

IX.A Citywide Community Design

The objectives and policies in this section relate to a larger community design ethos that necessarily involves entire neighborhoods, districts, or other sub-regions of the City. Within these areas, multiple parcels and a mixture of land uses are typically affected.

Objectives

- ❖ Focus new development in and near areas that already contain existing development.
- ❖ Preserve significant natural features, designated open space, and biological habitats.
- ❖ Preserve and enhance a pleasant visual experience for residents and visitors, emphasizing prominent and distinctive vistas, view corridors, and natural features.
- ❖ Create pedestrian access and connectivity opportunities as well as human-scaled gathering places.
- ❖ Promote high quality design for structures and building sites.

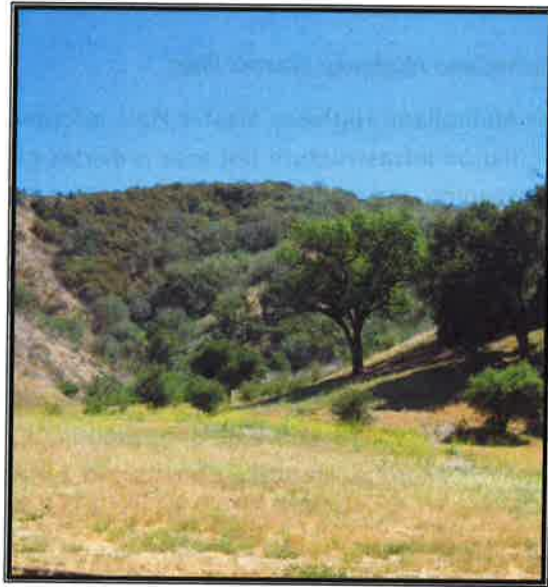


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General Plan Approach

Community design focuses on defining the physical forms and environmental features that contribute to community character. The themes of environmental sensitivity, compact urban form, and inviting pedestrian access are key elements to future development in Calabasas. It is a high priority of the City to protect the natural environment, hillsides, open spaces, and views as the City continues to realize some future development. Calabasas is committed to promoting sustainable practices through General Plan community design goals and policies that complement such policies in the Conservation Element.

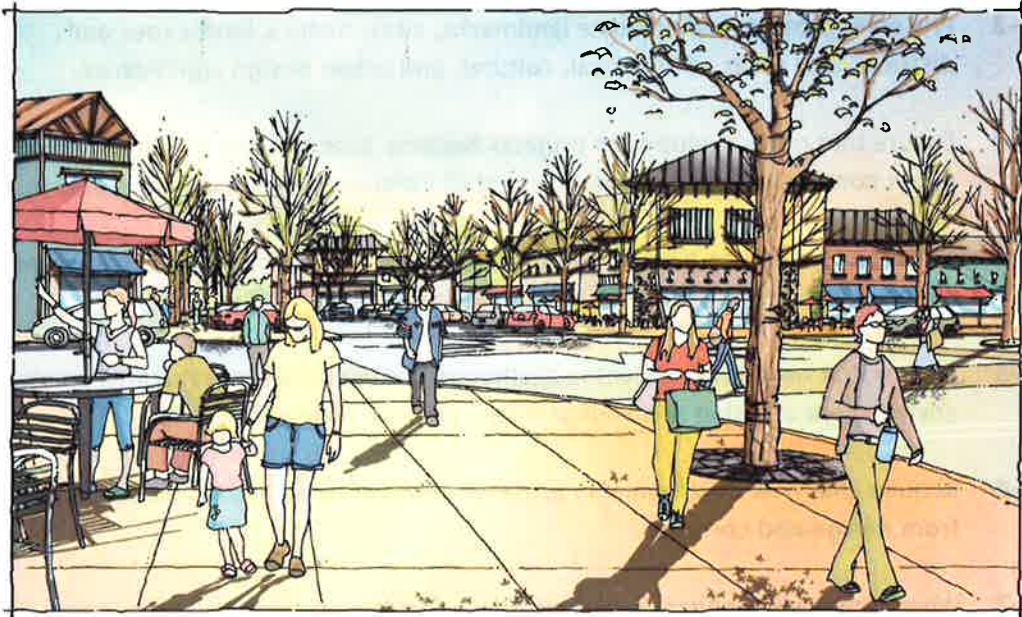
The primary community design concept for the General Plan is that new development should conform to the character of its natural setting. Therefore, new development should be accomplished through infill and revitalization of existing developed areas in order to conserve undeveloped areas. By creating a more compact urban form, many benefits may be realized, including maximizing open space, reducing energy costs, enhancing public transit feasibility, creating more walkable environments, and providing greater connectivity and synergy between land uses.



