

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **General Plan Legislation**

In the past 15 years, three legislative acts have outlined how localities are to address in community General Plans the conditions that are hazardous to public health and safety. In 1970, this element became a mandatory element of the General Plan. The provision for a Safety Element was partly a reaction to damaging wildfires that occurred in September and October of 1970. Following the San Fernando Earthquake in 1971, the State Legislature enacted legislation requiring counties and cities to adopt a Seismic Safety Element as part of the comprehensive General Plan. In 1984, there were revisions in General Plan legislation pertaining to these two elements. The Seismic Safety and Safety Elements were combined into a single element that contained essentially the same information previously included in the two elements.

According to Section 65302 (g) of the Government Code, the Safety Element is described in the following terms:

A Safety Element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wildland and urban fires. The Safety Element shall include mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards. It shall also address evacuation routes, peak load water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and clearances around structures, as those items relate to identified fire and geologic hazards.

### **Purpose and Function**

One of the basic purposes of the element is to identify hazards within Villa Park and initiate precautions to protect the safety of the residents. The Element is principally a preventative planning document that will reduce natural and manmade hazards to acceptable levels of risk.