

Atascadero Downtown Revitalization Plan

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CITY COUNCIL FINAL

CITY OF ATASCADERO COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

July 2000

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1 Introduction

Atascadero is located 17 miles inland, midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on Highway 101, and 20 miles north of San Luis Obispo. The historic center of Atascadero is the focus of the 2000 Downtown Revitalization Plan. Photo 1 shows the boundaries of the planning area.

This Downtown Revitalization Plan grew out of the City's 1999 Redevelopment Plan. The process used to prepare this Plan followed the "Main Street" model, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Redevelopment Plan identifies numerous goals, objectives and programs for improvements to the Downtown area including:

- Improvement of the downtown streetscape;
- Addition of anchor tenants to increase activity in the downtown;
- Improvement of public parking facilities in downtown;
- Expansion of entertainment facilities in the downtown;
- Financial and technical assistance in support of the Main Street program to stimulate community involvement; and
- Many others.

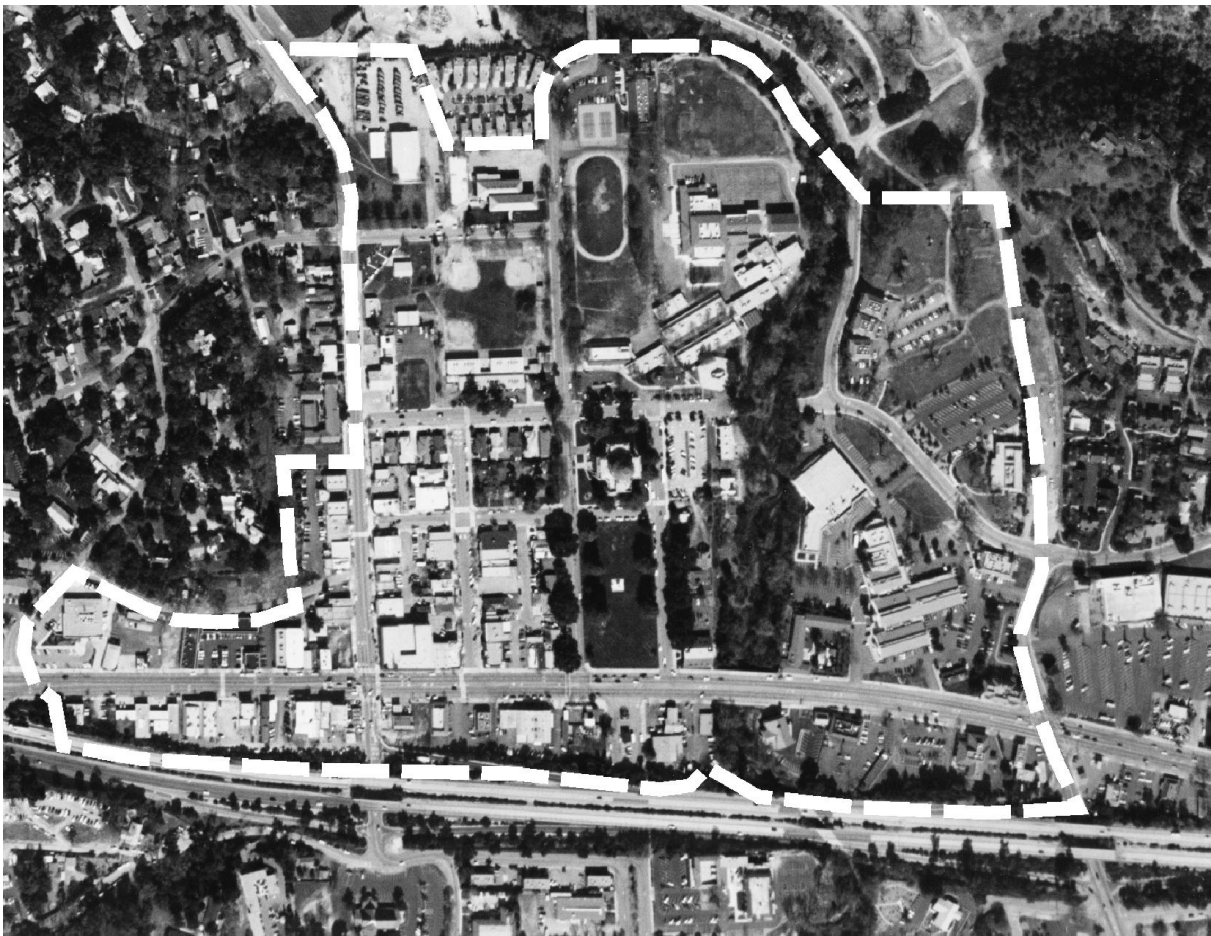


Photo 1. Aerial photograph of Downtown Atascadero.

Purpose

The purpose of the Downtown Revitalization Plan is to:

1. Implement the City's General Plan and Redevelopment Plan with a detailed focus on the Downtown area;
2. Develop a community consensus on an overall vision for the Downtown area;
3. Coordinate public and private investment in the area to realize the vision; and
4. Enhance the Downtown's character with public improvements and architectural standards to guide new development.

Relationship to Other City Plans

The Downtown Revitalization Plan is an "area plan" adopted by the City to implement the General Plan. The Downtown Revitalization Plan builds upon that foundation to provide more specific guidance for decision makers, property owners, business people and others involved in community development, commerce and community events. It is the result of focused community discussions and decisions on the Downtown and how to best implement the Redevelopment Plan. As such, the Plan represents the community's guidance to elected and appointed decision makers, property owners, developers and the public at large.

The Main Street Approach

The Main Street approach to downtown revitalization was developed by the National Main Street Center, a program of the National Trust for Historical Preservation. The approach is based on four points and relies on eight principles to produce fundamental changes in traditional commercial business districts. These are described below. Subsequent chapters of this plan address each of the four points of the Main Street approach.



Main Street's Four Points

Organization: Building an effective volunteer-driven management organization guided by professional staff with broad-based public and private support.

Promotion: Creating a unified, quality image and developing promotion strategies that bring people to the district.

Design: Enhancing the design and appearance of the district through historic preservation.

Economic Restructuring: Retaining and strengthening existing businesses, recruiting appropriate new businesses and developing appropriate economic restructuring strategies to sustain the economic vitality of the district.

◆
Over 1,200 communities have adopted the Main Street approach in the past 16 years, to look again at Main Street, their heart of the community, to save its historic buildings, to revive its commercial core, to strengthen business, to control community-eroding sprawl, and keep a sense of place and community life in America.
◆

Main Street's Eight Guiding Principles

1 – The Main Street approach is a comprehensive approach to revitalization. Unlike many revitalization strategies that have been tried in the past, the Main Street approach is comprehensive, addressing all the areas in which action must take place. Only one aspect of revitalization – design – has been addressed by most downtown and neighborhood commercial district programs, such as those which covered entire blocks of building facades with aluminum slipcovers, adopted false historic themes and applied them artificially to the fronts of buildings or demolished portions of the district in hopes of attracting a developer to build something new. Design improvements alone will not bring about meaningful change; effective marketing, a strong organizational base and solid economic development strategies are all necessary to reverse the cycle of decay from which many downtown and neighborhood commercial districts suffer, and to sustain preservation activity.

2 – The Main Street approach relies on quality. Downtown architecture can tell the history of a community. Traditional commercial buildings reflect the pride past generations felt for their communities. These buildings embody quality in construction, craft and style that cannot be replicated today – and which no shopping center can really imitate. The quality inherent in its commercial architecture and in the services offered by its businesses make a downtown unique in the marketplace and gives it many marketing advantages. The projects undertaken by the local Main Street should reflect this high level of quality to reinforce the district’s special characteristics.

3 – A public-private partnership is needed to make meaningful, long-term revitalization possible. To make a revitalization program successful, both public and private entities must be involved, as neither can bring about change alone. Each sector has unique skills and particular areas in which it works most effectively; combining the talents of both groups brings together all the skills necessary for revitalization to occur in a unified program.

4 – The Main Street program involves changing attitudes. The economic changes experienced by downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts in recent decades have made shoppers and investors skeptical about the downtown’s ability to regain economic viability. Because of its physical decay, many people have forgotten how important a downtown’s historic commercial buildings are to shaping the community’s identity and explaining its unique history. Changing people’s attitudes – demonstrating that positive change is taking place – is central to a successful revitalization program.

5 – The Main Street program focuses on existing assets. Each community is unique, and each downtown has special characteristics that set it apart from all others. By creating a strong revitalization effort based on the district’s unique heritage, each local Main Street program creates an organizational structure that builds on its own specific opportunities. In this way, the Main Street program is adaptable.

6 – Main Street is a self-help program. Without the will to succeed and the desire to work hard to create change, no revitalization program will succeed. Grant programs can help fund pieces of the work plan and consultants can provide guidance, but without local initiative, the Main Street approach will not work.

7 – The Main Street approach is incremental in nature. Downtown commercial areas did not lose their economic strength overnight; it happened over a period of years, with a number of small declines gradually leading to a severe downward spiral. Improvement must be gradual as well. Cataclysmic changes, like those brought about by urban renewal’s large-scale land clearance programs and massive infusions of funds to build pedestrian malls, have rarely created long-term downtown economic growth. The Main Street approach relies on a series of small improvements that begin to change public attitudes about the district, making the area’s investment climate more favorable. Gradually, the small changes build to larger ones as the local revitalization organization gains strength and becomes efficient at mobilizing resources for downtown revival.

8 – The Main Street program is implementation oriented. By identifying and prioritizing the major issues that downtown must confront, revitalization organizations can develop work plans that break down the large issues into smaller tasks, then, by developing a strong network of volunteer support, Main Street programs can build organizational structures capable of achieving the quantifiable tasks mapped out in the work plan.

Downtown History

The Colony Holding Corporation directed by E. G. Lewis founded the Atascadero Colony in July of 1913. Lewis acquired the 23,000 acres from the Rancho Atascadero, originally a Spanish land grant. Lewis intended to create a community where residents could enjoy the comforts of a rural lifestyle with the conveniences of an urban center. The design inspiration for Lewis' Atascadero Colony was the American Beautiful Movement, which called for civic and community buildings to be located around grand central community centers. The Sunken Gardens were created to act as the central feature. Italian Renaissance was Lewis' chosen architectural style. Lewis constructed several civic buildings that were important parts of the community. Today, the City Administration Building and Printery building are remnants of the original Colony.

The City Administration Building is the most dominant structure in the City. This four-story brick building, with elegant columns and large rotunda, was located in the center of the Atascadero Colony. The building has housed the administrative and governmental operations of the City since incorporation in 1979.

When constructed in the early 1900s, the Atascadero Printery housed the printing operations of the Colony Holding Corporation. Publications such as the San Francisco Chronicle and the Los Angeles Times relied on the Atascadero Printery for its printing capabilities. The Printery went out of business not long after the end of the Colony Holding Corporation. The building was later used by the local Freemasons order and was donated to the City. The building sits almost unused today (2000) because of needed seismic retrofits estimated at \$1 million. It still appears much as it did in the Colony days, although the interior has deteriorated, and a small addition to the northeast side distracts from the building's original composition.

Although not constructed as part of Lewis' Colony, one of the most significant structures in the Downtown is the Carlton Hotel. Located on the corner of El Camino Real and Traffic Way, the Carlton Hotel was a luxury hotel that attracted visitors traveling up and down the coast to Los Angeles and San Francisco. The hotel began to fall into deterioration in the 1970's, and currently sits vacant. Efforts are underway to revitalize the Carlton Hotel into a destination hotel and restaurant with specialty retail stores.



Photo 2. City Administration Building.



Photo 3. Printery Building.



Photo 4. Carlton Hotel.

Community Workshops & Committees

Community input throughout the preparation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan helped define the Plan's overall goals and issues. To solicit community input, two evening workshops were held at the City Administration Building (one on November 19, 1999; the second on March 22, 2000). Meeting notices were sent to the media, business owners, property owners, elected and appointed officials, and other interested parties. At the workshops, participants provided input on what they liked, disliked, and wanted to change about Downtown, created visions for a revitalized Downtown, commented on a conceptual plan, and broke into groups to discuss each of the four points of the Main Street program. Each workshop attracted 40 or more community members.

After advertisement at the first workshop and through public notices, a 15 member Steering Committee was formed to work with City staff and the consultants in the development of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Subcommittees were also formed to address each of Main Street's four points.

Community Vision

The Downtown Revitalization Plan is based on a community vision where:

- The Downtown has become recognized as an important social and commercial center of Atascadero. People frequent the Downtown to walk among the shops, along the Creek, have coffee, or see a movie.
- The streets have been improved with new trees with white lights, benches, antique street lamps, signs and colorful banners. Pedestrian bridges allow crossing of the Creek. The El Camino Real corridor through the Downtown is a pleasant and safe place for pedestrians to walk. Traffic still moves smoothly, but traffic speed is no longer the primary characteristic of El Camino Real.
- The buildings are full and the windows reveal a range of interesting products and activities within. The storefronts have been refreshed with paint, new signs, awnings and flowers. In some cases, the old brick facades have been restored.
- Residents take their guests downtown to dine in the many restaurants, often lingering into the evening at one of the quiet, outdoor patios under the oaks along West Mall. The Sunken Gardens is a fun place to be on a summer evening to enjoy an ice cream cone. Tourists just passing by on the Highway are also drawn Downtown by the activity.
- The Downtown supports surrounding office and residential areas by providing ample shopping, eating and entertainment opportunities as well as upper floor space for residences and offices.
- The Atascadero Creek corridor offers a unique natural setting within the Downtown. Creekside benches are full at lunchtime as it is a popular location that nearly office workers enjoy. Trails now provide a connection through the Downtown to other parts of the City.

