000,000	\$318,300,000	18%
SLO County	\$2,600,400,000	\$2,974,900,000	12.5%

2.5 TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX RECEIPTS

The City collects a Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) all hotel, motel and bed and breakfast lodging establishment room sales. The current rate is ten percent of the room rate. In November of 2002, the voters approved an increase in the TOT rate from nine percent to then current rate of ten percent.

TABLE 2.5

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
8 Hotels and Motels	\$190,000	\$211,000	\$261,000	\$304,000	\$290,000
322 Rooms					
Rate 10 %					
<small>52 New Rooms- Carlton, 2004</small>					

2.6 TRANSPORTATION

Air: 20 miles to San Luis Obispo County Airport which is served by commuter airlines with service to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Phoenix. The Paso Robles Airport is located 15 miles north for charter, courier, and private service.

Bus: Greyhound Bus Lines serves Atascadero with Los Angeles and San Francisco transfer routes. Atascadero Transit provides door-to-door and fixed route service, weekdays only. Frequent commuter bus service is available daily to San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles.

Rail: Atascadero is located on the Southern Pacific Line with freight and Amtrak connections in San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles.

Truck: Carriers serve the general area for daily pickups and deliveries. There are overnight deliveries to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Highways: U.S. Highway 101, State Highway 41 (Adjacent and Immediate)

CA Highway 46 (8 miles N) **U.S. Interstate I-5** (45 Miles N.E.)

2.7 UTILITIES

Utility service in Atascadero is divided between Private and Public sector providers. The following table lists utility services and the service provider:

TABLE 2.7

Utility	Provider
Water	Atascadero Mutual Water Co
Electric Power	Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)
Natural Gas	Southern California Gas Company.
Telephone	SBC Communications (Pacific Bell), Various Private Cellular Carriers
Sewer Service	City of Atascadero
Storm Drainage	City of Atascadero
Flood Control	City of Atascadero

2.8 COMMERCIAL LAND INVENTORY

There is available land (all privately held) in commercial, industrial and categories available for development. Estimates by land use category are shown below:

TABLE 2.8

Land Use	Zoned	Used	Available
General Commercial	432 Acres	219 Acres	213 Acres
Industrial	65 Acres	41 Acres	24 Acres
Office	45 Acres	23 Acres	22 Acres

2.8.1 Large Available Existing Commercial Sites

TABLE 2.8.1

Address/Name	Potential Build-Out	Proposed Uses, Comments
Home Depot Center	225K Sq Ft	2nd Anchor and Retail Pads Available
Dove Creek/US 101	300K Sq Ft	Regional Commercial Development
San Anselmo/ECR*	80K Sq Ft	Key Corner Site
Del Rio /ECR*	150K Sq Ft	Neighborhood Commercial Center
Portola/US 101*	170K Sq Ft	Freeway Commercial
Curbaril/ECR*	20K Sq Ft	Infill in Existing Grocery/Drug Center
Traffic Way/ECR*	45K Sq Ft	Key Downtown Infill Location

*Asterisk Denotes El Camino Real, Atascadero's Main Commercial Thoroughfare

SECTION 3- SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

In terms of expanding and improving the economy of Atascadero, Atascadero should be marketed and promoted to the investment community, business executives and owners, and the development community at the local, regional, and statewide level and beyond.

Likewise, Atascadero is a community that has a number of unique features and characteristics. An assessment of Atascadero’s strengths, weaknesses/challenges, opportunities, and threats provides a basis for further defining and improving our marketability to the business and investment community.

Based upon input from a wide array of community stakeholders, predominant findings are highlighted below. Stakeholders have helped define the City’s strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats, as well as define the community values and themes that should be expressed in the strategy and enhanced through its implementation.

