

# Hillside and Ridgeline Overview #1

## Review of City Documentation

Planning Commission Meeting

August 16, 2018

# Ridgeline Phase I Meetings

- Mtg#1: Review of City Documentation
- Mtg#2: Review of other Agencies Policies and Practices
- Mtg#3: Mapping and View Line Exercises
- Mtg#4: Public Workshop
- Mtg#5: Draft Options for Council Consideration

# Ridgeline Phase I Meetings

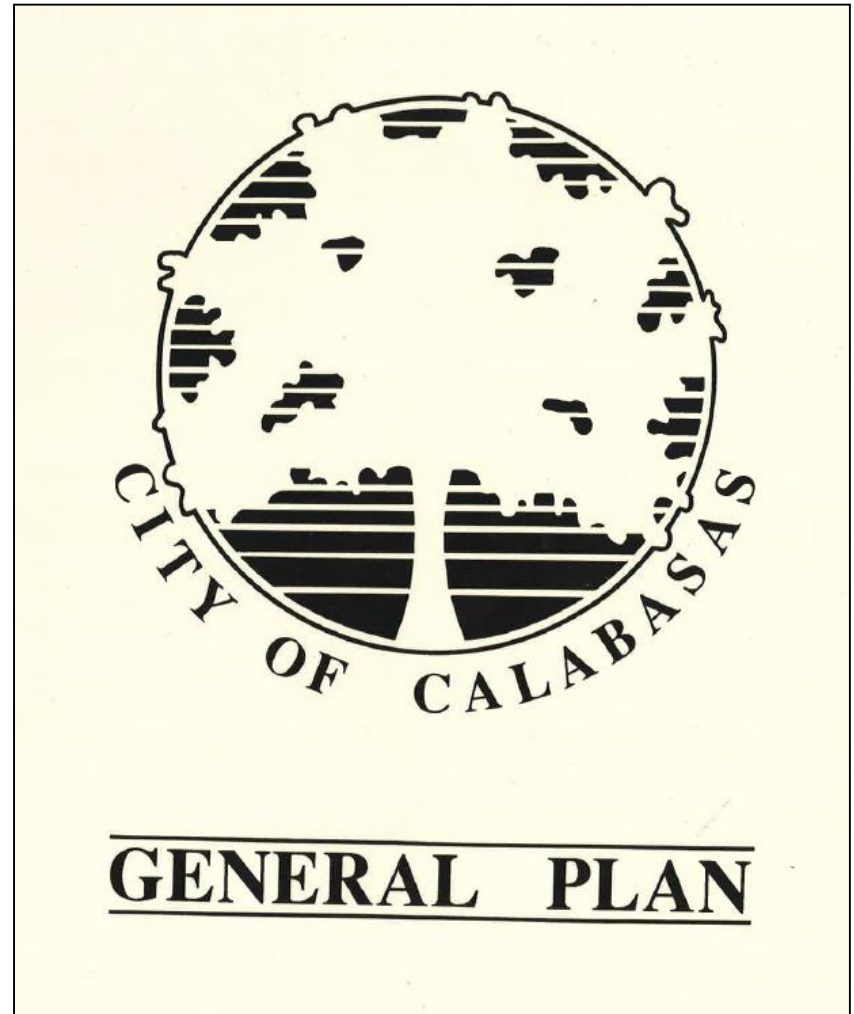
- **Mtg#1: Review of City Documentation**
- Mtg#2: Review of other Agencies Policies and Practices
- Mtg#3: Mapping and View Line Exercises
- Mtg#4: Public Workshop
- Mtg#5: Draft Options for Council Consideration

# City Documentation

- Foundation Planning Document (1991)
- Ord. No. 92-30 Scenic Corridor
- 1993 Community Issues
- 1993 Community Profile
- 1995 General Plan
- 1995 Consistency Review Program
- 1998 Development Code
- 2008 General Plan
- 2010 Development Code
  - Hillside and Ridgeline Development Standards

# Foundation Planning Document (1991)

- Planning Document baseline for GP
- Considered by the Council in Nov. 1991
- Contained ridgeline protection policies, topo and scenic resources maps



# Foundation Planning Document (1991)

- Environment Goals:
  - *“...the City is dedicated to the inventory, assessment, and preservation of the **remaining** natural environment... To this end, the plan calls for the preservation of ridgelines, habitat linkages, open space, scenic corridors, and significant ecological areas... Development...must respect proper planning controls on development on hillsides...”*

# Foundation Planning Document (1991)

- Hillside Development and Ridgeline Protection

Purpose: “... to protect those ridgelines identified as natural, scenic or environmentally sensitive resources.”

Characteristics: “...place emphasis on undeveloped areas for preservation of significant ecological resources..”

Objectives: The scenic qualities of hillside areas should be enhanced and preserved by encouraging the maximum retention of natural features...The natural features are... A. Ridgelines, hilltops, finger canyons, rock outcroppings and other significant land forms...”

