

October 5, 2022

Planning Commission  
City of Calabasas  
100 Civic Center Way  
Calabasas, CA. 91302

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I'm submitting the following comments for your consideration regarding the update of our General Plan's Safety Element.

The Fehr & Peers Traffic and Evacuation Study contains some caveats in its Introduction that I believe must be emphasized in the General Plan. It states that "...any emergency movement is unpredictable because it has an element of individual behavior related to personal risk assessment for each hazard event..." The Introduction continues to state "...this assessment is intended to provide the City with a broad understanding of the capacity of the transportation system during an evacuation scenario: *it does not provide a guarantee that evacuations will follow modeling that is used for analysis purposes, nor does it guarantee that the findings are applicable to any or all situations.*" (emphasis added).

I've lived in the northwestern part of Calabasas for about twenty-five years and have experienced several fires and evacuations over the years. I can state from personal experience that the modeling scenarios contained in this study are very optimistic. They do not reflect what my neighbors and I have experienced. I've seen Las Virgenes Road gridlocked by small fires.

I'm concerned that by incorporating this study into the General Plan without a *significant* disclaimer, it *will* be used in future Environmental Impact Reports to state that fire risk and evacuation impacts will be less than significant, when in reality they are not. The two sentences I referenced above will be glossed over, despite the fact that the gist of it is that the entire study should be taken with a grain of salt because they're hypothetical scenarios that don't necessarily reflect what happens in the real world.

I know that as a community, we refine our response with each emergency that happens. That is a good thing; we should continue to learn and evolve our response. However, I believe this study will give a false sense of security and safety that does not reflect real-world situations. And that will lead to potentially dangerous decisions in the future when it comes to putting additional people in areas with evacuation issues. That becomes a literal life-and-death scenario.

I know this study will be included in the Safety Element Update. I urge you to also include strong and clear language that indicates this study should not be used to base the safety of future development decisions.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Best regards,  
Frances Alet  
Calabasas

**From:** Joanne Suwara <[joasuw42@yahoo.com](mailto:joasuw42@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 27, 2022 11:00 AM  
**To:** info <[info@cityofcalabasas.com](mailto:info@cityofcalabasas.com)>  
**Subject:** Please forward to Planning Commissioners

We watched the archived video of the July 21, 2022 Planning Commission meeting and would like to make the following comments.

The Circulation and Fire Safety Elements are a very important part of the General Plan and needs proper attention. Please spend more time, not less to make sure you are making it a comprehensive document. We appreciate the time the Planning Department and Planning Commission have spent on this matter totally supporting the concerns voiced by members of the Planning Commission. They are the same concerns as ours and as voiced by other members of The Calabasas Coalition. We look forward to seeing them reflected in the next iteration of the process..

We also support Planning Commission Members that called for community involvement in the process via workshops and forums. We need to involve all residents of Calabasas.

We have lived in the Malibu Canyon Housing Tract since 1975. During that time we have seen several major fires surrounded our development. One fire, around 1983 that was not mentioned in the Staff report, originated in Box Canyon to the Northeast of us. It burned down 4 homes at the top of Farmfield and damaged several others. High winds pushed it across the freeway, burning many more homes on its way to the ocean. After the fire passed us I saw that the fire was near Saratoga Hills approaching the Pet Kennels. I drove there and started hosing down vegetation before it reached the Pat Kennel structures.

There are other fires including the Old Topanga Fire around 1993. Not sure if that originated in Calabasas but it burned down a good friends house in Malibu as it moed south again because of high winds,

There was also a fire around 2008 that burned open space in the upper Las Virgines Valley. As it approached our tract, the wind died down and fire fighter stopped it at Alicia Canyon Road.

In Conclusion, Thank you for your work. You have already invested a lot of effort and money in ths process. Please continue it with the Planning Commission and invite Public participation. It is too important not to do a complete job

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely

John and Joanne Suwara  
Founders, The Calabasas Coalition.

**From:** Joe Chilco <[joe.chilco@gmail.com](mailto:joe.chilco@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** October 5, 2022 at 5:59:58 AM PDT  
**To:** info <[info@cityofcalabasas.com](mailto:info@cityofcalabasas.com)>  
**Cc:** Michael Klein <[mklein@cityofcalabasas.com](mailto:mklein@cityofcalabasas.com)>  
**Subject:** Planning Commission 10/6/22 meeting - agenda item #2 - Public Comments

To the Planning Commissioners:

With regard to the Safety Element updates proposed, please consider the following:

In the redline version, the very first change/addition gives me pause. My concern is that the text of the General Plan should always reflect the reality of an issue.

Specifically, the text states that LVMWD has 6 months of emergency water in its Westlake reservoir.

Given the many factors involved, including the combined water use of all cities served and all the potential new development that increase that, the severity of a continuing drought, the inability to determine how much water will be needed for fire fighting, how can they possibly, accurately determine this amount? They can't. However, the proposed text implies they can.

It should state that the LVMWD has X capacity (state volume) in its Westlake reservoir which approximately equates to 6 months of emergency use based on data from (the actual year in which they calculated the determination).

My concern is that it gives a false sense of "don't worry, LVMWD has got us covered", that then is used by a developer as a guarantee that their development can't be denied due to insufficient water availability because the General Plan says it's not a problem...when it obviously is a concern already.

Unfortunately, I have not been in a position to thoroughly review all the proposed updates in this General Plan element.

However, as a guiding principle, the General Plan should always reflect the reality of an issue, and state the intent clearly with specificity so that the interpretation of such cannot be construed in a way to defeat the intent.

This lack of specificity and misconstrued interpretation is why the City is in litigation with the developer of the West Village at Calabasas project.

Now is the time and the opportunity to choose to ensure that the General Plan, while a blueprint for development, is not used as a undeniable guarantee of how development may be allowed.

Thank you for your consideration of the above and your careful planning to ensure development in the City aligns with the values of its residents.

Joe Chilco  
Calabasas resident  
(Address on file)