

## Exhibit D

# January 1993: Calabasas General Plan Community Issues



**CITY OF CALABASAS**  
**GENERAL PLAN**



**COMMUNITY ISSUES**

**JANUARY 1993**

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COMMUNITY ISSUES

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.

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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

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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

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D. COMMUNITY DESIGN

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

**The Natural Environment.** Community design deals with the image of a community, expressed through its physical environment. Calabasas' identity is based on the beauty of its natural environment, rolling hills, oak woodlands, scenic canyons, abundant wildlife, and overall rural character.

**Scenic Features.** Scenic features include the Calabasas Grade, Calabasas Ridge, Calabasas Creek, Malibu Creek and tributaries.

**Significant Ridgelines.** Significant ridgelines are found throughout the study area and are defined as those that visually dominate the surrounding landscape through their size, through the creation of a silhouette against the sky, and through their proximity to, and view from, existing development, or through their ecological, historical, or cultural importance.

**Scenic Corridors.** The City also identifies four scenic corridors: Mulholland Highway Scenic Corridor, Las Virgenes Scenic Corridor, Old Topanga Canyon Scenic Corridor, and the 101 Scenic Corridor.

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS ISSUES AND PROGRAM OPTIONS

*In addition to the Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance and the Scenic Corridor Ordinance, what actions should the City take to preserve the natural environment within and surrounding the City?*

The City can take a number of actions related to protecting the natural environment, including:

- Formulate requirements that new development within sites containing significant environmental features be clustered, increasing the density of those portions of the site which are permitted to be developed in exchange for the permanent preservation of those features within individual development projects.
- Within the General Plan, identify features worthy of protection and preservation.
- Establish performance standards for the protection and management of significant natural features within the General Plan study area. Ensure that these performance standards are met in the review of individual development projects, and utilize them as "thresholds of significance" in the review of development projects pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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- Initiate a program to purchase such development rights as may be attached to properties containing significant natural features to be funded through a community wide assessment.
- Initiate a transfer of development rights program to ensure the permanent preservation of significant environmental features in exchange for increased development density elsewhere in the City.
- Continue to pursue the protection of significant natural features by reviewing projects and placing appropriate conditions of approval on a project by project basis.
- Work with Los Angeles County to adopt environmental protection standards equivalent to those of the Calabasas General Plan for enforcement by the County within the City's sphere of influence.
- Implement additional measures to secure cooperation of surrounding jurisdictions to establish consistent environmental protection regulations are included in the Community Development portion of this document under the discussion of consistent development regulations.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

**Community Image.** The development pattern, or image of the study area, is one of primarily low density, residential character with concentrations of commercial and office development adjacent to the freeway corridor. Commercial architecture creates a mixture of urban and semi-rural character.

**Single Family Residential.** Generally, two categories of single family development can be identified; the more traditional single family tract development and the rural custom home development. Many of the traditional residential tracts are private, gated communities surrounded by walls with only one to two main access roads. This pattern of development restricts inter-neighborhood connections and creates inwardly focused neighborhoods. These neighborhoods include full urban improvements and are usually characterized by elaborate entry statements, often with gates and guard houses.

**Rural Residential.** Rural residential development is located primarily in the study area's southern portion along canyons and in the hills. Architectural styles vary widely and landscaping is informal or natural. Recent additions to these areas are large, custom estate homes.

**Multiple Family Residential.** Multiple family residential development tends to be concentrated in the Malibu Canyon, Lost Hills, and eastern Calabasas Park area. For the most part, these developments are well planned, however, in the Malibu Canyon area few amenities exist and there is a lack of sufficient landscaping and setbacks from the street.

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**Commercial and Industrial Development.** Commercial/office/industrial development within the study area can be generally categorized into three types: freestanding and strip mall developments located along the 101 Freeway; business park uses along Agoura Road; and the Old Town commercial district.

**Public and Quasi-Public Development.** The development of public and quasi-public uses in the study area is characterized by a lack of concentration and focus. This is primarily due to the recent incorporation of the City and the absence of a civic center.

**EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS  
ISSUES AND PROGRAM OPTIONS**

*Should the City preserve the existing character of residential developments, or does the City want to take actions to change existing residential image?*

There are several options the City can explore in relation to this issue. They include:

- Establish restrictions or limitations on the development of new gated communities.
- Develop techniques to promote the construction of a variety of housing types.
- Continue to permit residential development in compliance with existing codes and standards.

*Should the City pursue development of a city core to serve as a focus for community activities?*

Although the City does not currently have a central core, the City has a number of options in relation to this issues. They include:

- Identify and promote one central area for development as a "downtown". This area could include: a civic center, a community center or park, commercial and offices uses and multi-family development.
- Instead of promoting a single central core, identify and promote the development of several smaller locations throughout the City to serve as neighborhood "nodes". These areas could include: neighborhood shopping, offices and a park or school.
- Continue to function without identified urban spaces.

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SPECIFIC URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

**Hillside/Ridgeline Development.** Because of the City's unique terrain, hillside views help to create the character and identity of the community. Development on hillsides and ridgelines largely destroys the scenic value of these natural features and degrades the image of the City.

**Small Lots.** Under the control of Los Angeles County, hundreds of small "cabin" lots were approved throughout the Santa Monica Mountains. These lots were originally intended for vacation homes, and many were only 40 feet wide. In recent years, developers have begun to construct 4,000+ square foot homes on these tiny lots, dominating their surroundings and transforming the character of the area from rural to urban.