# Foundation Planning Document (1991)

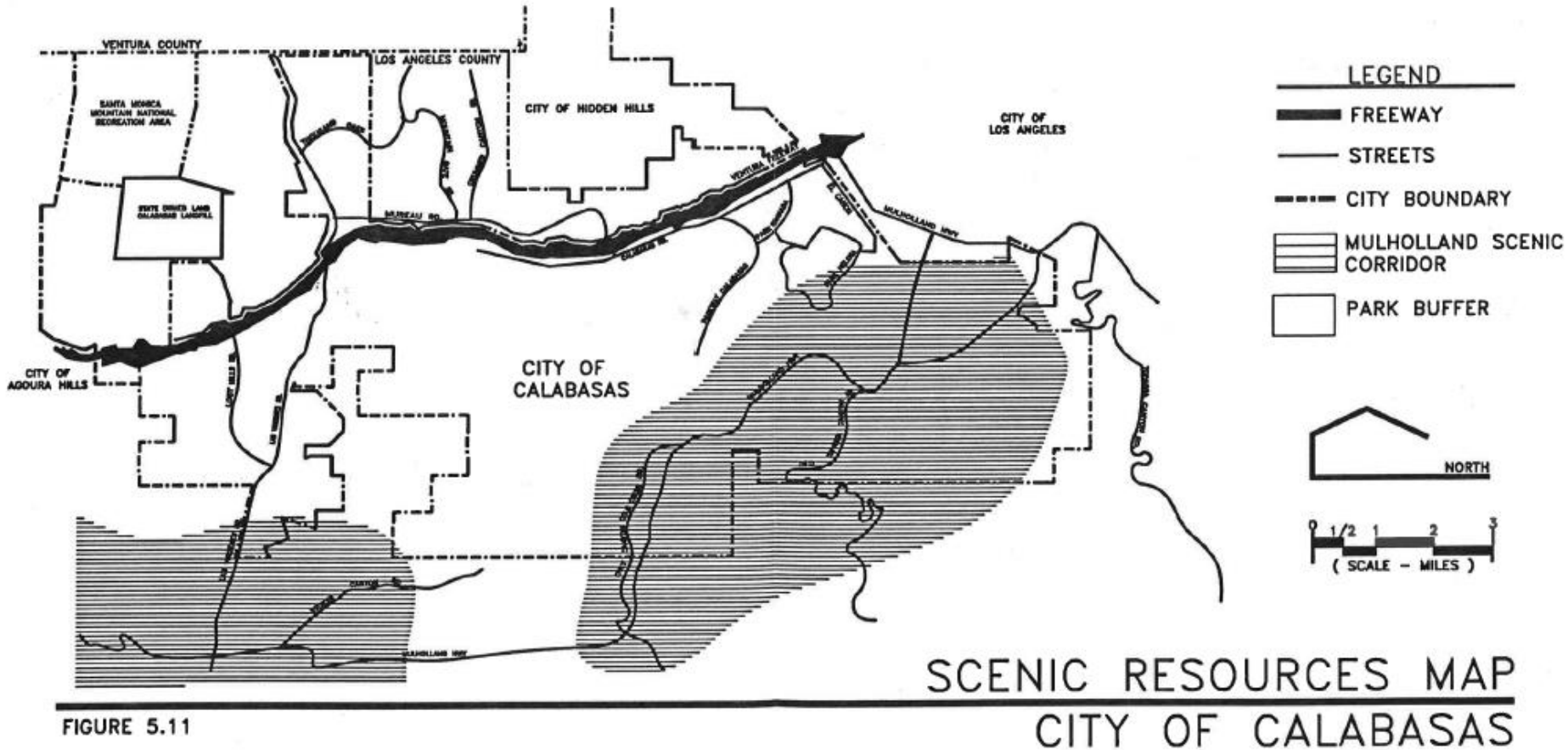


FIGURE 5.11





# Foundation Planning Document (1991)

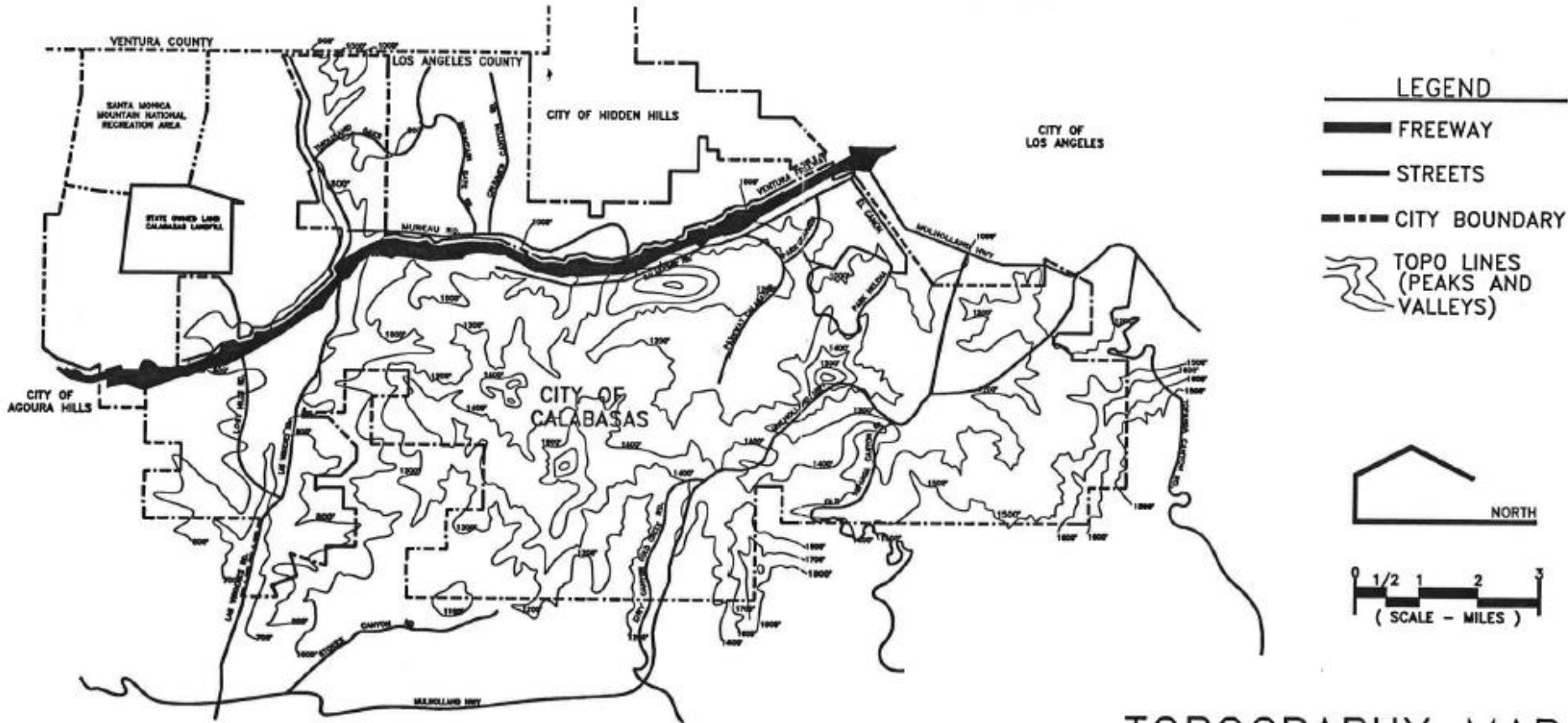


FIGURE 5.9

TOPOGRAPHY MAP  
CITY OF CALABASAS

# Topo Map (1991)





# Satellite View (2015)





# Ord. 92-30 Scenic Corridors

- Identified four primary scenic corridors within the City
- First ridgeline and hillside protections
- First ridgeline definitions
- First Significant Ridgeline map

## ORDINANCE 92-30

### AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CALABASAS ADOPTING A PERMANENT SCENIC CORRIDOR ORDINANCE

Whereas, on April 5, 1991, the City of Calabasas was established as a duly organized municipal corporation of the State of California. On said date, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1, thereby adopting by reference the Los Angeles County Code as the ordinance of the City of Calabasas, including Title 22 thereof setting forth the applicable planning and zoning regulations for the City of Calabasas. (Hereinafter said Title 22 shall be referred to as the "Zoning Ordinance".)

Whereas, after the incorporation of the City of Calabasas, the City Council examined the existing Los Angeles County General Plan, Zone District Plan and Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to existing and potential development in the City of Calabasas. Such examination revealed that there are pockets of territory within the City which do not provide a stable transition of densities and/or uses and are, as such, incompatible with certain scenic corridors of the City. Additionally, such examination revealed that the development review scheme encompassed within the Zoning Ordinance does not anticipate any review by the City Council prior to approval of certain projects. More specifically, developments within the herein defined scenic corridors could receive full development approval without any such local review. Lacking both a City adopted General Plan, and a consistent local review of development, such a development approval scheme did not contribute to appropriate community development and frustrated effective long-range planning within the City of Calabasas.

Whereas, in recognition of the need for effective long-range planning criteria, the City Council directed staff of the City to study and formulate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to assure adequate local review of such proposed development pending adoption of the ultimate General Plan.

Whereas, on May 15, 1991, the City Council adopted an interim Scenic Corridor Urgency Ordinance.

Whereas, the Urgency Ordinance expired on May 15, 1992 and the City Council has determined it necessary to have a permanent Scenic Corridor Ordinance.

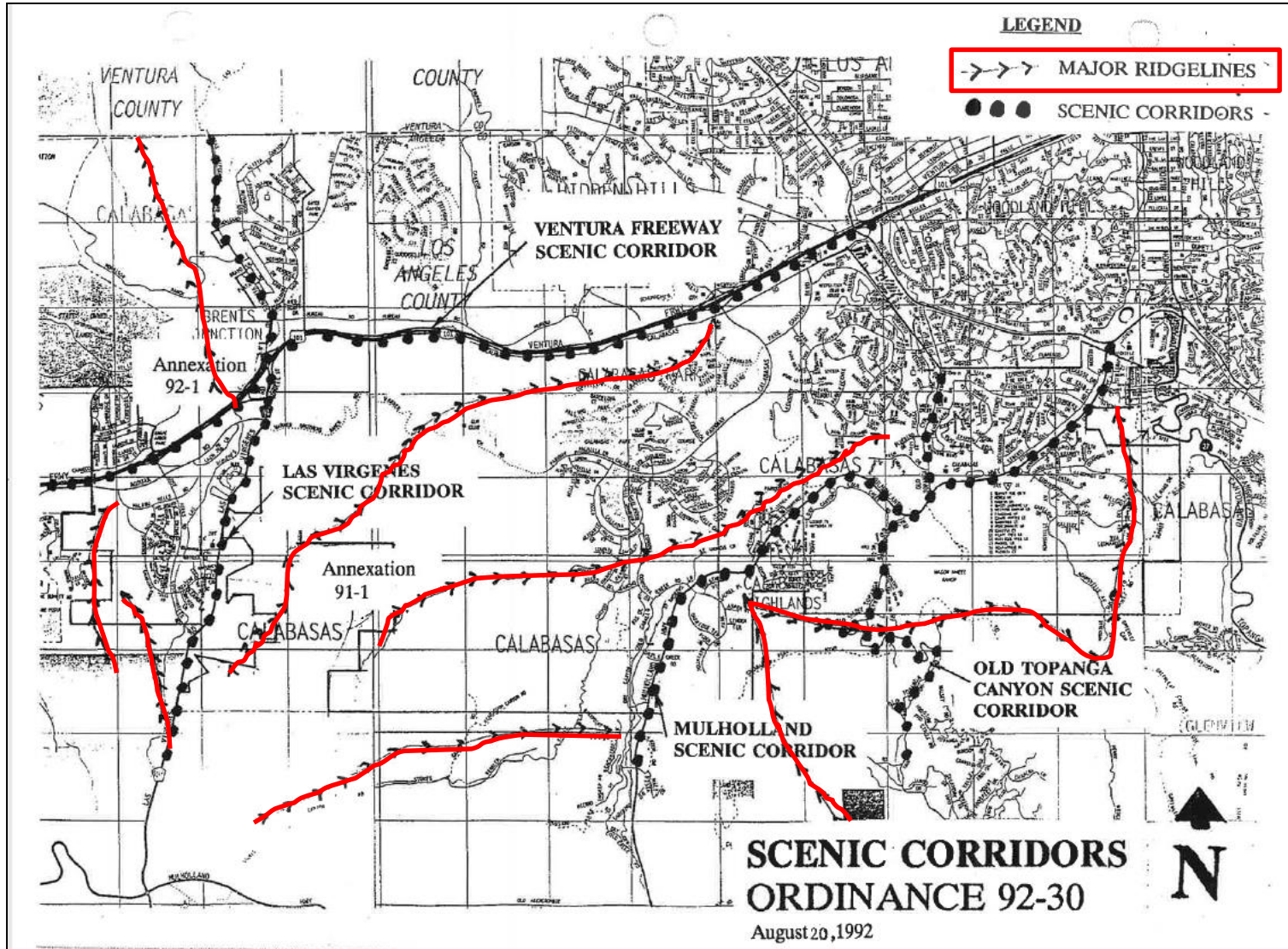
# Ord. 92-30 Scenic Corridors

- Goal was to protect and beautify existing corridors and preserve dominant ridgelines, rolling hills, oak woodlands, streams and wildlife areas
- Subjected projects to obtain a CUP
- Required proactive beautification in commercial zones
- Contained numerous performance standards

