### II. PRIMARY COMMUNITY THEMES

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Calabasas is a community preparing to meet the 21st Century. As the world changes economically and socially, and technological innovation changes the way we live, Calabasas is looking beyond conventional wisdom, looking beyond the way things have always been done, to define a vision of its future. From the myriad of information, opinions, and analysis compiled in the initial research and community involvement portions of the General Plan program, three primary themes emerge which run through nearly all discussion regarding the future of Calabasas:

- Environmental Responsibility
- Local Management and Control of Calabasas' Future
- Community Image

Understanding these themes is critical to understanding the aspirations, concerns, and vision that Calabasas residents have for the future of their community, as well as the issues that Calabasas faces in formulating a General Plan to manage that future. These themes tie together and explain the specific issues that have been identified in the initial research and community involvement portions of the General Plan program.

In many communities, "growth" is the primary community issue, and encouraging appropriate forms of growth or discouraging inappropriate forms is the primary community theme. In Calabasas, growth issues appear to be related to the three primary themes cited above. Long before the actual incorporation of the City of Calabasas, new development encroached into rugged hillside areas and threatened sensitive environmental areas; many in the community saw that it was necessary to protect what remained of the area's natural environment. Residents recognized that only through local control and direct management of development review could community objectives be achieved and could local social values be translated into physical forms. The results of growth in past years are identified in many ways as being inconsistent with local values; residents cite environmental destruction, traffic congestion, overly intense development, visual clutter, and a lack of community gathering places among the primary community image problems that must be addressed by the new General Plan.

Together, the three primary community themes create an underpinning for the strategic decision-making which will continue through the General Plan program. The themes identify the primary means by which Calabasas can ensure a high quality of life for its present and future residents, and allow the City of Calabasas to take advantage of the opportunities it has created for its future through incorporation. Simply stated, Calabasas' objective is excellence -- in protecting the natural environment that attracted so many of its residents to the area, in managing its affairs in a manner consistent with local social values, in enhancing the physical appearance and continuity of the area, and in ensuring its residents a high quality of life.

#### A. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

From the early settlements of the Chumash, through the era of ranching and farming, to the present urban community, Calabasas has provided a beautiful setting, natural habitats, and peaceful respite. The area's natural beauty and the tranquility of its hills and valleys provide for a high quality of life, and were important factors in the decision of many Calabasas residents to come to this area. Environmental considerations are invariably cited as the primary attributes of Calabasas; preservation of open space is generally cited as the community's number one priority.

Environmental considerations are often cited as being of critical importance in the incorporation movements that were eventually successful in establishing the City. As stated in the Foundation Plan, "Preservation of this environmentally sensitive area was a primary reason for incorporating." Environmental considerations are also an important factor in community attitudes toward potentially annexing the sphere of influence area to the south of the present city limits.

Calabasas residents believe that their community's natural environment is in better condition than that of the Los Angeles metropolitan area in general, and the San Fernando Valley in particular. Calabasas residents express an affinity for the Santa Monica Mountains and the attributes of its environment -- natural hillsides and open ridgelines, oak woodlands, riparian streams, and wildlife habitats and wildlife movement corridors -- along with a strong desire to protect that environment.

More than simply expressing an affinity for the area's natural environment, many Calabasas residents see themselves as defenders of that environment. The destruction that occurred as open lands and the natural environment made way for urban development are obvious to Calabasas residents, and the community is struggling to define a better way of managing its environment and creating an equilibrium between natural and manmade systems.

Protecting the area's remaining natural hillsides and ridgelines, as well as preserving remaining open lands in their natural state are important concerns of area residents. However, the view of environmental issues identified in the early portions of the Calabasas General Plan program is a broad one, extending beyond the community's immediate physical environment to other issues such as water resource conservation, solid waste management, night sky and glare considerations, air quality and energy conservation. This broad view of the environment also extends geographically, and is reflected in the community's participation in regional planning and visioning programs, including programs that only indirectly affect the City of Calabasas.

During the public participation process, a number of issues and characteristics were identified as being important to the community. The General Plan Advisory committee then evaluated and rated each issue, according to how critical they were. The rating system also identified whether the issue needed to be addressed now, or if an issue would be more appropriately addressed at some point in the future.

Issues and community characteristics related to the environmental responsibility theme are listed below. Following each issue is the General Plan Advisory Committee's rating for that issue.

