

**APPENDIX G.
GENERAL PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING 2 -- PRIORITIZING
ISSUES**



COMMUNITY ISSUES

**APPENDIX G. GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 2 --
PRIORITIZING ISSUES**

At the meeting on Monday, October 26th, the General Plan Advisory Committee reviewed significant characteristics about their community and looked at major issues facing the City. These characteristics and issues were grouped into three general topics:

- Community Development and Design,
- Municipal Facilities and Services, and
- Environmental Management.

Participants were assigned to one of the three topics. They then reviewed the items in the context of their general topic and prioritized them using the following classifications:

- Past; Current, Critical;
- Current, Moderate; Future, Critical; and
- Future, Moderate.

The results of this exercise along with a detailed description of the classification system used are included in this appendix.

In addition, participants were asked to select three issues that they felt were important and to write a brief summary of each issue selected. The summaries describe what individual committee members believe is the ideal resolution of the issue and any constraints to achieving that ideal. Excerpts from the committee members summaries are included in this appendix.

- Agenda - General Plan Advisory Committee Meeting, October 26, 1992
- Results of the Issues Prioritization Exercises
- Excerpts from the Committee Member Summaries of Issues

AGENDA

Calabasas General Plan General Plan Advisory Committee

**Monday, October 26, 1992
Calabasas City Hall**

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Group Assignments
- B. Issues Identified in the Timeline Review

II. ISSUES DEFINITION

- A. Group Discussion
- B. Group Presentations

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Assignment for the November 9th Meeting
- B. Questionnaire Collection

I. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

- A. Issues and Community Characteristics identified during the Timeline Exercise, Targeted Interviews and Community Workshop
1. Change in the Character of the Community from rural settlements and a small town character to a more urban environment.
 - a. Construction of Commercial Uses.
 - b. Construction of Multiple Family Uses (*Current and Future, Critical*)
 2. Protecting and Enhancing the Old Town Calabasas Image (*Past*)
 3. Expand protection of the old town Calabasas Image (rural character) to areas west of Parkway Calabasas (*Future, Moderate*)
 4. Retention of Local Land Use Control (*Current, Critical*)
 5. Strong Community ties to Monte Nido, Cold Creek Canyon, and Agoura Hills -- (*Future, Moderate*)
 6. Desire to preserve distinct separation from the City of Los Angeles (*Past*)
 7. Desire to preserve distinct separation from the County of Los Angeles (*Current, Critical*)
 8. Expand City of Calabasas boundaries into Sphere of Influence (*Future, Moderate*)
 9. Physical Separation of Housing Types (*Future, Critical*)
 10. Community at the Edge of the Urban Area (*Past*)
 11. Availability of Recreational Opportunities -- Trails, Public Parks (*Current, Moderate*)
 12. Burden of Parks on Adjacent Residences (*Future, Moderate*)
 13. Need to Protect Privacy of Individual Residence this need may vary by area (*Future, Moderate*)
 14. Need for an (Outdoor) Public Gathering Place(s) (*Future, Moderate*)
 15. Need for an (Indoor) Public Gathering Place(s) (*Future, Moderate*)
 16. View of Billboards, Signs, Poles and Car Dealerships from the Freeway (*Current, Critical*)
 17. Need for Architectural Design Guidelines a) Residential Uses (*Future, Moderate*); b) Commercial Uses (*Current, Critical*)
 18. Regulate commercial uses to protect Lifestyles in the Area (*Current, Critical*)
 19. Permitted Residential lot coverage and permitted commercial intensity and building height may be too High (*Current, Critical*)

B. Other Issues Not Mentioned in Previous Discussions

1. Archaeological Resources (*Past*)
2. Housing Issues -- Need for Elderly or Low/Moderate Income Units (*Future, Moderate*)

C. Relationship of these Issues to Other Major Topics.

1. Correlation of Slopes and Ridgelines as a visual resource to Slopes and Ridgelines as an environmental constraint.

II. MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A. Issues and Community Characteristics identified During the Timeline Exercise, Targeted Interviews and Community Workshop

1. Local Control over Local Taxes (*Current, Moderate*)
2. Low Crime Rate (*Current, Critical*)
3. Local Circulation Needs vs. Regional Circulation Demands (*Current, Critical*)
4. Poor Design of Freeway Bridges (*Future, Critical*)
5. Commercial Parking on Residential Streets (*Current, Moderate*)
6. Wider Bike Lanes for Safety (*Future, Moderate*)
7. Continue to Keep Through Traffic Off Residential Streets (*Current, Critical*)
8. Improve Circulation Communitywide (*Current, Moderate*)
9. Beautify Streets (*No Consensus*)
10. Installation of a City Recycling Program (*Current, Moderate*)
11. Better Road Maintenance (*Future, Moderate*)
12. Senior and Youth Oriented Services and Facilities (*No Consensus*)
13. Efficient Transit (*Current, Moderate*)
14. Quality of the Local Schools (*Future, Moderate*)

