



Photo of Frog Circle at De Anza Park



CITY of CALABASAS

Section 5

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

-
- *Summary of Community Survey*
 - *Summary of Public Workshops*
 - *Summary of Youth Workshop*

- *Summary of Recreation Needs of People With Disabilities Questionnaire*

INTRODUCTION

In order to reflect the views of the community and build consensus support for the plan, public participation was an integral part of the planning process. Public participation was sought in a number of ways:

- A random sample community survey
- Three public workshops
- Youth workshops with high school and middle school students
- A questionnaire about recreation needs of people with disabilities sent out to 1200 families of youth with disabilities

This section summarizes the results of each of these public participation efforts.

A. Summary of Community Survey

A survey of public attitudes, recreation interests and recreation participation characteristics was made in the City of Calabasas in late February of 2003. A total of 1,156 surveys were hand-delivered to 594 randomly selected households in Calabasas. After the random sample was selected, it was mapped and checked to ensure that each of the HOA's and apartment complexes in Calabasas was represented, as well as the few areas not included in associations. When the surveys were delivered, each member of the household aged 10 and over was asked to fill out a separate questionnaire.

Based on the random sample method used, in most communities, results are statistically accurate within an expected maximum error range of approximately 5% (a 95% confidence interval). In other words, if the sample were randomly selected 100 times, it would be expected that for 95 times, the results would vary no more than 5% from the results if everyone in the city were surveyed. However, the survey response rate in Calabasas was lower than average, despite a larger than average initial selection of households. Based on the **271 returns, the maximum margin of error is 5.91%**. This is slightly less than the five-percent deviation for which the sample was designed.

It was noted by the Community Services Director that there was a 27% turnout for the City election that took place right after the survey was conducted, and that this turnout was slightly higher than typical due to the high level of interest in a tax repeal measure on the ballot. Based on the election turnout, the survey return ratio may be a typical 'good' response rate for Calabasas.

It is also important to note an effort was made to ensure representation from all Homeowners Associations (HOAs), condominium complexes, and apartment complexes, as well as representation from the very minor areas of the City that are not part of a planned development. This included coordination with HOA presidents. However, City staff could not gain access to six gated HOAs despite these efforts, which means residents of Calabasas Country Estates, Clairidge, Malibu Canyon Villas, Malibu Creek Condominiums, Mulwood Town Homes, and Tanterra could not be surveyed.

For purposes of comparison, Calabasas was divided into two survey areas: west Calabasas and east Calabasas. Table 5.1 shows the percentage of returned surveys from each survey area.

Table 5.1
Survey Areas
City of Calabasas

Area	Percent of Sample
West	44.6%
East	55.3%
TOTAL	100.0%

It is interesting to note the west side of Calabasas had a higher survey return rate than the east side, although the east side has a higher population than the west side. The west side received 37.2% of the surveys distributed and the east side received 62.7%, but the west side accounts for 44.6% of returned surveys.

Listed below is a summary of the survey results. A more detailed analysis is contained in Appendix D.

- Based on the survey results, **De Anza Park** receives the most use in the community with an average of 12 visits per capita annually. The Tennis & Swim Center and the Community Center are also well used.
- Park use varies, sometimes significantly, depending on geography. There was much higher use by west side residents of westside parks, even the Community Center, and much higher use by east side residents of eastside parks, even the Tennis & Swim Center.
- Overall, respondents rated Park and Recreation Services highly. When lower ratings were given, cost and availability of facilities at popular locations were frequently the reasons.

- When asked what the most needed facilities in Calabasas were, the three most frequently cited responses were **Sports Fields** (of all types), **Trails/Paths**, and **Open Space**.
- There was high interest in trails and an extremely high level of support for open space acquisition. This was illustrated through the responses to a number of questions, as well as the recreation participation questions.
- When asked what types of trails are most needed, **Unpaved Hiking and Walking Trails** and **Off-Street Paved Trails** received the most support.
- Respondents overwhelmingly (74.9%) felt more **Sports Fields for Soccer, Baseball, and Softball** are needed in Calabasas. When asked who should be responsible for providing fields, more than 75% of respondents indicated either the City or a partnership between the City and the School District.
- There is relatively high participation in programs. Community-wide, **41.3%** of the respondents indicated they **have participated in recreation programs** sponsored by the City of Calabasas within the past year.
- When asked to prioritize seven major projects, the three that were most favored were **Acquisition of Open Space**, **Develop More Trails**, and a **Sports Field Complex**.
- When asked what cultural arts programs are of greatest interest, **Performances or Concerts in the Parks** and **Community Arts Festivals and Special Events** received the most support.
- A **Teen Center** and **Place to Gather or Hang Out** received the most responses when respondents were asked what types of youth programs or facilities are most needed.
- When asked about the **pricing of programs and services**, **88.3% of respondents were satisfied**, selecting either that “the prices are about right” or “no opinion”. Only about 10% felt prices are too high.
- The City’s **Recreation Brochure is very successful**. When asked how they find out about programs, 52.4% of respondents indicated the Recreation Brochure as the main source. This is much higher than in most communities.