#### Current, Critical

- Preservation of Open Space
- Preservation of the Rolling Hills
- Preservation and Enhancement of Scenic Corridors
- Preservation of Open Ridgelines
- Preservation of Oak Trees
- Protection of Local Creeks
- Establishment and Maintenance of Wildlife and Migration Corridors
- Transportation Demands versus the Desire to Keep Scenic Corridors Scenic

#### Current, Moderate

- Establishment of a Regional Trails System
- Mitigation of Geologic and Slope Stability Hazards
- Installation of a City Recycling Program
- Protection from Fire Hazards
- Community Concerns about Hazardous Wastes

#### Future, Critical

Clean Air

#### Future, Moderate

- Mitigation of Noise
- Impacts of the Landfill on the Community
- Preservation of the Area's Dark Night Sky

#### No Consensus

Beautification of Streets

The Environmental Responsibility theme and related issues lead to three basic requirements for the Calabasas General Plan:

- Recognize the area's natural environment as a key community asset, and establish a system wherein the natural environment will be protected not only as an amenity for the developed portions of the City, but also because of a sense of responsibility and commitment to environmental quality.
- Limit new development to that which is consistent with the preservation of remaining open spaces and protection of the natural environment.
- Establish management programs to ensure that Calabasas becomes a "sustainable community," recognizing limitations on natural resources such as energy and water, and living within those limits.

#### B. LOCAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF CALABASAS' FUTURE

The Calabasas General Plan represents the City's commitment to take responsibility for managing its own future, and to guide the type, amount, and location of development in a manner consistent with local social values -- to preserve the beauty and natural environment of the area, to ensure the adequacy and integrity of services and facilities, and to protect and enhance the quality of life of its citizens.

Much of the history of Calabasas reveals the desire and need to establish local control over the community's destiny. The high level of civic involvement exhibited by area residents and the activities of area homeowners' associations are reflective of the past efforts to assert local social values, and to have consideration of the environmental protection and the impacts of growth on local neighborhoods incorporated into the development review process.

Without the local control and ability to manage daily community affairs that are afforded to cities, development decisions were made by Los Angeles County that did not necessarily reflect local social values or the long-term commitment needed to adequately protect the area's environment and quality of life. Area residents, individual homeowners' associations, and the Federation of Las Virgenes Homeowners' Associations became actively involved in civic affairs and the County's development review and planning processes. In discussing the lessons that were that were learned from the events of the past (see Appendix F), General Plan Advisory Committee members expressed the message that only through concerted, joint action could local residents be effective in inserting community values into the review of development.

The theme of local management and control is expressed in the high level of involvement that Calabasas residents have in the formulation of community policy. The formation of a General Plan Advisory Committee ensures that the Calabasas General Plan and the policies it sets for the city's development review process are reflective of community social values. In addition, Calabasas has established numerous citizen advisory committees to grapple with specific issues and areas of interest. These committees include citizen

advisory such as traffic and transportation, environmental standards, and health and wellness, among others. The result is a community-based planning system to help the city refine its vision, and to make it responsive to the needs of its citizens.

Concurrent with an understanding of the need for local management and control of the daily affairs of the community is an awareness that, even after establishing Calabasas as a city, decisions made by outside agencies can and will have far reaching implications for the future of Calabasas. Thus, in discussing many varied issues, Calabasas residents indicate the need for involvement in the decision-making processes of other governmental agencies. By participation in the decision-making process of the jurisdictions, the City can ensure that Calabasas' interests are recognized in the review of development projects, and that projects by other jurisdictions such as Los Angeles County, Ventura County, City of Los Angeles. As a result, projects are not approved by these and other agencies at the expense of Calabasas residents.

Calabasas residents recognize that there may be environmental and other benefits that offset the impacts of a development project, such as was the case for the Micor project. However, it is an important principle that, if a development project will create impacts across municipal boundaries, that appropriate environmental and other offsets be provided across those same boundaries. A key factor of the local management and control is that the relationship and benefits associated with impacts of new development must be offset by project-related benefits within each of the jurisdictions in which the impacts will be experienced.

Specifically, the impacts of new development must be offset by benefits within the jurisdictions in which the impacts will be experienced.

Issues and community characteristics related to the local management and control of Calabasas' future theme are listed below. Following each issue is the General Plan Advisory Committee's rating for that issue.

