

**APPENDIX A.
CITY OF CALABASAS
GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM
PRESS INFORMATION KIT**



CITY OF CALABASAS GENERAL PLAN:

COMMUNITY ISSUES

APPENDIX A. CITY OF CALABASAS GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM PRESS INFORMATION KIT

To promote community involvement in the City of Calabasas' General Plan program, a press information kit was prepared and distributed to representatives of the local media. The package begins with historical information on the City and a description of previous planning efforts. It then describes the purpose of a general plan: explaining what a general plan is, the role of a general plan, and the contents of a general plan. The description of the General Plan is followed by a discussion of the General Plan process: preparing a plan and adopting one. The community participation program is then described. The press kit concludes with a discussion of the organization of the General Plan documents.

The following are included in this appendix:

- City of Calabasas General Plan Program Press Information
- Local Media Distribution List

September 10, 1992

Newspaper, Radio Station or Cable TV Channel Name
Contact Person
Address
City, State

RE: City of Calabasas General Plan

Dear: (Contact Person) _____ :

The City of Calabasas is pleased to announce the start of a comprehensive program to write the City's first General Plan. Developing the Calabasas General Plan is an ambitious undertaking, second only in importance to incorporation itself. Throughout the process, the City must contend with critical issues; issues whose resolution will form the primary frame of reference for many of the important land use and development decisions the City will face for the next five, ten, or twenty years. In short, the General Plan process represents an opportunity for the City of Calabasas to confront issues and adopt comprehensive programs for their resolution; a chance to define and create its own future.

To assist the City in developing its General Plan, the Calabasas City Council has contracted with a team of planning, urban design, and environmental consultants led by **PLANNING NETWORK**. As part of the General Plan program, the **PLANNING NETWORK** team will conduct a community-wide public participation program. Community input generated will be used as a basis for the General Plan, providing not only initial direction, but also review at key points in the program. It is the City's intention to encourage citizen participation throughout the general plan program so that the final document accurately reflects community goals.

To promote community involvement in the General Plan process, we need your help. As members of the press, you can assist the public participation process by documenting this important public process. To assist you in your efforts to keep the residents of the community well informed, the attached press kit has been developed. It provides the background, methodology, and proposed schedule of the Calabasas General Plan program.

We look forward to working with you throughout the General Plan process. If you have any questions regarding the attached information, please contact Steven Harris, Community Development Director, City of Calabasas at (818) 878-4225.

Sincerely,

Bob Hill
Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CITY OF CALABASAS

GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM

PRESS INFORMATION

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CALABASAS GENERAL PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Located in western Los Angeles County along the heavily traveled Ventura Freeway, the City of Calabasas presently encompasses an area of approximately 12 square miles and has a population of 27,000. The City of Calabasas is bounded by the Cities of Los Angeles, Hidden Hills, and Agoura Hills, as well as large areas of unincorporated territory. Large areas of sensitive environmental resources are located within and adjacent to the City's boundaries (see Figure 1 -- City of Calabasas: General Location).

The Calabasas community has a varied and colorful history. Indians, explorers, squatters, and bandits are all part of the City's heritage. Until the Spanish expeditions in the 1700s, the Chumash Indians led a peaceful existence amid Calabasas' rolling hills, making their homes in canyons where streams and springs ensured an abundant supply of wildlife. However, European exploration and settlement changed the Indians' way of life forever. The earliest record of European exploration in this area is the diary of Miguel Costanzo, which documents encounters with the Chumash during the Portola expeditions in 1769-1770. Six years later, the Juan De Anza party camped just west of Calabasas.