B. Other Issues Not Mentioned in Previous Discussions

1. Fire Hazard and Fire Safety (*Current, Moderate*)
2. Impacts of the Landfill on the Community (*Future, Moderate*)
3. Community Concerns about Hazardous Wastes (*Current, Moderate*)

C. Relationship of these Issues to Other Major Topics.

1. Carrying Capacity of Streets, Sewers, Water and Schools and the Impact on Future Growth (*Current, Critical*)
2. Transportation Demands versus the Desire to Keep Scenic Corridors Scenic (*Current, Critical*)

III. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

A. Issues or Community Characteristics Identified During the Timeline Exercise, Targeted Interviews and Community Workshop

1. Open Space (*Current, Critical*)
2. Warm Climate (*Past*)
3. Rolling Hills (*Current, Critical*)
4. Trails (*Current, Moderate*)
5. Dark Night Sky (*Future, Moderate*)
6. Scenic Corridors (*Current, Critical*)
7. Open Ridgelines (*Current, Critical*)
8. Clean Air (*Future, Critical*)
9. Access to Ocean (*Current, Moderate*)
10. Oak Trees (*Current, Critical*)
11. Local Creeks (*Current, Critical*)
12. Wildlife and Migration Corridors (*Current, Critical*)

B. Other Issues Not Mentioned in Previous Discussions

1. Geologic and Slope Stability Hazards (*Current, Moderate*)
2. Noise (*Future, Moderate*)

C. Relationship of these Issues to Other Major Topics.

1. Environmental vs. Community Design impact of Open Space, Rolling Hills, Ridgelines, Oak Trees and Local Creeks
2. Transportation Issues Related to the Accessibility of the Ocean and Roadway Cuts within Hillside Areas
3. Recreational issues related to the Trails System

CLASSIFICATION OF ISSUES AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Please rate relevant issues and community characteristics as follows:

- **Past.** This issue or community characteristic was once important. The issue has since been resolved or the characteristic has been lost; however, there is a lesson to be learned that can be applied to managing Calabasas' future.
- **Current, Critical.** This issue or community characteristic is critical to Calabasas' present and future. The issue must be resolved now or methods for the protection of the characteristic are needed now. Unless immediate action is taken, the issue will grow beyond the capability of community action to solve or the community characteristics will either be permanently lost or damaged beyond repair.
- **Current, Moderate.** This issue or community characteristic may be important, but its resolution or protection does not have the urgency of critical issues/characteristics.
- **Future, Critical.** This issue or community characteristic might not be particularly important today, but will become critical if attention is not paid to it. It is highly important for Calabasas' future that preventative measures be put into place.
- **Future, Moderate.** This issue or community characteristic may become important in the future, but its resolution or protection is something that can be handled at such time as it does become a problem. Putting a plan in place for managing the issue or community characteristic may be important, but the need for implementing the plan is not necessarily urgent.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS SUMMARIES OF ISSUES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

Response 1

- The initial lure of the Las Virgenes Valley for me when I moved here in 1970 was the feeling of living in the country. I, personally, would like to retain the rural quality as much as possible. Any further commercial development and multiple family dwellings must be considered with the greatest caution. Our way of life, as well as our precious environment, is dramatically jeopardized if the uncontrolled development continues as it did prior to Cityhood. The 'flip-side' of this is that any form of down-zoning might be risky.

Every effort should be made to utilize the present abandoned commercial space before embarking on new development. Would it be economically feasible for the City to offer some type of 'perk' to an individual or individuals who can creatively recycle the present vacant commercial structures? If this were done judiciously, the City might reap greater financial rewards that would offset any initial loss of revenue.

I recognize the City's need to create revenue, but this should not be done at the expense of orderly growth. Perhaps, the City should restrict its services to those of utmost necessity, i.e., police, fire, etc. Increased services, at the expense of the environment may not be prudent planning.

- To preserve the rural quality of the 101 Scenic Corridor should be of utmost importance to the City of Calabasas. A proliferation of billboards and signs instantly detracts from the natural beauty as viewed from the Freeway.

There is an appreciation for the merchant's dilemma in not being able to boldly announce a business in the area, but it has been proven in other parts of the country that this form of advertising is not a prerequisite to a successful business.

If the City of Calabasas can balance the signage requests of the business community with the aesthetic desires of the residential community, the City will have succeeded where some other cities have not.