**Freeway Corridor.** Billboards and large commercial pole signs block views from the 101 Freeway corridor and stand in sharp contrast to the surrounding hillsides. The commercial area on Las Virgenes Road at Agoura Road has been identified as an area where a multitude of signs exist and create a negative image for the City.

**City Entries.** There are five major entrances to the City, however, only one at the corner of Mulholland Drive and Calabasas Road presents a significant visual entry statement into the City. This lack of concrete City boundaries has been a hindrance to creating an separate and unique identity for the City.

SPECIFIC URBAN DESIGN ISSUES AND PROGRAM OPTIONS

*What types of actions is the City willing to take to regulate development within hillside areas?*

The City has a number of options relative to managing and regulating hillside development, including:

- Identify the minimum development intensity that could be legally applied within hillside areas, and reflect those intensities on the General Plan Land Use map.
- Develop slope-density and/or slope-open space preservation formulas for implementation through the General Plan Land Use map and subsequent zoning regulations in a manner consistent with local community values.
- Designate as permanent open space on the General Plan Land Use map all parcels within "density controlled" subdivisions that were set aside and not developed as a trade-off for smaller parcels in other portions of the development site.
- Initiate a program to purchase such development rights as may be attached to current open hillside areas lands to be funded through a communitywide assessment district or other similar mechanism.

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- Continue to support regional efforts to preserve hillside open space lands.
- Formulate requirements that new development be clustered, increasing the density of those portions of the site which are permitted to be developed in exchange for the permanent preservation of open space and ridgelines within individual development projects.
- Initiate a transfer of development rights program to ensure the permanent preservation of current hillside open space lands in exchange for increased development density elsewhere in the City.
- Establish hillside design guidelines and hillside development requirements which maximize open space preservation within development sites, including regulations and guidelines for the following:
  - ▶ landform grading;
  - ▶ landform planting;
  - ▶ maximum heights for cut and fill slopes;
  - ▶ limitations on the use of retaining and crib walls;
  - ▶ maximum pad sizes based on slope;
  - ▶ rounding of the tops and toes of manufactured slopes to blend in with adjacent natural terrain.
- Prohibit development along major *and* minor ridgelines within the General Plan study area.
- Prohibit development along major ridgelines within the General Plan study area, and establish regulations to ensure that the top of structures that are constructed adjacent to ridgelines are kept a minimum distance below the ridgelines.
- Establish maximum height limitations for structures which might block views of major ridgelines based on protecting the viewshed from major vantage points within the community. Where such height limitations would prohibit economic use of the land, require, as a trade-off for obstructing views of ridgelines, the preservation of view corridors. For example, the City of Agoura Hills has adopted, as part of its zoning ordinance, restrictions on development above the 1,100' elevation line.
- Formulate and adopt requirements for the preservation of view corridors to protect views of major *and* minor ridgelines, as well as prominent hillside areas from major vantage points.

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- Continue to pursue the protection of natural hillsides and ridgelines by reviewing projects and placing appropriate conditions of approval on a project by project basis.

*How will the City address the proliferation of "cabin" lots approved throughout the Santa Monica Mountains?*

The City has a number of options as to the manner in which it addresses the issue of "cabin" lots. These include:

- Formulate and adopt regulations for the merger of substandard lots under the same ownership as a means of creating parcels that meet current lot width and depth requirements.

- Identify areas with substandard lots, and work with area landowners for the voluntary incorporation of a mutual benefit corporation which would:

- ▶ purchase the lots in exchange for shares in the corporation;
- ▶ merge the parcels and resubdivide them into parcels that meet current lot width and depth requirements; and
- ▶ sell the resubdivided parcels and distribute proceeds to shareholders.

GRADING  
+ AFF/HOO  
PMT OR A/H  
OPP'D BY Co.

COST EFFECTIVE?

- Utilize the power of eminent domain to purchase areas with substandard lots, paying for such parcels with the proceeds of the sale of these areas after parcels have been merged and resubdivided.

- Utilize the power of eminent domain to purchase areas with substandard lots with City funds, merge and resubdivide these areas, and reimburse City expenses with the proceeds from the sale of these areas.

YES  
CAPITAL COMM.

- Establish setback, height, and maximum dwelling unit size regulations to ensure that the size of dwelling units constructed on "cabin" lots is in proportion to the size of the parcel.

- Work with the Los Angeles County Health Department to establish minimum parcel sizes for the provision of septic tank sewage systems, which would effectively require the extension of sewer or merger of lots in order for development to proceed.

- Continue to pursue design review for the construction of homes on "cabin" lots by reviewing projects and placing appropriate conditions of approval on a project by project basis.

Interestingly, one-third of all respondents also believe that there are too many gated communities in the housing mix of Calabasas.

### Open Space and Environmental Protection

When asked about future growth, Calabasas residents are more likely to identify the drawbacks of urbanization rather than loss of environmental amenities as major concerns. Nevertheless, explicit questions about open space preservation and environmental protection do elicit strong support from residents.

- \* Approximately 90 percent of the respondents view open space preservation and hillside protection as very important issue for the general plan.
- \* One-in-four believes that past hillside grading has not been sensitive to environmental and scenic concerns.
- \* Approximately 80 percent of all respondents support limitations on hillside grading and the protection of oak trees.
- \* Large majorities support landscaping programs and sign control for implementing the Scenic Corridor Ordinance.