Although European exploration was common in the area through the 18th and early 19th centuries, one of the early permanent settlements in the City, the ranch El Scorpion, was not established until the 1830s. Occupying a large tract of land in the west valley, the ranch was originally granted to three Chumash Indians. About 25 years later, Miguel Leonis, the Basque "King of Calabasas," acquired the property in his marriage to Espiritu, an Indian woman who had inherited the ranch from her father. Leonis was a colorful character who hired gunmen to expand his lands, bribed witnesses, and threatened nearby settlers. He was killed in 1889 when he fell from his wagon after removing a band of squatters from his land. Squatter wars and gun fights were a bloody part of Calabasas' history. When large ranches were divided into farms in the late 1800s, families of settlers struggled against poverty and drought.

After the turn of the century, several select locations in the Calabasas area were developed into weekend retreats or movie locations. Crater Camp was opened in 1914 as a year-round picnic site in the Monte Nido area. Some reminders of the camp still exist on the site of Malibu Meadows. The Stunt family developed a homestead on the north slope of Saddle Peak, also in the Monte Nido area. The homestead became a favorite spot for filming motion pictures because of the ideal scenery.

Throughout the 1700s, 1800s, and early 1900s, water availability and the lack of it had always been a major concern for Calabasas. With the founding of the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District in 1958, a reliable water supply was ensured. The rapid development of the area began in earnest.

Although Calabasas is an established community with a varied and colorful history, the City itself is in its infancy. It was not until April 5, 1991, that the City of Calabasas was officially incorporated. Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and the ability to exercise local control over development decisions were important factors in Calabasas' incorporation.

After incorporation, cities are required by the State to adopt a general plan within 30 months. Since the City incorporated in April 1991, the Calabasas deadline to adopt a general plan is September 1993. However, the City is proposing an ambitious citizen participation component as part of its general plan program. To ensure adequate time to incorporate public input into the general plan program, the City will probably request an extension of the State's time limit.

Work on the general plan began over a year ago. In July of 1991, the City began preliminary General Plan studies with the assistance of the School of Regional Planning at California Polytechnic University, Pomona. The result of these studies was the "Foundation Plan," which was completed in November 1991, and is being used by the City of Calabasas as an interim tool to guide development activities until a new General Plan is prepared and adopted. The "Foundation Plan" is not only an interim policy document, but will also be used by the City in developing the general plan program.

II. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

What Is A General Plan?

A General Plan is a statement by local citizens of what they feel is in the best interest of their community. Functioning as a guide to the type of community that residents desire to live in, a general plan is a compilation of community values, ideals, and aspirations. It defines how natural and manmade environments will be organized and managed, identifying the types of development that will be allowed and the general pattern of future development. All subdivisions, public works projects, zoning decisions, and redevelopment projects within a city must be consistent with the community's general plan. In addition, a general plan must include specific actions designed to implement this vision of the future. Thus, the general plan functions not only as a guide to the type of community that is desired, but also provides the means by which a community may achieve that desired future.

Role of the General Plan

Although the general plan is a statement of local policy, the State of California establishes a framework to guide communities in the preparation of their plans. According to State guidelines, the role of the General Plan is to:

"...act as a 'constitution' for development, the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based. It expresses community development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land use, both public and private."

The guidelines further specify that a city's general plan must:

- Identify land use, circulation, environmental, fiscal, and social goals and policies for the City and its surrounding planning area as they relate to land use and development;
- Provide a framework within which the Planning Commission and City Council can make land use decisions;

- Provide citizens the opportunity to participate in the planning and decision making process affecting the City and its planning area; and
- Inform citizens, developers, decision makers, and other agencies, as appropriate, of the City's basic rules which will guide development within the City.