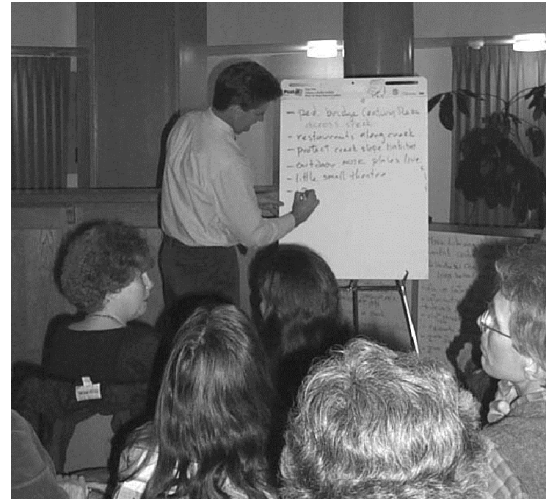


Photo 5. Workshop 1 Brainstorming.



Photo 6. Workshop 1 Residents create their vision for a revitalized Downtown.

- Off of Entrada there is a charming plaza surrounded by eateries and shops. Parking is conveniently located along the streets and in nearby parking lots. People just like to go downtown to sit and talk.
- The Downtown is alive and jumping at night; shops are open late and the Atascadero Theater (located at the old junior high site) is the center of a thriving local art and cultural scene. It is a venue that attracts people from all over the Central Coast. After seeing a movie or performance, visitors eat, shop, go to a bookstore or coffee house, visit an art gallery, or listen to music.
- It seems that there is always something going on Downtown – not only the major events like Colony Days and the Tree Lighting Celebration, but concerts, Art in the Gardens, sidewalk sales, farmers market, and a wide variety of seasonal promotions that are fun for families.
- The Main Street Association has four ongoing committees, one devoted to coordinated promotions, one for membership, one for economic restructuring, and another to continue the physical improvements to the buildings and businesses.
- Downtown is truly a vital part of Atascadero.

Community Goals

The vision described above will be realized through the implementation of the following goals for the Downtown Revitalization Plan:

1. Enhance downtown Atascadero as a source of community pride and as a community focal point.
2. Establish an image, a sense of visual continuity, and a pedestrian orientation that distinguishes downtown Atascadero from other commercial areas in the City.
3. Develop a distinctive architectural character for the downtown while allowing for reasonable design flexibility.
4. Provide an adequate circulation system for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians to serve downtown uses.
5. Improve the appearance of El Camino Real and reduce its impact as a pedestrian barrier.
6. Provide adequate parking resources to support downtown uses.
7. Restore Atascadero Creek as an amenity in the future use and design of private developments along the creek.
8. Create opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle paths and passive recreation along Atascadero Creek.
9. Enhance downtown's economic vitality by encouraging a mix of uses that are mutually supportive.
10. Encourage land uses in the downtown that will increase municipal revenues.
11. Encourage more intense development at appropriate locations within the downtown.
12. Encourage the relocation of junior high school and armory facilities to other sites in the City, and the reuse of these sites in conformance with this plan.

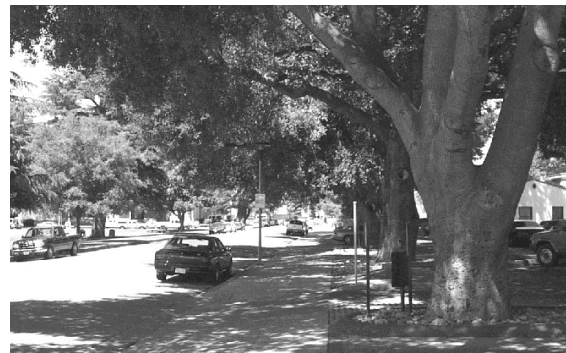


Photo 7 Existing trees along East Mall

2 Organization

Downtown Atascadero will build an effective volunteer-driven management organization guided by professional staff and broad-based public and private support.

Introduction

The National Trust for Historic Preservation identifies ten principles of a successful Main Street organization. They are:

1. Widespread community support.
2. Broad-based community representation in an advisory capacity.
3. A distinct constituency.
4. A clear, shared sense of mission and a well-defined set of goals and objectives.
5. Committed, dependable funding.
6. Working committees.
7. Full-time management.
8. A well-thought-out work plan based on the four points of the Main Street approach: design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring.
9. A commitment to work, and succeed, over time.
10. Strong public-private partnerships.

In recognition of these principles, the Downtown Revitalization Plan identifies the type of organization preferred by the City to operate the Main Street program, components of the organization including the board of directors, participants in the Main Street organization, and specific actions to establish Atascadero's Main Street organization.

Organizational Alternatives

The National Trust for Historic Preservation identifies five alternatives for the organization of a Main Street program. These include housing the Main Street Program within: (1) city government; (2) the chamber of commerce; (3) downtown merchants association; (4) downtown development organization; or (5) a new organization. It states, "The ideal vehicle is a strong, independent private organization whose express purpose is downtown revitalization – with no other conflicting agenda."

After review of the types of organizations and their pros and relative to Atascadero, the Organization Subcommittee creating a new, non-profit organization as their suggested for the Atascadero Main Street Program.

The primary reason for the selection of an independent non-profit organization is that the new organization can:

- ◆ Establish a clear focus unhindered by past history,
- ◆ Develop a consistent program, unhampered by the constraints of local politics, and
- ◆ Serve as a visible symbol of renewal, new activity and future for the downtown.



Photo 8. Organization subcommittee meets at Workshop 2.

cons
selected
alternative

profit

new

Components of the Organization

The components of the Main Street program include the Board of Directors, the Committees, and the Project Manager. Each of these components and their roles are described below.

Board of Directors

The Atascadero Main Street program's board of directors should be a strong, working board capable of developing and implementing policy to create positive change in the Downtown. The success of the Downtown revitalization effort depends largely on the board's ability to identify and mobilize resources, build volunteer support, develop new leadership and maintain a clear focus on the downtown's needs and opportunities.

The Organization Subcommittee determined during the preparation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan that a desirable size for the Board of Directors is 15-25. Board members should come from all facets of the community. Identified groups include: downtown retailers, professionals and other business people, downtown property owners, planners, City and/or County government officials, lenders, chamber boards, heads of neighborhood organizations, civic organizations, preservation or historical societies, and any interested community members. See Table A at the end of this document for a list of downtown business owners and Figure 1 for downtown property owners.

Responsibilities

Collectively the board of directors assumes the legal and philosophical responsibility for all activities of the Main Street Program. Individually, board members provide leadership for the program, serve as advocates of downtown revitalization and support the board by serving responsibly and with dedication. Each board member should meet the following requirements.

- A demonstrated interest in the Main Street programs purpose and goals;
- Specific experience in or knowledge of administration, finance, program development, advertising, public relations, downtown business activity, communications, design or economic development.
- Representation of a public or private organization or segment of the community
- Four-to-ten hours per month of available time.

Profile

Board members should resemble the following profile:

- Supports board decisions, even when he or she may disagree with the majority decision;
- Understands the mission of the Main Street program and promotes the goals and activities to his or her own constituent groups and to the community as a whole.
- Attends board meetings
- Attends as many as possible of the training programs and workshops held each year by the state program and National Main Street Center;
- Contributes knowledge, financial resources or labor to the Main Street program;
- Offers opinion honestly, constructively and without reservation;
- Does not commit more time to Main Street program than he or she can realistically afford;
- Delegates responsibilities to committees when appropriate;
- Promotes unity within the organization and seeks to resolve internal conflicts;
- Encourages orderly, systematic and incremental implementation of the Main Street program's work plan, discouraging the board from being distracted by secondary issues or projects not included in the program's annual agenda;
- Encourages staff and other board members to express their opinions openly in board meetings;
- Is loyal to the program and honors his or her commitment to it.

Committees

The National Main Street Center recommends that local Main Street programs set up three standing committees corresponding to three of the four points of the Main Street approach – promotion, design and economic restructuring and one standing committee to deal with membership development, fund raising and other organizational housekeeping chores.

Executive Director

The executive director is the central coordinator of the Main Street program’s activities. He or she oversees daily operations, providing the hands-on involvement critical to a successful program. The director also provides a communication link between committee, ensuring that activities in all four points of the Main Street approach are synchronized. The executive director initiates and coordinated a wide range of projects, from supervising promotional activities to assembling market information. Most important, though, is the role as a full-time advocate for Downtown Atascadero and as an authority on information, resources and programs related to the City’s downtown revitalization effort. A sample job description is included.

Participants

Atascadero’s Main Street program must involve groups and individuals throughout the community in order to be successful. Groups typically represented and involved in successful local downtown revitalization programs include: merchants, property owners, chamber of commerce, financial institutions, civic clubs, historic societies and historic preservation organizations, consumers, city and county government, regional planning commissions and councils of government, schools, and the media. Table 1 includes the list of participants generated by the Organization Subcommittee during the preparation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

Recommended Actions

Information on the responsible agency, funding source, and priority of each program discussed below are discussed in Chapter 6, Implementation.

1. Dissolve existing BIA organization. Assign responsibilities for advising the City on the expenditure of BIA assessments to the new Main Street organization, as required under state law.
2. Transition existing downtown programs to independent, non-profit Main Street organization.
3. Form Main Street Board of Directors and four advisory committees. The City staff should facilitate the development of the Board of Directors a process that provides involvement for all that want to participate.
4. Develop non-profit articles of incorporation, by-laws and other documents required by state and federal law for non-profit status. Sample by-laws provided by the National Main Street program are located in Appendix B.
5. Provide Board of Directors training program focusing on the four points of Main Street and Board governance.
6. Hire Main Street Executive Director.
7. Form/pursue a design assistance team of local architects and designers.
8. Apply for California Main Street certification.

MAIN STREET EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Starting Salary: DOQ

Work Objectives

The Main Street Executive Director will manage the Atascadero Main Street Program, a collaborative effort of downtown businesses, property owners, and other downtown stakeholders to revitalize, market, and promote downtown Atascadero. The Main Street program follows the national Main Street model which is based on a four-point strategy of organization, promotion, design, and economic development. The Executive Director position will report to the Board of Directors.

He/she is responsible for the development, conduct, execution, and documentation of the Main Street program and related public events within the boundaries of the program. The executive director is the principal on-site staff person responsible for coordinating all project activities locally as well as for representing the community regionally and nationally as appropriate.

Duties to be Performed

The Executive Director is responsible for carrying out the following tasks:

1. Coordinate activity of and provide support to the Main Street Board of Directors and any task force committee formed to assist with special events.
2. Manage all administrative aspects of the Main Street program, including purchasing, record keeping, budget development and accounting as well as assisting with the preparation of reports to funding agencies.
3. Administer the contract between the Main Street program and the City of Atascadero.
4. Develop, in conjunction with the Main Street Program Board of Directors, downtown revitalization strategies within the limitations of the available resources.
5. Assist the Main Street Program Committee in developing and implementing an annual action plan focused on four areas of organization, promotion, design, and economic development.
6. Develop and conduct ongoing public awareness and education programs designed to enhance appreciation of the downtown's key assets. Foster an understanding within the community of the Main Street goals and objectives. Use speaking engagements, media interviews and personal appearances to keep the program in the public eye.
7. Assist individual tenants or property owners with physical improvement projects through personal consultation, coordination with City agencies and available loan programs.
8. Encourage improvements in the downtown community's ability to carry out joint activities such as promotional events, advertising, uniform store hours, special events and business recruitment.
9. Help build strong and productive working relationships with appropriate public agencies at the local and state levels.
10. Develop and maintain data systems to track the process and progress of the Main Street program. These systems should include the Main Street Directory and the annual vacancy survey.

Resource Management Responsibilities

The Executive Director supervises any necessary temporary or permanent employees as well as professional consultants. He/she participates in personnel and project evaluations. The Executive Director maintains local Main Street records and reports, establishes technical resource files and libraries, and prepares regular reports for the Board of Directors, the Redevelopment Agency, and the City of Atascadero as required. The Executive Director monitors the annual project budget and maintains financial records.

Job Knowledge and Skills Required

The Executive Director should have education and experience appropriate to the responsibilities with emphasis on public relations, public administration, non-profit or volunteer administration and/or small business development. The Executive Director must be experienced at event production and promotion, sensitive to design and preservation issues, and must understand the issues confronting downtown business people, property owners, public agencies and community organizations. The Executive Director must be entrepreneurial, energetic, imaginative, well organized, and capable of functioning effectively in an independent situation. Excellent written and oral communication skills are essential. Supervisory skills are desirable.

Reporting Relationships

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. It is expected that the Director will cooperate fully with the City of Atascadero, Atascadero Redevelopment Agency, sponsoring organizations of events, and the Chamber of Commerce.

To Apply

Please submit a resume detailing your experience and qualifications to the _____,
Attention: _____ by _____. You may fax your resume to
(805) _____ or email it to _____.

Table 1: Participants

Types of Players and partners we should involve in revitalization	Specific people in our community	Skills they might contribute
<p>Downtown Landowners School District Representative Business Owners Architects Local Realtors and Assoc. of Realtors SLO County Contractors Assn. Accountants Attorneys Local Elected and Appointed Officials City Council Planning Commission Park and Rec. Commission City staff SLOCOG CalTrans Visitor and Conference Bureau Chamber of Commerce Local Service Clubs Arts Community Historic Society Atascadero Homeowners Assn. Atascadero Land Preservation (ALPs) Youth Groups (such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Schools) Seniors, AARP, SCORE, RAMS Colony Days Board Farmer’s Market Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) Cuesta College Small Business Large Retailers (i.e. Albertsons) Clergy and Churches Downtown and Local Residents (owners and renters)</p>	<p>Steering Committee members</p> <p>City Staff</p> <p>Landowners – See Figure 1</p> <p>Business Owners – See Table A</p> <p>Financial Institutions</p> <p>Youth/Schools Atascadero High School Mr. Tanemoto – Leadership Donn Clickard – Athletic Director</p> <p>Local Media Atascadero News Atascadero Gazette Telegram Tribune Paper Works/Coupon Works Radio TV</p>	<p>Workers – youth, seniors, residents Fundraising Sponsorship – businesses Advertising – media Data – City, County History – historical society Creativity – architects, artists, contractors Expertise – accountants, bankers, realtors, attorneys</p>

3 Design

Downtown Atascadero will be enhanced through public improvements to the streetscape, use of design guidelines in the review of future development projects and private improvements such as to building facades.