#### Current, Critical

- Retention of Local Land Use Control
- Desire to preserve distinct separation from the County of Los Angeles
- Regulate commercial uses to protect Lifestyles in the Area
- Local Circulation Needs vs. Regional Circulation Demands
- Continue to Keep Through Traffic Off Residential Streets
- Carrying Capacity of Streets, Sewers, Water and Schools and the Impact on Future Growth

#### Current, Moderate

- Access to Ocean and Related Regional Traffic Impacts
- Local Control over Local Taxes
- Improve Circulation Communitywide

#### Future, Moderate

- Maintaining Strong Community ties to Monte Nido, Cold Creek Canyon, and Agoura Hills
- Expansion of City boundaries into Sphere of Influence
- Need to Protect Privacy of Individual Residence this need may vary by area
- Housing Issues -- Need for Elderly or Low/Moderate Income Units

The Local Management and Control theme and related issues lead to four basic requirements for the City's General Plan:

- Formulating a clear set of rules by which development proposals will be reviewed, including specific performance standards which describe the City's expectations of the type, quality, and responsibilities of new development;
- Developing a program for working with residents of the City's sphere of influence toward mutually acceptable land use plans and regulations as a means of pursuing annexations, ensuring needed environmental protection and open space preservation, and allowing future development to occur in a manner consistent with local social values. This program also needs to review the potential for extending municipal services into the sphere area.
- Founding a basis for the City of Calabasas to cooperate and work with surrounding jurisdictions toward the establishment of development review systems that equitably distributes both the benefits and impacts associated with a project.
- Framing a system by which, as Calabasas matures as a City, the voice of its citizens in intergovernmental matters becomes stronger, and which establishes the City as a leader in exploring new mutually beneficial cooperative ventures with neighboring communities.

#### C. COMMUNITY IMAGE

Calabasas residents have a heightened awareness of the City's identity and image, perhaps because of the high profile battles with Los Angeles County and early incorporation attempts that preceded Calabasas' actual incorporation, as well as the high profile developments that are currently being considered in surrounding jurisdictions for example the Ahmanson Ranch, and the expansion of the Soka fault. The community image theme has many components, including the community's identification with the area's natural environment and remaining open lands which was discussed as part of the Environmental Responsibility theme. Other components include community fragmentation and "sense of community", design features, traffic, and municipal services.

Community image issues largely revolve around the destruction of the natural environment that has occurred in the past, and the need for better management of open space preservation and environmental protection in the future. Visually, the General Plan study area contains some of the most scenic and diverse topography in the region. The beauty of its oak studded hillsides, peaks, ridgelines, and riparian woodlands combine to create a feeling of openness that is at the heart of Calabasas' image and character as small town/rural. The natural oak studded, grassy hillsides found throughout the community are, along with beaches and the Golden Gate Bridge, the essential image of *California*.

The Calabasas Community Survey revealed that a significant number of Calabasas residents view their community as either highly fragmented and having a low sense of community (31 percent) or as being somewhat fragmented with a moderate sense of community (60 percent). The survey also revealed that many residents felt that it was important for the City to adopt policies to strengthen the identify of Calabasas as a *unified community*. This component of the Community Image theme is also expressed in a desire for establishing both indoor and outdoor community gathering places. This was also sometimes expressed as a concern over the predominance of gated communities within Calabasas, although residents of gated communities were just as likely as residents of non-gated communities to support the need for community unity.

Scenic beauty and the design of new development within the Calabasas General Plan study area is a pervasive issue. Positive elements of Calabasas' image include: rural and open space areas (open ridgelines, natural hillsides, oak woodlands, canyons and riparian areas); the small scale of most existing development; quiet, peaceful family neighborhoods; Old Town Calabasas and its early California architecture; rural scenic corridors, and Calabasas Parkway.

Development over the past years has, however, created several negative elements, identified by area residents as including: non-descript, tacky architecture in new developments; tract housing that has destroyed natural hillsides; development along ridgelines; proliferation of signs and billboards along the freeway; and the high intensity, large scale of commercial development along Las Virgenes Road at Agoura Road, Calabasas Road between Park Granada and Parkway Calabasas, as well as auto dealerships.

"Mansionization" was raised in several instances as part of the Community Image Theme. Efforts to define the mansionization issue revealed the following specific concerns: houses that were too large for their lots, especially in instances where small, narrow hillside lots were previously approved by and recorded within County jurisdiction; lack of setbacks and landscaping along street frontages; insensitive grading and destruction of hillsides to create development pads; and location of large homes along ridgelines. As one participant in community participation efforts stated, "too many of these homes were designed to look from with no concern as to what we would be looking at."

Traffic is a pervasive concern in Calabasas, and is largely created by sources outside of the City. Traffic concerns were rated by Calabasas residents as being of significant concern in the community survey. Particular traffic concerns focused on through traffic and congestion along Mulholland Highway and Las Virgenes Road.

