A. DEVELOPMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

As required by the Calabasas General Plan, the General Plan Implementation Guide provides the rules by which the consistency of individual development projects with the General Plan will be determined. The General Plan Consistency Guide consists of a description of the City's development/environmental review process, maximum allowable impacts for indivudal development projects, and detailed performance standards.

The City's development/environmental review process is significantly different from the review processes of most cities. In the "traditional" review process, the development applicant maximizes intensity of use consistent with good business practices, and the agency works to decrease that intensity based on environmental mitigation and infrastructure capacity needs. In the City of Calabasas' process, environmental and infrastructure carrying capacities are established in advance of project design. The net result of this system is to closely integrate the environmental review and development review processes.

The purpose of this section of the General Plan is to outline the development and environmental review process that will be undertaken to determine consistency with the Calabasas General Plan. The Development/Environmental Review Program is expressly intended to integrate the traditional development project review with the environmental review currently undertaken to implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and to prepare for possible future changes to general plan law and CEQA.[1] Thus, the Development/Environmental Review Program is intended to specifically tie the intensity and design of new development to the management of environmental resources present within the site. As a consequence, this section defines the circumstances under which site-specific studies will be required, and delineates thresholds for significant adverse impacts which the City finds to be unacceptable.

RESOURCES/CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ASSESSMENT REPORTS SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATION FOR ALLOWABLE LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Upon receiving an application for a proposed development project, the first step in its review is to define the Environmental Resources/Hazards affecting the project site, and to conduct needed site-specific studies. Currently, the City of Calabasas requires preparation of a "Resources/Cumulative Impacts Assessment Report" for proposed zone changes, tentative tract maps, conditional use permits, and variances. The purpose of this report is to identify ***site-specific*** resources and hazards, and to identify the development layout that will maximize preservation of significant resources and minimize environmental impacts. Development applications are then reviewed to determine how the proposal addresses the impacts and mitigation measures identified in the Resources/Cumulative Impacts Assessment Report. The policies and performance standards of the General Plan provide guidance as to how the site-specific resources should be managed.

[1] Current discussion at the State level focus on greatly streamlining the CEQA review process in favor of a more detailed, communitywide environmental evaluation as part of the General Plan.

As part of the Resources/Cumulative Impacts Assessment Report, proposed development sites will be placed into one or more of four "Land Management" classes to address the desired balance between complete preservation of the natural landscape and creation of a totally manmade environment, and clarify the City's intent regarding the relative degree of preservation and development desired throughout the General Plan study area. The four Land Management classes are as follows.

- **Preservation**applies to areas whose environmental values are such that any alteration of the natural landscape would create significant environmental impacts. Preservation encompasses lands that were previously committed to open space use as environmental mitigation for development projects. This land management class is limited to environmental education, research, and enhancement programs. Development and other activities, other than recreation facilities with very low visual impacts, are inappropriate.

- **Retention** applies to areas with significant environmental features, but which have not been previously committed to open space. Within Retention areas, a certain degree of development and land management can be tolerated without significant environmental impact provided that development and land management activities are clustered into non-significant portions of the site, and the majority of land is preserved in open space.

  Retention is distinguished from Preservation in that it provides for clustering of development and land management activities into non-sensitive portions of the site in order to preserve and protect natural features. Under this land management classification, the carrying capacity of biotic habitats is to be maintained, and significant environmental features are to be preserved in place. Development within Retention areas shall not be the visually dominant feature when viewed from designated scenic corridors. "Manufactured" open space areas, such as manmade slopes and introduced landscaping, should repeat the forms, lines, colors, and textures which are found in the characteristic surrounding natural landscape.

- **Partial Retention** applies to lands that retain a natural character and may contain significant environmental features, but which are generally suitable for development. While there may be significant environmental resources present, these features do not generally dominate the natural landscape. Lands designated for Partial Retention are not currently dominated by manmade forms.

  New development and land management activities are to remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. However, significant environmental features must be protected, and introduced landscaping and manufactured landforms should borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture.

New buildings, signs, roads, and other manmade features should borrow from naturally established forms, lines, colors, and textures at such a scale that their visual characteristics are compatible with the natural surroundings. Thus, landform grading and landform planting techniques are to be incorporated into new development.

- **Modification**applies to infill lands within currently developed urban and rural lands. In these areas, retention of natural landforms is neither practical nor feasible.