Introduction

This chapter of the Downtown Revitalization Plan translates the vision and goals into a conceptual plan. The conceptual plan expresses the physical parameters of development in the Downtown over the next 20 years and is shown in Figure 4. The intent of this plan is to establish a framework for land use changes to encourage a mutually supportive mix of uses, oriented to the market potential of the area and the creation of a vital downtown shopping, entertainment, business and living environment.

Summarized below in three issues areas, Land Use, Circulation and Parking Improvements, and Design Elements, are the ideas and concepts that will help to realize the vision for Downtown Atascadero.

Land Use

The predominant land use type desired in the Downtown is multi-story mixed uses with retail commercial uses occupying the ground floor and residential uses, offices, and visitor accommodations on the upper stories. Mixed-use development is most conducive to the creation of a pedestrian oriented environment. Occupying this area of the Downtown with first floor retail commercial uses will provide high customer turnover, large volumes of pedestrian traffic, interesting windows and storefront displays, signs designed for pedestrian viewing, and merchandise likely to be purchased in a multiple-stop shopping trip where visitors to the Downtown “park once”. New development, especially in setback areas along East and West Mall, is encouraged to include usable outdoor spaces, courtyards, and arcades in sunny locations. Locations for multi-story, mixed use projects are illustrated on the Conceptual Plan in orange.

To capitalize on the proximity of the Downtown to the freeway, single-story uses and low vegetation are desired on El Camino Real adjacent to Highway 101 to create a window to the Downtown where a passerby on Highway 101 can easily see the City Administration Building and Sunken Gardens. This area for one-story structures and lower vegetation includes the area currently occupied by the Chamber of Commerce. This is illustrated on the Conceptual Plan in green.

Parcels at the corner of Morro Road and El Camino Real extending to Atascadero Creek, including the Century Plaza, are envisioned for large-scale entertainment type uses. This is illustrated on the Conceptual Plan in yellow.

At the intersection of Capistrano and Santa Ysabel office uses in an “office park” setting. This area includes the existing Bank of America and several office buildings currently under construction. Pedestrian linkages, including a bridge across Atascadero Creek, are intended to link office workers to stores, services, the Sunken Gardens and other opportunities in the Downtown, whether they spend their lunch hour at a restaurant, running errands, or strolling by the creek. This area is illustrated on the Conceptual Plan in blue.

At the corner of Olmeda Avenue and Traffic Way senior housing and a senior center are suggested with possible reuse of Printery building as a senior center. If senior housing is not desired, other multi-family development could work well in this area.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block
 Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Figure 2: Synthesized Conceptual Plan

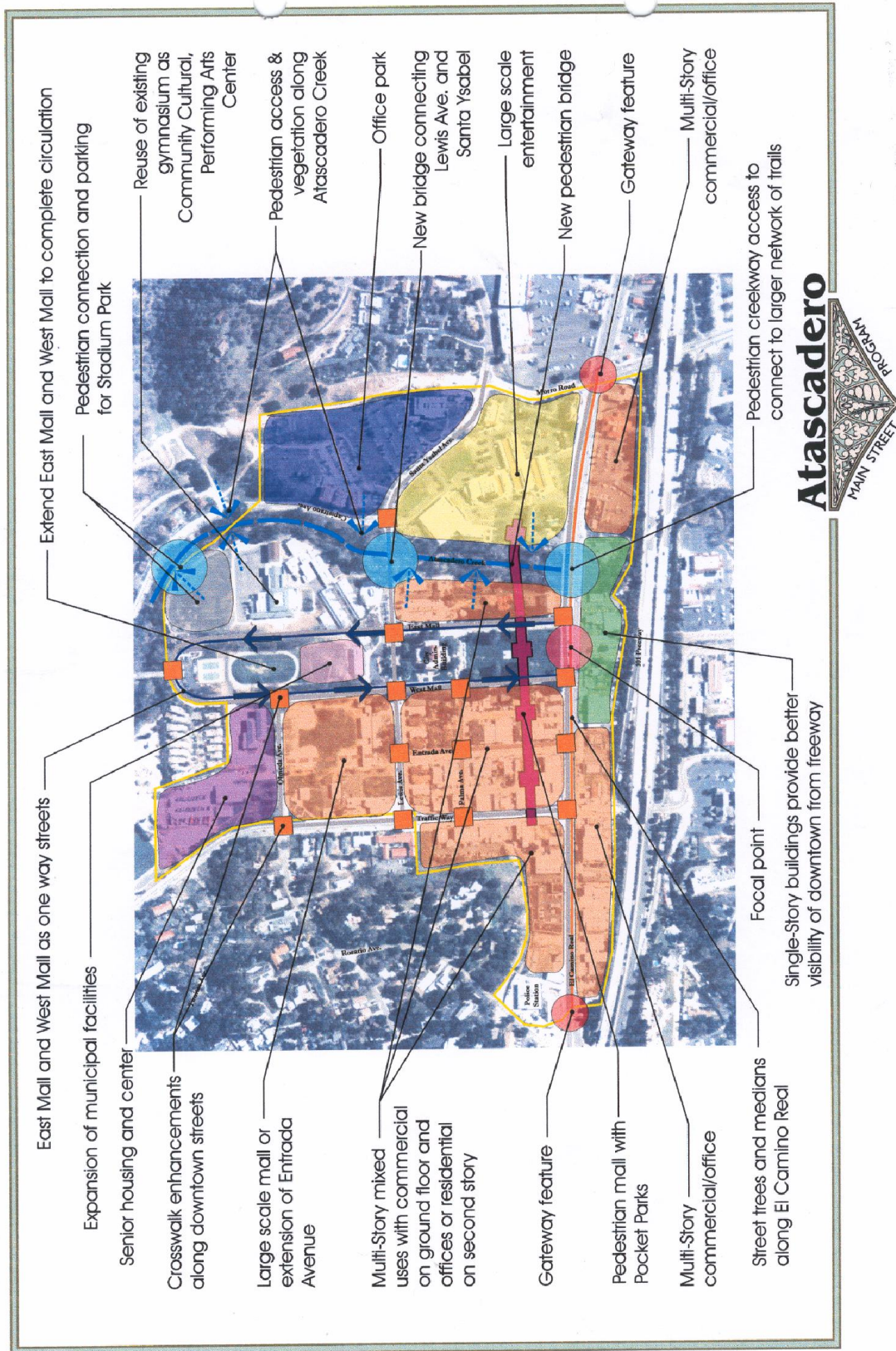


Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block*Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.*

Both the City and the Atascadero Unified School District intend over the long-term plan to relocate Atascadero Junior High out of the Downtown area. This area will allow for the future expansion of municipal facilities for such uses as a library, performing arts center, or cultural center (re-use of Junior High Gymnasium). Many other uses are also possible for the site. One idea for the old Lewis Avenue Elementary School site (today part of the junior high), bounded by Traffic Way, Olmeda Avenue, West Mall and Lewis Avenue, is for an extension of Entrada Avenue onto this block. This would allow for the continuation of the Downtown. Another option posed for this site would be a large-scale pedestrian mall or theater complex.

Circulation & Parking Improvements

Much of the charm and economic potential of older downtown areas is related to their pedestrian scale and the ease of parking in one location while shopping at several stores (the “park once” concept). To accomplish this, a series of improvements related to pedestrian and vehicular circulation and parking facilities are proposed. These are described below.

The City has planned, as part of the General Plan to construct the Lewis Avenue Bridge across Atascadero Creek. This will be an important connection, as it will provide an additional link parallel to El Camino Real into the Downtown area.

The vision for a revitalized Downtown includes making the El Camino Real corridor, as well as other streets, a pleasant and safe place for pedestrians to walk. Traffic should still move smoothly, but traffic speed will no longer be the primary characteristic of travel along El Camino Real through the Downtown. Crosswalk enhancements and landscaped medians are discussed in Chapter 6, First Implementation Project.

Although Downtown Atascadero is not perceived to have a parking problem in 2000, the Downtown area needs convenient parking areas. Table 2 includes a parking inventory in the Downtown including existing on-street and off-street parking. A total of

Table 2: Existing Downtown Parking

Street	Location	Parking Spaces
El Camino Real	Between Traffic Way and Rosario	45
	Between Traffic Way and Morro Road	68
Traffic Way	Between El Camino Real and Palma	22
	Between Palma and Lewis	18
	Between Lewis and Olmeda	25
Entrada Avenue	Between El Camino Real and Palma	35
	Between Palma and Lewis	17
West Mall	Between El Camino Real and Palma	32
	Between Palma and Lewis	15
	Between Lewis and Olmeda	25
East Mall	Between El Camino Real and Palma	24
	Between Palma and Lewis	17
Palma Avenue	Between Traffic and Entrada	16
	Between Entrada and West Mall	16
	Between West Mall and East Mall	16
Lewis Avenue	Between Traffic and Entrada	12
	Between Entrada and West Mall	11
	Between West Mall and East Mall	13
Total On-Street Parking Spaces:		427
Bank of America		118
Professional Office Complex (off of Santa Ysabel)		78
Century Plaza		376
Cal Fed Bank		37
Ranch Tee Motel		28
Ken's Mobil		5
Mid State Bank		103
Denny's		62
Bonnema Brewery		38
Peabody & Plum		25
City Lot		54
Junior High (off Lewis Avenue)		34
Junior High (by Tennis Courts)		33
Career Training Center		13
Near Chamber of Commerce		16
Jack in the Box		54
Behind El Camino Real businesses (near Traffic Way)		52
Lot on Traffic Way (between Palma and Lewis Ave)		25
El Paseo		52
Starna Cells		6
Atascadero News		14
Atascadero True Value		18
Virginia Plaza		47
Ocean Harvest/Laundromat		28
Police Station		41
Total Off-Street Parking Spaces:		1,357

Source: Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr, 2000.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

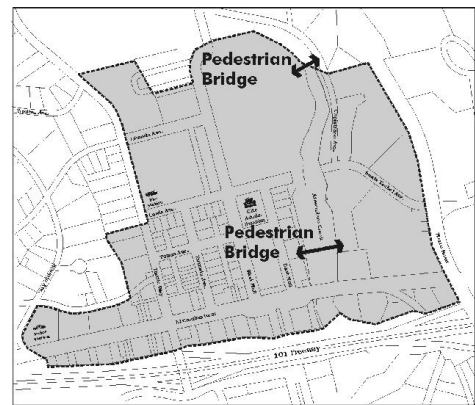
Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

1,784 parking spaces are currently available in the Downtown. Recognizing the need for parking and the desirability in maintaining a continuous street frontage, this Plan proposes the conversion of East Mall and West Mall to one-way streets and the creation of angled parking from El Camino Real to Lewis Avenue. The conversion of existing on street parking to angled parking will create an additional 30 parking spaces. The Plan also envisions the connection of East and West Mall in the northern section of the study area as originally envisioned by E.G. Lewis.

Other attractive, well-landscaped, off-street parking areas should be located behind buildings with pedestrian connections between parking lots.

Approximately 1,500 feet of Atascadero Creek runs through the Downtown. The Creek is recognized as one of Downtown’s greatest potential assets. Atascadero Creek contributes to the quality of life in the Downtown by providing beauty, spawning grounds for fish, specialized plant and animal communities, corridors for wildlife, and recreational opportunities. This Plan retains the idea of a creek side park and trails as discussed in past plans as well as picnic and activity areas for the enjoyment of the creek’s natural beauty and wildlife.

As described above, a new vehicular bridge will span the Creek at Lewis Avenue. New pedestrian/bicycle bridges are desired from East Mall area to Century Plaza and from the northern portion of the Junior High site near Capistrano Avenue which will allow connection between the Downtown area and Stadium Park. The potential for a network of trails is desirable which would connect the Stadium Park through the downtown along the creek corridor under El Camino Real and Highway 101 to the high school area and potentially to the Atascadero Lake.



Design Elements

Transforming the Downtown into an identifiable place is part of the vision for successful Downtown revitalization. An inviting entrance is desired that announces and marks the edge of the Downtown with a distinctive gateway treatment at both the southern entrance at Morro Road and El Camino Real and the northern entrance near Rosario. An event banner across El Camino Real is also desired to provide a location where Downtown events can be announced. Another focal point is envisioned at the Sunken Gardens and El Camino Real. Gateways and focal point locations are shown in red circles on the Conceptual Plan.

One goal of downtown revitalization is to attract shoppers to visit the area more frequently and stay longer. The visual appearance of the area, the ease and pleasantness of walking from one area to another, and places to rest for short periods of time are all important to the accomplishment of that goal. To support the pedestrian shopping environment, the plan includes design guidelines (see Appendix A) to encourage storefront interest and improvements to the shopping environment.