Through traffic within Calabasas is infringing on the area's quiet, peaceful character, and is a continuing reminder to residents of the urbanization they sought to leave when they came to Calabasas. The Cal Poly Foundation Planning Document identifies Calabasas as a "Gateway Community" because it sits at the entry to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and to State Parks. Calabasas "acts as a regional linkage in several critical aspects," including east-west linkages along the Ventura Freeway, and north-south linkages along the Las Virgenes Road - Malibu Canyon corridor. Congestion along the Ventura Freeway has resulted in commuters searching for alternatives through Calabasas along local streets. This through traffic has not abated, even after the completion of freeway widening and interchange improvements. In addition, current development proposals within the unincorporated portions of Los Angeles and Ventura counties threaten to further exacerbate the situation.

In general, Calabasas residents enjoy and demand a high degree of municipal services which are provided through the City, as well as the County, special districts, and private contracts. Fire protection, police protection, animal control, and trash collection services were given particularly high satisfaction ratings in the community survey. Although Calabasas residents indicate a high degree of satisfaction with life in the community, the adequacy of several services are of concern. In particular, Calabasas residents are concerned with a lack of local parks and recreational opportunities. Library services and services for seniors were also of concern.

Issues and community characteristics related to the community image theme are listed below. Following each issue is the General Plan Advisory Committee's rating for that issue.

#### Current, Critical

Change in the Character of the Community from rural settlements and a small town character to a more urban environment.

Construction of Commercial Uses.
Construction of Multiple Family Uses

#### Current, Critical (Cont'd)

- Views of Billboards, Signs, Poles and Car Dealerships from the Freeway
- Regulate commercial uses to protect Lifestyles in the Area (Current, Critical)
- Permitted Residential lot coverage and permitted commercial intensity and building height may be too High
- Need for Architectural Design Guidelines
   Commercial Uses
- Low Crime Rate

#### Current, Moderate

- Commercial Parking on Residential Streets
- Improve Circulation Communitywide
- Efficient Transit

#### Future, Critical

■ Change in the Character of the Community from rural settlements and a small town character to a more urban environment.

Construction of Commercial Uses.
Construction of Multiple Family Uses

- Maintaining Physical Separation of Housing Types
- Poor Design of Freeway Bridges

#### Future, Moderate

- Expand protection of the old town Calabasas Image (rural character) to areas west of Parkway Calabasas
- Need to Protect Privacy of Individual Residence this need may vary by area
- Need for an (Outdoor) Public Gathering Place(s)
- Need for an (Indoor) Public Gathering Place(s)
- Burden of Parks on Adjacent Residences
- Need for Architectural Design Guidelines
   Residential Uses

#### Future, Moderate (Cont'd)

- Wider Bike Lanes for Safety
- Better Road Maintenance
- Quality of the Local Schools

#### Past

Protecting and Enhancing the Old Town Calabasas Image

#### No Consensus

- Ensuring Continued Availability of Recreational Opportunities
- Senior and Youth Oriented Services and Facilities

The Community Image theme and related issues lead to four basic requirements for the Calabasas General Plan:

- Recognize the scenic beauty afforded by Calabasas natural environment, and formulate design guidelines and development policies which will ensure the preservation of the area's natural beauty.
- While recognizing physical differences in various portions of the community and allowing for variations in housing and/or land use between these areas, formulate policies and programs to enhance a unified identity as the City of Calabasas.
- Define the desired character of development within Calabasas, and translate that character into clear guidelines for the physical form and design of new development.
- Review the concept of Calabasas as a Gateway Community". While the City will continue to physically function as a regional linkage for east-west and north-south traffic along primary highway corridors, the General Plan must define the extent to which the gateway function will be emphasized or resisted in specific locations and along specific roadways in the future.

#### D. COMMUNITY VISION

VISION OF CALABASAS: 1992

As part of the Calabasas Visioning Charette, participants were asked to collect photographs that illustrated how they see their community. Some of the pictures describe positive aspects of the community; others illustrate more negative attributes. However, together they create a Vision of Calabasas as it exists in 1992.