The challenge lies in how to accommodate and shape future development in infill locations in a way that retains the character of Calabasas and minimizes environmental effects. With this infill approach in mind, the City also seeks to accommodate housing demand through the redevelopment of commercial areas of the community with somewhat higher density mixed use development. This will create a series of mixed use community areas linked by open space and areas of larger residential development. Within the mixed use areas, the formation of inviting pedestrian areas and local gathering spaces will be important in creating a desirable atmosphere and a sense of community.



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Calabasas recognizes that it is, and will continue to be, a low-profile, residentially-oriented community and the City intends to maintain its unique character as a friendly, family-oriented community in a picturesque natural setting.

Residential “mansionization” (building of excessively large houses on small lots) is perceived by some as a concern in Calabasas. This type of development can result in houses with large bulk that are out of scale with existing neighborhoods and that have the potential to change the character of the neighborhood. It can also result in minimal setbacks and landscaping along street frontages; decreased availability of light, air, and privacy; view blockage; and excessive grading for large building pads. The General Plan aims to prevent overbuilding by requiring that new residential construction be compatible with the surrounding community character and the physical limitations presented by the natural terrain. The City recognizes that development of individual small lots, in itself, does not necessarily create negative impacts, as long as certain key design concepts are incorporated to mitigate potential negative impacts.

Policies

- IX-1 Through community input and design review, ensure that new development and redevelopment is of high quality design, is aesthetically pleasing, and contributes to a positive image for the City.



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- IX-2** Preserve, protect, and enhance landmarks, sites, historic landscapes and districts, and areas of historical, cultural, and urban design significance.
- IX-3** Ensure that new development projects become assets to the community through direct contribution to the enhancement of Calabasas' visual environment.
- IX-4** Protect and enhance historic resources such as Old Town, in collaboration with all other affected jurisdictions as appropriate.
- IX-5** Ensure that new development is aesthetically compatible with the area's natural environment and that it contributes to a positive image for the City.
- IX-6** Require that new developments preserve views of identified scenic resources from designated corridors.
- IX-7** Where applicable, enhance view corridors that are oriented toward existing or proposed community amenities, such as recreation facilities, parks, open space, or natural features.
- IX-8** Require that new developments establish architectural and siting design themes that are compatible with the surrounding context, including:
- *Prominent design features existing in the immediate area (i.e. trees, landforms, historic landmarks);*
 - *Existing and planned development, buildings and structures; and*
 - *The natural environment (i.e., hillsides, washes, native vegetation, community landscaping).*
- IX-9** Require that new developments create pleasing transitions to surrounding development. For example, where applicable:
- *The bulk of new structures should be compatible with the area's environment and with adjacent development;*
 - *Setbacks from streets and adjacent properties should be in proportion to the structure and the function of the street and shall encourage pedestrian scale and uses (for example, zero setbacks from property lines and street right-of-way are appropriate within Old Town); and*



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- *Multi-story structures should be made less imposing by physically stepping the upper stories of the structures back from street level.*
- IX-10 Within residential neighborhoods, protect neighborhood character by maintaining the mass, scale, and height of structures at a size that is compatible with the size of the parcel upon which the structure is located, as well as the size of adjacent development.
- IX-11 Promote an assembly of distinct neighborhoods that encompass a range of housing types which:
- *Provide a refuge from the congestion of the adjacent metropolitan area;*
 - *Are visually attractive and compatible in intensity, dwelling unit size, and structural design with the need to protect the surrounding natural environment; and*
 - *Meet the needs and suit the lifestyles of current and future residents.*
- IX-12 Provide appropriate transitions between different projects and between suburban and rural/semi-rural land uses through the provision of buffer areas, landscaping, and other similar treatments, such as hedges, walls, fences, berms, or landscaped open space.
- IX-13 Promote the establishment and maintenance of the following features to enhance community character:
- *Gathering, meeting, and recreational places;*
 - *Commercial facilities that facilitate, rather than hinder, pedestrian circulation within the facility, as well as between commercial facilities and adjacent residential neighborhoods;*
 - *Development designs that enhance a feeling of being safe*
 - *Traditional, rather than trendy or "franchise" architecture that complements the natural character of Calabasas' setting;*
 - *Distinctive buildings that contribute to, rather than detract from, Calabasas' character;*
 - *Hillside residential development designs that feature natural rather than manmade forms and that emphasize the use of custom foundations in place of slab construction;*



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- *House sizes and flat pad areas in hillside areas that are consistent with the natural character and setting; and*
- *Community entry statements and landscaping that accurately portray community character.*

IX-14 Promote lower level lighting/illumination citywide through implementation of lighting standards such as the City's "Dark Skies" ordinance.