# Ord. 92-30 Scenic Corridors

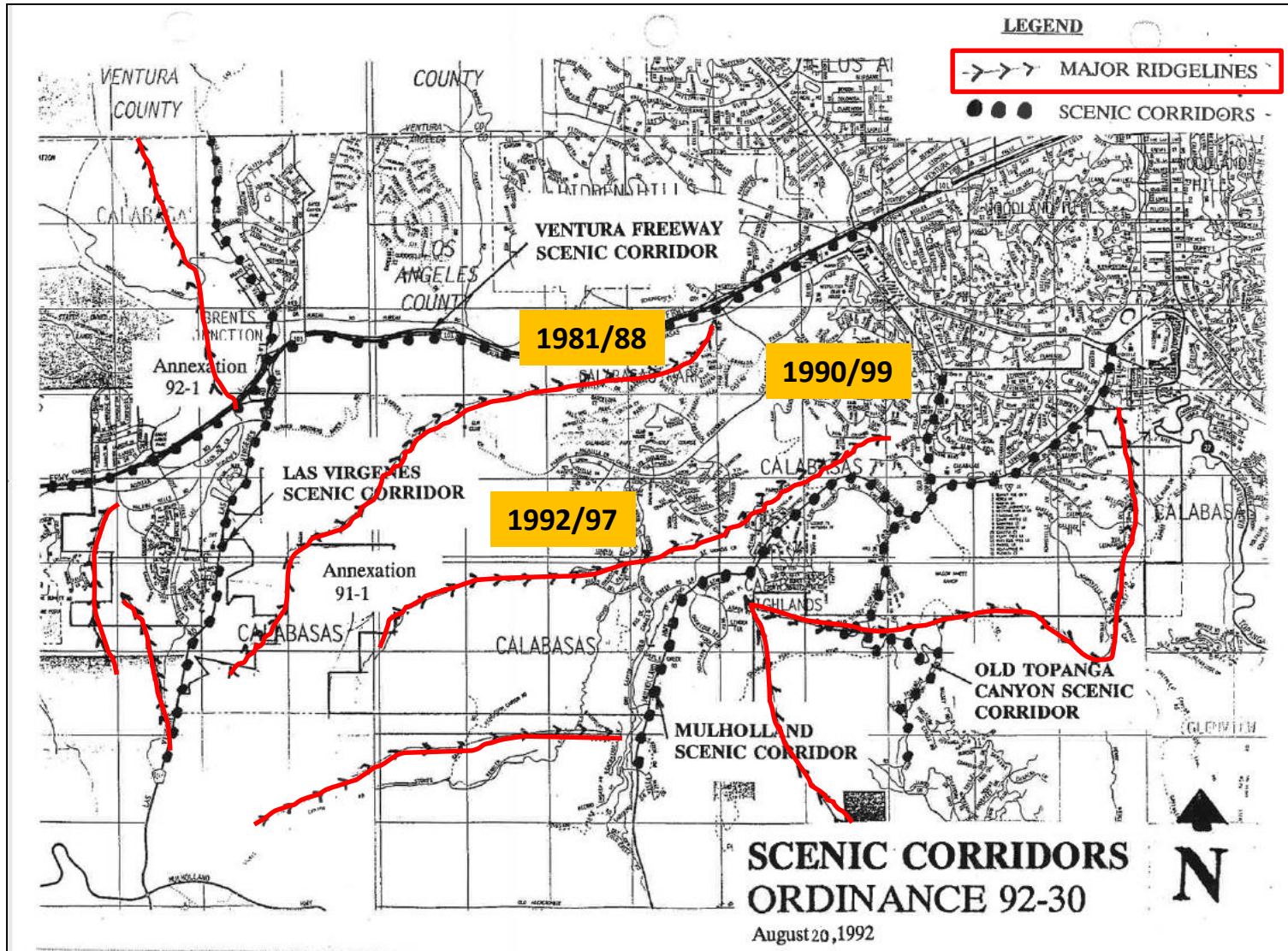
- The Ordinance contained two ridgeline definitions:
  - *“A **Landmark Ridgeline** is any significant ridgeline which by its location in conjunction with the landform of which it is a part, historically act as a reference for directional orientation within a neighborhood.”*
  - *A **Significant Ridgeline** is any ridgeline that visually dominates the landscape through its size in relation to the hillside or mountain terrain of which it’s a part; through the creation of a silhouette against the sky, as an existing natural backdrop feature; and through its proximity to, and view from existing development; or through its ecological, historical or cultural importance.”*

# Ord. 92-30 Scenic Corridors



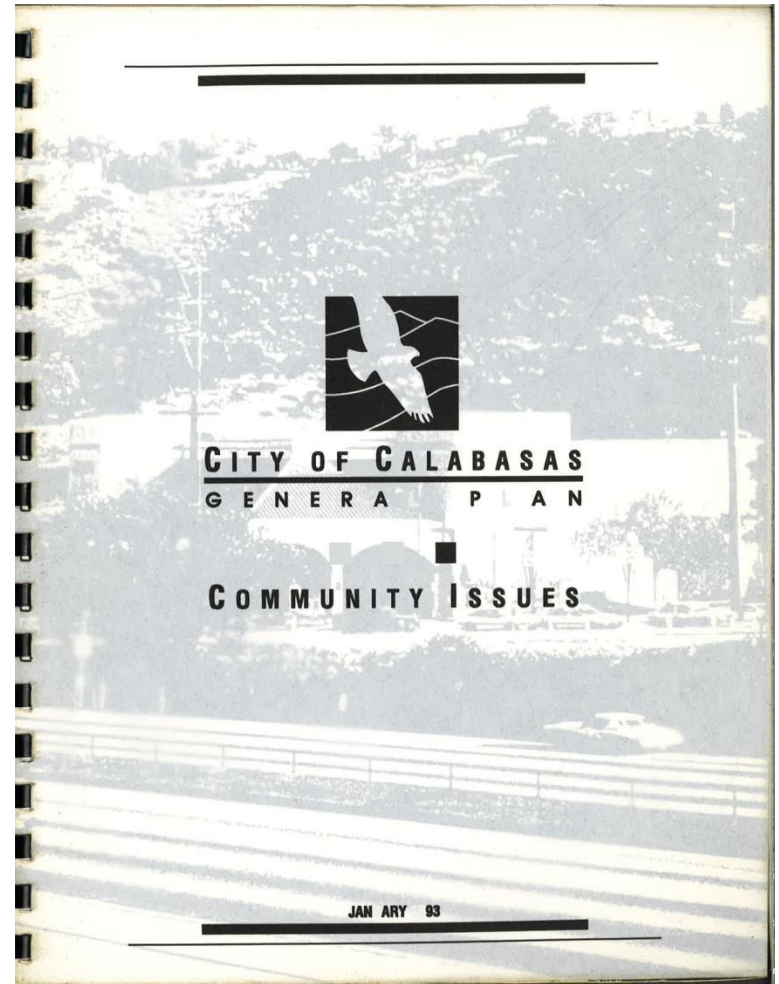


# Ord. 92-30 Scenic Corridors



# Community Issues (1993)

- Defined key community concerns and desires to be addressed in the General Plan
- GPAC developed policy/strategies to implement community goals
- Contained ridgeline definition



# Community Issues (1993)

## CITY OF CALABASAS GENERAL PLAN:

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### COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

# Community Issues (1993)

- Significant Ridgelines (III-16)
  - “...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 significance.”

# Community Issues (1993)

- Suggested programs to protect hillsides and ridgelines from development:
  - Increased density w/clustering in exchange for permanent hillside/ridgeline protections
  - *“Prohibition of development along major and minor ridgelines...”*
  - Rooftops below significant ridgelines
  - Protect views from major vantage points by limiting height for structures impacting ridgeline views

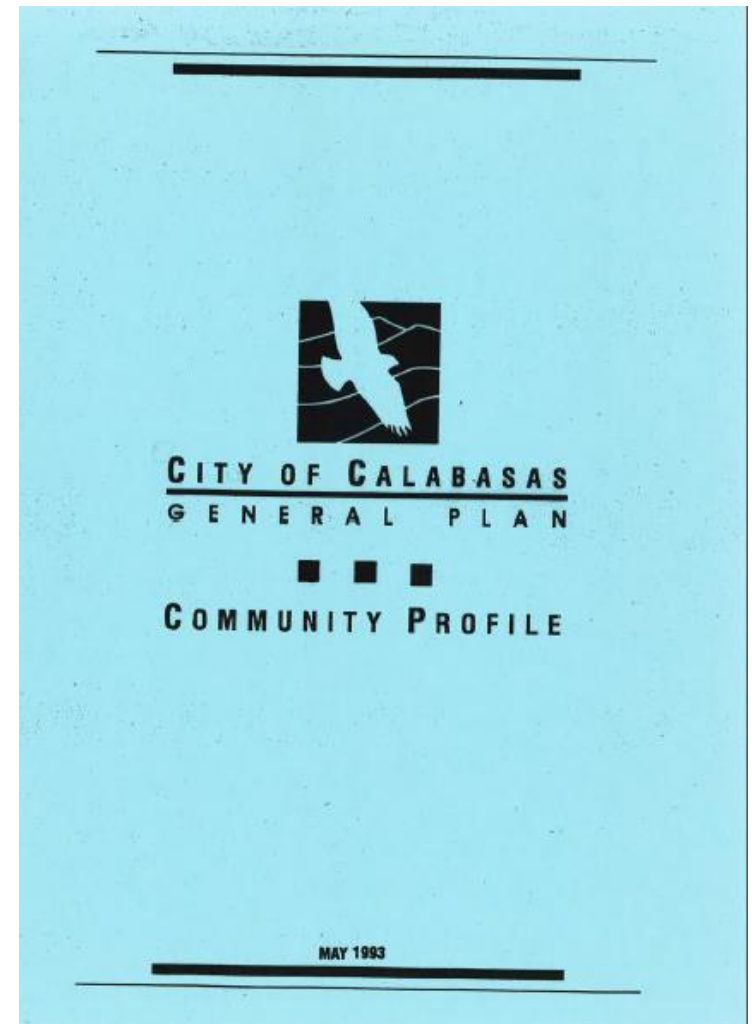
# Community Issues (1993)