New pedestrian connections, such as through a mid-block pedestrian mall, are shown on the Conceptual Plan extending from Traffic Way to the Century Plaza (see also Figure 3). New development in these areas should incorporate a pedestrian connection with a pocket park or plaza-type feature that includes comfortable seating, landscaping and other amenities.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

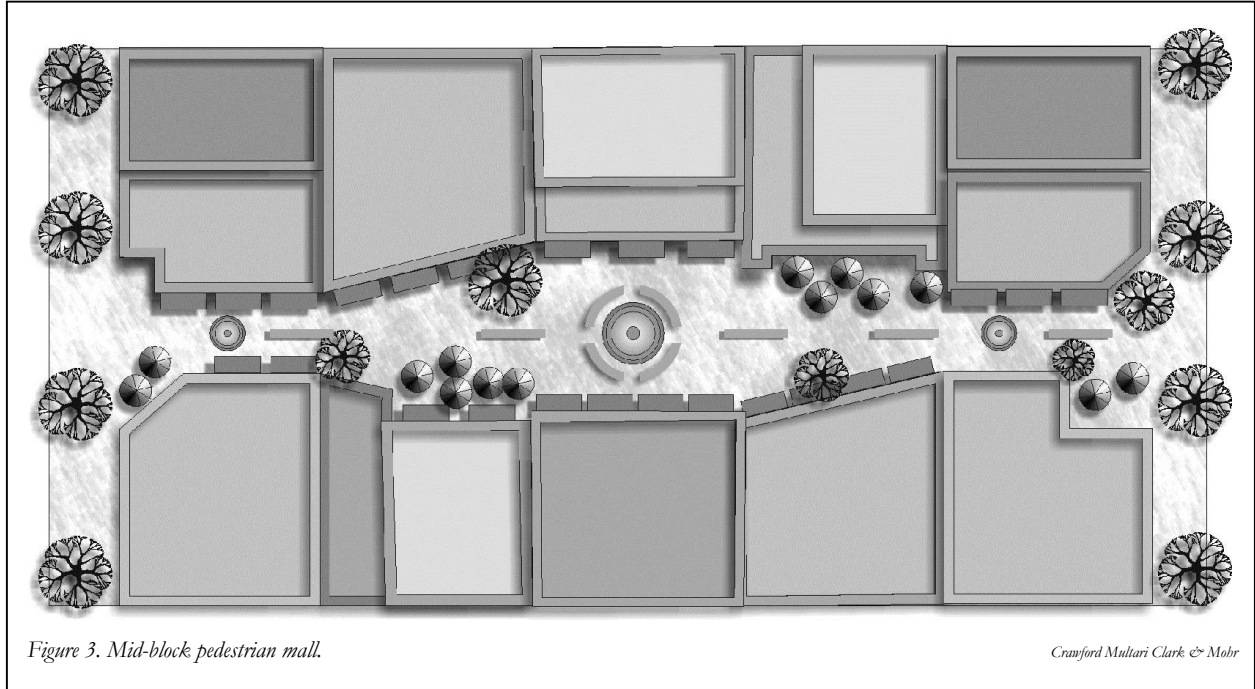


Figure 3. Mid-block pedestrian mall.

Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr

The Sunken Gardens Area is a portion of the original 1913 plan for the City and serves as an attractive setting for the historic Administration Building. It is a major community resource as well as an area that could contain activities supportive of downtown revitalization. Use of the Sunken Gardens for events is discussed in Chapter 5. Improvements for the Sunken Gardens to make it more pedestrian friendly need to be guided by an overall plan but would likely include increased landscaping, walkways, a usable plaza area with benches. There is also potential to close off Palma Avenue in front of the City Administration Building either temporarily for special events (with bollards) or permanently, to make the pedestrian connection to the Sunken Gardens stronger and uninterrupted.



Photo 9. Fountain in Sunken Gardens.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Recommended Actions

Information on the responsible agency, funding source, and priority of each program listed below are discussed in Chapter 6, Implementation.

1. Design and construct medians along El Camino Real.
2. Design and construct crosswalk bulb-outs.
3. Create one-way streets and angled parking along West and East Mall.
4. Develop a façade improvement program.
5. Organize a Design Assistance Team to assist applicants.
6. Design and install entry gateway features.
7. Design and construct improvements to the Sunken Gardens.
8. Work with Cal Trans to implement “window to downtown.”
9. Design and construct creekside trails and pedestrian bridge(s).
10. Design and construct Lewis Avenue bridge.

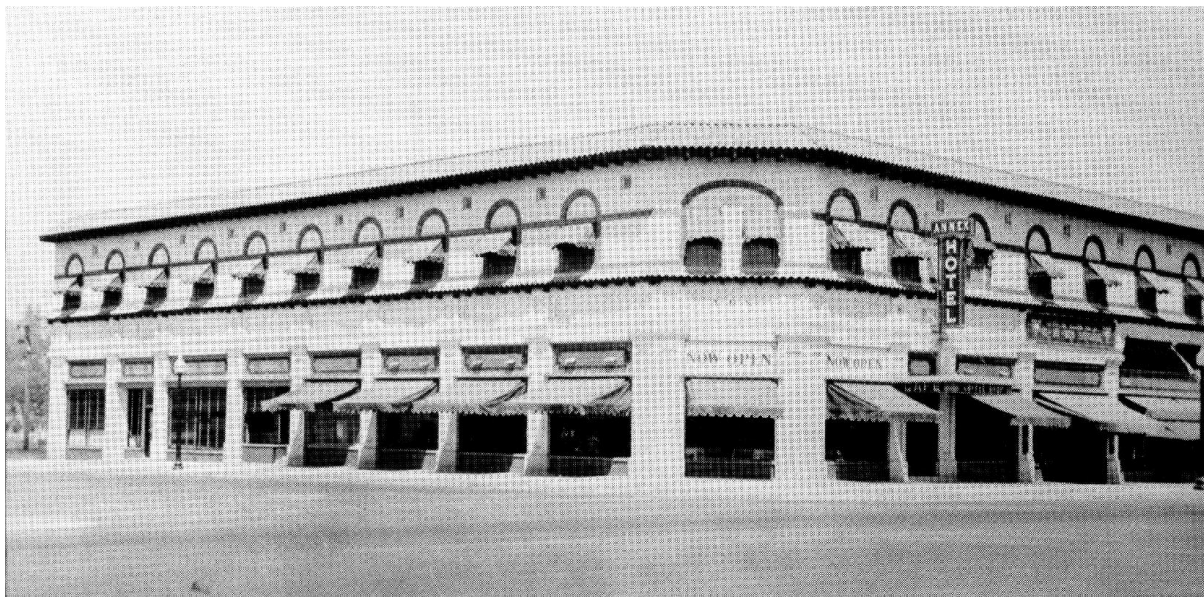


Photo 10. Carlton Hotel prior to the construction of the clock tower feature in the 1950s.

4 Economic Restructuring

Downtown Atascadero will retain and strengthen existing businesses, recruit appropriate new businesses and develop appropriate economic restructuring strategies to achieve an economically vital downtown.

Introduction

The Economic Development Element of Atascadero’s General Plan identifies revitalization of the Downtown core areas as “valuable to the development of a healthy tourism industry in the community and is a way of preserving the historic social, cultural and commercial core of the City.” The Element identifies six programs in support of downtown revitalization.:

- Re-affirm a vision statement for the Downtown core area;
- Develop tourist attractions in or near the downtown core;
- Support redevelopment of the Downtown core;
- Support circulation improvement in and around the Downtown;
- Redevelop the Junior High Site; and
- Create a revolving loan fund to assist business development in the core area.

This section of the Downtown Revitalization Plan supports these programs and provides specific direction on their implementation. Included are: a preliminary market analysis; a discussion of the downtown’s development potential and trade area; and policies and programs to achieve the community’s goals of a revitalized downtown.

Preliminary Market Analysis

This preliminary market analysis provides background information about the potential demand for additional commercial development in the City of Atascadero, development potential, and the market area. The analysis focuses on the growth potential of commercial (retail) land uses. The results of the market analysis will assist in the formulation of economic restructuring policies.

Development Opportunities and Constraints

A survey of existing land use conducted by Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr in late 1999, identified nine parcels as undeveloped. Additionally, 13 buildings are vacant including the Carlton Hotel, McCarthy’s restaurant and various spaces in the Century Plaza Mall and Virginia Plaza. Vacancies adversely impact the Downtown by breaking the flow of pedestrian traffic as well as reducing revenues such as sales taxes. Filling vacant buildings and developing undeveloped parcels consistent with community goals will contribute to a viable downtown.

Atascadero Demographics

Since current City residents are potential patrons of the Downtown, it is useful to know something about them.

- Population:** 25,450 in 1999
- Number of Households:** 9,355 in 1990
- Median Family Income:** \$43,800 in 1990

Employment

Atascadero’s labor force includes 12,210 people. The economic base of the City has been oriented to service positions including staff at Cuesta College, Cal Poly State University, Atascadero State Hospital and California Men’s Colony.

Downtown Businesses = 144

Largest Downtown Employers:

Public Employees:

Atascadero Junior High School	80
Atascadero Police Station	38
Atascadero City Hall	30
Atascadero Fire Station	17
SLO County Assessors Office (North County Office)	13
County Building Inspector	5

Private Businesses:

Peabody & Plum	27
Mid State Bank	21
Denny’s	20
Atascadero News	17
Century 21	16
Bonnema Brewery	15
Landcaster Mortgage	10
Nunes’ Auto Body	7
Bank of America	4
North County Tax	4
Cal Fed Bank	3

Source: California Employment Development Department; US Census; Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr, 2000.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

The community's vision for Downtown Atascadero is that of a "traditional" downtown. This includes up to three story buildings with retail commercial uses occupying the ground floor, and residences, professional offices, or visitor accommodations on upper floors. To date, approximately 90 percent of the existing buildings within the Downtown are single-story. With this in mind, the majority of the parcels in the Downtown could be classified as "underutilized."

The parcel size in the Downtown varies greatly. In the area from West Mall to Traffic Way original parcel sizes were 25'x75', 25'x100' and 25'x135'. Many parcels with existing structures have been consolidated; for example, the Carlton Hotel covers six parcels. Figure 1 in Chapter 2, Organization, identifies 95 downtown property owners. Additional consolidation of property into larger parcels would be beneficial in any development scenario by allowing for more flexibility in use and design.

The existing junior high school site, owned by the Atascadero Unified School District, makes up approximately one-third of the Downtown area. The School District has, from time to time, contemplated relocating the junior high school away from its current site, most recently to an area near San Benito Elementary School. The City's Economic Development Element and Redevelopment Plan identify the site for redevelopment. The site is generally flat, has existing utility service and good access.

The School District also owns the parcel occupied by the stretch of Atascadero Creek that runs through the Downtown (from Capistrano Avenue to El Camino Real). The property is currently under long-term lease to the Atascadero Historical Society.

Highway 101 bisects the City in a north/south route connecting northern and southern California. Access from Highway 101 to Downtown Atascadero is excellent, including two interchanges at Traffic Way and Morro Road. The daily traffic volumes along Highway 101 through the City create a significant market in itself. Peak hour counts (during the PM peak hour) range from 3,453 vehicles per hour on 101 southbound to 3,814 vehicles per hour on 101 northbound; which means the average daily traffic volume could range from 34,000 to 38,000 trips per day (Source: Omni Means, Technical Memo, January, 2000). Additionally, Highway 46 is located 10 miles north and provides an easy connection to Interstate 5. Highway 41 (Morro Road) bisects the City in an east/west direction providing access to the coast.

The 1999 population of Atascadero was approximately 25,450. Current buildout (based on the 1992 General Plan) is projected at approximately 31,150 residents. Proximity to Highway 101 is an obvious advantage, and the parcels with freeway frontage have great visibility. In general, literature on market analysis estimates that about 15 percent of total retail sales can be attributed to individuals outside of the immediate market area. It is possible that Atascadero's capture rate of out of the area shoppers could be much higher than 15 percent however, because of the high volume of traffic along Highway 101.

Regionally, there is a great deal of retail competition within 15 miles of Downtown Atascadero. The closest major discount stores are: Big-K (K-mart) off of San Anselmo in Atascadero; the Crossings Retail Center in southern Paso Robles, which includes Target, Ross and Office Max; and Wal-Mart in Paso Robles. The major apparel stores in Atascadero are found in the City's Factory Outlet Mall, which includes over 20 retail outlets such as Ralph Loren, Jones New York, Casual Corner, Van Heusen, Bugle Boy and Nautica. The Atascadero Commercial Center, which will include a Home Depot, is currently under construction on the north end of the City. Atascadero has four major food stores including: Vons, just south of the Downtown; the newly opened Albertson's in the Curbaril Shopping Center; Food4Less; and Ralph's. Drug stores include Rite Aid, SavOn and Long's.

Market Analysis

The difference between the total amount of income local consumers spend on retail expenditures and the amount they actually spend locally is known as "leakage." This measure provides an indication of how much money is available for "capture" by new commercial development. One common method used to estimate leakage is discussed below.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block*Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.***Expected Local Expenditures & Capture Rates**

Assessing the ability of the Atascadero consumers to support additional commercial development begins with determining the disposable income of the market area population. For purposes of this discussion, we looked at two different market area populations - the current population of Atascadero and the population of Atascadero at buildout (see Table 3).

Table 3: Population & Income

Jurisdiction	Market Area Population*	Per Capita Income*	Market Area Income
Atascadero (1999)	25,450	\$21,682	\$551,806,900
Atascadero-Buildout	31,150	\$21,682	\$675,394,300
San Luis Obispo County (1999)	231,416	\$22,568	\$5,222,596,288

*Note: Per capita income from 1997, build out income in 1997 dollars.

Source: California Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit, Crawford Multari Clark & Mabr.

The local market area income is computed by multiplying the total population by the per capita income. This yields a yearly market area income of \$551 million for Atascadero at present, \$675 million at buildout. This local market area income represents the total amount of money local consumers earn per year.

The market area income must be adjusted to account for non-discretionary spending, such as housing, utilities, taxes, and social security, which comprise about 36 percent of the average yearly expenditures (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998). Of the remaining amount, 44 percent is spent in the retail sector and 20 percent is spent in the service sector (see Table 4). Table 4 shows that the residents of Atascadero spend a total of about \$242.8 million yearly on retail purchases.

Table 4: Income by Expenditure Category

Jurisdiction	Non-discretionary (36% of Market Area Income)	Services (20% of Market Area Income)	Retail (44% of Market Area Income)
Atascadero (1999)	\$198,650,484	\$110,361,380	\$242,795,036
Atascadero-Buildout	\$243,141,948	\$135,078,860	\$297,173,492

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998; Crawford Multari Clark & Mabr, 2000.

Information on expected retail expenditures can be derived from two sources. First, the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey provides a categorical breakdown of average consumer expenditures. Second, the California Department of Finance summarizes retail expenditures in San Luis Obispo County that can be used to estimate average consumer expenditures in various categories.

Consumer expenditure patterns are surveyed periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The survey reports the percentage of income consumers spend on various goods and services. For instance, average consumers spend about 9.5 percent of their after tax income on food purchased for home consumption. Table 5 also shows the amount of income that is available to be spent on a variety of products and services, if the assumed percentages apply, for Atascadero in 2000 and Atascadero at buildout. Caution must be used in applying these average breakdowns because there may be significant regional or local variations; but these estimates can be useful as a starting point for analysis.