3.1 “SWOT” MATRIX:

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

	Internal	External
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial City Council, Management and Administration • Financial Stability • Redevelopment Agency • Smart Growth Principals and Practices • Resource Allocation for Economic Development • # of Freeway Interchanges • Carlton Hotel Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Desirability • Transportation-Dictates “Smart” Growth • Location • Climate • Retirement Investment • Second Career Entrepreneurs
Weaknesses/ Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Tax Leakage • Housing Cost • Housing Availability • Misinformation / Misunderstanding re: benefits of development • Building Inventory • Developable Sites • Infrastructure • Roads • Quality of Freeway interchanges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Cost • Housing Availability • Land Cost • Developable Sites • Opposition to Growth • Misinformation / Misunderstanding re: benefits of development • Regional Representation • Identity and Recognition • Infrastructure • Accessibility (Roads, Air, Rail)

<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-Capture Sales Tax Leakage • Expand commercial and light industrial opportunities through re-zoning • Leverage RDA TI into projects • Redevelop Underutilized Sites • Redevelop Brownfield Sites • Create Regional Commerce Opportunity Zones • Annexation • West Side Commercial Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Funding • Migration of Capital • Carlton Hotel as a Downtown Revitalization Catalyst • Identity and Recognition • RDA Property Acquisitions
<p>Threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-migration 2 Income households & highest producers • “Graying” Demographics • Slow or No-Growth Sentiment • Brain/Talent Drain-Exodus • Uncompetitive Compensation • NIMBYism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighboring Commercial Dominance • Macro-Economy • State Budget • Natural Disaster /Terrorist Incident • Commercial Down-Zoning

SECTION 4- ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Economic Development Action Plan is to establish a results oriented program of integrated strategies and tasks that focus the resources of Atascadero on the economic betterment of the community and enhancement of its unique quality of life. The Action Plan creates opportunities for economic growth through job creation and capital investment by building strategic partnerships among local citizens, community groups, business, education, public utilities and government.

ACTION PLAN PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The Business Development Program establishes and improves linkages between the local business community and the City to assist and improve interactions and dealings with the City and establish business assistance tools to foster business retention, expansion, investment and attraction.

- **COMMUNITY IMAGE AND PROMOTION PROGRAM**

The Community Image and Promotion program is designed to develop a positive identity for the City and the excellent quality of life that exists in Atascadero to support business retention, expansion, investment and attraction activities.

- **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

The Community Revitalization Program is an improvement program to enhance the physical appearance, economic viability of properties and

businesses and image of the community. Community Revitalization is targeted to unify public improvements, develop design standards for downtown and major corridors, aid and beautify residential neighborhoods and maximize redevelopment.

- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS**

The Partnership Program establishes a comprehensive framework for Economic Development management and seeks to establish clear policy and program direction from the City Council to combine and coordinate available Economic Development management skills and expertise to implement Economic Development programs, and promote and to expand participation in Economic Development efforts in partnership with the local business community and with the community as a whole.

4.1 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Establish and improve linkages between the local business community and the City to assist and improve interactions and dealings with the City and establish business assistance tools

A. Business Retention and Expansion

Develop new, and refine existing policies and programs that are proactive and responsive and to identify new opportunities in business retention and development

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Local Business Outreach Program
- b) Business retention survey(s)
- c) Establish a local business public relations campaign "Shop Atascadero"
- d) Work closely with the Chamber and Main Street to achieve mutual goals
- e) Initiate a new business welcome program
- f) Educational training and information resources on trends, demographics and statistics.
- g) Maintain a current and historical database of Atascadero businesses
- e) Market Financial Assistance programs and opportunities
- f) Continue Permit and License process Improvement

B. Business Attraction

Establish a marketing campaign to attract businesses in identified industrial, commercial, and retail business clusters.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Develop Site Inventory and Referral Materials
- b) Market site development, and Assembly Opportunities
- c) Create industrial, commercial, retail and housing facts sheets
- d) Establish a targeted industry marketing campaign
- e) Cooperatively or individually participate in trade shows, fairs, etc
- f) Obtain an display / exhibit booth
- g) Seek investment from outside San Luis Obispo County to expand Atascadero's economy and quality of life

C. Target Industries

- Wine-Related Businesses and Industry
- Tourism and Visitor Serving Businesses
- Retail Businesses:
Boutique, Destination, Regional, and Point of Sale
- Light Manufacturing
- Intellectual Industries (IE: Software Design)

D. Development Review and Permitting Processes

Evaluate and review City development and permitting processes and fees in order to streamline the procedures and minimize the costs of starting or expanding local businesses.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Expanded business development through streamlining permit processes
- b) Create a "New Business Startup Guide" that describes the City's business-friendly environment,
- c) Efficient and effective coordination between City departments and with other agencies to promote business growth.
- d) Competitive fee structure so fees are not an impediment to business growth.
- e) Assisting existing and new businesses through the permitting process.