Response 2

- Calabasas has an urgent need for parks -- active and passive -- and open space Parks are an expense to the city because of maintenance costs, construction costs, insurance costs, as well as for money to purchase sites. Private parks within a community play a role in providing the above however, they also do not encourage communities to intermingle, therefore reducing City spirit. They also are not large enough nor is there money enough to construct recreation buildings that can be used for everything from daycare to senior citizen activities. There is also a lack of baseball diamonds that could be used for City softball leagues or for pickup games that would encourage positive teenage activity. Much of the above mentioned costs can be obtained by user fees, developer donations (mandatory) and Prop A funds.

Calabasas Road is currently becoming more and more offensive to the eye as you drive on the 101 Freeway. Do we want our City to be the only one that allows the merchants to dictate what should be used as signage? The Acura dealer just put up a used car lot sign and lights as well as gaudy signs hanging from the light standards - the same that the Jim Bess auto dealership has been allowed. Those signs will not sell automobiles, they only create ugliness. I am ashamed that Calabasas will be remembered by the public for the Acura sign and by Jim Bess' garish display. Add to the problem the signs on the backside of the Ralph's market. We will not be known as "The Last of the Old West" but by the "The City with the Garish Signs." The Planning Department and the City Council should remember that what is allowed now will set a precedent for the future. Responsible adherence to even the County of Los Angeles' sign ordinances should be upheld and a strong sign ordinance must be written to protect our city from the ugliness that is already being allowed.

The allowed building height of the Kilroy/Ahmanson project is much higher than the residents of Calabasas want. This project and its development agreement was handed to us by the County of Los Angeles and we must learn to live with it. However, we do not have to allow any buildings over 2 stories and higher than 30 feet from grade level. If this level is part of our city's General Plan, then developers know it and cannot claim a hardship if they overpay for their land. The economic feasibility argument is their problem only and not one that the citizens have to suffer with. The current economic problems will go away, but the tall "New York" type buildings will not.

Response 3

- Issue: Center(s) of geographic and emotional focus for the community. Sports/cultural programs/Rally's

Problems/Obstacles:

- No existing land
- Unwilling sellers
- Split City geographically
- Many competing interests
- Shortage of money
- Transportation and traffic
- Demands by "outsiders"

Solutions/Alternatives:

- Soka property
- Mureau property
- Government land in the Cabot/Cabot/Forbes Development
- Land when the landfill is completed

ENVIRONMENTAL

Response 1

- Open Ridgelines Ideally, no ridgeline should be developed as it adversely affects many other people in the community, and benefits only the few.

Subdivision of acreage which includes the ridgeline should be controlled to prevent all ridgetop development by imposing conditions:

- Clustering of homes well below the ridgeline
- Dedication of ridgelines as permanent open space (may be privately owned if deed restricted).
- Other Design constraints as outlined in Section on Rolling Hills below.

Individual homeowner/builders should be required to work with the City on sensitive design requirements.

- Rolling Hills Strong Design Guidelines should be set up, to include:
 - Building location, setback, below ridgeline to protect viewshed.
 - Building Design, including size, height, color, slope of roof, appropriate design for terrain.
 - Minimizing grading, minimizing flat pad sizes, requiring hillside adaptive architecture.
 - Natural drainage techniques, no bench drains, landform grading to minimize and mitigate manufactured slopes.
 - Native plants, gradual variation of plant density and height from surrounding hillside to create less obtrusive fire breaks around the houses.
 - Custom designed homes, designed specifically for each site (before grading) should be strongly advised.

Strict control of allowable density in steep hillside areas.

- Open Space/Wildlife Corridors:

For large developments

- Deed restriction of open space by developer in return for clustering of homes at a slightly increased or reasonable density (this should not apply to Significant Ecological Areas)

For individual homeowner/builders

- Cooperative efforts between individual and City to minimize footprint of house and produce a sensitive design.
- Encourage homeowners who live in rural settings to protect part of their own property for wildlife in perpetuity (tax break or permit fee reduction in some form?)

The Coastal Commission requires the possible exchange or purchase of development rights of substandard lots in exchange for permission to build more than a cabin (TDR or PDR); small lots in hilly, rural areas can then be protected as Open Space (My facts are a bit sketchy on this).

Again, strict control of allowable density in steep hillside areas should create wildlife corridors.

- Oak Trees/Native Habitat As part of the City Development Review process, insist on the design of homes to accommodate existing oak trees rather than remove them.

Encourage developers, as part of their environmental impact mitigation, to set aside

- natural riparian habitat
- oak forest areas, for possible regeneration
- land previously grazed or planted with non-native plants to be restored to its natural habitat.

These areas could be improved by the City using funds paid in mitigation by other developers for removal of oak trees etc.

Response 2

It is very difficult to separate the issues I have identified as current, critical. Each is a part of the larger issue of open space. (B1 may be an exception.) Saving our mountain space, i.e., our mountains and streams, is of primary importance to me. And not necessarily for the citizen's of the community, even though being out there gives me peace. It is for the very existence of the mountains themselves and for the habitat and wildlife they sustain. If we don't do it now, it will all be lost forever.