#### COMMERCIAL AND HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT





#### COMMUNITY...ISSUES

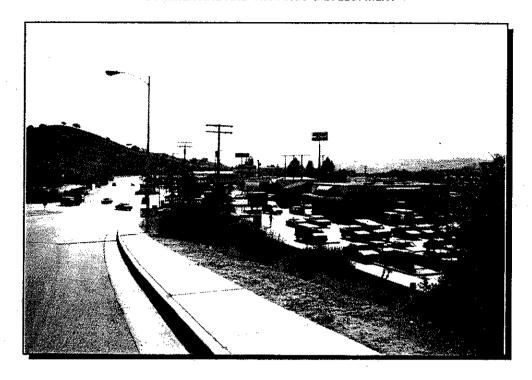
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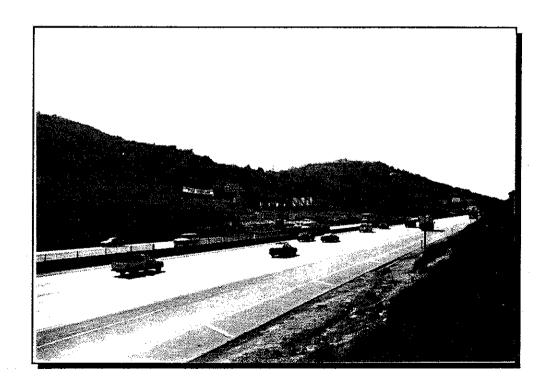




January 11, 1993

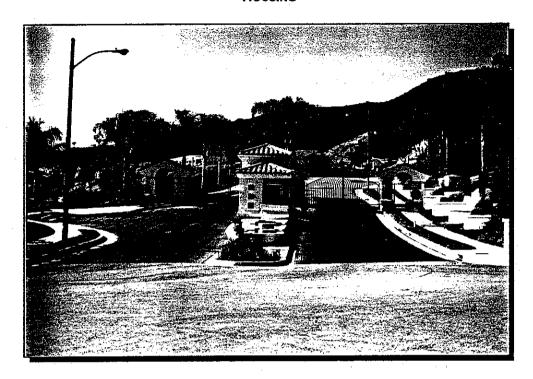
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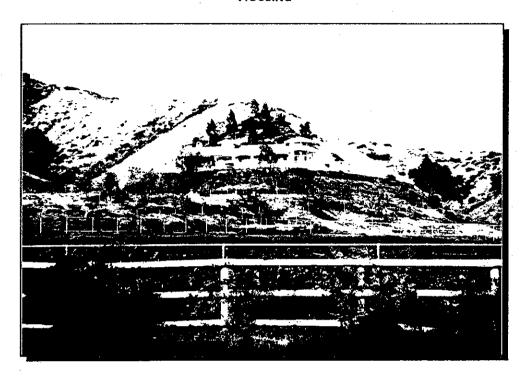
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#### Housing





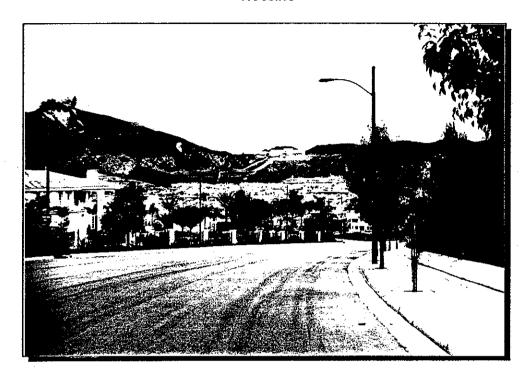
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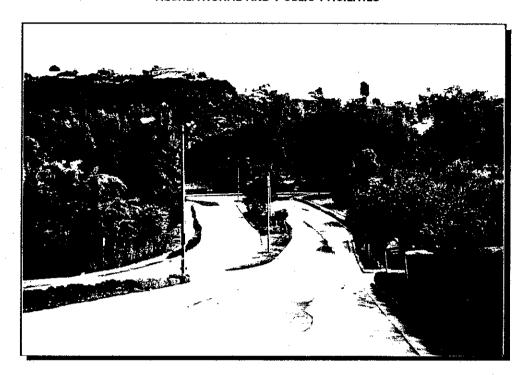
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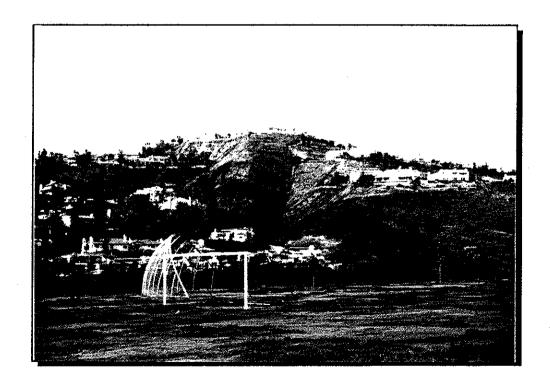
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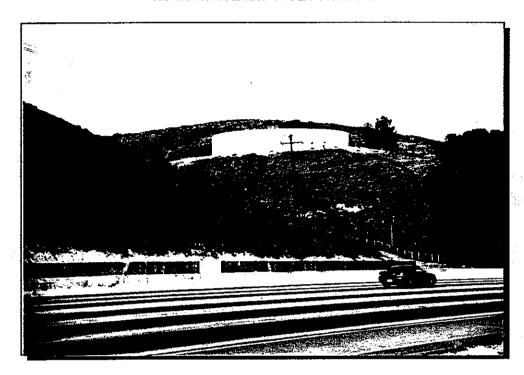


