



*Photo of Highlands Park*



CITY of CALABASAS

## Section 2

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

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- *Regional Context*
- *Planning Area*
- *Natural Resources*
- *Climate*
- *Demographic Characteristics*
- *Land Use*

## INTRODUCTION

This document section outlines general information about the community of Calabasas, including natural resources, demographic, and land use characteristics.

### A. Regional Context

Located adjacent to U.S. Highway 101, the City of Calabasas is known as the gateway to the Santa Monica Mountains. Calabasas is situated 31 miles northwest of Los Angeles near the Ventura County boundary. The City encompasses an area of approximately 12.9 square miles. Scenic Mulholland Highway runs to the south of the City.

Calabasas is located in the picturesque Santa Monica Mountains, and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is located nearby. This 150,000-acre area includes 550 miles of multi-use trails in 70,000 acres of public park land.

Calabasas is the newest city in Los Angeles County. It was formed in 1991, and the incorporation passed by a 9 to 1 margin.

*Listed below are travel distances from Calabasas to various destinations.*

<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>31 Miles</i>
<i>Santa Barbara</i>	<i>65 Miles</i>
<i>San Diego</i>	<i>150 Miles</i>



**FIGURE 2.1**  
**Regional Location**

### B. Planning Area

The planning area for this study includes all lands within the city limits of the City of Calabasas.

## C. Natural Resources

Natural resources are important to recreation planning for a variety of reasons. The topography/terrain and the existence of water features impact the potential for development. While land with natural resources is often considered environmentally sensitive and has development limitations, it is often conducive to park, open space, and recreation uses as well. Aside from minimizing hazards associated with these features, the preservation of resource areas has a number of other benefits, such as protecting unique landforms, maintaining aquifer recharge areas and other hydrological functions, and preserving the riparian and vegetative cover.

In the City of Calabasas, many areas remain undeveloped with the natural features remaining. The City has a number of zoning designations protecting natural resource areas, restrict development, and maintain the open character.

### *Topography/Terrain*

The terrain in the Calabasas area can be categorized as rugged or mountainous, with few level areas. Calabasas is located within the Santa Monica Mountains, and ranges in elevation from 500 to 2,500 feet above sea level, with an average elevation of 796 feet. This topography is a major factor in the development and overall aesthetic character of the City of Calabasas. The scenic character of Calabasas is a result of the topography and most undeveloped areas in the City will likely remain that way due to constraints and zoning limitations resulting from the topography.

### *Water Features*

Las Virgenes Creek, part of the Malibu Creek drainage, passes through the City, as do several other creeks and drainages. There is one small human-made lake located near the Tennis and Swim Center.

Streams and drainage areas are important because of their ability to provide habitat corridors for fish and wildlife, preserve riparian vegetation, and carry stormwater runoff. In addition to their functional and aesthetic characteristics, the drainages can also serve as conduits for trails.

## D. Climate

Similar to most communities in southern California, the climate in the City of Calabasas can be characterized as mild in the winters, and warm and dry in the summers. Precipitation averages 13.6 inches a year. This mild climate encourages year round outdoor recreation activity.

## E. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics are important attributes because they provide a picture of the local population and allow comparisons between communities. Information about demographics also provides insight into recreational interests and participation. Factors such as age and income significantly affect the level and individual ability to pursue recreational activities. To a lesser extent, employment, education and ethnicity also play a role. The population and demographic information for the City of Calabasas is derived from the 2000 U.S. Census.

According to the U.S. Census, the City's 2000 population was placed at 20,033 people. Limited growth is expected in the City over the coming years. Due to environmental constraints and steep hillsides, most undeveloped land within the City limits will remain that way, and most of the developable areas are already built out. Several annexations are planned, and the population will increase as a result.

### *Demographic Profile*

As a whole, Calabasas is much less diverse than Los Angeles County. In Calabasas, the population is predominantly white, with 82.2% of the population characterized as non-Hispanic white; and the Black, Asian, and Hispanic populations are all significantly lower than in the county. Housing costs are very high, and most of the housing in Calabasas is owner-occupied (81%). In terms of age, the distribution of the population of Calabasas is generally similar to that of Los Angeles County, although the median age in Calabasas is higher. Calabasas also has a highly educated population. Almost 25 percent of the population ages 25 and over have a graduate degree.