Characteristics of a General Plan

The State General Plan Guidelines not only define the role of a community's general plan, but they also describe basic characteristics of a general plan. These characteristics include the following:

- *The General Plan must be comprehensive.* The State defines comprehensiveness in two ways: the physical area the plan covers and the issues the plan addresses. Geographic comprehensiveness means that the general plan must cover all territory within the community's boundaries, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning. For cities, this means all areas within the incorporated city limits and generally all lands within a city's sphere of influence. The General Plan study area for the City of Calabasas is shown in Figure 1. The second way the State defines comprehensives is by examining the range of issues the general plan addresses. A community's plan must address not only the seven elements required by the State, but it must also consider other issues affecting the community. Comprehensiveness means that a community addresses all the issues confronting the City. Comprehensiveness is further defined in the discussion of state mandated general plan elements.
- *The General Plan must be internally consistent.* According to state planning law, an internally consistent general plan is a document that has no conflicts. The text, maps, and individual components of the document are all consistent.
- *The General Plan must be a long-term planning tool.* By definition, a general plan for any community needs to include policies and programs which can be extended into the immediate and the long-term future. Most cities rely on 15 to 25 years as the long-term planning horizon for the general plan. The Calabasas General Plan will establish the year 2010 as a horizon date for the preparation of general plan policy.
- *The General Plan must be a statement of development policy.* Development policy is a statement that guides action. It can include goals, objectives, principles, policies, proposed actions, or standards. The Calabasas General Plan will develop issue-based goals and policies and propose specific actions for implementing those goals and policies.

State Mandated Elements

According to the State guidelines, a city's general plan is the official policy regarding the location of housing, business, industry, roads, parks, and other land uses; protection of the public from noise and other environmental hazards; and for the conservation of natural resources. These issues may be addressed in the following mandatory components or "elements".

Land Use designates the proposed general distribution, location, and extent (including standards for population density and building intensity) of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private use.

Circulation correlates with the land use element and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other public utilities and facilities.

Housing is a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all segments of the community and all economic groups. It contains standards and plans for the improvement of housing, and the provision of adequate sites for housing. In addition, to ensure that all communities provide a variety of housing opportunities, the State has special guidelines for Housing Elements including a requirement that the element be updated once every five years.

Conservation addresses the conservation, development, and management of natural resources.

Open Space details plans and measures for the preservation of open space for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety, and the identification of agricultural land.

Noise identifies and appraises noise problems in the community, and evaluation of whether the noise levels or specific land uses are compatible.

Safety establishes policies and actions to protect the community from any unreasonable risks related to natural and man-made hazards. The safety element includes mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards.

A general plan need not, however, be organized into these seven elements, so long as the issues required by state law are discussed within the document. For many communities, it may be preferable not to structure their general plans in this manner. The City of Calabasas faces a number of broad-reaching issues that cross the well-defined boundaries of the State mandated elements. To directly respond to these issues, the City chose an innovative method of organizing its plan, which presents the general plan in four plan documents. The organization of these four general plan documents will be explained in Section V of this packet.

The Calabasas General Plan will translate State mandated requirements into useful guidelines for local decision making. To provide for logical and orderly development, the General Plan will try to address issues concerning public services, the economic vitality of the community, and environmental constraints. Land use and policy determinations can thus be made within a comprehensive framework which incorporates public health, safety, and "quality of life" considerations.

III. GUIDE TO THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

General Plan Preparation

The following seven-step program will be followed in drafting the Calabasas General Plan.

Issues Identification. Issues represent the unresolved concerns of the community which are identified in the General Plan and resolved by the Plan's goals, concepts, and strategies. Methods used to identify and understand community issues include community participation programs, citywide forums, community leader interviews, and coordination with other jurisdictions.

Examination of the Existing Setting. This step of the General Plan program will establish the baseline information on which the ultimate development of General Plan policies will be based. This research will provide an understanding of existing natural and man-made conditions within the community, their effect on the City's options for the future, and the natural and logical extent of the ultimate City limits.

Goals and Objectives Development. Using the results of the issues identification and the examination of the existing setting, community goals and objectives will be developed.

Development of Alternative Strategies. Identification and evaluation of alternative strategies to manage Calabasas' future. For each of the three alternative futures for the City of Calabasas, an accompanying land use plan will be formulated and examined.

Selection of a Preferred Alternative. These three alternatives will then be presented for public debate. The relative merits will be evaluated in a public forum and a preferred land use plan will be selected.