IX-15 Ensure that public improvements such as streets, sidewalks, drainage facilities, and streetlights are aesthetically pleasing and contribute to a positive image for the City. For example, where applicable:

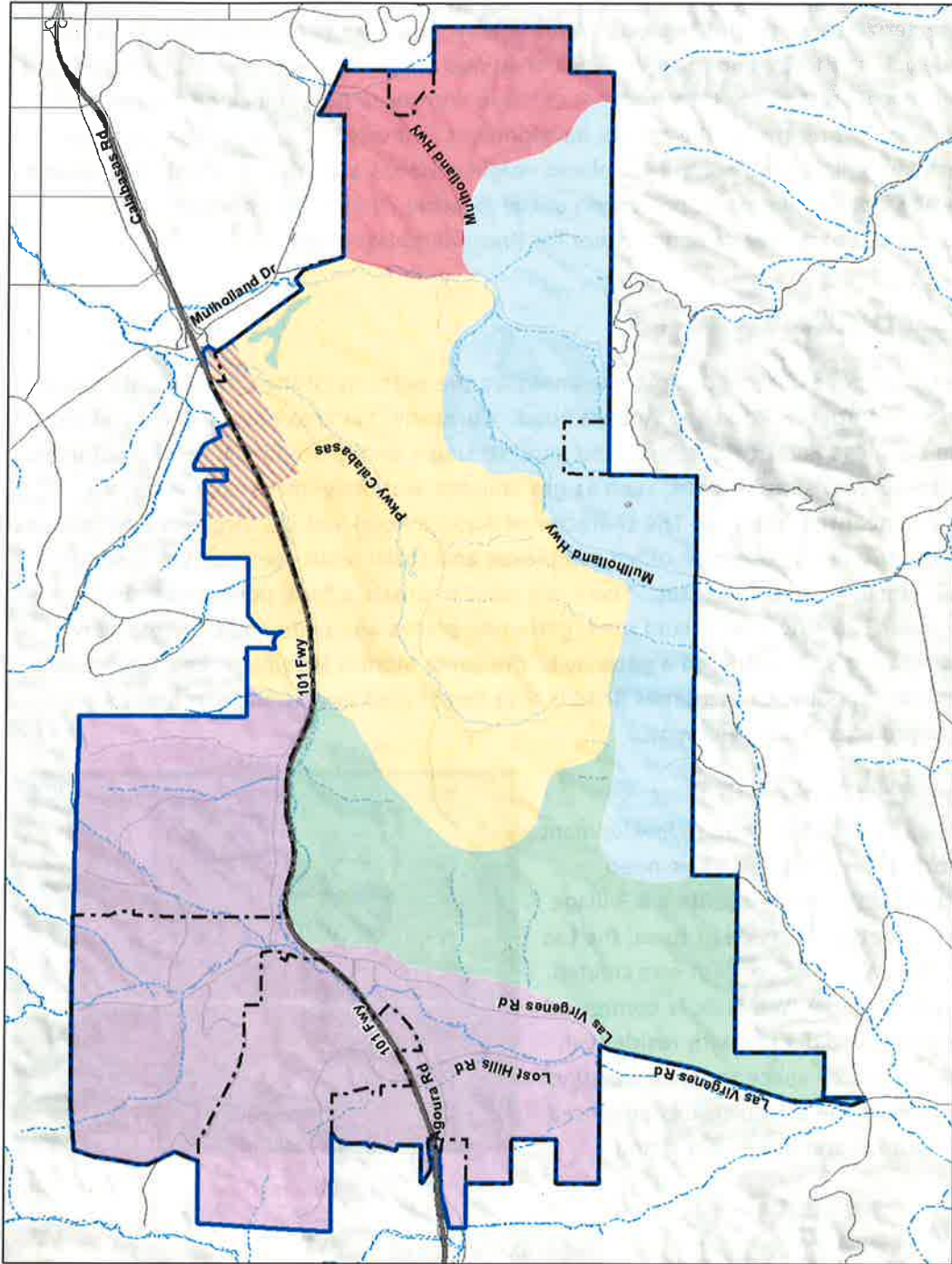
- *Use earth-tone tinted concrete for drainage features;*
- *Provide natural-looking treatments for culverts incorporating native stone material; and*
- *Install streetlights and traffic signals that are attractive and low glare.*

IX-16 Integrate sustainable practices into the design of developments, including site planning, building form, materials, and landscaping.