- Formulate requirements for the preservation of view corridors to protect major and minor ridgelines, as well as prominent hillside areas from major vantage points
- Purchase development rights
- Transfer of development rights and increased density in exchange for permanent preservation of hillsides and ridgelines



# Community Profile (1993)

- Contains facts and research material underlying the General Plan
- Documents the City's physical, natural and economic environment
- Contains a Scenic Features Map with Significant Ridgelines
- Contained a revised Significant Ridgeline definition



# Community Profile (1993)

- Modified Significant Ridgeline Definition (II-52)

*“...A significant ridgeline is defined as one that visually dominates the surrounding landscape through its size; through its creation of a silhouette against the sky **as a significant natural backdrop feature**; through its proximity to, and view from, existing development; or through its ecological, historical or cultural significance.”*



# Community Profile (1993)

- Topography (II-52)

*“...protect the ridgelines, canyons and scenic vistas.”*

*“...the natural topography has been cut and filled to create buildable lots and man made slopes in many areas of the City”*

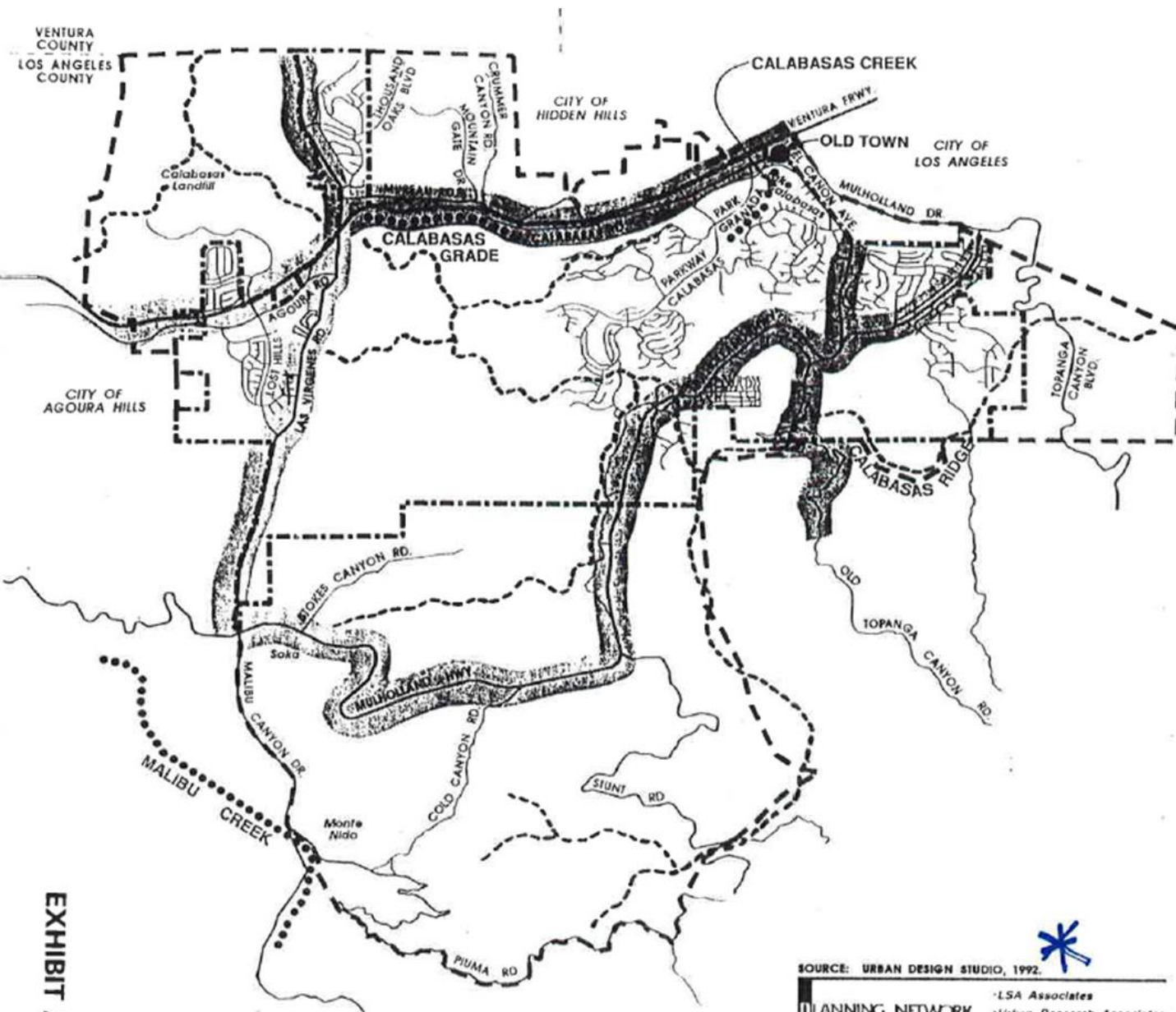
- Scenic Features (II-53)

*“ Calabasas Ridge (Summit to Summit Ridge) – The highest landmark ridgeline of the City...including rich riparian areas with heritage oak groves along the base of the ridge... It is a visual landmark within the study area.”*



# CITY OF CALABASAS GENERAL PLAN

## FIGURE II-4 SCENIC FEATURES



### LEGEND






-  CITY LIMITS
-  SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
-  SIGNIFICANT RIDGELINES
-  SCENIC CORRIDORS
-  SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

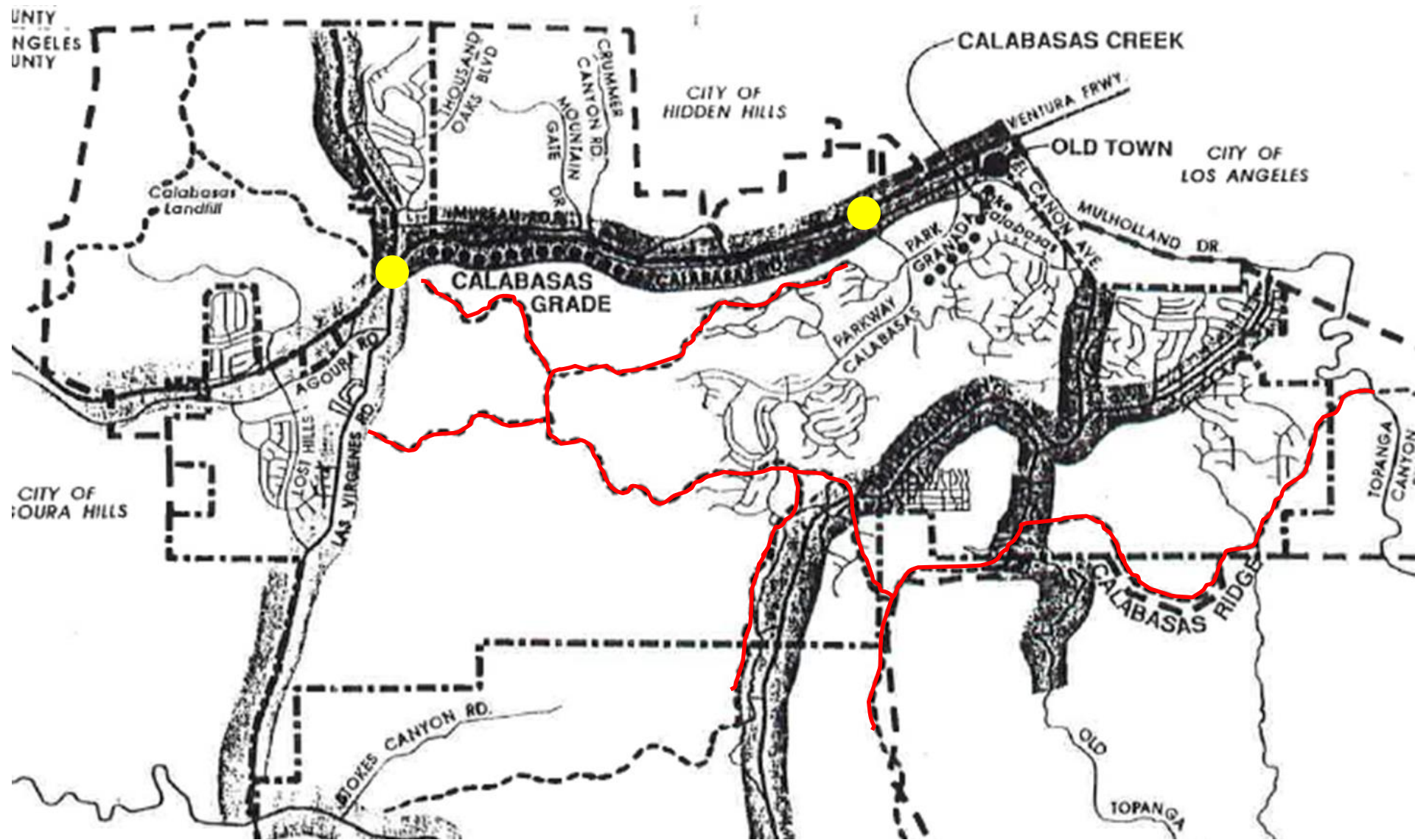
EXHIBIT A

SOURCE: URBAN DESIGN STUDIO, 1992.