Development of Strategies and Implementation Programs. When a preferred alternative has been selected, the strategies and implementation programs necessary to attain stated community goals will be developed.

Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to document the potential environmental impacts of the General Plan. Environmental Impact Report (EIR) preparation will be integrated with General Plan work efforts throughout the program. The EIR's importance in the program is to provide decision makers and the public an opportunity to assess the potential impacts that the proposed General Plan may have on the environment prior to the adoption of the General Plan, and to establish a database that is able to be updated to assess the environmental implications of future decisions.

General Plan Adoption

When the Draft General Plan is completed, the documents will be considered for adoption. In the general plan adoption process, as in the rest of the General Plan program, the City wishes to encourage public involvement. To do so, they are promoting the following three-step process.

Public Review. A community-wide forum will be held to present the General Plan and explain proposed implementation programs.

Planning Commission Review. A series of public hearings will be held before the Calabasas City Planning Commission. During these hearings, citizens will be asked to present their concerns about the proposed plan. The Planning Commission will take action on the draft, recommending revisions to the plan which incorporate the concerns presented during the public testimony.

City Council Review and Adoption. The Planning Commission recommendation will be presented to the City Council and a series of public hearings held. When the public hearings are closed, the City Council will consider the proposed draft and adopt the Final General Plan.

IV. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

As an ongoing component of the General Plan Program, community participation represents the most important effort of the process. It is through community participation that a general plan is specifically tailored to the needs and desires of the community. The community participation program for Calabasas will include five components: a Visioning Charette, community attitude survey, General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), a series of citywide workshops, and a series of workshops with the Planning Commission and City Council.

The Visioning Charette. Within the City of Calabasas, many issues relate to how residents visualize their community. A visioning charette will be held to help residents describe how they see the City, now and in the future. The results of the visioning charette will be incorporated into the Community Design portion of the General Plan.

Tentative Date: Saturday, October 3, 1992

Participants: City Council, Planning Commission, General Plan Committee, and residents appointed by the City Council

Community Attitude Survey. The community attitude survey will gather information from a broad cross-section of Calabasas residents on issues that are vital to the successful completion of the General Plan. The results of the survey will be included throughout the General Plan.

Tentative Date: The surveys will be mailed out on October 2, 1992; and returned on or before October 23, 1992.

Participants: Randomly selected.

General Plan Advisory Committee. The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is a group of Calabasas residents appointed to work with the Planning Network team throughout the General Plan program. Their job includes identification and resolution of issues; formulation of a vision of Calabasas' future; review and selection of alternative strategies for the City's future; and review and selection of General Plan policies and programs. They will provide feedback on a regular basis through each stage of the General Plan development process.

Tentative Date: The first GPAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 12, 1992.

Participants: Appointed by the City Council.

Citywide Workshops. In addition, a series of community workshops will be held at key points in the General Plan program to solicit input from all segments of the community.

Tentative Date: The first Citywide Workshop is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 1992.

Participants: General public invited.

Planning Commission/City Council Workshops. In addition to the citywide workshops, public workshops with the Planning Commission and the City Council will be held at critical junctures in the General Plan program. These public hearings will be scheduled following the preparation of the Community Profile document and prior to the selection of a preferred General Plan alternative. They will be designed to solicit public input regarding the alternatives, as well as to explore community desires as to the direction which the preferred plan should take.

Tentative Date: January 1993.
Participants: General public invited.

All of the meetings described in the Citizen Participation program will be public, and representatives of the media are encouraged to attend.

V. GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Calabasas General Plan will be completed in three documents: the Community Profile, the General Plan policy document, and the Environmental Impact Report.

Community Profile

The Community Profile will provide the factual basis upon which General Plan goals, concepts, and strategies will be prepared. In addition, the Community Profile will provide the existing setting and analysis of the impacts of future growth and change for the General Plan Environmental Impact Report. It will be organized into the following sections.