Table 5: Theoretical Demand for Consumer Retail Goods

Commercial Goods & Services	Expenditures as % of Income After Taxes	Estimated Demand	
		Atascadero (1999)	Atascadero at Buildout
Food at home	7.7	\$42,489,000	\$52,005,000
Food away from home	5.8	\$32,005,000	\$39,173,000
Alcoholic Beverages	0.9	\$4,966,000	\$6,079,000
Housing (including shelter, household operations and housekeeping supplies)	20.9	\$115,328,000	\$141,157,000

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.

Household Furnishings	4.5	\$24,831,000	\$30,393,000
Apparel	4.7	\$25,935,000	\$31,744,000
Transportation - New Autos	8.2	\$45,248,000	\$55,382,000
Transportation - Gas & Oil	2.8	\$15,451,000	\$18,911,000
Transportation - Other	7.1	\$39,178,000	\$47,953,000
Health Care	5.3	\$29,246,000	\$35,796,000
Entertainment	4.9	\$27,039,000	\$33,094,000
Personal Care	1.2	\$6,622,000	\$8,105,000
Reading	0.5	\$2,759,000	\$3,377,000
Tobacco Products	0.7	\$3,863,000	\$4,728,000
Utilities	6.4	\$35,316,000	\$43,225,000
Education	1.6	\$8,829,000	\$10,806,000
Miscellaneous	2.5	\$13,795,000	\$16,885,000
Cash	3.3	\$18,210,000	\$22,288,000
Personal insurance/pensions	11	\$60,699,000	\$74,293,000
Total Expenditures	100.0	\$551,807,000	\$675,394,000

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 1998; California Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit, Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr, 2000.

The BLS figures provide data about the types of goods and services consumers purchase, but these figures provide little information about the type of store where the goods are purchased. For instance, average consumers spend about 5.8 percent of their yearly income on apparel, but the apparel purchases could be made at clothing stores, department stores, or other specialty shops. In some cases, type of outlet can be inferred, as in the cases of food and gasoline purchases.

Consumers do not spend all of their disposable income within the local market area, although most consumer expenditures do occur within a three-mile radius of the home, when goods are available. In addition, consumers who reside outside of the local market area generally make about 15 percent of all purchases (Wiewel and Mier, 1989), although this percent can be highly variable depending on such variables as regional competition and proximity to the major transportation routes.

In 1997, Atascadero businesses reported \$225.9 million in taxable transactions to the California Department of Finance. Totals for 13 expenditure categories are generally provided, but only 11 are available for Atascadero (to avoid the disclosure of confidential information, expenditure totals are only provided when more than three outlets are represented by a category). See Table 6, below.

As noted earlier in Table 4, the **expected** retail expenditures for Atascadero alone were estimated at \$242.79 million, after taxes and household expenses. However, \$225.97 million was **reported** in taxable expenditures within the Atascadero city limits. Based simply on local expenditure potential and capture, approximately seven percent of the market area income (about \$16.9 million) is being spent elsewhere. Of course, it is unrealistic to expect all retail expenditures to be captured in the local market area; on the other hand, market area sales are not limited to purchases by local residents (especially in the case of Atascadero which can draw from a large under-served rural market and from travelers on Highway 101).

Table 6: Retail Expenditures

Type of Store	Atascadero 1997	%	San Luis Obispo County 1997	%
Motor vehicles and parts dealers	\$53,203,000	23.54%	\$365,739,000	20.54%
Furniture and home furnishings	\$3,234,000	1.43%	\$54,468,000	3.06%
Electronics and appliance stores	\$5,193,000	2.30%	\$25,188,000	1.41%
Building material, garden equipment and supplies	\$15,690,000	6.94%	\$166,402,000	9.34%
Food and beverage stores	\$64,735,000	28.65%	\$404,032,000	22.69%
Health and personal care stores	\$22,196,000	9.82%	\$126,832,000	7.12%

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block*Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.*

Gasoline stations	\$23,728,000	10.50%	\$169,715,000	9.53%
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	\$16,106,000	7.13%	\$90,125,000	5.06%
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	\$2,921,000	1.29%	\$56,106,000	3.15%
General merchandise stores/Miscellaneous store retailers	\$15,749,000	6.97%	\$207,981,000	11.68%
Office supplies, stationery and gift stores	\$2,057,000	0.91%	\$40,277,000	2.26%
Non-store retailers	\$1,163,000	0.51%	\$73,837,000	4.15%
Total	\$225,975,000	100 %	\$1,780,702,000	100 %

Source: California Department of Finance, 1997, Crawford Mulieri Clark & Mohr, 2000.

Table 6 indicates that the following retail expenditures make up a higher percentage of sales in Atascadero than would be expected based on countywide expenditures: Food and Beverage Stores (+5.96), Motor Vehicles and Parts Dealers (+3.00), Health and Personal Care Stores (+2.70), Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores (+2.07), Gasoline Stations (0.97), and Electronics and Appliance Stores (+0.89).

It is also possible to infer which retail sectors account for the leakage by comparing the average per capita yearly expenditures in Atascadero to the San Luis Obispo County average. The average yearly per capita expenditures (Table 7) for Atascadero exceed the San Luis Obispo County average by \$1,551. However, lower retail expenditures, which indicates leakage, take place in Atascadero in the following sectors: Furniture and Home Furnishings, Building Material, Garden Equipment and Supplies, Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores, General Merchandise Stores/Miscellaneous Store Retailers, Non-store Retailers, and Office Supplies, Stationery and Gift Stores.

Table 7: Per Capita Retail Spending

Type of Business	Atascadero 1997	San Luis Obispo County 1997	Ratio Atascadero/ SLO County* <1 leakage possibility >1 capture possibility
Motor vehicles and parts dealers	\$2,176.88	\$1,580.44	1.38
Furniture and home furnishings	\$132.32	\$235.37	0.56
Electronics and appliance stores	\$212.48	\$108.84	1.95
Building material, garden equipment and supplies	\$641.98	\$719.06	0.89
Food and beverage stores	\$2,648.73	\$1,745.91	1.52
Health and personal care stores	\$908.18	\$548.07	1.66
Gasoline stations	\$970.87	\$733.38	1.32
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	\$659.00	\$389.45	1.69
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	\$119.52	\$242.45	0.49
General merchandise stores (such as K-Mart or Target) and Miscellaneous store retailers	618.82	\$898.73	0.69
Office supplies, stationery and gift stores	\$84.17	\$174.05	0.48
Non-store retailers	\$47.59	\$319.07	0.15
Total	\$9,246.11	\$7,694.81	1.20

Source: California Department of Finance, 1997, Crawford Mulieri Clark & Mohr, 2000.

* A ratio of less than one indicates leakage, meaning that Downtown Atascadero could capture retail sales in this business sector. A ratio of greater than one indicates that Atascadero is currently capturing more spending in that particular sector.

Although Atascadero may be capturing sales in categories such as clothing and clothing accessory stores (likely due to the Atascadero Factory Outlet stores), electronics and appliance stores, and health and personal care stores additional retailers in these sectors are still desired in the Downtown. Quality customer service in these types of business and the uniqueness of a Downtown setting can lead to success beyond that generated by average spending.

Trade Area & Development Potential

A trade area is a geographical region from which a business or commercial district draws the majority of its customers. The concept is based on general assumptions that people will travel to the nearest facility for

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

goods and services. Therefore, trade area boundaries are based on the length of time required for potential customers to reach the commercial district. Two notable exceptions to this rule are freeway travelers and tourists traveling to “special places.”

Trade areas are typically comprised of primary, secondary or tertiary zones. Primary zones are defined as areas not requiring more than about a ten-minute drive and generally lie within three to five miles of the commercial district. Industry estimates suggest that about 60 to 70 percent of sales are realized from the population within this area. The balance of the sales volume comes from secondary and tertiary zones for which the commercial district is less readily accessible. Secondary zones are areas that lie within 15 to 20 minutes driving and generally are within three to seven miles of the commercial district. Tertiary areas are all areas beyond the secondary zone that may generate dollars to the commercial district due to lack of competing facilities in that zone or because of convenient access. This area may extend 15 miles in major metropolitan markets and as far away as 50 miles in smaller, more rural places.

Satisfying local demand would be a conservative development strategy for Downtown Atascadero. The market analysis in the previous section indicates that retail needs are not being met in the local market area. This problem will increase as the City grows. Also noted above is the presence of an under-served rural market and travelers through Atascadero along Highway 101. Downtown Atascadero’s retail trade area is estimated to include the following:

- < The Primary Trade Area is the City of Atascadero.
- < The Secondary Trade Area includes unincorporated Santa Margarita south of the city limits.
- < The Tertiary Trade Area includes the rest of the North County including unincorporated Templeton, Creston and Shandon and the City of Paso Robles. Atascadero can be reached quickly via Highway 101 from various points in the North County. Commuters will have immediate access to Downtown Atascadero as they travel to and from work in the South County. It is anticipated that Atascadero will capture a share of retail expenditures made by these commuters.

The market area of retailers varies from a radius of five blocks for specialty stores to a radius of over 15 miles for large discounters. In general, retail stores can provide either convenience goods or comparison goods (Wiewel and Mier). Convenience goods are items that are bought fairly frequently, at the most convenient location without much comparison shopping. Typical items include food, medication, hardware, dry cleaning, barber and beauty services, and shoe repair services. The radius of the market area for these types of goods tends to be fairly small (up to one mile).

In contrast, comparison goods are bought after some degree of deliberation, on a less frequent basis, and are somewhat specialized in nature. The products purchased at these retailers typically last longer than convenience goods and are differentiated by brand identification, retailer image, and shopping area ambience. Typical items include apparel, household furnishings, and specialty items like jewelry, cameras, and books. People will engage in comparison shopping for these types of goods, so the radius of the potential market area is larger.

In Atascadero, the demand for convenience goods is generally satisfied, and this results in a low additional demand for food stores and service stations. On the other hand, there is the possibility of additional capture in Atascadero, which could be accommodated in the Downtown, for some comparison goods (furniture and home furnishings) and specialty stores (sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores, office supplies, stationery and gift stores).

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block
 Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Determining whether there is sufficient demand to support additional retail outlets in Downtown Atascadero is complex because the sales required to support a profitable enterprise vary by the type of outlet. The Urban Land Institute has calculated the average annual retail sales per square foot different kinds of stores. The values range from \$105 per square foot in food stores to \$296 dollars per square foot in home furnishings and appliance stores. Using these figures, the amount of retail that can be supported can be estimated (see Table 8). The additional demand in square feet must then be evaluated to determine if it is sufficient to support an outlet.

Table 8: Annual Retail Sales per Square Foot by Use, Typical Nationally

Type of Commercial Use	Annual Retail Sales per square foot
Apparel	\$150.00
General Merchandise	\$177.23
Drug Stores	\$225.60
Food Stores	\$105.00
Packaged Liquor	\$250.00
Eating and Drinking	\$288.49
Home Furnishings	\$296.51
Building Materials and Farm Implements	\$143.38
Auto Dealers	\$397.10
Service Stations	\$179.00
Other Retail	\$253.00

Source: Urban Land Institute, *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers*, 1990.

Table 9 displays the “typical” square footage and trade area of some commercial uses for comparison with existing demand. The trade area for the Central Coast is likely to be larger than urban areas. For example, major discount stores may draw from a trade area of 30 miles or more. Square footage varies greatly both between and within store types. The average square footage for restaurants is relatively small (4,100 square feet), while the square footage of discount stores, such as Costco or Home Depot, averages 90,000 square feet. Apparel stores range in size from 2,000 to 26,000 square feet in size.

Table 9: Typical Square Footage of Retail Stores

Type of Commercial Use	Average Sq. Ft.	Range of Sq. Ft.	Trade Area
Apparel	11,000	2,000 to 26,000	3 miles
General Merchandise	75,000	50,000 to 100,000	3 miles
Home Appliance	36,000	25,000 to 50,000	1 - 2 miles
Entertainment	37,000	25,000 to 45,000	5 - 10 miles
Restaurant	4,100	1,500 to 10,000	3 miles
Major Discount Stores	90,000	50,000 to 160,000	7 - 10 miles

Source: Cranford Multari Clark & Mober, 2000

Citywide data was utilized in the market analysis in the previous section to identify leakage. Data specific to Downtown Atascadero would need to be collected to identify the development potential in the Downtown.

Tax Generators

Although there are also costs associated with development such as the provision of police and fire protection, commercial development is a financial benefit to communities. The potential of different types of stores to generate property or sales tax revenues depends on the volume of sales and the cost of items.

Property tax currently accounts for 26 percent of the Atascadero general fund revenues (City of Atascadero, 2000). Properties are taxed at one percent of their total valuation at the time of development or transfer. About ten percent of the property tax generated by commercial development is returned to the local community.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.

The potential for sales tax generation can be calculated from figures provided by the State Board of Equalization. Averages for San Luis Obispo County retail outlets were used for this analysis. Dividing total receipts by number of outlets provides an index of average receipts for each store type. Sales tax return to the local community is one percent of the total receipts. Table 10 shows the average sales return for 10 store categories. General merchandise, service stations, and auto dealers and supplies are the three largest sales tax generators.

Sales tax revenues are an important source of income for local communities. Currently about 25 percent of the City's general fund revenues come from sales tax (City of Atascadero, 2000). Retail outlets are usually the most significant source of sales tax revenues. Because of Downtown Atascadero's proximity to Highway 101, retail outlets can target both the regional and local market area.

Table 10: Average Yearly Sales Tax Generation Per Store

Type of Store	Average Yearly Sales Tax
Apparel Store	\$4,453.14
General Merchandise	\$24,158.26
Specialty Stores	\$1,834.22
Food Stores	\$7,346.55
Eating & Drinking Places	\$3,850.92
Home Furnishings & Appliances	\$2,237.43
Building Materials	\$10,774.11
Auto Dealers & Supplies	\$15,708.51
Service Stations	\$16,380.41
All Other Outlets	\$3,607.53
Average	\$5,164.98

Source: State Board of Equalization, *Taxable Sales in California, 1997.*

Economic Restructuring

This section includes policies and programs for economic restructuring in the Downtown and the recommended actions that will facilitate the nature of revitalization desired by the community. Two primary policies are identified, and specific programs required to implement each policy are presented.