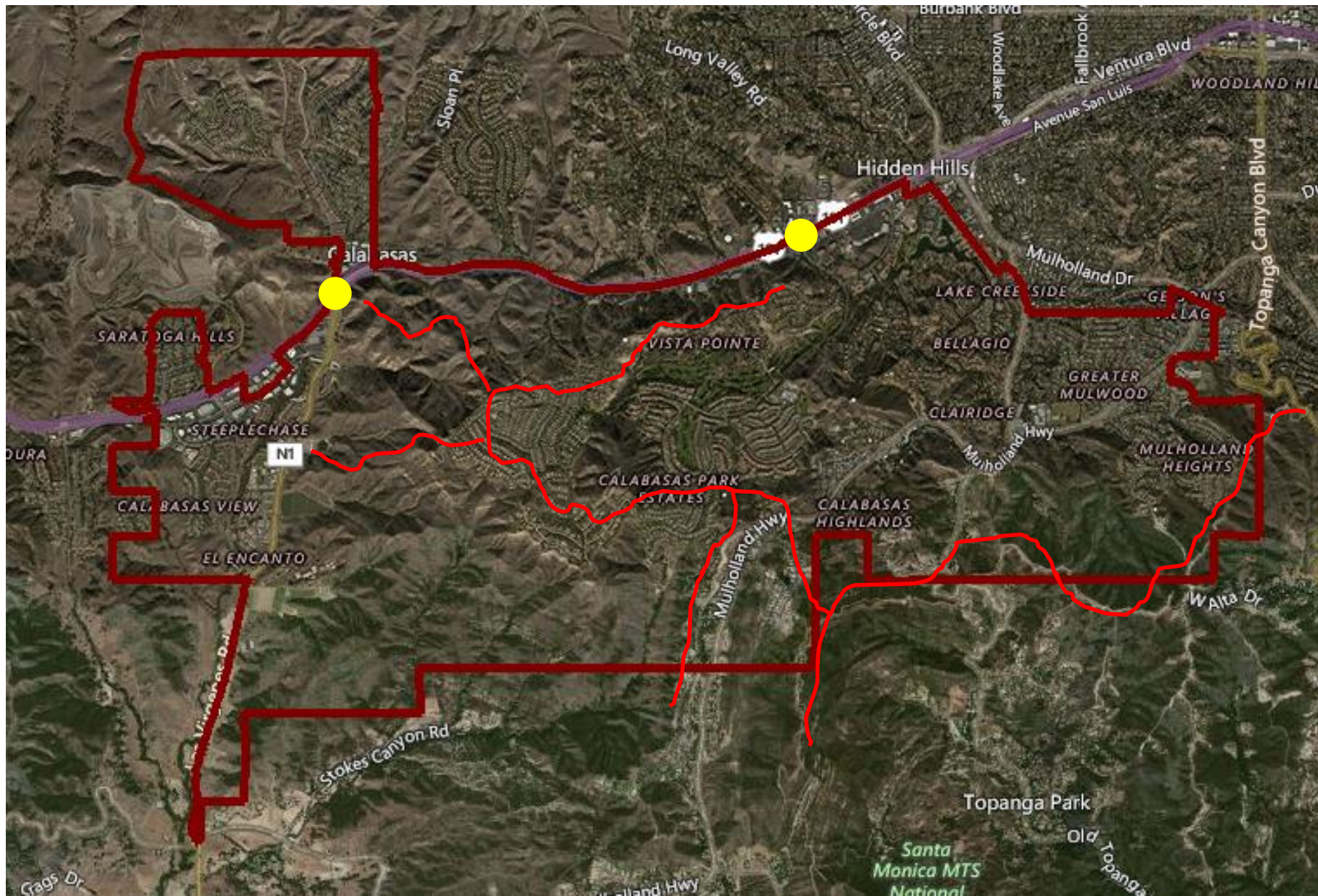
PLANNING NETWORK

- LSA Associates
- Urban Research Associates
- Urban Design Studio



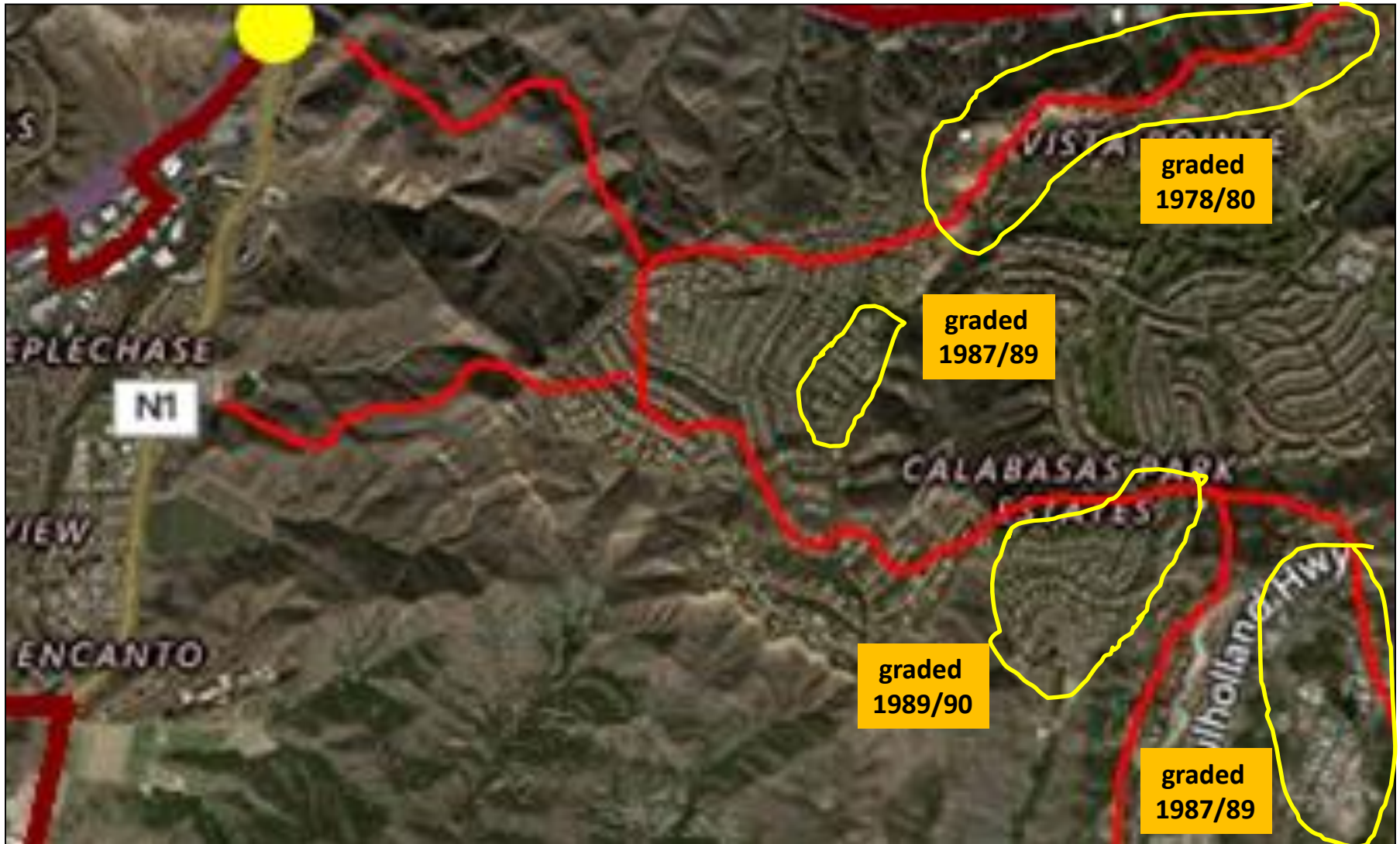






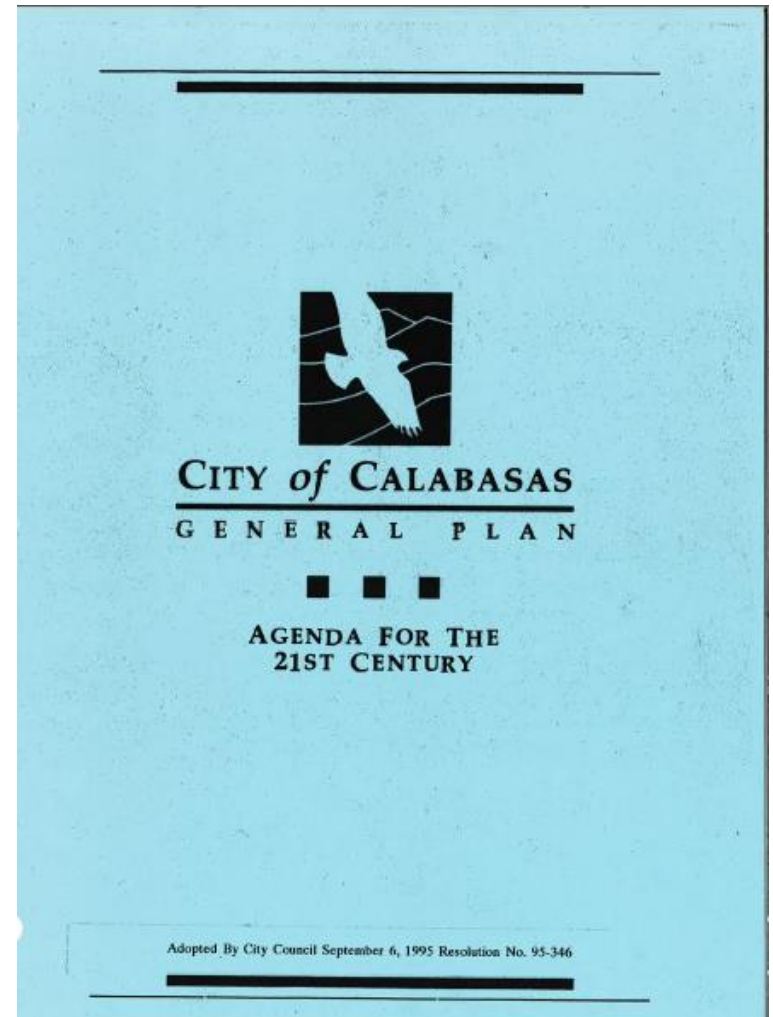


# Scenic Features Map (1992)



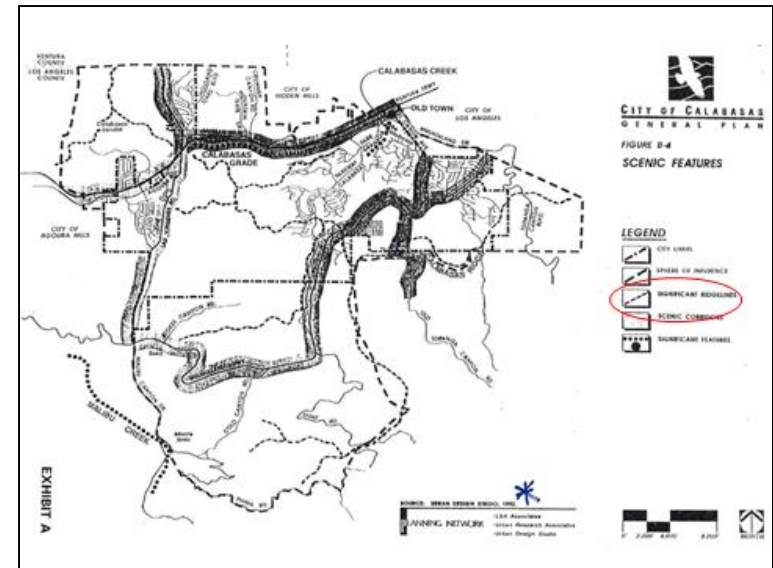
# 1995 General Plan

- Objective was to maintain and/or restore significant natural hillside features, including primary ridgelines
- Identified ridgelines as an inventoried scenic resource



# 1995 General Plan

- Called for maintenance of a Calabasas Resources Inventory
  - *“...it is imperative that the information presented in these maps accurately reflect the most current information available...”*
- The 1993 Community Profile Scenic Features Map was included with no revisions



# 1995 General Plan

- Incorporated the old 1993 Community Profile ridgeline definition:

*“...A significant ridgeline is defined as one that visually dominates the surrounding landscape through its size...”; and*

- Introduced a new, technical 1995 General Plan ridgeline definition:

*“Ridgeline: A line connecting the highest points along a ridge and separating drainage basins or small scale drainage systems from one another.”*



# 1993 Ridgeline Definition



Ridgeline as “visual silhouette” ...

# 1995 Ridgeline Definition

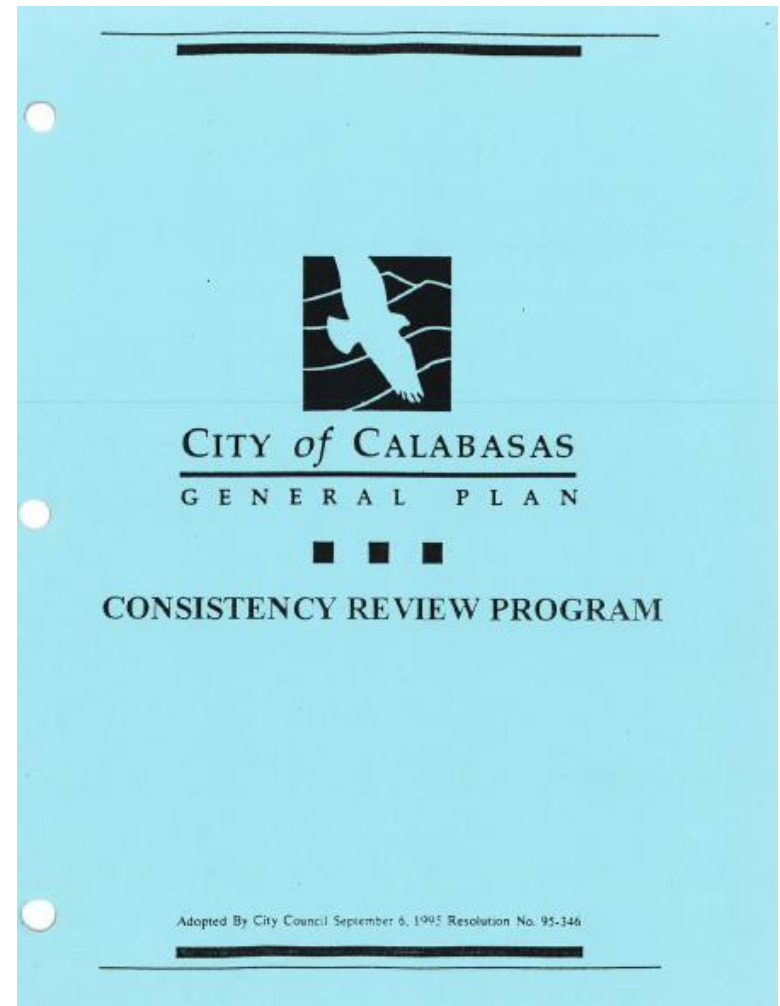


Ridgeline as “watershed”...



# 1995 Consistency Review Program

- Served as the City's Development Code between 1995 and 1998
- Contained detailed hillside performance standards
- Distinguished between the built and natural environment



# 1995 Consistency Review Program

- Introduced important Land Management classifications and approaches:

**Preservation** – Significant environmental features/resources to be retained as open space

**Retention** – Environmental features unaltered with limited development

**Partial retention** – Environmental features present but spotty; development can occur

**Modification** – Features/resources lost, retention not practical or feasible

# 1995 Consistency Review Program

- Ridgeline/Hillside standards echo approach:
  - Preserve** – Slope <50%, Primary Ridgeline, significant rock outcrop
  - Retention** – Largely natural topography, steep hillsides <25% slope
  - Partial Retention** – largely natural topography, flat areas, slopes >25%
  - Modification** – Areas of primarily manmade landforms preferred for development

# 1995 Consistency Review Plan

- Included performance standards for new projects:

**Grading:** *“Grading of ridgelines is prohibited. Structures shall be sited sufficiently below ridgelines as to preserve unobstructed views. In cases where application...would prevent construction of any structures...obstruction of views of a natural ridgeline shall be minimized, and landscaping provided to soften the impact of the new structure.”*

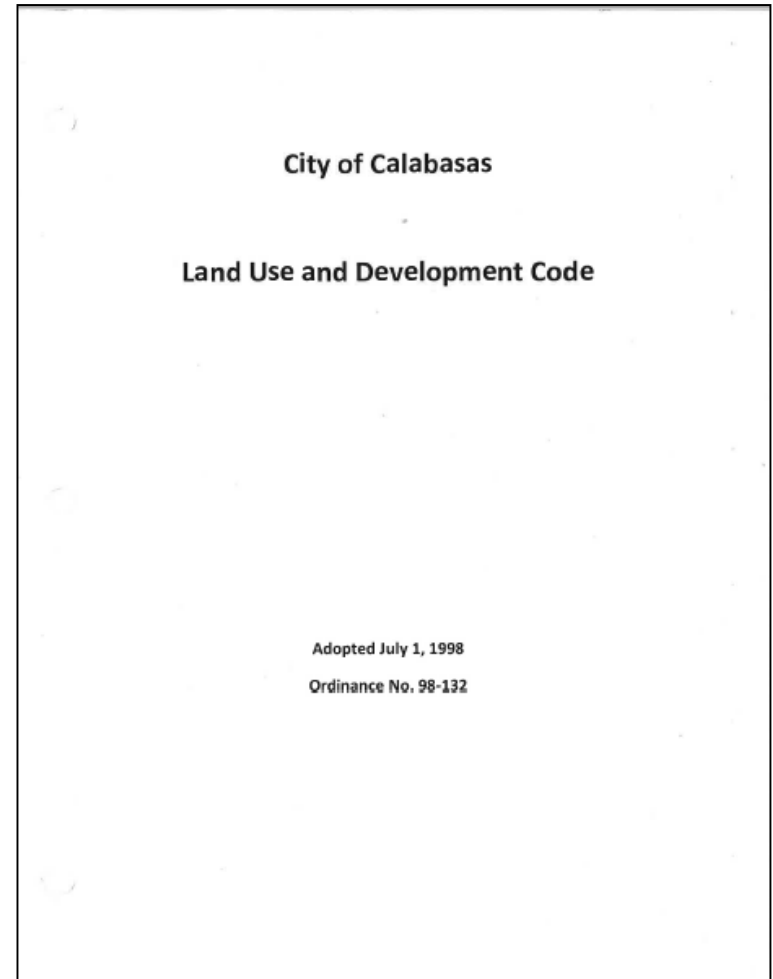
# 1995 Consistency Review Plan

**Landscape Treatment:** *Skyline planting shall be used along secondary ridgelines to recreate the lineal silhouette and to act as a backdrop for structures. Trees shall be planted to create a continuous lineal silhouette since gaps in the planting will not give the desired effect.”*

*“Use landscape plant material as a supplement for ridgeline backdrop if ridge is graded”.*

# 1998 Development Code

- Replaced the Interim Los Angeles County Development Code adopted in 1991
- Carried over many of the performance standards found in the 1995 General Plan