#### RECREATIONAL AND PUBLIC FACILITIES





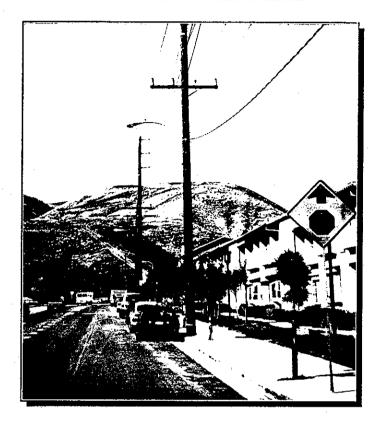
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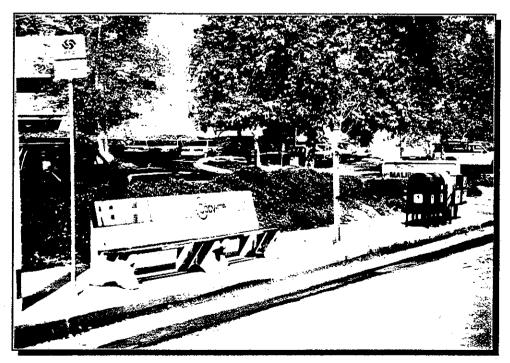




January 11, 1993

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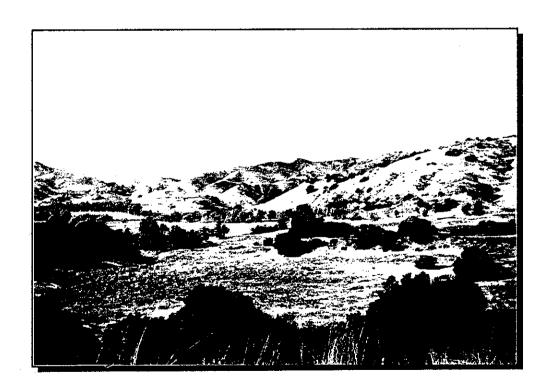




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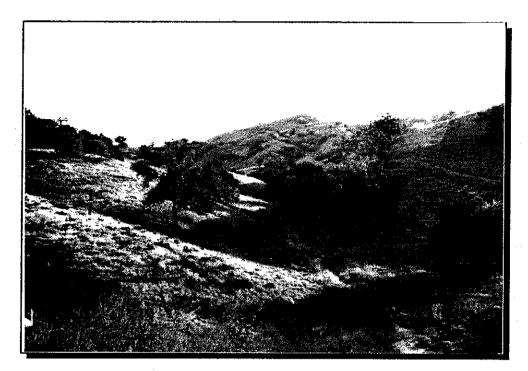
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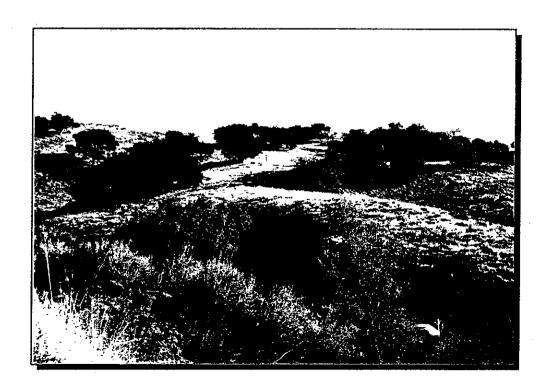




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#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