The overriding principle behind the policies stated below is to maintain and enhance the quality of life in Downtown Atascadero by implementing the Revitalization Plan to beautify the downtown area and transition unutilized or underutilized land into economically productive developments. It is acknowledged that the economic potential of Downtown Atascadero can only be realized with the cooperation of both the public and private sectors. Therefore, this section includes strategies to work with the public and private sectors to improve the quality of life, which will allow the Downtown to be economically competitive.

Economic restructuring centers on the following policies:

1. To encourage and assist existing businesses to remain and expand in Downtown Atascadero, helping them to be economically viable contributors to the community; and
2. To recruit new industries and businesses, thereby creating new jobs for Atascadero residents.

Business Retention and Expansion

The retention and expansion of existing firms are key to maintaining a stable employment and tax base and, ultimately, to attracting new business. A retention and expansion program is a systematic approach to gathering information from the local business sector, and then using the information as a tool to identify and address immediate problems and to develop local programs that promote a diversified local economy.

Retention and expansion also involves providing links or direct access to a variety of public and private services such as training and financing. The program also provides a ready-made early warning system to prevent impending company relocation. A strong retention and expansion program keeps the City, the Main Street Organization, chamber of commerce, and businesses in touch and communicating on a regular and systematic basis.

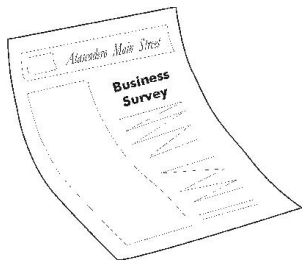
Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Major economic development tools that the City, Redevelopment Agency and Main Street Organization can use include tax increment financing for specific projects in the redevelopment area, job training assistance, information dissemination, advertising and promotion, and top quality customer service from City staff.

One of the side benefits of business retention is that commercial attraction efforts are enhanced through the increased success of existing businesses. Also, positive working relationships are developed between the public and private sector, creating a welcome, can-do perception of the City. Potential target industries and business sectors will also emerge, and new business opportunities will become a natural outgrowth of a successful retention and expansion program.

Programs designed to address business retention and expansion are delineated below. The Main Street Organization, in coordination with the City's Economic Development Program should:



Conduct Periodic Surveys. In addition to gathering basic industry statistics (e.g., business sector, number of employees), surveys can obtain information on the needs of existing businesses to remain profitable and enable them to expand.

Act as Ombudsman. Businesses recognize the value of having an advocate and link within the City that can cross department lines to bring appropriate action to bear on problem solving or to take advantage of an opportunity for expansion, retention, or attraction of other business.

Locate Financing Sources and Linkages. This is recommended to encourage more lending and financing opportunities Downtown.

Link Small Business to Assistance Training and Counseling. The City and Main Street organization have a definite and important role to play by encouraging development of assistance programs available to local small business, including use of the Small Business Development Center.

Provide Information and Referral Services. This is one of the fundamental activities of the Main Street Program. Increased requests for information and the number of contacts are one of the manifestations of a successful program. The Main Street Organization can assist a company by providing an answer to a question or solution to a problem, the program strengthens the individual company and contributes to the health of the general business environment.

Host Seminars and Workshops. This activity will promote economic development to brokers, tenants, and companies on a regular basis. This activity can also be used as a marketing tool to kick off an economic development strategic plan to the community and should be coordinated with other business groups in the community.

Maintain Regular Direct Communication with Business. The City Council, Main Street organization, chamber of commerce, and City staff should make regular contact with Downtown businesses. This could be done by direct mail, phone/fax, e-mail, and personal visits. The intent of this communication is to let the businesses of the community understand that their presence in Downtown Atascadero is appreciated and to extend an invitation to assist the business with problems they may encounter.

Business Attraction and Formation

The use of targeted business attraction techniques represents an opportunity for Downtown Atascadero based on its demographics, local economy, and economic activity going on around it. Also, disposable income inside the community, and outside the community, presents development opportunities to recapture the sales that are lost to retail centers in adjacent communities.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Programs designed to address business attraction are described below. The Main Street Organization, in coordination with the City's Economic Development Program should:

Identify Attraction Targets. To prepare an effective attraction program, it is first necessary to identify companies that are a natural fit with Downtown Atascadero. It is also necessary to find out which companies are searching or growing to target resources where there is the greatest likelihood of a successful match. This involves matching the Downtown's strengths with growth companies most needing the type of location offered by Downtown Atascadero.

Create and Follow Site Location Leads and Prepare Proposals. Specific proposals should be prepared using Downtown information packets with specific demographic, economic, and site information that will encourage a company to select Downtown Atascadero as the location for their company. Leads or referrals can be made by City staff, the Main Street organization, the chamber of commerce, existing businesses, new businesses, commercial brokers and developers, and others.

Work Closely with Commercial Brokers and Developers. Establishing a solid communication network among brokers and developers results in growing familiarity and improved perceptions of City permit and planning services, exchanges of information about sites available for new companies, and opportunities to respond to unique development timing requirements with a unique Downtown process. The City's reputation as a serious player in business attraction is made by the perceptions, accurate or not, of company managers, brokers, and developers. Close communication results in problem solving and cooperative working relationships.

Recommended Actions

The following actions are recommended to achieve the economic restructuring policies and implement the supporting programs. Information on the responsible agency, funding source, and priority of each action discussed below are discussed in Chapter 6, Implementation.

1. Track Atascadero's Downtown business inventory, statistics, and markets through surveys, business license program, or other means.
2. Collect and analyze economic and demographic data provided through City surveys, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), various state departments, the 2000 Census, other federal departments, and other sources. Information needs to be readily available to brokers, developers, market consultants, and site locators to promote Downtown Atascadero.
3. Track employment trends with information available through the Employment Development Department for use in site location proposals, and for information and referral by the City.
4. Review City regulatory processes that effect business retention, expansion, and attraction to determine how to best provide assistance to businesses in processing development approvals, expansion plans, and other land use issues.
5. Create a special development team for fast reaction of unique downtown opportunities. A team drawing from all City disciplines and departments can be established to review plans and provide an expedited process when unique circumstances warrant.
6. Streamline the permitting process to reduce both the costs and the time required to go through the process. Streamlining the permitting process embraces all of the strategic goals, including better communication, improved customer service, commitment by employees, and staying competitive. Streamlining does not necessarily mean relaxing requirements or reducing fees; it does mean making it easier for the customer to understand and, therefore, easier to complete.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

City of Atascadero
Downtown Revitalization Plan

7. Create an economic development internship program whereby interns from Cal Poly, and other local colleges can help the City or Main Street organization implement economic development programs in the Downtown.
8. Work with local financial institutions to create a storefront improvement program to provide loans to property and business owners for the renovation of building facades in the Downtown.
9. Institute a monitoring program that tracks Downtown economic restructuring initiatives and outcomes, business contacts and follow-up requirements, land use data and development status, retail sales and sales tax targets (including sales tax revenues as a percentage of total City revenues), and other criteria to measure the success of the economic development element.

Citations

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California State Board of Equalization, *Taxable Sales in California (Sales and Use Tax)*, 1997.

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5 Promotion

Downtown Atascadero will create a unified, quality image and develop promotion strategies that bring people to the district.

Introduction

As described in Chapter 4, Economic Restructuring, the Downtown Revitalization Plan and the formation of the Atascadero Main Street Program envisioned as an impetus to economic development in Downtown Atascadero. Promotional activities will include working with potential investors and property owners and promoting the Downtown through community events.

Existing Downtown Activities & Other Community Events

Many community events are currently taking place either in the Downtown or elsewhere in the City. These are described below.

Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration

The City began its holiday tree lighting celebration years ago in the Sunken Gardens drawing an average of 300-500 people. Originally, the ceremony included multi-colored lights on the trees and people would gather on the City Administration Building steps to sing holiday carols and watch the trees light up. The Atascadero Chamber of Commerce assisted the City with the ceremony until about 1995. The Downtown BIA began hosting the tree lighting ceremony in 1996 and added the street faire. At that time, the BIA paid to put up the fountain light and the Season's Greetings sign.



Photo 11. Sunken Gardens during Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration

In 1997, the City stopped lighting the trees because of cost and liability issues. That year the lighting ceremony included lighting the fountain and the Season's Greeting sign as well as the lights on the Rotunda. In 1998, the BIA took over the tree lighting ceremony including upgrading electrical boxes and buying and installing new lights. The project cost over \$40,000. The BIA hosted fundraisers (including an annual golf tournament) for the costs, and we were able to light up the front two trees with white lights at the next lighting ceremony. In 1999, the ceremony added lighting the next two trees, expanded the street faire and the advertising of the event to raise attendance to approximately 1,600 people.

Associated activities offered in 1999 include a mountain of snow, DJ playing music, doing drawings, making announcements, a band playing, dancers performing, a live nativity scene, cotton candy, popcorn, hot dogs, apple cider, craft booths, Santa, parrot pictures, big screen with multi-media show playing, displaying downtown businesses, new developments with Main Street, etc.

The Atascadero High School Leadership Class assisted with the event as volunteers for community service hours (snow mountain patrol, trash pick up, etc.). Sponsors included businesses inside and outside the BIA boundaries.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.

The tree lighting ceremony is traditionally held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, however, in 2000, the event is scheduled for Friday, December 1st, as a lot of vendors and downtown business people were unavailable in the past due to the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Other BIA Sponsored Activities

In addition to the holiday tree lighting celebration, the Downtown BIA has participated in the "Spring Into Atascadero" which is sponsored by Atascadero News, The Chamber and the BIA.

Downtown Awards

At the BIA's annual meeting held in June 2000 was the first year the BIA gave awards acknowledging the successes of downtown businesses. Categories for awards included landscaping, window displays, customer service, etc. The Main Street organization may continue this event to acknowledge downtown success stories in the future.

Fireman's Muster

The Fireman's Muster is one successful event that was held in the Sunken Gardens in the past. It is an annual event held around the state that the Atascadero Fire Department bid on to host in Atascadero.

Cruise Night

Cruise Night has been an annual event hosted by the Mid State Muscle Car Club on the Friday night before the car show held at Atascadero Lake Park. The cruise extends from Curbaril to Morro Road on El Camino Real. The event has been very successful, drawing thousands to El Camino Real to watch the cars or *cruise* along in the parade of cars.

Colony Days

Colony Days is held the third Saturday in October as an annual celebration of historic Atascadero. A parade with 100 to 150



Photo 12. Parade along El Camino Real.

Why Should We Invest In Downtown?

- Downtown is a symbol of community economic health, local quality of life, pride, and community history.
- A vital Downtown retains and creates jobs, which also means a stronger tax base. Long-term revitalization establishes capable businesses that use public services and provide tax revenues for the community.
- Downtown is also a good incubator for new small businesses -- the building blocks of a healthy economy. Strip centers and malls are often too expensive for new entrepreneurs.
- A vital Downtown area reduces sprawl by concentrating retail in one area and uses community resources wisely, such as infrastructure, tax dollars and land.
- A healthy Downtown core protects property values in surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- The traditional Downtown is an ideal location for independent businesses, which in turn:
 - Keep profits in town.* Chain businesses send profits out of town.
 - Supports local families* with family-owned businesses
 - Supports local community* projects, such as ball teams and schools
 - Provide an extremely stable economic foundation*, as opposed to a few large businesses and chains with no ties to stay in the community
- A revitalized Downtown increases the community's options for goods and services: whether for basic staples, like clothing, food and professional services or less traditional functions such as housing and entertainment.
- Downtown provides an important civic forum, where members of the community can congregate. Parades, special events and celebrations held there reinforce intangible sense of community. Private developments like malls can and do restrict free speech and access.
- Many Downtown areas become tourist attractions by virtue of the character of buildings, location, selection of unique businesses, and events held there.

Source: Adapted from *Why Are Main Streets Important?* National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2000.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

entries completes a route from Curbaril to Traffic Way. Other associated activities include a carnival in the Sunken Gardens. The event is the largest held each year in the City. The event is put on by a private non-profit organization, the Colony Days Organization.

Farmer's Market

The official Atascadero Farmer's Market, held by the Farmer's Market Association, is held on Wednesday afternoons from 3pm to 6pm in the Vons/Rite Aid parking lot just south of Morro Road, outside the Downtown. The weekly event was held in Downtown until about 1997, originally on Entrada Avenue then in the Sunken Gardens.

Flea Market

The City's Community Services Department hosts a Flea Market in March and September with approximately 125 retail and craft vendors.

Stadium Park

Purchased in 1993, Stadium Park is a 26-acre City-owned and maintained park north of Capistrano Avenue adjacent to the Downtown area. Other than a stage built around a large oak tree in the center of the base of the natural bowl, the park has no developed amenities. A 1999 focus group identified the mission of Stadium Park is to revive the site's historic use for cultural and educational experiences while preserving this unique natural habitat for passive recreation. Parking is not provided at Stadium Park, however some parking could be provided in the Downtown with a pedestrian bridge and pathway to accommodate the parks users (see Chapter 3 – Circulation & Parking Improvements).

Tourism

Tourism should be developed as another way to strengthen the Downtown economy. Creation and enhancement of cultural, entertainment, and recreational activities and facilities in Downtown Atascadero will attract the tourist and, therefore, positively affect sales tax revenue. Activities and special events by various special interest, cultural, and other groups should be encouraged to create a regional draw of individuals to the community. Promotion of the City's historic character and attractions, and the installation of music and art in public places, should be encouraged to attract tourists. Also, the City could capitalize on it's freeway visibility and access to lure travelers between the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles into its shops, restaurants, entertainment complexes, and lodging facilities.

Promoting Downtown Atascadero

Opportunities for promoting events and tourism to support Downtown Revitalization include the following.