IX.B Neighborhoods

Different areas of Calabasas exhibit a variety of design characteristics and themes. This variety is an important component of the community identity of Calabasas. Several neighborhoods within Calabasas warrant specific design direction. The following four neighborhoods are a focus of this section: Las Virgenes/Westside, East Village, North Mulholland, and South Mulholland. For the purposes of this section, the subtitle "neighborhoods" refers to subareas of the City that are actually collections of neighborhoods located in the same general area. **Figure IX-1** shows the location of each neighborhood.





LEGEND

- Calabasas City Boundary
- Plan Area Boundary
- Major Roads
- Las Virgenes/Westside
- Old Town/East Village
- Open Space
- Greater Mulwood (North Mulholland)
- South Mulholland
- Greater Calabasas Park



Figure IX-1
Calabasas Neighborhoods

Basemap imagery provided by USGS, 2002. Additional data layers from City of Calabasas, 2007, RSM Design Group, 2008, and Ricon Consultants, 2009. Updated March 2014.



CITY OF CALABASAS 2030 GENERAL PLAN, COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

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General Plan Approach

As stated earlier, strategic infill development is preferred to development in undisturbed, natural areas. The greatest opportunities for strategic infill development in Calabasas lie at the western and eastern gateways to the City, in the Las Virgenes/Westside and East Village neighborhoods. Mixed use infill development will characterize these neighborhoods. Additionally, none of the major entrances to the City, such as the East and Las Virgenes/Westside areas, currently presents a significant visual entry statement. Development of these entrances should include recognizable elements that represent the quality development and way of life of Calabasas. The North Mulholland and South Mulholland neighborhoods are more residentially focused neighborhoods; therefore, protection of the existing community character is an important community design concept for these neighborhoods.



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East Village

The East Village area is actually a collection of four distinct areas: Calabasas Park, Old Town Calabasas, The Commons, and Craftsman's Corner. Calabasas Park and Old Town Calabasas have well established identities and not much revitalization or infill is envisioned for these areas. Currently, challenges include lack of connectivity between these subareas, visual clutter along the freeway, unscreened parking lots along Calabasas Road, and the unmet opportunity for more of a downtown environment for the east side of the community.

The vision for The Commons and Craftsman's Corner areas is to create an expanded "village" environment by including new professional offices, retail commercial uses, visitor accommodations, cultural arts facilities, and residential development connected with pedestrian spaces, plazas, and parks. Specific visioning for portions of the East Village area was conducted and is presented on **Figure IX-4**.