E. Business Incentives

Implement the Economic Investment Strategy to induce investment and business attraction, expansion, and retention.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Utilize incentive policies and implement financial assistance programs for business development.
(Economic Investment Strategy as Adopted by the City Council on April 14, 1998.)
- b) Develop and distribute promotional and informational materials relating to financial and non-financial incentives.
- c) Research, identify, develop, and implement non-City financing programs available to business to meet short and long-term needs.

4.2. COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Improvement program enhance physical appearance, economic viability of properties, business and physical image maximize Redevelopment, unify public improvements, develop design standards for Downtown/major corridors, aid residential neighborhoods.

A. Commercial Corridor Appearance Enhancement

Develop new, and amend current, policies and programs that are designed to improve the appearance of the commercial corridor, and the economic vitality of the community.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Maintain effective and proactive code enforcement and clean up campaign with appearance and maintenance standards, removal of abandoned and illegal signs, and abandoned and dilapidated structures.
- b) Develop and implement the Downtown Revitalization Plan through planning, capital improvements, and marketing and promotions.

B. Business Property Revitalization

Assist local businesses to aid in physical and economic improvements to the commercial corridors

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a revolving improvement loan program
- b) Encourage job creation and entrepreneurial opportunities and new or existing business development and ownership. .
- c) Establish assistance programs for reducing commercial corridor and downtown vacancies through relocation of home based businesses

C. Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Design and establish long-range commercial corridor public infrastructure plans

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Improvement plans for public areas: downtown, Citywide landscaping and traffic calming and safety
- b) Prepare and implement a Gateway design plan.
- c) Long range plan for public parking areas to counter current inadequacy
- d) Capital improvement program to identify necessary capital improvements to support private investment and reinvestment

D. Neighborhood Improvement and Development Programs

Develop and implement a comprehensive program for addressing the housing needs of the community and to reduce and eliminate appearance deficiencies in neighborhoods

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Improvement plan for designated residential neighborhoods
- b) Step-up code compliance efforts for clean neighborhoods
- c) Preservation of the community's marketable and unique qualities through thoughtful control of new development

4.3 COMMUNITY IMAGE AND PROMOTION PROGRAM

Community Image and Promotion Program is to develop a positive identity for the City and the excellent quality of life that exists in Atascadero.

A. Community Regional Marketing (Market Atascadero to outside world)

Develop focused strategies and collateral marketing materials to promote Atascadero as a quality business and residential location, emphasizing the City's excellent quality of life.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Economic development promotion campaign utilizing all marketing tools
- c) Promote an Atascadero identification program
- d) Annually/periodically update the City's marketing materials
- e) Assist/contribute to updating of the City's web pages
Complete Economic Development/ Redevelopment Agency web site
- f) Identify optimal periodical advertising to publicize Atascadero's business opportunities and quality of life.
- g) Develop promotional interactive CD's
- h) Create presentation package/kit for distribution
- i) Development meetings and conferences, as well as visitors and tourists.
- j) Establish a photo/slide library and PowerPoint presentation for promotion
- k) Annual Special Events (i.e., Festival, Colony Days, etc.) to attract tourists and to promote community and community-based activities.

B. Tourism and Film Marketing

Establish a highly visible site for the City's Visitor's Information Center, marketing campaign targeting the film and entertainment industry.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) City gateway features and signage for image enhancement and visitor attraction
- b) Collaborate with the California Visitor's Centers and SLO Co. CVB
- c) Create a film industry location guide and production policy
- d) Create visitor's profile
- e) Create a Visitor destination inventory
- f) Create an events and promotions calendar and assist with the promotion and advertising of the events.