Implement a Joint Business/Downtown Advertising Program. There is an opportunity to leverage the Downtown's dollars by advertising Downtown Atascadero jointly with private industry. Atascadero could

- Ideas for Future Downtown Events*
- Main Street Float in Colony Days Parade
 - Youth Window Painting for Halloween
 - Art Fair in the Sunken Gardens
 - Downtown Merchants Lighting Contest
 - Window Decorating Contest
 - Tree Lighting Celebration and Street Fair
 - Downtown New Year's Bash
 - Sweetheart's Shopping Spree (sidewalk sales, gift baskets, etc.)
 - Sunken Gardens Easter Egg Hunt
 - Main Street Awards Extravaganza
 - Chili Cook-off and Beer Festival
 - Hot El Camino Nights – Car Cruise
 - Party in the Park – Sunken Gardens Kid's Day
 - Celebrating the History of Atascadero
 - 10K the starts and finishes in downtown
 - Farmer's Market/Street Fair with food and entertainment to draw families businesses stay open late
 - Bands playing in the park once a month during the summer or during Farmer's Market Night
 - Motorcycle Rally/Show
 - Petting Day in the Park – have animals in Sunken Gardens (Zoo to You, Charles Paddock Zoo, citizens, etc.)
 - Mini-Shakespeare Festival in Sunken Gardens
 - Plays/dramas on stage in Sunken Gardens during the summer
 - Annual Fundraiser Golf Tournament

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

take advantage of the achievements of Atascadero area companies by using them in marketing and promotion of the Downtown

Market the Downtown. The Main Street organization should work with developers and property owners to encourage development, upgrades, and improvements in order to attract new businesses and investment in the downtown. Loans for facade upgrades, seismic safety, and other improvements could be secured. Policies identified in Chapter 4, Economic Restructuring, that relate to business retention and attraction can be applied to the Downtown area.

Complete a Downtown Identity Program. A Downtown identity program that preserves the historic character of the City should include specific actions such as landscaping, lighting, paving, and gateway improvements, and a downtown signage program.

Create Project Financing Sources. The Main Street organization should work with funding providers to create a downtown banking consortium that will commit financing and counseling on how to obtain further financing for buildings, expansion, equipment, and cash flow management.

Create Promotional Materials. The Main Street organization should develop a promotional brochure describing Downtown points of interest, restaurants, specialty shops, and annual special events.

Support Local Museums, Art, and Cultural Events. Growth in tourism can be encouraged by supporting the programs and events of historic places of interest and entertainment throughout the community. This can be accomplished through support from the Main Street organization, and by coordinating events/exhibits with additional interest groups such as the Atascadero Historical Society.

Create and Increase Support of Local Special Events. Support existing special events in the Downtown, develop related events that coincide with current events, and create new events that emphasize the character of the Downtown. Ideas for special events in the Downtown are identified in the sidebar.

Develop a Marketing Plan. Develop a marketing plan because none of the economic restructuring programs will work effectively without considerable promotion of the Downtown goals, strategies, and location as a desirable community. Program advertising and marketing will require professional assistance from an outside consultant or public relations firm to create such a plan. Once the marketing plan is created, implementation will require a coordinated and combined effort of the Main Street organization, its chamber, and others.

Create a Logo or Theme. Create an economic development identity symbol, theme, and logo, which may require professional assistance. Having professional presentation of information with a recognizable coordinated look demonstrates that the Main Street organization takes itself and its program seriously. Start by using existing themes (“Welcome to Downtown Atascadero, A Friendly, Old Fashioned, Small Town” and “A Small Town is Like a Big Family”) or working off those themes.

Create Downtown Marketing Materials. Create Downtown marketing materials, including brochures, fact sheets, maps, an internet web site, and other appropriate tools. Information is needed on transportation, labor market, housing, education, recreation, cultural facilities and events, and other topics. Data is also needed on specific available sites for development, a description of the permitting process, and a list of existing businesses in Downtown Atascadero. A profile of the City Council and staff needs to be developed to emphasize the stability of local government and the City’s can-do attitude.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Promotions Recommended Actions

Information on the responsible agency, funding source, and priority of each program discussed below are discussed in Chapter 6, Implementation.

1. Sponsor logo contest for Atascadero Main Street.
2. Develop public signage program to distinguish Downtown from other areas in the City.
3. Install posts for revolving banner signage across El Camino Real.
4. Work to bring a farmer's market/weekly street fair to Downtown or an alternative market-type event.
5. Co-host Tree Lighting Ceremony (2000) and host in coming years.
6. Prepare an annual event calendar.
7. Prepare a long-term marketing program for Downtown Atascadero that markets downtown's assets.
8. Develop a joint advertising program for Downtown businesses.
9. Freeway signage change.
10. Develop a Downtown Atascadero Main Street program website.
11. Develop a permanent street tree lighting program.
12. Work with organizers to facilitate events in downtown/process for screening groups who wish to have a downtown event.

6 Implementation

Introduction

Achieving the vision captured by the Downtown Revitalization Plan will be accomplished through a partnership among downtown businesses and property owners, the Redevelopment Agency and the community. Each has a role to play in making the downtown a vital, interesting focal point of the City. This chapter outlines the administrative (responsibility), financing (resources), priority and regulatory approaches that should be followed to effectively implement the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

City Code Revisions

The following steps should be taken by the City of Atascadero to implement the provisions of this Plan.

General Plan Amendments

The City's 1992 Downtown Master Plan was adopted as an optional element of the City's General Plan. As described earlier in this Plan, this Downtown Revitalization Plan is an "area plan". In order to implement the land use recommendations identifies in Chapter 2 of this Plan, the City should amend its General Plan to dissolve the existing Downtown Master Plan and amend the City's Land Use Element to include one land use designation for the Downtown. This would also include the adoption of the Downtown Revitalization Plan's goals, policies and programs.

New Downtown Zoning Ordinance & Design Guidelines

To bring the City's Zoning Ordinance into consistency with this Downtown Revitalization Plan, the City should repeal its existing Downtown Zoning Districts to eliminate the existing downtown zoning districts and overlay designations. The City should then adopt the new Zoning Ordinance, including new zoning districts, allowed uses, parking requirements, setbacks, and sign requirements. The City should also adopt the design guidelines in Appendix A.

Streetscape Improvements

In order to attain the vision for the Downtown identified in this Plan a number of public improvements should be implemented, including the construction of public amenities such as a system of creekside trails, pedestrian bridges, decorative paving, landscaped medians, antique street lights, bulb-outs at street intersections and street trees.

The most likely source of financing for the streetscape and other improvements is tax increment revenue generated by the Redevelopment Project Area.

First Implementation Project

The Main Street Steering Committee identified a first implementation project to kick-off the Downtown revitalization. It was the Committee's desire to have the first project be both visible and contribute to the vision of a pedestrian-oriented Downtown. The recommended project includes the installation of a landscaped median on El Camino Real from Traffic Way to West Mall and the installation of bulb-outs and crosswalk enhancements at the Traffic Way/El Camino Real intersection as well as the Entrada Avenue/El Camino Real intersection. A preliminary cost estimate for the first implementation project is provided in Table 11.

In 1994, the City of Atascadero hired DKS Associates and SEDES to prepare a conceptual design for medians along El Camino Real from Rosario Avenue at the north end of the Downtown to El Bordo Avenue south of the Post Office. Through the Downtown area, the conceptual plans illustrate medians ranging in width from six to 16 feet in width. These plans were utilized to prepare the cost estimate in Table 11. A section drawing of the recommended median is shown in Figure 4.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

The enhanced crosswalks and street "bulb-outs," where parts of the sidewalk extend into the street to make drivers more aware of a pedestrian crossing, and these streetscape improvements will need to be designed for the first implementation project. An illustration of the Traffic Way/El Camino Real intersection is shown in Figure 5. Many alternatives exist for types of paving used including tile accents or stamped colored concrete.

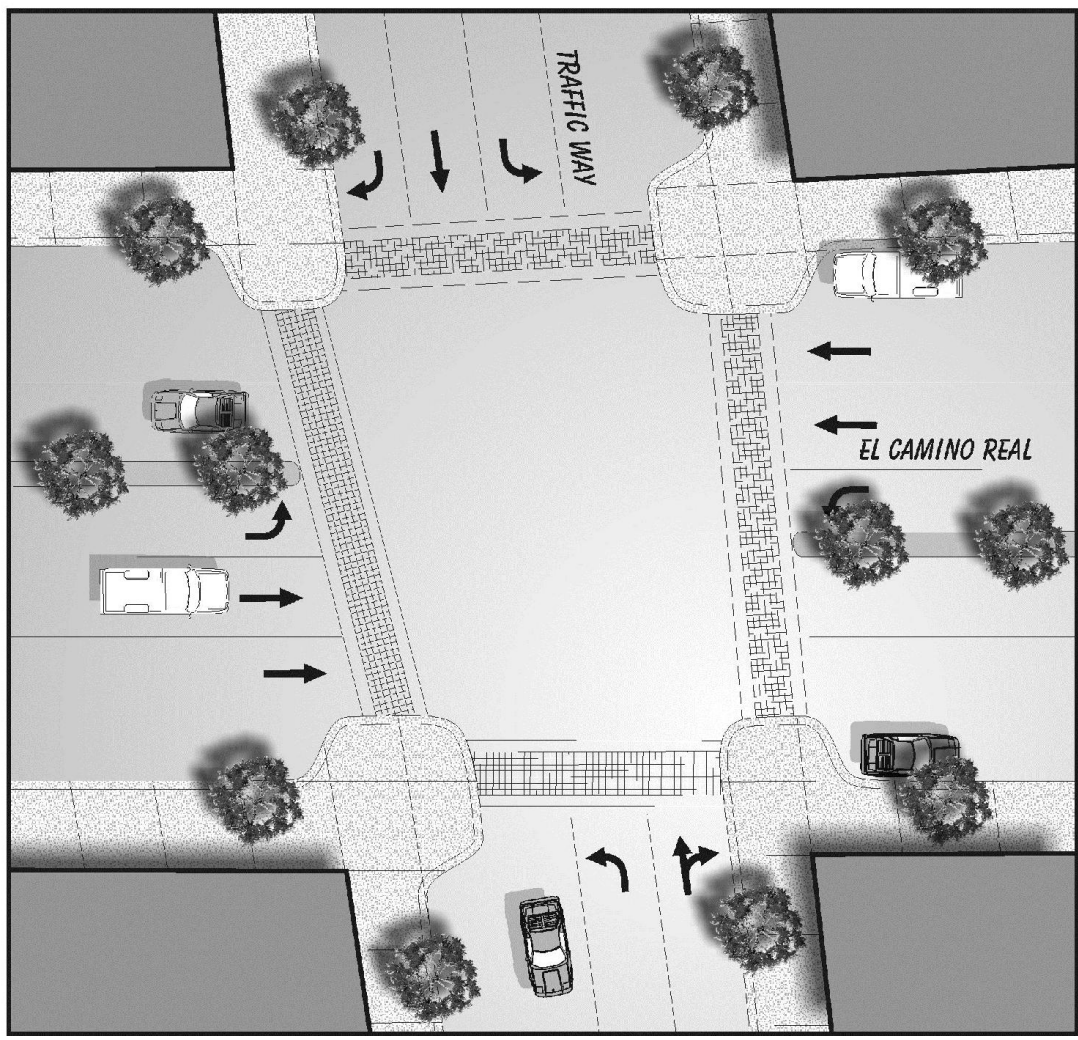
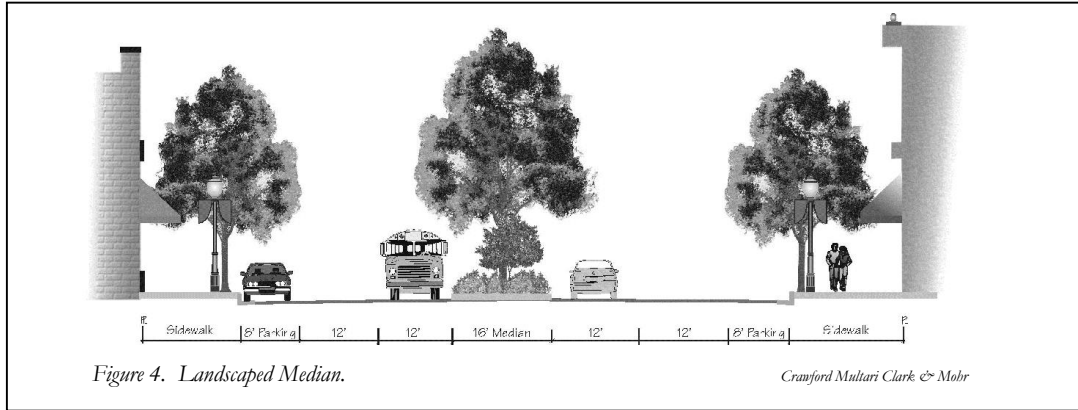


Table 11: Preliminary Cost Estimate of First Implementation Project

Improvements	Description	Preliminary Cost Estimate
Median In El Camino Real		
Demolition – pavement removal and disposal	Flat Rate - estimate	\$10,000
Curb and gutter for median	600 lineal feet, 183 lineal meters; \$100 per lineal meter	\$18,300
Imported Soil	350 cubic yards soil - combination of fill dirt (\$22/yard) and planter mix (\$32/yard)	\$9,200
Irrigation	\$0.50 per square foot for approx 6,000 square feet	\$3,000
Finish grading	Flat Rate - estimate	\$2,500
Trees	8-24" box accent trees, such as <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> , and 15-24" box canopy trees, such as <i>Platanus acerifolia</i> , \$400 installed per tree.	\$9,200
Other Landscaping	205-5 gallon shrubs, such as <i>Raphiolepis indica</i> and <i>Hemerocallis spp.</i> (\$25 installed), 80 flats groundcover, such as annual color and <i>Vinca major</i> (\$20 installed).	\$6,725
	TOTAL	\$58,925
Bulb out treatment at Traffic Way and El Camino Real		
Enhanced Sidewalk/Crosswalk*	350x15 feet, 107x4.6 square meters; \$80 per square meter	\$39,376
New curb and gutter	160 lineal feet, 49 meters; \$100 per lineal meter	\$4,900
	TOTAL	\$44,276
Bulb out treatment at Entrada Avenue and El Camino Real		
Enhanced Sidewalk/Crosswalk*	160x15 feet, 49x4.6 meters; \$80 per square meter	\$18,032
New curb and gutter	80 lineal feet, 24.5 meters; \$100 per lineal meter	\$2,450
	TOTAL	\$20,482
	Design and Engineering Fees (estimated at 10% of construction cost)	\$12,368
	GRAND TOTAL	\$136,051
*includes demolition and disposal costs		
Source: City of San Luis Obispo, Engineering Department, recent construction bids for similar streetscape improvements, 2000; Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr, 2000.		