- There is very high support for acquisition of open space. When asked how aggressively the City should acquire open space as it becomes available, **42.7%** chose the most aggressive level of **open space acquisition**.
- Participation in Calabasas is somewhat higher (about 8%) than the MIG Average.
- **Exercising/Aerobics** and **Hiking/Backpacking** have the highest recreation participation rates among survey respondents, and the participation rate for these activities in Calabasas was double the MIG Average.
- **Six of the Top Ten** Preferred Recreation Activities in Calabasas are **trail-related**.
- The activities that had the highest latent demand (defined as activities people would like to participate in if facilities were more available) included:
 - * Yoga
 - * Horseback Riding
 - * Golf (both Playing and Driving Range)
- In response to the open-ended question about how to use the 2-acre west side park site, there were two main themes to the answers: very active park use with sport fields and courts or very passive uses, such as trails and open space. Responses were pretty evenly split between the two.
- The majority of responses to the open-ended question about how to use the 10-acre east side park site focused on passive uses, such as trails, open space, and environmental education.

B. Summary of Public Workshops

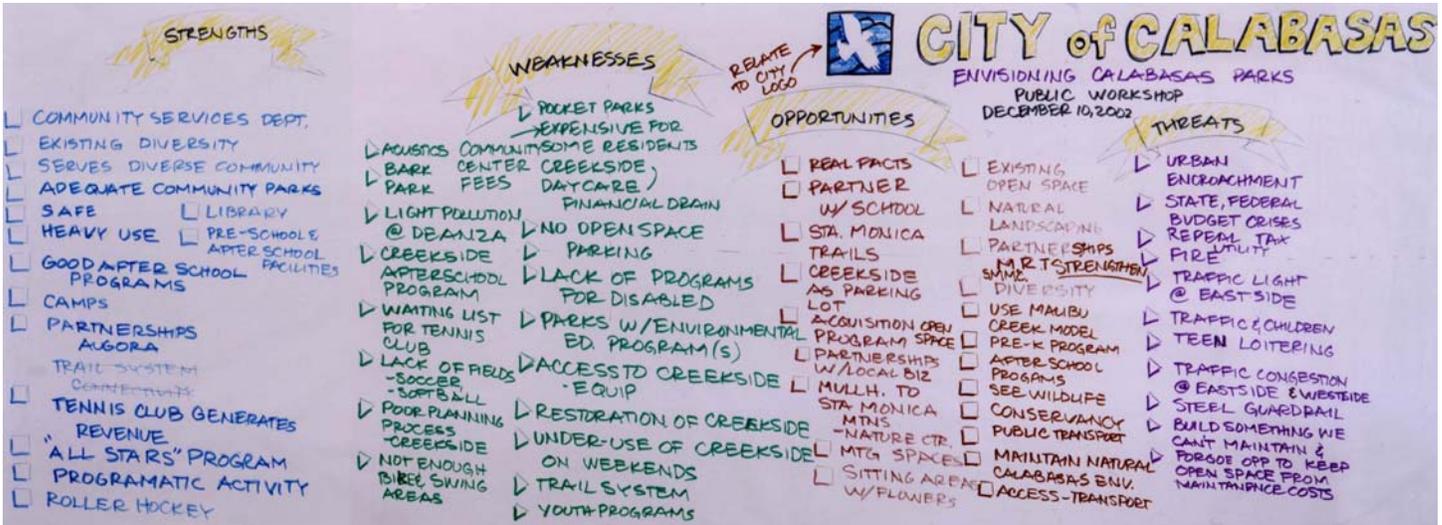
December 2002 Workshop

Public meetings were held on December 10, 2002; March 10, 2003; and November 10, 2003. A summary of each of these public meetings is included below. More detailed summaries are included in Appendix D.

The first public workshop for the Master Plan was held on December 10, 2002 at the Tennis & Swim Center. The purpose of this workshop was to obtain community input into the future vision for the Parks and Community Services Division. The workshop began with a brief Presentation on the Master Plan process and an overview of the public input opportunities.

During the next section of the meeting, community members were asked to participate in a large group visioning exercise. The discussion focused on four main points: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Comments were graphically recorded on a large sheet of paper at the front of the room. Figure 5.1 contains a reproduction of the wall graphic from the workshop.

Figure 5.1
12/10/02 Wall Graphic



After the large group exercise, participants were divided into two smaller groups to discuss two future parks sites; one at the intersection of Las Virgenes and Lost Hills Roads (west), and the other at the intersection of Old Topanga Canyon Road and Mulholland Highway (east).

After the break-out session, each group chose a delegate to report back to the overall group at the close of the meeting. The groups had a range of opinions for the west side parcel from natural open space to community gardens, or an educational center (less activity) to more active uses, such as playfields or ball fields. Both groups noted the area was a gateway to the Santa Monica Mountains, and when reviewing the site, the city should keep it within the context of the Santa Monica Mountains and existing, or potential, open space. For the east side parcel, participants in both groups tended to favor more passive uses that emphasize the site’s natural features. There was a range of opinions on what “open space” might encompass, from simple unpaved trails, to accessible walkways, to a National Park Service-style, rustic amphitheatre.