C. Community Local Marketing (Marketing Atascadero to Atascadero)

As a part of the comprehensive marketing program, establish a plan to enlist Atascadero citizens' and businesses' support in marketing the community. Through information and education, mobilize individuals as spokespersons and ambassadors extolling the virtues of living and working in Atascadero to potential residents and businesses. Develop and implement community economic development "awareness" programs.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) City audio-visual Library of photos/videos of quality of life in the City to attract relocation of visitors, potential workers, and businesses.
- b) Promotion through local cable access, print, radio and interactive CDs.
- c) Assist and promote local community events.
- d) Create/Distribute a City and/or Agency Newsletter.
- e) Design and maintain City and Agency website(s)

D. Cooperative Regional Marketing

Market Atascadero at the regional level throughout the County, the Central Coast, Statewide and beyond.

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) Create a tourism brochure.
- b) Participate in and support activities that market Atascadero and downtown Atascadero.
- c) Participate with the EVC and the Central Coast Marketing Team in events, educational seminars, business development and trade missions.

4.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

- Enhance the existing partnerships and establish new relationships with public and private economic development entities and stakeholders to leverage resources, talents, communications and opportunities.
- Establish clear policy and program direction from the City Council
- Combine and coordinate the available Economic Development management skills and expertise to implement Economic Development programs
- Promote and expand participation in Economic Development efforts with the local business community and with the community as a whole.

A. Program Implementation

Develop and refine responsive implementation of economic development programs:

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

- a) The City shall review annually and amend as necessary an economic development. Strategy and integrate into the City's annual budget process.
- b) Create an economic development team including staff from the Economic Development, Redevelopment Agency, City Manager, Community Development, and Public Works Departments.

c) Use marketing and economic development professionals/consultants to assist the Economic Development team in marketing, promotion and business attraction and expansion

d) Conduct and/or participate in regular economic development training for City employees, community members, and business and commercial participants to assist with business attraction, expansion and retention.

B. Strategic Partnerships

Expand Agency/City participation in economic development planning and actions with:

Public agencies, the private business sector, regional groups

Proposed Activities / Products / Tasks

a) Increase local community and business group participation in the City's economic development program with:

1. Atascadero Chamber of Commerce
2. The Atascadero Main Street Association
3. San Luis Obispo Economic Vitality Corporation
4. Private Industry Council of San Luis Obispo
5. State of California Employment Development Department
6. State of CA Department of Technology Trade and Commerce
7. CA Dept. of Housing and Community/Economic Development
8. Cuesta Community College Office of Economic Development
9. California State Polytechnic University - San Luis Obispo
10. University of California-Santa Barbara

b) Institute a cooperative team approach to the attraction, retention and expansion of local businesses to:

1. Expand the economic base
2. Create quality employment opportunities
3. Maintain Atascadero's excellent and unique quality of life

SECTION 5- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Local-Atascadero

- Atascadero Chamber of Commerce
- Atascadero Main Street
- Business Community
- Residents

Regional-San Luis Obispo County

- San Luis Obispo Economic Vitality Corporation
- Private Industry Council of San Luis Obispo
- San Luis Obispo County Office of Planning and Building

State Of California

- California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED)
- California Redevelopment Association (CRA)
- California Department of Housing and Community/Economic Development
- State of California Department of Technology Trade and Commerce
- State of California Employment Development Department

Education

- Atascadero Unified School District
- Cuesta Community College
- California State Polytechnic University - San Luis Obispo
- University of California - Santa Barbara

CREDITS

- **CA Department of Finance**
- **CA Employment Development Department**
- **City of Atascadero**
 - Administrative Services Department
 - Community Development Department
 - Public Works Department
- **Economic Vitality Corporation of San Luis Obispo County**
- **San Luis Obispo County**
- **University of California-Santa Barbara Economic Forecast**
- **US Census Bureau, 2000 Census**