Housing

The Plan recommends the introduction of housing into the Downtown where it can be accommodated subordinate to commercial uses, such as on the upper floors of two- and three-story buildings. Because the Downtown is in a Redevelopment Area, any newly constructed housing project should have 15 percent of the total units set aside as affordable to people within specific income ranges. This is true for any type of housing, even if it is built with no public subsidy. This type of housing can take place in the downtown, project area or within the citylimits. Typically housing production is a function of the private sector, and changes in zoning may be sufficient inducement to developers to build housing in the Downtown. However, if the City decides to take a more active role in encouraging housing in the Downtown it might be appropriate to use public funds to this end. In this case, redevelopment tax increment revenues provide the most likely funding source.

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.

State law requires that 20 percent of all tax increment revenues collected be set aside to assist in developing affordable housing within redevelopment project areas. Because a large portion of Atascadero is within a redevelopment project area, this money could be used to build housing in a number of locations that are not in the Downtown. However, the City should consider making housing provisions in the Downtown a priority, since this could both provide affordable housing and encourage Downtown revitalization.

Summary of Recommended Actions

The vision illustrated by the Downtown Revitalization Plan will be achieved through the implementation of a series of programs and projects that have been described in the previous sections of the Plan (Organization, Promotions, Design and Economic Restructuring) and are summarized in Table 12. The programs are divided into two groups: First tier programs, which generally have a higher priority, and second tier programs that can be implemented over a longer timeframe. However, the tiering is not intended to be rigid. If opportunities arise for a second tier program sooner, they should be pursued.

Table 12: Summary of Recommended Actions

Organization

Recommendation	Description of Action	Responsible Parties	Resources	Timing
Organization 1	Dissolve existing BIA organization. Assign responsibilities for advising the City on the expenditure of BIA assessments to the new Main Street organization, as required under state law.	City of Atascadero	Existing City staff	Immediate
Organization 2	Transition existing downtown programs to independent, non-profit Main Street organization.	City of Atascadero	Existing City staff	Immediate
Organization 3	Form Main Street Board of Directors and four advisory committees. City staff should facilitate the development of the Board of Directors a process that provides involvement for all that want to participate.	City of Atascadero	Existing City staff	Within six months
Organization 4	Develop non-profit articles of incorporation, by-laws and other documents required by state and federal law for non-profit status.	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within six months
Organization 5	Provide Board of Directors training program focusing on the four points of Main Street and Board governance.	City of Atascadero	Existing City staff	Within six months
Organization 6	Hire Main Street Executive Director.	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within six months
Organization 7	Apply for California Main Street certification.	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within five years

Design

Recommendation	Description of Action	Responsible Parties	Resources	Timing
Design 1	First implementation project (landscaped medians, bulb outs, crosswalk enhancements)	City of Atascadero	Main Street budget and Redevelopment Funds	Within six months
Design 1	Design and install entry gateway features	Main Street and City of Atascadero	Main Street budget and Redevelopment Funds	Within two years
Design 2	Design and construct creekside trails and pedestrian bridge(s)	City of Atascadero	Redevelopment Funds and grants	Within five years

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.

Design 3	Design and construct vehicular bridge to connect Lewis Avenue	City of Atascadero	Redevelopment funds and Impact Fees	Within five years
Design 4	Develop façade improvement program/loan program	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year
Design 5	Form a design assistance team of local architects and designers	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year
Design 6	Design and construct additional medians along El Camino Real	City of Atascadero	Redevelopment funds	Within five years
Design 7	Design and construct improvements to the Sunken Gardens	City of Atascadero	Redevelopment funds	Within five years
Design 8	Develop a walkway improvement program and construct improvements	City of Atascadero	Redevelopment funds	Within five years
Design 9	Traffic flow – one way streets on East Mall and West Mall	City of Atascadero	Existing staff	Within six months
Design 10	Create angled parking and one way streets on East and West Mall	City of Atascadero	Existing staff	Within six months
Design 11	Work to implement “window to downtown”	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year

Economic Restructuring

Recommendation	Description of Action	Responsible Parties	Resources	Timing
Economic Restructuring 1	Work with applicants to streamline development review process	City of Atascadero	Existing staff	Immediate and on-going
Economic Restructuring 2	Prepare a market niche study (in association with marketing program described under promotions)	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	As needed
Economic Restructuring 3	Pursue desired downtown tenants	Main Street Board and City of Atascadero	Main Street budget	On-going
Economic Restructuring 4	Revise City’s Zoning Ordinance	City of Atascadero	Existing staff	Immediate
Economic Restructuring 5	Incentivize transision of downtown medical offices – develop incentive program for relocation	Main Street Board and City of Atascadero	Main Street budget and City staff	On-going
Economic Restructuring 6	Accumulate and consolidate property	City of Atascadero	Agency funds	On-going
Economic Restructuring 7	Develop a monthly property for sale brochure	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within six months and on-going
Economic Restructuring 8	Develop and maintain a detailed list /database of downtown properties	Main Street Board and City staff	Main Street budget	Within six months and on-going
Economic	Prepare a business retention plan	Main Street Board and City	Main Street	Within six

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BLA, 1999.

Restructuring 9		staff	budget	months
Economic Restructuring 10	Work with school District to encourage relocation	Main Street Board and City staff	Existing resources	Within six months and on-going

Promotions/Events

Recommendation	Description of Action	Responsible Parties	Resources	Timing
Promotions/Events 1	Sponsor logo contest for Atascadero Main Street	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within six months
Promotions/Events 2	Develop public signage program to distinguish Downtown from other areas in the City	Main Street Board and City staff	Existing resources	Within one year
Promotions/Events 3	Install posts for banner signage across El Camino Real	Main Street Board and City staff	Main Street budget	Within five years
Promotions/Events 4	Work to bring Farmers Market to Downtown or an alternative market-type event	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Immediate and on-going
Promotions/Events 5	Co-host Tree Lighting Ceremony (2000) and host in coming years	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Immediate and on-going
Promotions/Events 6	Prepare an annual event/ fundraising calendar	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Immediate and on-going
Promotions/Events 7	Prepare a long-term marketing program for Downtown that markets downtown's assets	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year
Promotions/Events 8	Develop a joint advertising program for Downtown businesses	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year
Promotions/Events 9	Freeway signage change	City staff	Existing staff	Immediate
Promotions/Events 10	Main Street program downtown website	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year
Promotions/Events 11	Permanent street lighting program	Main Street Board and City staff	Main Street budget and City staff	Within five years
Promotions/Events 12	Work with organizers to facilitate events in downtown/process for screening groups who wish to have a downtown event	Main Street Board	Main Street budget	Within one year

Table A: Existing Downtown Businesses by Block

Source: Atascadero BIA, 1999.

City of Atascadero

Downtown Revitalization Plan

Business	Address
L. H. Warren, M.D.	5420 West Mall
Brack Linscott, D.D.S.	5942 West Mall
Lawrence M. Guittard, D.D.S.	5960 West Mall, Suite A
Robert C. Miller, D.D.S.	5988 West Mall
Twins Painting	5550 Traffic Way, Unit 27
George A. Blount, D.D.S.	5750 Traffic Way
Karl E. Moyer, D.D.S.	5750 Traffic Way
A.R.E. Co.	5808 Traffic Way
Pregnancy Support Center	5810 Traffic Way
Designs In Life	5814 Traffic Way
Miracles Beauty Salon	5840 Traffic Way
Carole M. Boosz	5840 Traffic Way
Brasswood Repair - Musician's Emp.	5850 Traffic Way
Assure A Cure, Inc.	5865 Traffic Way
A Day of Grace	5870 Traffic Way
Obispo Pacific	5880 Traffic Way
Wil Mar Disposal	5885 Traffic Way
Atascadero Sewing & Vacuum	5925 Traffic Way
Huffman & Associates	5943 Traffic Way
Knock-Out Sports Cards	5975 Traffic Way
Buena Geotechnical Serv.	5975 Traffic Way
Atascadero Jewelry & Loan	5550 El Camino Real
Old Trading Post	5570 El Camino Real
Country Sampler	5585 El Camino Real
Ocean Harvest	5625 El Camino Real
Nunes Pristine Auto Body	5680 El Camino Real
Zev Communications	5735 El Camino Real
Blakeslee & Blakeslee	5735 El Camino Real, Suite A
Jerry R. Takier	5735 El Camino Real, Suite J
Papi's Tacos - Gorditas	5735 El Camino Real, Suite O
Atascadero Pizza Express	5735 El Camino Real, Suite R
Cuttin' Up	5760 El Camino Real
Casual Cuts & Styles	5780 El Camino Real
Bargain Depot	5800 El Camino Real
Coast To Coast Hardware	5805 El Camino Real
Think Big	5820 El Camino Real
Limelight Music & Gifts	5880 El Camino Real
Return Engagement	5900 El Camino Real
Bistagne's Tree Of Life	5920 El Camino Real
All My Stuff Thrift Store	5930 El Camino Real
Pflum's Atascadero Muffler	5970 El Camino Real
Auto Shoppe	6040 El Camino Real
Smog Shoppe	6060 El Camino Real
Harry's Upholstery	6105 El Camino Real
McCarthy's	6195 El Camino Real
Atascadero Bipi Gi's Boutique	6390 El Camino Real
Atascadero Super Sport Skate Shop	6450 El Camino Real, Suite A
A Back Alternative, Brian Ring, D.C.	6455 El Camino Real
Chamber of Commerce	6550 El Camino Real
Frontier Auto	6700 El Camino Real
Lance's Automotive	6700 El Camino Real
Obert's Automotive	6700 El Camino Real
A.R. Pete Reed Bkpg & Tax	6750 El Camino Real
Atascadero Realty, Inc.	6760 El Camino Real
Rancho Tee Motel	6895 El Camino Real
Strictly Gourmet Coffee & Tea	6895 El Camino Real
Atascadero Florist	6900 El Camino Real
Creekside Lanes	6901 El Camino Real
Pacific Coast Martial Arts Academy	6901 El Camino Real
JP Pro Shop	6901 El Camino Real
Armando's Mexican Food	6905 El Camino Real
Century 21	6905 El Camino Real
Sunstorm Cyclery	6905 El Camino Real, Suite 4

Business	Address
Cool Cat Cafe	6905 El Camino Real
Sunrise Donut Co.	6905 El Camino Real
C. Kevin Farr, DMD	6905 El Camino Real
Mission Medical Associates	6905 El Camino Real
Captain Kid's	6905 El Camino Real, Suite 6
Denny's Restaurant	6910 El Camino Real
Starlight Cafe	6911 El Camino Real
Mid State Bank	6950 El Camino Real
Invest Financial Corp.	6955 El Camino Real
David C. Peterson, Attorney	6955 El Camino Real
Cal Fed	6955 El Camino Real
Midland Pacific Construction	6955 El Camino Real
Ken's Mobil Service	6990 El Camino Real
Ronald Chalker, D.D.S. Corp.	5825 Entrada Ave
Paper Works	5900 Entrada Ave
Sweet Leilani	5905 Entrada Ave
T.L.C.'S Skin Solutions	5905 Entrada Ave
Sandee's Nails	5905 Entrada Ave
Nails By Sharon Moore	5905 Entrada Ave
Tina Hart	5905 Entrada Ave
Atascadero Nutritional Testing	5905 Entrada Ave
Rick Butler Sales & Service	5914 Entrada Ave
Atascadero Travel	5920 Entrada Ave, Suite A
Law Abiding Citizens	5920 Entrada Ave
SOS Appliance Repair	5925 Entrada Ave
Lynn Montandon, Env. Consulting	5932 Entrada Ave
Ross Jams	5940 Entrada Ave
Corral	5945 Entrada Ave
Ernest Casacca, Attorney	5950 Entrada Ave
Frederick J. Wood, Attorney	5950 Entrada Ave
Wright & Sanders, A Law Corp.	5950 Entrada Ave
Ted's Custom Hair Care	5960 Entrada Ave
Johnston Chiropractic Clinic	5975 Entrada Ave
Riffel Chiropractic	5975 Entrada Ave
Art Of Nails	5983 Entrada Ave
Karen's Beauty Supply & Salon	5985 Entrada Ave
Peabody and Plum Realtors	5955 East Mall
John P. Anderson, D.D.S.	5903 East Mall
Rich Morey, Ph.D	5905 Capistrano Ave
Bank of America	6905 Capistrano Ave
Jane Gold and Cathy Brody	5805 Capistrano Ave, Suite A
First Propane	5805 Capistrano Ave, Suite G
County Assessors Office	5855 Capistrano Ave, Suite A
County Building Inspector	5855 Capistrano Ave, Suite C
Wheeler & Beaton Law Offices	5855 Capistrano Ave, Suite G
Lancaster Mortgage Services	5905 Capistrano Ave, Suite F
North County Tax	5905 Capistrano Ave, Suite A
Tri-County Register Center	5905 Capistrano Ave, Suite E
Dr. Schechter Family Medicine	5905 Capistrano Ave, Suite C
Beryl R. Davis, Ph. D.	5805 Capistrano Ave, Suite F
Chris Schulz, L.C.S.W.	6470 Lewis Ave
Anne Youngquist, MFCC	6470 Lewis Ave
AJ's Appliance Service	5905 Palma Ave
A-Wright Pet Grooming	6025 Palma Ave
California Hair Unlimited	6035 Palma Ave
My Bookkeeper	6275 Palma Ave
Atascadero Optometric Center	6480 Palma Ave
Arlyne's Flowers & Gifts	6485 Palma Ave