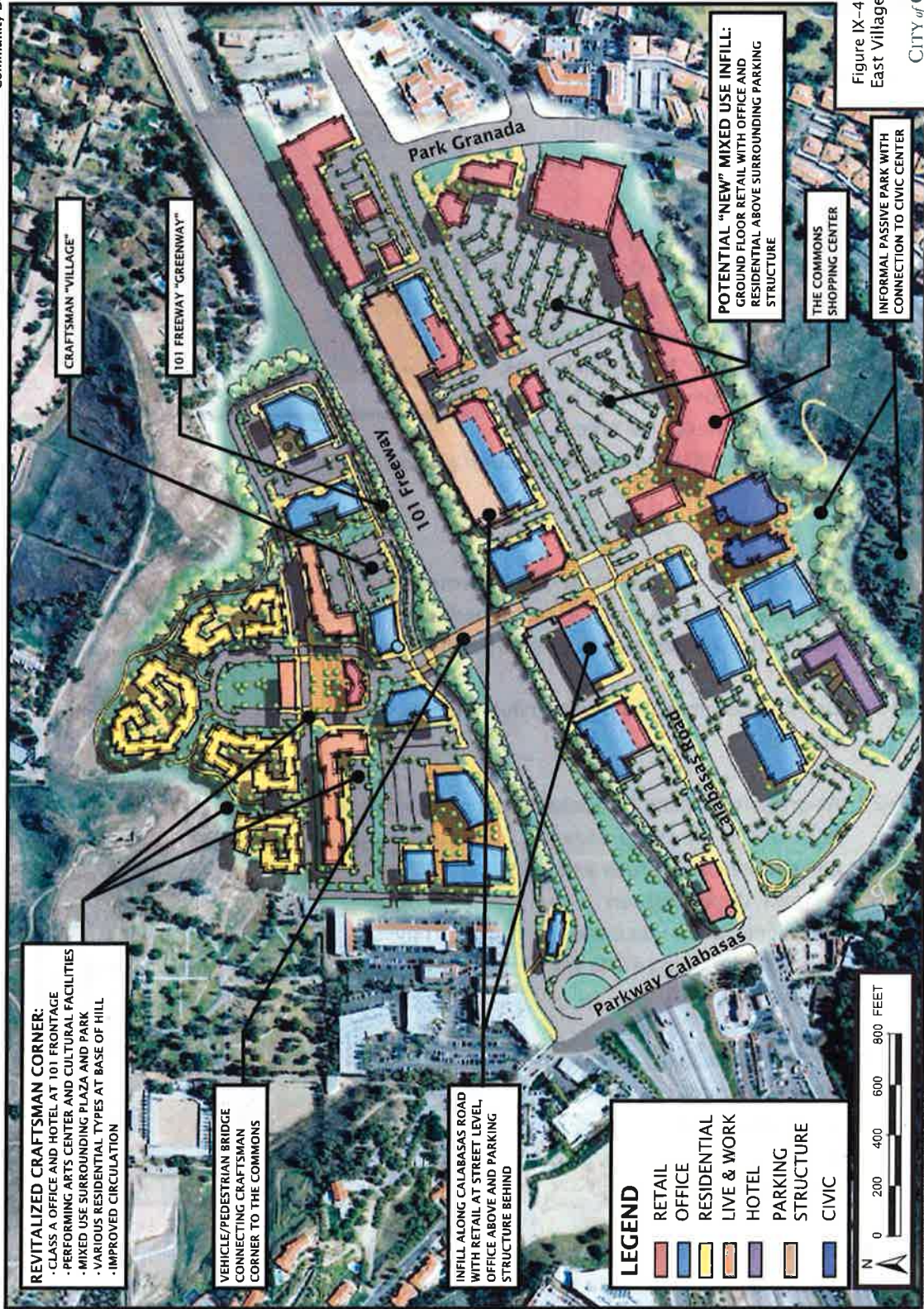


Figure IX-4
East Village

CITY OF CALABASAS

CITY OF CALABASAS 2030 GENERAL PLAN, COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

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Objectives

- ❖ Maintain the well-established traditional character of Calabasas Park and Old Town.
- ❖ Revitalize the Craftsman's Corner area and enhance The Commons area by creating an expanded village environment that includes new retail commercial, visitor accommodations, and residential development with limited new professional offices and cultural arts facilities connected through pedestrian spaces, plazas, and parks.



Policies

- IX-25 Facilitate the establishment of a "downtown" district for Calabasas Road east of Parkway Calabasas emphasizing a pedestrian-oriented mix of retail, office and residential uses as well as pedestrian connections to adjacent residential areas.
- IX-26 Use The Commons as a successful example for the quality of design and public spaces.
- IX-27 As properties along Calabasas Road redevelop over time, require placement of buildings at the street edge to enliven the street scene and enhance the pedestrian experience and reduce the visibility of parking areas from public view.



- IX-28 Reduce the visibility of parking areas from public rights-of-way using appropriate building placement, landscaping, and other design techniques.
- IX-29 Annex and revitalize Craftsman's Corner through redevelopment with a mix of uses (possibly including a focus on creative or performing arts), improving



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circulation, and raising the quality of building design to meet or exceed the surrounding areas. In conjunction with revitalization, create a vehicle and pedestrian connection (freeway overpass) between Craftsman's Corner and The Commons that may also act as a gateway element. Also, create pedestrian and bicycle connections between Calabasas and Hidden Hills.

IX-30 Beautify and buffer the freeway edge while preserving views of surrounding hillsides.

IX-31 Establish parking strategies such as shared parking facilities or establishing parking districts to increase efficiency and enable redevelopment of selected areas.