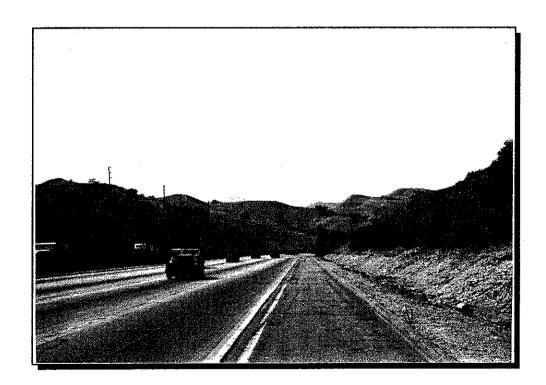




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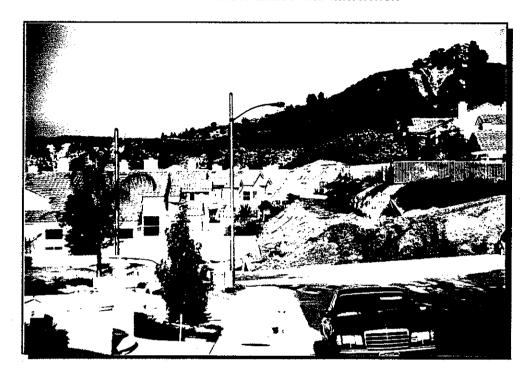
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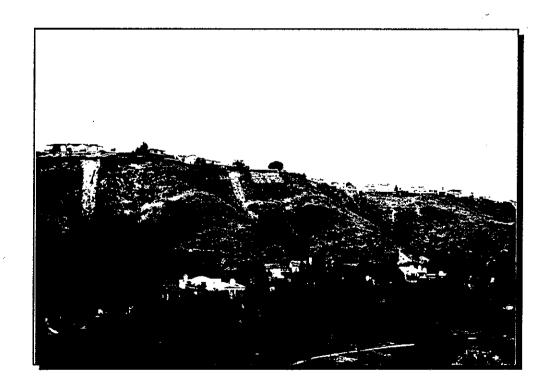




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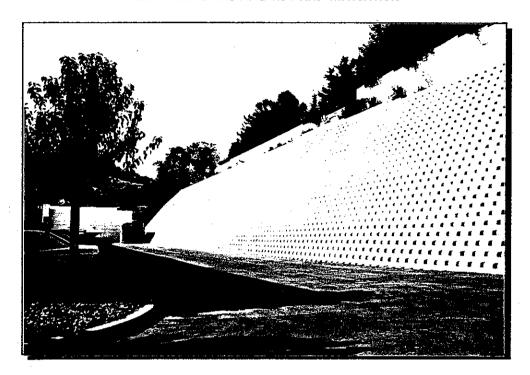
#### **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND MITIGATION**

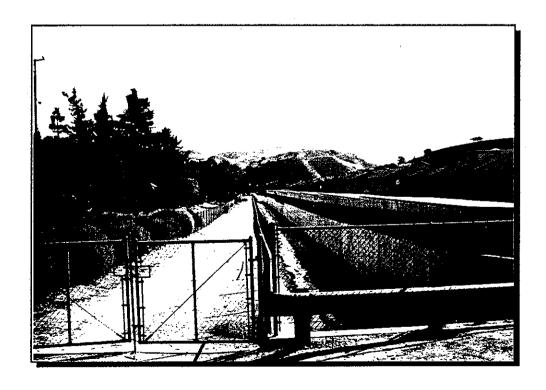




January 11, 1993

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND MITIGATION**





VISION OF CALABASAS: 2012

At the last General Plan Advisory Committee meeting, committee members defined their vision of Calabasas in the year 2012. Keeping in mind the issues, how the committee prioritized them, and suggestions for resolving the issues, committee members wrote headlines for a fictitious newspaper. These headlines describe what the committee members would like to read in their morning paper in the year 2012.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND URBAN DESIGN

### Calabasas NEWS

Vol. 21, No. 1

"Cherishing Its Environment, To Plan the Future"

Friday, May 13, 2012

#### HIGHLIGHTS

FREEWAY SIGNS DISAPPEAR, SIGN PROGRAM COMPLETED: Lorum ipsum delertine est. Ipsum lorum delertine est. Ipsum lorum es

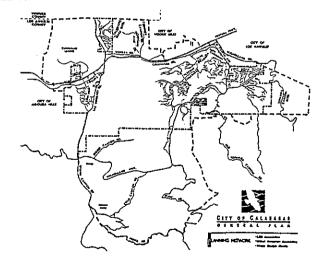
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### L.A. MAGAZINE NAMES CALABASAS "BEST IN THE WEST"

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**GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT** 

# Calabasas NEWS

Vol. 21, No. 2

"Cherishing Its Environment, To Plan the Future"

Friday, May 13, 2012

#### HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENT FEES TIED TO BUILDING PERMITS: Lorum pain debrane est. Lorum debrane est.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS SAVED: Dolorum primi forum est. Dolorum forum primi forum est. Dolorum forum primi forum est. Dolorum forum