Past recreation studies conducted by MIG indicate that, in most cases, the older the population, the less participation in active or competitive recreation activities. In contrast, young age groups tend to participate in recreation activities more frequently than any other age group and favor more active and competitive activities. This includes activities such as basketball, baseball, soccer, swimming, and bicycling.

### *Age*

As shown in Table 2.1 on the next page, although the City of Calabasas has roughly the same percentage of population in each age group as Los Angeles County, the median age is significantly higher. Calabasas is comparable to Agoura Hills, although Agoura Hills has a lower percentage of seniors and a higher percentage of children.

**Table 2.1**  
**Age Distributions – 2000**

	Under Age 18	Ages 18 to 64	Age 65 and Over	Median Age
State of California	27.3%	62.1%	10.6%	33.3
Los Angeles County	28.0%	62.3%	9.7%	32.0
Calabasas	28.6%	62.8%	8.6%	38.5
Agoura Hills	30.5%	63.3%	6.2%	37.6
Camarillo	25.3%	57.7%	17.0%	38.9
Hidden Hills	33.0%	56.9%	10.1%	40.4
Thousand Oaks	26.0%	62.9%	11.1%	37.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### ***Income***

Income levels within the City of Calabasas are higher than in Los Angeles County and the rest of the state. However, many of the communities surrounding Calabasas also have relatively high incomes compared to the county.

**Table 2.2**  
**Household Income Levels – 2000**

Area	2000 Median Household Income
California	\$47,493
Los Angeles County	\$42,189
Calabasas	\$93,860
Agoura Hills	\$87,008
Camarillo	\$62,457
Hidden Hills	\$200,000+
Thousand Oaks	\$76,815

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### ***Education***

An analysis of education revealed the vast majority (97.2%) of adult residents have a high school degree or higher. Nearly two-thirds of the residents (57.9%) have a bachelor's or graduate degree. Almost one-quarter have a graduate degree (24.4%); an extremely high percentage. Overall, the breakdown of the educational attainment would suggest a highly educated community, with much higher educational attainment levels than countywide or statewide.

## **F. Land Use**

Land use plays an important role in the location, distribution and availability of park and recreational facilities. A major characteristic of land use in Calabasas is that most of the undeveloped land in the City is in protected or restricted development designations. This means that even though it might appear there is quite a bit of undeveloped land, most of that land is either unavailable or unsuitable for development. Since the

area within the existing city limits is either well developed or has development limitations due to rugged terrain, there are very few parcels of land that are not steeply sloped. This poses a challenge to the development of additional parks and recreational facilities. The land use and topographic characteristics create a challenge and make it necessary to evaluate the most effective means of meeting the park and open space needs for each major park category.

The total land area of the City of Calabasas is about 12.9 square miles or 8,256 acres. There is limited residential growth potential due to the steep hillsides and other constraints on development. Based on zoning and available vacant land, between 567 and 1,209 residential units could be added to the City of Calabasas.

The non-developed areas of the City are mainly in Open Space or Hillside/Mountainous zones. The Open Space zoning category limits the use of land, and the City is in the process of adopting a second Open Space zone with additional development restrictions. This new zone will be called the Open Space Development Restricted zone and will include most of the remaining undeveloped land within the Hillside/Mountainous district. This zoning designation also limits development, allowing anywhere from 1 unit per 10 acres to 1 unit per 40 acres, depending on the individual site and the development proposal.

The predominant housing type is single family residential, which represents more than three-quarters of the homes in Calabasas. Compared to most neighboring cities, Calabasas has a relatively high employment base. Commercial areas are located on the east and west ends of town, near Highway 101. Most of the available jobs are in the service sector, and a high percentage of these employees are in the low to moderate income ranges and cannot afford to live in Calabasas.<sup>1</sup>

Population growth primarily occurs through two means: 1) annexation and 2) in-migration and infill. Identifying population growth potential from both sources is critical to identifying new demand for park and recreation services. In Calabasas, infill in developed areas is unlikely to be a significant source of population growth, given that most of the developed areas are subdivisions with covenants, codes, and restrictions (CCRs) that will likely not permit infill. Annexation has greater potential for population growth. Three major annexations are anticipated within the next few years and additional annexations may take place in the future.