  New development and land management activities may visually dominate and even replace the characteristic natural landscape. A ***developed*** character, either urban or rural, is anticipated. Thus, alterations may contain detail which is incongruent with natural occurrences when seen in the foreground or middle ground. When viewed as foreground, new development and land management activities need not appear to borrow from naturally established forms, lines, colors, or textures. To soften visual impacts, landform grading and landform planting techniques are to be incorporated into new development.

  New development and land management activities must not dominate the background. The visual characteristics of background views from the Ventura Freeway and designated scenic routes must be those of natural occurrence within the surrounding area or character type.

During preparation of the Resources/Cumulative Impacts Assessment Report, Table 1, Delineation of Land Management Classes, is to be reviewed, and delineation of land management classes is to be made as follows.

- Those portions of a development site that meet any of the criteria for Preservation contained in Table 1 shall be subject to the provisions of the Preservation classification described above.

- Those portions of a development site that do not meet any of the criteria for Preservation, but that do meet any of the criteria for Retention contained in Table 1 shall be subject to the provisions of the Retention classification described above.

- Those portions of a site that do not meet any of the criteria for Preservation or Retention, but that do meet any of the criteria for Partial Retention contained in Table 1 shall be subject to the provisions of the Partial Retention classification described above.

- Those portions of a site that do not meet any of the criteria for Preservation, Retention, or Partial Retention, but that do meet the criteria for Modification contained in Table 1 shall be subject to the provisions of the Modification classification described above.

Table 1
Criteria for Delineation of Land Management Classes

	Preservation (P)	Retention (R)	Partial Retention (PR)	Modification (M)
Existing Character of Land Development	N/A	N/A	Scattered development and few manmade features. Development that does exist is rural in character, and has been designed to be compatible with the characteristic surrounding natural landscape.	Developed areas which have a primarily urban character and which are dominated by manmade forms that are incongruent with the characteristic surrounding natural landscape.
Open Space	Areas that have been committed to open space as environmental mitigation for past development projects (see Figure II-2, Existing land use map, in the Calabasas Community Profile).	Areas owned and managed as part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and intended primarily for preservation of natural open space (see Figure III-5, Recreational Facilities, in the Calabasas Community Profile). Areas designated for acquisition as part of the National Recreation Area.	Lands where clustering of development is needed for establishment of an integrated, communitywide open space system.	Development lands and areas of uncommitted open space which are not required for establishment of an integrated, communitywide open space system.
Hillsides, Canyons, and Ridgelines	Areas with an average slope over 50 percent. Primary ridgelines identified in the Calabasas General Plan Community Profile. Rock outcrops (see Page IV-22 of the Calabasas Community Profile for a description of significant rock outcrop areas).	Lands retaining a largely natural topography which consists of steep hillsides and areas with an average slope over 25 percent.	Lands retaining a largely natural topography which consists of relatively flat areas and rolling hillsides; average slope less than 25 percent.	Areas of primarily manmade landforms.

Table 1
Criteria for Delineation of Land Management Classes

	Preservation (P)	Retention (R)	Partial Retention (PR)	Modification (M)
Biotic Resources	Designated habitat areas of fully protected species subject to State or Federal law (see Section IV-C, Biotic Resources, in the Calabasas Community Profile).	Riparian areas and wetlands subject to Federal or State permits (e.g. blue line streams) and wildlife linkages/corridors (see the vegetation map located in the map pocket at the end of the Community Profile, and Figure IV-1, Significant Ecological Areas). Specific Plant Communities: Riparian woodland, Riparian scrub, Southern sycamore-alder riparian woodland, Southern coast live oak riparian forest, other riparian areas, Southern oak woodlands, Valley oak woodlands, California walnut woodlands (refer to the Calabasas Vegetation Map located in the map pocket at the end of the Calabasas Community Profile for plant community locations).	Habitat areas of species proposed as endangered or threatened; habitat areas of "Category 1" candidate species. For a description of habitat areas see Section IV-C of the Calabasas Community Profile. In addition, see Appendix B, Biological Resources, in the Calabasas Community Profile. Habitat areas of species of local concern. Areas listed by the California Natural Diversity Data Base as "special" or of "concern." Specific Plant Communities: Coastal sage scrub areas, Southern oak woodlands, Valley oak woodlands, California walnut woodland (refer to the Calabasas Vegetation Map located in the map pocket at the end of the Calabasas Community Profile for plant community locations).	Previously disturbed lands and areas not containing significant biotic resources.