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#### CLUSTERED HOUSING SAVES HILLSIDES

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### **GROWTH CONTROLLED IN** 1992: A Historical Perspective

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ENVIRONMENTAL

### Calabasas NEWS

Vol. 21, No. 3

"Cherishing Its Environment, To Plan the Future"

Friday, May 13, 2012

#### HIGHLIGHTS

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR COM-PLETED, CONNECTS SIMI HILLS TO TOPANGA: Locain pount observed sea. Locain pount dollaring est. Locain pount dollaring sea. Locain pount dollaring sea. Locain pount dollaring sea Locain bound substant sea. Locain pount dollaring sea. Page 2.

CALABASAS AIR QUALITY
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RECLAIMED WATER AVAILABLE FOR ALL TO USE: Jostim est layon determin. Datarem est layon est determin datarem determines. Passa determines layon est determines layon determines l

LIGHTING PROGRAM SUC-CESSFUL; STARS VISTBLE AT NIGHT: Ipsun deleren terme ex-Delenin ibrun ipsun est. Deleren Milli est. Loren deleren franz Loren jenen deleren franz Ipsun deleren est. Page 3

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#### MORE OAKS THAN PEOPLE: SUCCESSFUL REFORESTATION OF CALABASAS COMPLETE

Minimum venient due nestrod laboris nsum dator sit amet, can prominen ventana quis nostruit laborrs erst et stiquip ez es com doior in reprehendent p voluptate nonumy. Lorum ipsum dolor sit ensel, con managem venade que restrui laboris nia, ut aliquip ex ea com depor in reprehendent in voluptare nonunty. Minamam vontami quie nostrud laboris nsum doigr sif kindl, con myemum ventanii quis pastrud laboris nist ut aliquip es es com dator in reprebendent is voluetan nominy. Lonna ipsum dolor și amet, con minanum Yanimi quis postrad laboris tils, at allegilp ex sa coett skiner ti reprehendent. Ha Voluptale поликцу, Minimum veniami quis nostrud laboria asem Avior est sines, son minimum ventant qua nostrud laboris mai di aliquip ех ез соги боют на пертерендерт на valuation nontinty. Luture assurt dolor sit Jorgen Insum dolor sit amet, con muniquen venami puts nosteud laboris pis, ut sliquip ek es som delor ur reprehendest in volupate norumy. Minemum venseni quis costrud laboris neum dolor sit ametiterison zing kurinov mominum nov laboria mai ut aliquap ex ex com desor in reprehendent at volumento norumy. Minister etriami dire pestud labore nsum dalor sit amet, oon minimum veniani quis nostrui iaberis nest et aliquip ex ea cora dixor is regreticadent is vehiptate nationly. Lorum ipsum indees at arrest con thirismum vonem mes nostrud ixbons nia, ut aliquip ex ca com unue m represendent in Voluptate noming. Menman ventam dus nostrud leboris nsum dotor sil amol, con numuran venussi quis nastrud laboris mu utaliqua minumum veniami dius nostriktex ea com dotor at reprehendent in normany.

# ONLY NOISE IN CITY IS APPLAUSE: Housing Kept Off Major Streets

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#### BLACK FLIES RETURN TO CALABASAS CREEK: Water Quality Is Improved

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TRANSPORTATION

# Calabasas NEWS

Vol. 21, No. 4

"Cherishing Its Environment, To Plan the Future"

Friday, May 13, 2012

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

# PARK 'N' RIDE WORKS: Lorsin pour delorun est. Lorsin pour delorun est. Larsin pour polerun est. Lorsin pour delorun est. Lorun pour delorun pour delorun est. Lorun pour delorun est. Lorun

#### STREETS MADE SAFE FOR BICYCLE TRAVEL:

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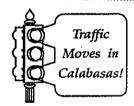
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### RED LINE MONORAIL SYSTEM EXTENDED ALONG HWY. 101

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### CITY TRANSIT SYSTEM REDUCES NEED TO DRIVE

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PARKS AND RECREATION

## Calabasas NEWS

Vol. 21, No. 5

"Cherishing Its Environment, To Plan the Future"

Friday, May 13, 2012

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

OUR SENIORS HAVE FUN!
Senior Center Celebrates
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YOUTH CENTER FOCUSES

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### 20th PUMPKIN FESTIVAL KICKS OFF CONCERT IN THE PARK SERIES

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#### PARK OPENS AT OLD LANDFILL SITE

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