March 2003 Workshop

The second public workshop was held March 10, 2003, from 5:30 to 7:30 at the De Anza Park community room. The workshop was conducted in open house format with four stations, including public comments to date; existing recreation facilities and potential specialized services; East Side park site development concepts; and West Side park site development concepts.

Project team members and staff facilitated and recorded discussions at each of four stations. Participants were encouraged to write comments at each station and many wrote comments on notepaper and attached them directly onto display boards or maps. Additional comments were recorded on flip charts.

At Station One, participants were intrigued and appreciative of comments expressed by the two Youth Leadership Classes from Calabasas High School and A.E. Wright Middle School. Many supported the concept of adding a teen center, as outlined by students. Some were surprised the youth are more interested in outdoor nature activities, and one alternative (minority) comment was expressed that the youth will not have an equal voice in contributing to the decision making process. The majority view reiterated earlier public input comments that open space should be preserved and trails could become an interconnecting link.

At Station Two, the participants indicated their top three preferences for specialized new facilities would be: an environmental education area, additional group picnic areas, and an amphitheater. In contrast, a formal garden, indoor recreation center and/or sports complex, and larger or new dog park received no ranking by the open house participants.

The public also reviewed the preliminary results of a random household survey conducted as part of the project, which indicated the three most needed recreation facilities in Calabasas are sport fields, trails/paths, and open space.

At Station Three, participants viewed two potential options for park development at Old Topanga Road and Mulholland Highway. The passive park concept with native plant restoration and trailhead connections, with additional features, such as a connection to the future environmental education center across the street and a children's play environment taking its inspiration from the natural and cultural history of the area was favored. Areas of divided opinion were in regards to the children's play area, parking and access to the new Mountains Restoration Trust Headquarters facility and future environmental educational center across the street.

At Station Four, participants reviewed two potential options for park development at the corner of Lost Hills and Las Virgenes Roads. Option A was conceived as a more active park with basketball courts and a community garden, while Option B was more passive in design. The majority view among open house participants was to provide a more passive park.

November 2003 Workshop

The November 2003 workshop was an open house format at City Hall. The draft master plan was presented for public review and comment. Specific support was expressed for some of the recommendations, in particular for providing a playground accessible to youth of all ages and abilities. The proposal to provide neighborhood parks on three school sites attracted the most comments. There was concern the two existing sites could not accommodate separate facilities, but a desire to increase public access to the existing play facilities. In addition, there was concern about the possibility of the proposed new elementary school being located within a gated neighborhood, and a related concern about spending public funds on park facilities that might not be readily available to the public. As a result, the recommendations were revised.

C. Summary of Youth Workshops

Leadership classes from A.E. Wright Middle School and Calabasas High School participated in workshops designed to obtain input into youth recreation needs. The two Leadership classes provided insight into the teens' likes/dislikes, desires, and vision for the future of Calabasas Parks and Recreation. While the middle school students expressed concern over not knowing enough about City programs, they offered suggestions on activities they would like to see added, as well recommending a communications tools to ensure they receive information.

Both groups overwhelmingly endorsed the concept of a Teen Center, though a few students at the high school were concerned it would not be used to its capacity by high school age students. Both groups offered suggestions on what a Teen Center should offer, from passive activities, such as a study or movie room, to physical activities, such as athletic offerings, or a pool table. Both agreed Calabasas teens needed a place "hang out."

Students at the high school had a detailed visioning discussion on potential development of the two new park sites. They expressed concern the sites could be sold to developers, and emphatically stated they didn't want commercial sprawl.

D. Summary of Recreation Needs of People with Disabilities Questionnaire

In 2002, the City of Calabasas Community Services Department began offering the ALL STARZ basketball program, a league open to developmentally challenged youth and young adults between the ages of 8 and 21. Because the program has been very popular, the Department began to consider whether additional programming for people with disabilities was needed in Calabasas.

As part of the master plan process, the City decided to seek input on recreation programs and facilities for people with disabilities. Working with the Las Virgenes Unified School District, the City distributed 1200 questionnaires to the families of youth with disabilities. These one-page questionnaires asked about the recreation needs of people with disabilities in Calabasas, with specific attention on the needs of youth. Seventy responses were received. Some of the highlights of those responses were:

- There would be interest in additional programming designed for people with disabilities, if the City were to offer it.
- A variety of activities were suggested in response to the question about what programs are needed. Programs that were suggested by more than one respondent include **Sports, Camps, Swimming, Classes, Dance Classes, and Activities.**
- A variety of age groups were identified as needing services, with several comments that all ages are in need of programs and services.
- When asked whether improvements were needed to existing parks, paved paths and an accessible playground were the only improvements noted.