I would have to review the recent Supreme Court decision and speak to an attorney who specializes in the field to know how we can limit the rights of an individual owner to build on or use the land, but I know we can set limits. I want this General Plan to set the strictest limits legally possible.

The panelists at The Open Space Preservation Forum, put on by the Environmental Standards Committee, addressed many ways to preserve open space. The Agoura Hills Report on their Open Space Workshop addressed even more.

Response 3

- **Clean Air -- Future, Critical.** The City Council imposes strict controls and fines. What if other neighboring cities pollute? We should form a joint committee with other cities with an overlook that plans jointly.
- **Wildlife and Migration Corridors -- Current, Critical.** All "development" should provide acres of access for wildlife that connects to existing corridors. What if the developer refuses? Cause for denial of his project (it is open for conjecture how the courts would handle such a decision).
- **Open Ridgelines -- Current, Critical.** No future houses on ridgelines. What if approvals already exist? Then renegotiate, offer concessions.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Response 1

- **Low Crime Rate.** If our City is to continue to grow and prosper and remain an area in which we want to live and raise our families we must take whatever steps are necessary to maintain a low crime rate. In the past year we have seen an increase in the frequency and types of crime that previously had been alien to our community. If the City lacks the financial strength to "buy" the requisite amount of protection from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department it should consider deputizing citizen's groups or forming an auxiliary police department to work with the Sheriff's Department.
- **Local Circulation Needs vs. Regional Circulation Demands Continue to Keep Through Traffic Off Residential Streets.** These issues are interrelated and accordingly I will discuss them together.

Our City surrounds the Ventura freeway that is the primary route for traffic passing between the San Fernando Valley and the cities of Agoura Hills, Westlake, Thousand Oaks and other cities in Ventura County. Our City also surrounds the Lost Hills Road - Las Virgenes Road route that is the primary route for Z traffic from the cities of Agoura Hills, Westlake, Thousand Oaks and other cities in Ventura County to Pacific Coast Highway, Santa Monica and the west side of Los Angeles. As serious as this problem is today, it is just the beginning.

The proposed traffic impacts that will result from the development of the Ahmanson Ranch and Continental projects, which are outside our City and from which the City will derive no financial benefits, will exacerbate the existing traffic problems including those which will result from the Micor and Pazar projects that are inside the City, and from which the City will derive financial benefits. The City must do everything in its power to prevent Los Angeles and Ventura counties, Caltrans, etc. from imposing their will on us for the benefit of others and to our detriment.

Response 2

- There is substantial evidence of increased gang activity and crimes, in general, in the Calabasas area. Although this still is extremely low by Los Angeles City standards, there are two major areas that I feel should be dealt with now: We need community youth activities to involve kids who live in the Calabasas area to keep away from gangs and take an interest in the community. An organized parks and recreation service could help with some of the children. Identification of potential problems children face (not just in the school

environment, but out of school as well) and community services to reach them also could be helpful. Equally important, something needs to be done to discourage "outside" crime from coming into our area more and more. I have no idea what this should be, but coordination with the Sheriff's Department (including special funds allocated for this if appropriate) might be the answer.

- I believe that our entire state is rapidly approaching the intolerable level as to various pollution problems. Calabasas "seems" to be somewhat isolated from this, but it is not. The city should play an active role in encouraging regional and state planning for water, air and land environmental security. Funds obviously are limited, but they should be allocated to the extent that they are available. I have no expertise in this area, but something has to be done and soon!
- We have a good school system in the Las Virgenes area, and it is a definite asset to the City of Calabasas. I have always marvelled at how people decide that they are qualified for, and then run for and are elected to, the school board. We have been reasonably fortunate in the quality of our board, but as the area grows larger, we are going to have less and less knowledge of the abilities of persons who decide to run. I would like to see the city work toward providing a course of education for persons who think they may wish to run for the school board, so that the candidates are educated in the problems of the school district, how to solve them, and what the financial situation is, before they are elected and not "on the job."

Response 3

- The capacity of the infrastructure was poorly, if ever, considered by the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission. This has resulted in totally over-stressed facilities. Constant vigilance on new developments, ordinances that restrict rebuilding on damaged buildings (those along Calabasas Road next to Old Town), gradual, rather than abrupt, land reductions, etc.
- Again, control of future developments, demand that current ones begin to conform (along Scenic Corridor) by insisting any future re-landscaping be done with native plants and vegetation that resists view of current development, homes, entrance gates, etc. Ditto on lighting.
- 1) Input to other counties concerning traffic impacts on us. 2) That's why issue is critical because our ability to effect change in this area is hampered by Ventura County effects.
- 1) Work with Transportation Committee to establish appropriate traffic routes. 2) Discourage other routes by use of directional signs, curved road blockades, etc.