Community Development and Design. This section will provide the factual background and understanding necessary to facilitate decisions regarding the types and character of land uses desired for the City of Calabasas. It will meet the State's data and analysis guidelines for the Land Use and Housing Elements. In addition, the information provided in this section will provide the background data for the following optional elements: Historic Preservation, Urban Design, and Fiscal Management. The Community Development and Design section will address the following topics:

- Population
- Housing
- Land Use
- Community Design
- Historic/Cultural
- Fiscal Management

Municipal Facilities and Services. This section will provide the factual background and understanding necessary to meet the State's data and analysis guidelines for Circulation Elements. In addition, the information provided in the Municipal Facilities and Services section will provide the background data on the provision of essential municipal services within the City, and will focus on the relationship between services and land use character. The Municipal Facilities and Services section will address the following topics:

- Circulation and Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Educational Facilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Safety Services

Environmental Management. The Environmental Management section is divided into two subsections: Environmental Resource Protection and Environmental Hazards. The Environmental Resource Protection subsection will provide the factual background and understanding necessary to meet the State's data and analysis guidelines for the Open Space and Conservation Elements. In addition, the information provided in this subsection will provide the background data necessary to comply with the AQMD (Air Quality Management District) and SCAG (Southern California Association of Governments) requirement that local agencies address air quality issues. The Environmental Hazards subsection will provide the factual background and understanding necessary to meet the State's data and analysis guidelines for the Noise and Safety Elements. The Environmental Management section will address the following topics:

- Environmental Resource Protection
 - Hillside, Canyon, and Ridgeline Management
 - Open Space Lands Inventory
 - Air Quality
 - Biotic Resources
 - Water Resources
 - Mineral Resources
- Environmental Hazards
 - Geology & Seismicity
 - Fire Hazards
 - Noise
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Disaster Response

Growth Management. The Growth Management section will evaluate the explicit and implicit actions now in place within the City and General Plan Study Area that have growth management implications. This section will also present a conceptual review of the most frequently used growth management techniques employed by other municipalities in California, and evaluate the applicability of these techniques to the City of Calabasas.

General Plan Policy Document

The General Plan policy document will outline the goals, concepts, and strategies that the City will pursue to achieve its vision of the future. It will be organized into the following sections.

An Introduction to the Calabasas General Plan. This section of the policy document will provide an overview of the General Plan process in addition to an outline of State requirements. It will also include a clear vision statement of Calabasas' future, along with the general goals which will be pursued in accomplishment of that vision.

The Policy Statement. This section of the General Plan policy document will present the goals, concepts, and strategies which the City will pursue to achieve its vision. It will be divided into the following four subchapters: Community Development and Design, Municipal Facilities and Services, Environmental Management, and Growth Management. Each of these four subchapters will be structured in the following manner:

- **Introduction:** A brief overview of the purpose and contents of each Subchapter.
- **Planning Issues:** The specific issues which Calabasas must address to achieve its vision of the future will be assessed to provide a basis for developing the policy portion of the General Plan.
- **Goals, Concepts, and Strategies:** It is with these policy statements that the City will guide new development, manage its natural and man-made environments, and define the future character of Calabasas.
- **Implementation Matrix:** As a part of each Chapter, this quick reference summary will establish when, how, and by whom each strategy will be undertaken, and how the goals in the Plan will be accomplished.

General Plan Implementation and Monitoring Program. This portion of the General Plan will include a comprehensive implementation program. Written in "Housing Element style", the implementation program will not only describe specific implementation measures but also designate the person/agency responsible for carrying out the program, identify potential funding sources, and assign a general timeframe during which the action shall be initiated. The implementation monitoring program will also include a development review checklist. This comprehensive checklist will provide an often overlooked method by which individual development projects can be easily checked for consistency with policies contained in the General Plan.

Contact Person

All requests for additional information should be directed to Steven Harris, Community Development Director, at (818) 878-4225.

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CITY OF CALABASAS

Press Kit - Media List

January 11, 1993