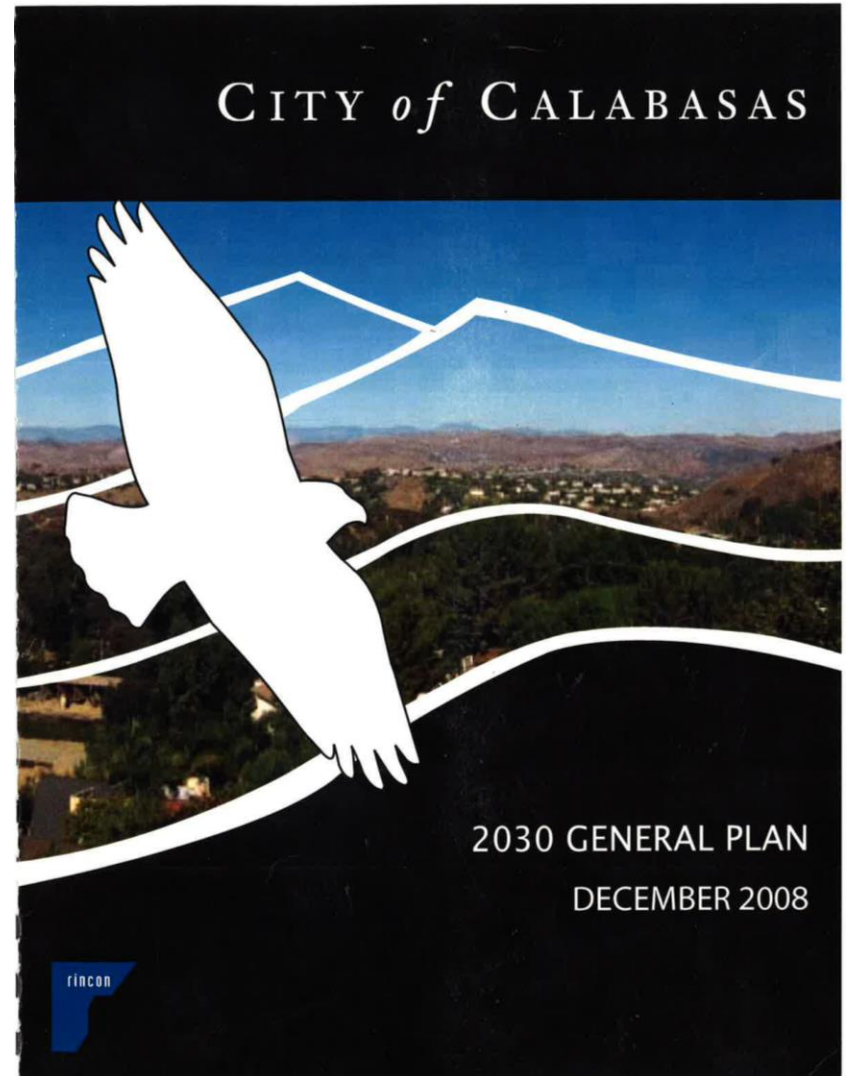


# 1998 Development Code

- Contained no definition for a ridgeline (17.90)
- Hillside and Ridgeline Development Code (17.20.130)
  - Referenced performance standards found in the 1995 General Plan and Consistency Review Plan
  - Provided “least visible” sighting principles for projects near ridgelines
  - Established 25 foot setbacks from ridgelines
  - Prohibited grading within 25 feet of a ridgeline
  - Contained prioritized development locations for sites where no options existed to avoid ridgeline impacts

# 2008 General Plan

- Developed after 16 month effort
- Retired performance standards to the Development Code
- Expanded Significant Ridgeline Mapping



# 2008 General Plan

- Open Space, IIIB. Hillside Management:
  - “The natural hillside areas... are significant visual and biological resources as well as a key factor in City’s unique setting and community character...” (III-12)
  - “A key concept of the Calabasas General Plan is to define permitted land use intensities within ***remaining open hillside areas*** on the General Plan land use map in a manner that is consistent with Calabasas’ vision...” (III -13)

# 2008 General Plan

- Open Space, IIB. Hillside Management:
  - *“Maintain and/or restore significant natural systems and resources associated with hillside environments, including...primary ridgelines...”*
  - *“Maintain the visual characteristics of hillsides...”*
  - *“Minimize the disruption of existing landforms and maintain the natural characteristics of hillside areas...”*
  - *“Preserve all significant ridgelines and other significant topographic features...”*

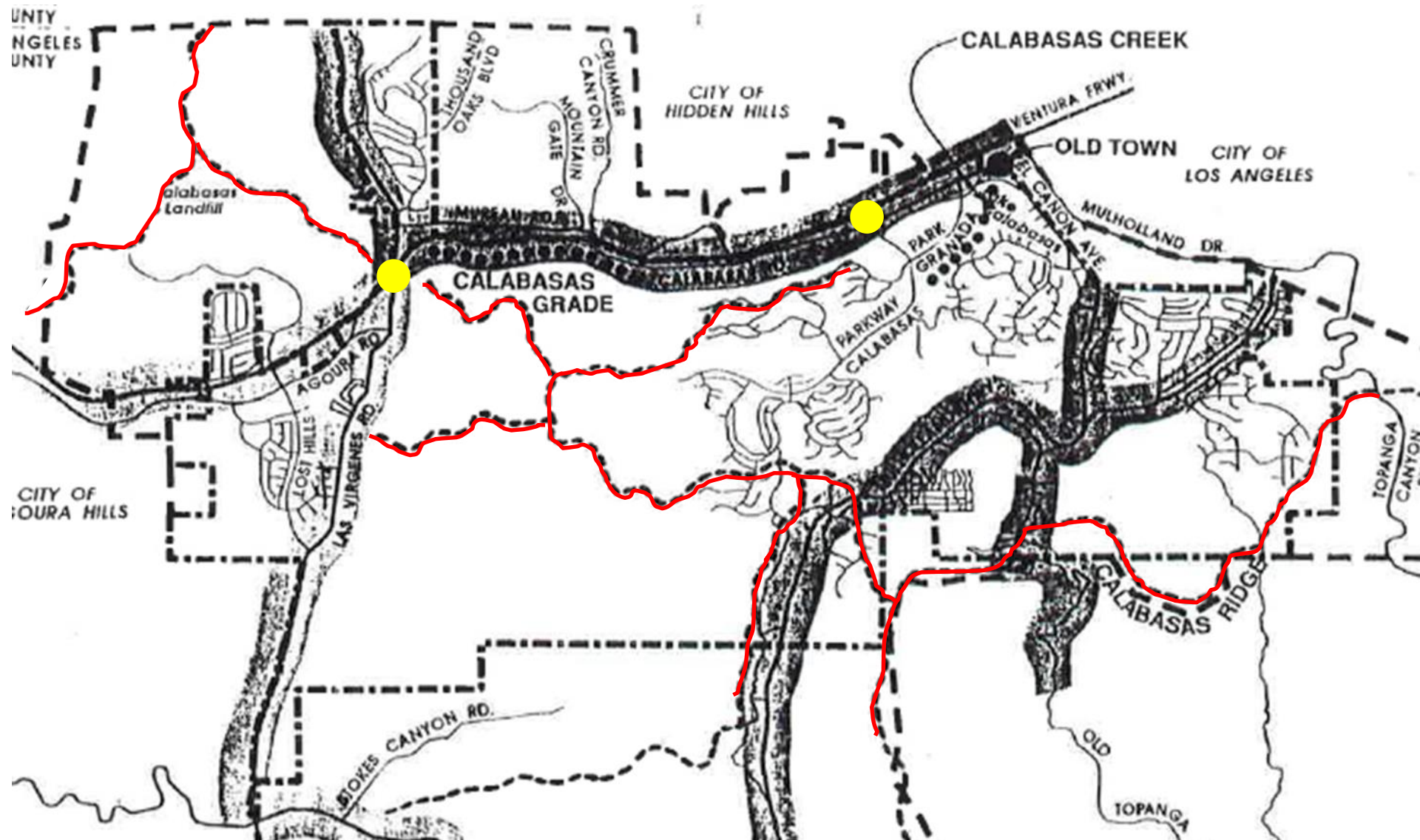
# 2008 General Plan

- IX Community Design Element (IX-3):
  - “Single family tract developments are usually relatively small residential enclaves *surrounded by* natural areas, such as open hillsides and canyons.”
- Objectives require protection of significant natural features (IX-7)
  - Policies require new development to be aesthetically compatible with the natural environment (IX-5), identified scenic resources be preserved (IX-6) and view corridors of natural features be enhanced (IX-7)