Table 1
Criteria for Delineation of Land Management Classes

	Preservation (P)	Retention (R)	Partial Retention (PR)	Modification (M)
Archaeological & Paleontological Resources	Archaeological sites that have been preserved in place as mitigation for a previous development project.	Significant archaeological sites as defined by Appendix K of the 1993 CEQA Guidelines (refer to Appendix A, Historic, Cultural, and Paleontological Resources, in the Calabasas Community Profile).	Areas of potential archaeological sensitivity (see Figure II-5, Areas of Potential Historic Sensitivity, in the Calabasas Community Profile). Areas of high paleontological sensitivity (Modelo, Topanga formations). For a description see Page II-75 in the Calabasas Community Profile.	Areas with no known archaeological or paleontological resources and having a low potential for such resources.
Hazard Areas	N/A	Areas of known and/or current mass wasting/ landslides (see Figure V-1, Geologic Formations, in the Community Profile. See also Pages V-10 and V-11 of the Community Profile for a description of current mass wasting/landslides). Floodways defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as part of the National Flood Insurance Act.	Potential areas of mass wasting/landslides. Potentially active fault zones (see Figure V-1, Geologic Formations, in the Community Profile). High ground response areas. Wildland fire hazard areas located more than 600 feet from a public roadway or located more than 300 feet from a public roadway, but having only a single means of ingress and egress (refer to Page V-12 in the Community Profile) Flood plain areas (see Figure III-3, 100-Year Flood Zones, in the Community Profile).	Areas free from significant environmental hazards.

Table 1
Criteria for Delineation of Land Management Classes

	Preservation (P)	Retention (R)	Partial Retention (PR)	Modification (M)
Scenic Resources	N/A	N/A	Designated scenic corridors. Areas of outstanding scenic value (see Figure II-4, Scenic Features, in the Calabasas Community Profile. See also Pages II-52 and II-53 for a description of Scenic Features).	Areas without significant natural scenic values.

Source: Planning Network, 1993.

TECHNICAL REPORTS
PROJECT-SPECIFIC EVALUATION

In addition to a review of ***site-specific*** resources and hazards in the Resources/Cumulative Impacts Assessment Report, one or more technical studies may need to be prepared to identify ***project-specific*** impacts and mitigation measures. In general, project-specific studies will be required for any project which is potentially inconsistent with the goals, objectives, approaches, policies, or performance standards of the General Plan. The purpose of these studies is to determine the extent of project-related impacts, define whether the project is consistent with the provisions of the General Plan, and to determine what project revisions/mitigation measures are necessary, if any, to achieve general plan consistency.

Additional, specific, criteria for determining whether technical are necessary studies include:

- **General:** Projects meeting the applicability criteria of Table 2 which have the potential for exceeding the maximum acceptable impacts identified in Table 3, or which have the potential for not meeting applicable performance standards.

- **Air Quality:** A demonstration shall be made that the project meets the air pollutant emission reduction targets contained in Table 4. The analysis shall use the methodology put forth by the South Coast Air Quality Management District's *"CEQA Air Quality Handbook"* as amended from time to time. In addition, projects that will potentially exceed the threshold criteria for air pollutant emissions contained in the applicability criteria contained in the most recent *"CEQA Air Quality Handbook"* shall comply with the environmental documentation requirements of the handbook.

- **Noise:** Any project that meets or exceeds any of the following criteria shall be required to prepare an acoustical analysis and provide such mitigation as is necessary to meet the noise compatible land use performance objectives contained in Table VI-2.

  - Addition of more than ten percent to the average daily traffic volume of any arterial street. This traffic volume addition is more than incremental and could result in measurable noise increases.

  - Addition of 1,000 or more vehicles in the peak hour on adjacent roadways. This traffic volume addition is more than incremental and could result in measurable noise increases.

  - Areas where projected noise levels identified in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report exceed the noise compatible land use performance objectives contained in Table VI-2. Because the noise-related performance objective will be exceeded, site-specific analysis and mitigation will be required to meet specified objectives.

  - Lands located within an existing 60 dBA or greater noise contour.

For residential uses, where an acoustical analysis is required, the report shall be complete and approved by the Community Development Director prior to issuance of a grading permit or map recordation. Further information is required prior to issuance of building permits, if not previously submitted.

Where an acoustical analysis is required for a non-residential project, the report shall be submitted for Community Development Director approval prior to issuance of building permits.

- **Traffic:** Traffic impact analyses consistent with the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program may be required in addition to city requirements for traffic analyses needed to confirm that projects will meet applicable Calabasas General Plan standards.