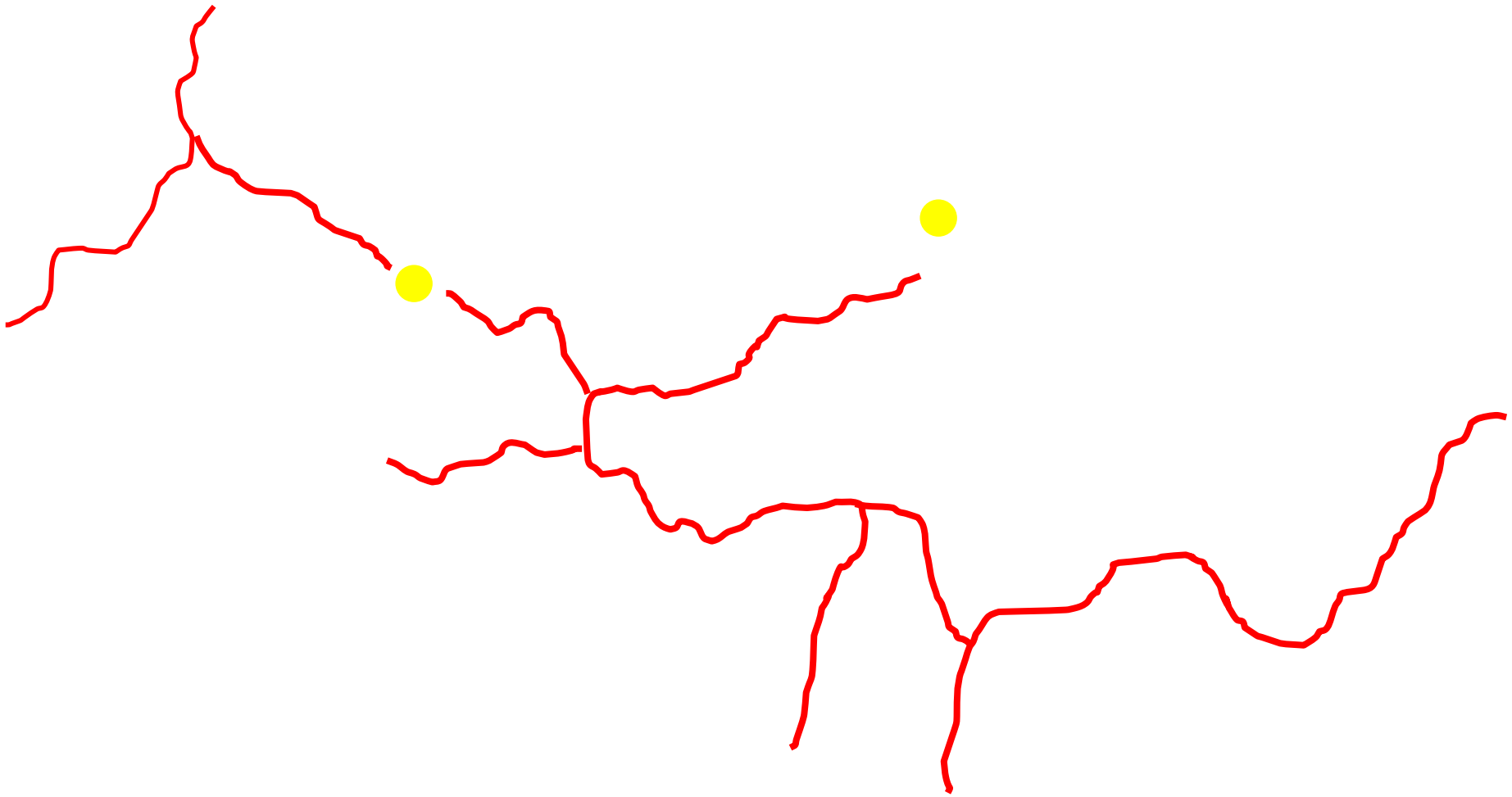


# 2008 General Plan

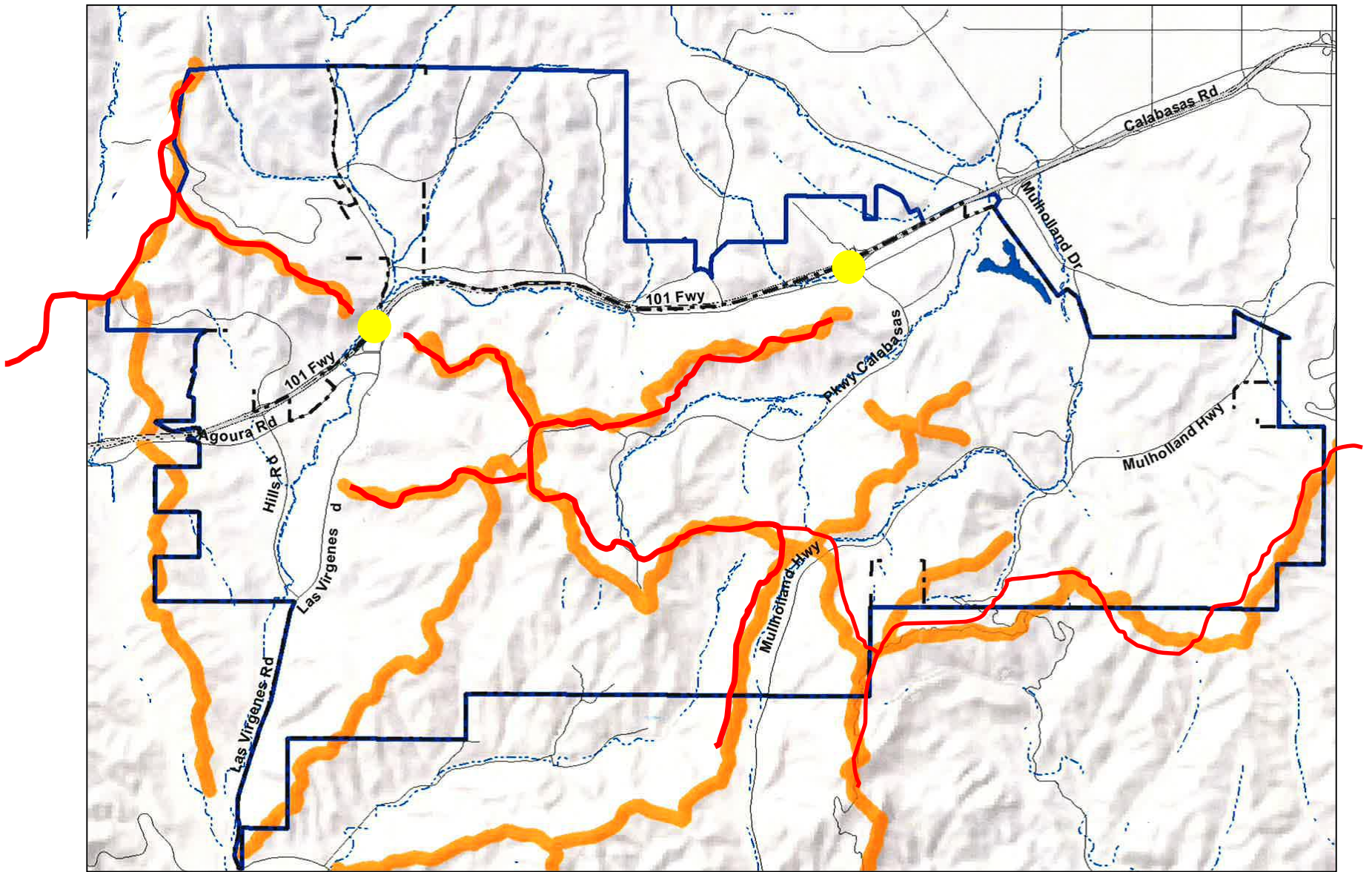
- The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) reviewed the 1993 Significant Ridgelines Map
  - The issue of the ridgeline running thru developed tract communities was not noted nor discussed
  - GPAC elected to greatly expand the extent of significant ridgelines
  - Expansion area discussions utilized the current significant ridgelines overlaid on USGS topographic maps; Staff did not identify mapping anomalies at that time



1992 Scenic Features Map



1992 Scenic Features Map



2008 Significant Ridgeline Map

# 2008 General Plan

- Ridgeline definition carried over from 1995 General Plan:

***“Ridgeline:** A line connecting the highest points along a ridge and separating drainage basins or small scale drainage systems from one another”*



# 2010 Development Code

- Consolidated:
  - 1995 GP Performance Standards
  - 1998 Development Code
  - New 2010 Codes
- Introduced tighter ridgeline and hillside restrictions

Title 17	
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT*	
Chapter:	
	User's Guide
Article I. Purpose and Effect of Development Code	
17.01	Enactment and Applicability
17.02	Land Use Permit Requirements
17.03	Interpretation of Code Provisions
Article II. Zoning Districts and Allowable Land Uses	
17.10	Establishment of Zoning District and Allowable Land Uses
17.11	Allowable Land Uses
17.12	Standards for Specific Land Uses
17.13	Residential Districts
17.14	Commercial Districts
17.16	Special Purpose Districts
17.18	Overlay Zones
Article III. Site Planning and Project Design Standards	
17.20	General Property Development and Use Standards
17.22	Affordable Housing
17.24	Art in Public Places
17.26	Landscaping
17.27	Lighting
17.28	Parking and Loading
17.30	Signs
17.32	Oak Tree Regulations
17.34	Green Development Standards
17.36	Historic Preservation Ordinance
17.38	Reasonable Accommodation

\*Editor's note—Ord. No. 2010-265, § 3, adopted Jan. 27, 2010, amended Title 17 in its entirety to read as herein set out. Title 17 was previously amended in its entirety by Ord. No. 98-132.

217 (Ordinance Supp. No. 47)

# 2010 Development Code

- 17.20 Hillside and Ridgeline Development
  - Protects hillside and ridgeline natural features, and ridgeline views from the public ROW
    - Siting prohibitions on steep slopes over 50%
    - Impact analysis required for ridgeline siting
    - Structure silhouette provisions
    - 50 foot setback standards for new structures
      - Amended in 2016 to permit additions up to 1,200 SF
    - Color, mass and screening standards
- 17.90 Definition:
  - Ridgeline remained a topographic (drainage) feature

# Summary

- All City plans and codes have always sought to preserve ridgelines and natural features
- Significant ridgeline maps have never accounted for existing development
- Earlier City documents provided management policies for developed vs undeveloped sites
- The ridgeline definition has changed from an aesthetic feature to a technical feature